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“The Dignity of Being Called Americans”: American Identity and Portrayals of Canadians in the American Press, 1754-1812

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree
in History

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the ways that Canadians were portrayed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century American press and considers how those portrayals intersected with and reinforced the development of early American identity. Building on the concepts of “othering” as identified by Edward Said¹ and “imagined communities” as identified by Benedict Anderson,² I argue that American newspapers othered Canadians as a means of reinforcing cohesion within the early American imagined community. Many historians have explored the ways that early Americans othered their French, British, Indigenous, and Black neighbours in constructing their own unified American identity, but these studies have not explored the role that the othering of Canadians also played in this process. Canadians mattered to Americans because they served as an ideal foil, or negative example, against which to define the American identity. As North American subjects of European colonial empires, Canadians were more American than Europeans, yet more European than Americans. The Canadians’ origins were also diverse, including French, English, American, and Indigenous peoples, and so provided many different national and racial foils against which to compare White Americans. Positive comparisons emphasized the shared qualities American newspapers felt were properly American, while the much more numerous negative comparisons highlighted the aspects of American identity that made it superior to its northern neighbour. Though portrayals of Canadians oscillated between positive peaks and negative valleys throughout the period between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, the majority of depictions were negative, and remained consistently so throughout the era. This dissertation traces the origins of these negative portrayals back to the French and Indian War, and argues that the methods that American newspapers used to paint the Canadians as an enemy other pioneered many of the approaches that were later utilized during the Revolution and the War of 1812. Canada has often been an

¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso Press, 2006).

afterthought for modern Americans, but in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Canada mattered to Americans greatly. In their depictions of Canadians, early Americans often defined their emerging identity against what it was not: not British, not Indigenous, and not Canadian.

Keywords

Canadian-American relations, Canada, United States, the early American press, newspapers, othering, imagined community, racialization, portrayals of Canadians, American identity, Canadian identity, First Nations, Indigenous, French Canadians, Loyalists, Black Americans, Black Loyalists, the French and Indian War, the American Revolution, the Jay Treaty, the Embargo of 1807, the War of 1812, the First Party System, Federalists, Democratic-Republicans

Summary for Lay Audience

This dissertation explores the ways in which the American press portrayed Canadians between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, arguing that American newspapers often used depictions of what they perceived as the Canadian identity to help define the American identity by contrast. The late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century were pivotal years for the formation of American group identity, and through that era, Canadians were an important point of comparison for American newspapers that sought to explore what made an American. Canadians mattered to the American press because they represented a useful negative model against which to define the American identity. Americans also defined their identity against the British empire which they broke away from in the American Revolution and against the Indigenous nations which surrounded them, but these comparisons were not sufficiently precise. As European settlers living in America, the Canadians were far more like Americans than were the British or Indigenous peoples, and as such, Canadians served as an important foil, or negative example, against which to define what made an American. Throughout the era between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, Canadians mattered to Americans, but this significance has not been fully recognized by scholars. The majority of the portrayals of Canadians that appeared in the American press were negative, and though there were moments when American public opinion of Canadians turned positive, images of Canadians were typically used as an anti-model against which to define the American identity. This dissertation traces the roots of this trend to the French and Indian War and argues that the ways that American newspapers sought to portray Canadians as being outside the American identity had a long shadow which stretched through the American Revolution and to the War of 1812. Today, Canadians are often viewed as defining themselves against their southern neighbours, but in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it was Americans that, in part, defined their group identity against the Canadians. In this way, Canada mattered, and mattered in ways that scholars are just beginning to explore.

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Introduction

“The Essence of Not Being”

On January 30, 1809, an advertisement appeared in the *Political and Commercial Register* of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for a “New Circus” to be held at the “Corner of Walnut and Ninth streets,” which was to feature a performance known as “the comic scene of the Canadian Peasant.”³ According to Andrew Davis, “The Canadian Peasant” was a variation on the flying wardrobe act, in which a rustic-looking audience plant would insist mid-show on performing a riding stunt, during which the initially clumsy plant would slowly remove his many, tattered coats, his horsemanship improving with each one, until he was finally revealed to be an expert member of the troupe.⁴ In the case of “The Canadian Peasant,” the plant posed as a stereotyped French Canadian who, in the course of the performance, would quite literally transform into a skilled American horseman. For the next thirty years after this first appearance in 1809, American circuses regularly advertised “The Canadian Peasant” amongst their most prominent features. Between 1809 and 1843, the act was performed at least 167 times⁵ by at least 25 performers,⁶ with performances ranging from Charleston, South Carolina to Cincinnati, Ohio and from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Salem, Massachusetts. For most of the early 1800s, “The Canadian Peasant” criss-crossed the country, a popular entertainment that influenced American public opinion of their Canadian neighbours throughout the era. But “The Canadian Peasant” was also itself the product of that American public opinion. The

³ *Political and Commercial Register*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 30, 1809.

⁴ Andrew Davis, *America’s Longest Run: A History of the Walnut Street Theatre* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 27.

⁵ These performances took place in the following cities: Albany, New York; Alexandria, Virginia; Baltimore, Maryland; Boston, Massachusetts; Charleston, South Carolina; Cincinnati, Ohio; Hagers-Town, Maryland; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; New Orleans, Louisiana; New York, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Portsmouth, New Hampshire; Salem, Massachusetts. Most of these performances were held in Philadelphia and New York.

⁶ Those performers were recorded as Mr. Asten, Mr. Bogardus, Mr. Breshard, Mr. Bullen, Mr. Caytano, Mr. Codet, Mr. Diego, Mr. Downs, Mr. Green, Mr. Guerin, Mr. Jackson, Mr. La Forest, Mr. Langley, Mr. Menial, Mr. Nathan, Mr. Pepin, Mrs. Redon, Mr. Richer, Mr. Sargent, Mr. Spencer, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Sweet, Mr. Tatnell, Mr. Vilallave, and Mr. Whittaker.

performance was built on generations of evolution in American thinking about their northern neighbours, a process of change laid out clearly in American press portrayals of Canadians between 1754 and 1812. The possibility of a metamorphosis like the one that occurred in the act, from a seemingly ignorant, lazy, superstitious, cowardly, uncultured, submissive Canadian to the ideal of an educated, industrious, rational, brave, refined, free American, was something that the American press debated for decades in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Unlike in “The Canadian Peasant,” however, in the American public mind, Canadians never seemed quite able to throw off their final coats and truly join the ranks of Americans. Throughout the approximately sixty years between the start of the French and Indian War and the start of the War of 1812, Canadians remained an “other,” utilized in the American press as a foil against which to define what Americans were, and more importantly, what they were not.

As a new political and social entity, Americans were just establishing their national identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, largely defining it against the European empires they were to break away from and the Indigenous nations which surrounded them. Benedict Anderson has argued that national identities are built on notions of historic group unity and the establishment of nation-myths which stress that unity,⁷ while Edward Said has argued that communities “other” out-groups as a means of maintaining a sense of internal group identity.⁸ Many other historians have explored the ways that Americans othered their French, British, and Indigenous neighbours to construct and reinforce their own identity and unity. These studies, however, have not explored the role that the othering of Canada also played in this process. As North American subjects of European colonial empires, Canadians were more American than Europeans, yet more European than Americans. As such, they stood as a unique and important comparison for those trying to establish American national and cultural identities. In addition, as they were widely believed to be the product of interracial unions between French traders and Indigenous women, early Canadians also served as a unique racial comparison against which to define the American racial identity. This dissertation

⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5-7.

⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 1-6.

explores portrayals of Canadians in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century American press and argues that American newspapers used both positive and negative depictions of Canadians to reinforce notions of American exceptionalism and unity in the nation's fledgling days. Positive comparisons emphasized the shared qualities that American newspapers felt were properly American, while negative comparisons highlighted the aspects of American identity which they felt made the Americans superior to their northern neighbour. Othering French Canadians, English Canadians, and First Nations peoples reinforced internal American group identity by defining the ways in which Americans felt they were unique and particularly enlightened compared with those around them.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were tumultuous times in North America, with American popular opinion of two of the primary colonial forces in the northern part of the continent, France and Britain, shifting from positive to negative several times throughout the era. American popular portrayals of Canadians shifted alongside, with Canadians portrayed as barbarous, bloodthirsty apostates during the French and Indian War, as enlightened, rational fellows during the American Revolution, and as dull, lazy serfs around the turn of the nineteenth century. While such portrayals evolved drastically from one era to the next, they all shared a common theme. When American newspapers commented about the Canadian character, they were simultaneously commenting on the American character. When American papers praised Canadians, emphasizing the character traits that the American people also considered key aspects of their own character, they reinforced these characteristics as important parts of the American identity. When the American press ridiculed the aspects of the Canadian character that they felt ran contrary to the American character (as was far more likely to be the case), they reinforced American identity as unique and superior to its Canadian counterpart. Despite the drastic shifts in their portrayals, throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, American press depictions of Canadians continually operated as a foil against which to define the emergent American identity. Comedian Mike Myers once joked, "Canada is the essence of not being. Not English, not American,

it is the mathematic of not being.”⁹ In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, it was not Canada that built its identity on what it was not, but rather its southern neighbour. Though the modern American identity often oozes confident distinctiveness, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it was the fledgling American identity that was “the essence of not being,” an identity that defined itself by what it was not: not British, not Indigenous... and not Canadian.

American press portrayals of Canadians can reveal much about the subtleties of how Americans thought of themselves. In particular, the ways in which such depictions changed over the course the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries reflected how American understandings of themselves were also changing. The decades between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812 were pivotal years for the United States, years in which Americans won their independence and began to make a name for themselves on the world stage as they challenged the French republic and British empire in the Quasi War and the War of 1812, respectively. It was in this era that the American identity truly established itself as an identity distinct from the British identity, and defining that identity took constant working and reworking. The ways that American press portrayals of Canadians changed between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812 reflect the ways that Americans themselves were defining their own identity in that era. After the War of 1812, Americans increasingly saw themselves as equals to the European powers, but in the six decades that preceded that conflict, the American identity was not as self-assured as it is today. Instead, the American identity was just establishing the aspects of itself that were to be fundamental to its definition. Depictions of Canadians were a means by which to affirm those aspects as fundamental to the American identity, to affirm them by contrasting them with the Canadian identity. Importantly, this method of defining an identity by examining its antithesis was not always done intentionally. Because of this, subtleties that often remain obscure in writings that sought explicitly to define the American identity can be revealed through American depictions of Canadians.

⁹ David Lawrence Pike, *Canadian Cinemas since the 1980s: At the Heart of the World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 17.

When American writers spoke of Canada, they were also, unintentionally speaking of themselves and the values they felt were inherent to Americans. Their portrayals give us a unique window into those values and expose one of the many ways in which the American identity was being constructed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Approaching American portrayals of Canadians in this way raises a number of questions about those portrayals and the ways that they relate to the emerging American identity. What do the aspects of the Canadian character that the American press praised reveal about the ways that Americans understood themselves? What aspects of the Canadian character did Americans admonish, and why did such negative portrayals tend to outnumber positive comparisons? How did American notions of Canadians change through time, and what does this say about the ways that American notions of themselves were also changing? American newspapers serve as an especially useful source base for an exploration of these questions as they consist of the views of various contributors, curated by editors or groups of editors. In this way, the material that appeared in American newspapers was both a reflection of the American public mind (through the contributors) and a means of shaping the public mind (by editors). In providing material from the newspapers, contributors revealed candid glimpses into their thinking on their own identities. In compiling and framing those contributions, editors molded those candid shots into a general theme, often to promote a political or social message. And so, American newspapers provide unique windows into the ways in which eighteenth and nineteenth century Americans were thinking about themselves. In particular, depictions of Canadians reflected American understandings of race, class, gender, and religion. American portrayals of Canadians, both positive and negative, were often built around these aspects of social identity, the same aspects of identity that were increasingly forming the foundation of what it was to be American. Typically, the comparisons in the American press focused on differences, and in drawing distinctions between Canadians and Americans they reinforced that Americans were nothing like their Canadian neighbours. When American newspapers decried the intermingling of Canadians and

Indigenous peoples, they reinforced conceptions of Whiteness¹⁰ as key components of American identity. When they disparaged Canadians as being unable to read or write, they emphasized literacy as an essential element of being American. When they condemned Canadians as Catholics and Anglicans, they reaffirmed their own traditions of religious dissent. Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, American newspapers continually used depictions of Canadians to cement the aspects of social identity which they felt most defined Americans in American popular thought.

Canada and Canadians have largely been an afterthought in the American historiography, though this has recently begun to change. Transnational, continental, and regional approaches are helping to bring the influence of Canada and of Canadians on American history into greater focus. The pace of this change, however, has been relatively slow. As part of his research into Canada's impact on the early United States, Jeffers Lennox has noted, "despite recent efforts by leading historians, citizens of the United States have not looked north with any regularity."¹¹ Still, some historians have begun to explore the role that Canada played in American history and the ways that Canadians were viewed by Americans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Gordon T. Stewart has examined the ways in which Canada was seen by Americans in post-Revolutionary America¹² while Aldona Sendzikas has explored American images of

¹⁰ I have intentionally capitalized "White" throughout this dissertation when referring to race. While I am sensitive to the fact that White Nationalist groups have attempted to use the capitalization of White to promote White Supremacy, I do not believe that they should be given this ground. In addition, I believe that capitalizing White makes the most sense from a grammatical perspective, and I further believe that not capitalizing it continues to give privilege to the constructed "White" racial category by marking it as separate from other constructed racial categories which are almost universally capitalized. See Kwame Anthony Appiah, "The Case for Capitalizing the B in Black," *The Atlantic*, June 18, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/06/time-to-capitalize-blackand-white/613159/>. As Appiah has argued, using different capitalization rules for White and Black can subtly imply that Whiteness is neutral and standard, that it stands outside the context of racialization. I believe that this is a potentially dangerous way to approach socially constructed conceptions of race, and for that reason, I have chosen to capitalize all references to constructed racial categories.

¹¹ Jeffers Lennox, *North of America: Loyalists, Indigenous Nations, and the Borders of the Long American Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022), 17.

¹² Gordon T. Stewart, *The American Response to Canada Since 1776* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1992).

Canadians in pre-Revolutionary America.¹³ Neither of these studies, however, has explored the particular role that the American press played in circulating and reinforcing notions of Canada, nor has the work of Lennox. Other historians like Alan Taylor and Lawrence B.A. Hatter¹⁴ have also explored the role that Canada played in American history, especially in border and frontier areas, but their research has also not given particular attention to the press. Jordan E. Taylor has explored the ways in which the early American press tried to curate what they defined as truth for readers, and his research has explored Canada and the ways in which American printers sought to influence Canadian readers,¹⁵ but his study has not examined understandings of Canadian identity or the ways in which portrayals of Canadians influenced depictions of American identity within American newspapers. My research explores the role that the early American press played in cementing the notions of Canadian identity that would be used as important counterexamples of the developing American identity in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century American newspapers. As a foil against which to define American identity in the American press, Canadians were important to the development of that identity in ways that have not yet been fully recognized.

I have chosen American newspapers as they represent an important source of popular belief about Canadians that played an integral role in the development of American national identity. Lennox argued that “during the War for Independence and the decades that followed, the loyal British provinces were instrumental in the creation of the United States and the character of its citizens.”¹⁶ My dissertation explores the role that American newspapers played in this process and extends the study of Canada’s

¹³ Aldona Sendzikas, “Unredeemed Americans: Canada as Seen by the American Colonies before the Revolutionary War,” *The Journal of Erie Studies* Vol 41 (2016).

¹⁴ Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2016); Alan Taylor, *American Republics: A Continental History of the United States, 1783-1850* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2021); Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 2007); Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*; Lawrence B.A. Hatter, *Citizens of Convenience: The Imperial Origins of American Nationhood on the U.S.-Canadian Border* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016).

¹⁵ Jordan E. Taylor, *Misinformation Nation: Foreign News and the Politics of Truth in Revolutionary America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2022).

¹⁶ Lennox, *North of America*, 17.

impact on American identity back to the French and Indian War, revealing that the predominant image of Canadians from this era cast a long shadow over the rest of the eighteenth century and early republic. As Michael Warner and Charles C. Clark have argued, the early American press provided English Americans with an accessible public sphere that presented them with a relatively unified worldview.¹⁷ As such, the press was instrumental in reinforcing ideas about Canada and Canadians. This dissertation argues that Canada mattered to Americans in the approximately sixty years prior to the War of 1812, with that importance reflected in the portrayals of Canadians that filled early American newspapers. As tens of thousands of separate newspaper depictions attest, American ideas about what made a Canadian had a significant impact on American ideas about what made an American. More than has been recognized in the historiography, Canada mattered to the formation of the United States and American identity.

This dissertation is based on a close reading of the source material pertaining to Canadians that appeared in the early American press. As part of my research for this project, using the Wolfram Mathematica software and programming language, I have constructed a dataset of the more than 30,000 references to Canadians that appeared in the American press between 1750 and 1816,¹⁸ tagged based on content and portrayal through careful reading. This dataset allows for an examination of the distribution of American opinion regarding Canadians across both time and space, as well as for visualizations of that distribution of opinion. To construct the dataset, I used Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software to locate search terms such as “Canadian,” “Canadians,” “People of Canada,” and “Inhabitants of Canada,” in digital newspaper archives. As expected, the material spanned the American colonies, with a heavy

¹⁷ Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 40; Charles E. Clark, *The Public Prints: The Newspaper in Anglo-American Culture, 1665-1740* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), 4-11.

¹⁸ I constructed the full dataset for this project using the date range 1750 to 1816 so as to capture all the references to Canadians that appeared between the first mention of Canadians in the American press in 1750 and one year following the end of the War of 1812 (so as to include opinion in the immediate aftermath of the war). As I revised the timeline for this project, I eventually made extensive use of the 11,925 articles which appeared between the start of the French and Indian War in 1754 and the start of the War of 1812 in 1812, sampling the remaining source material that appeared before and after those dates.

concentration in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia (Figure 1). While OCR likely did not catch every reference to Canadians that appeared in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the more than 30,000 references that it did catch form a significant body of evidence. In addition, as part of constructing the dataset of American press portrayals of Canada, I have recorded which articles are reprints of previous articles. This allows for an examination of how widely portrayals of Canadians spread across the United States and which portrayals were reinforced the most. Though likely incomplete, the source base used in this dissertation provides a relatively comprehensive overview of the general sentiments regarding Canadians that appeared in the early American press and the ways in which these sentiments changed over the course of pivotal moments in the formation of American identity. Mapping the spread of ideas across early America can be difficult, though the combination of quantitative and qualitative research that this study is based on provides a template for mapping the spread of ideas about Canadians. More than simply locating and exploring source material from the early American press, this research allows for an examination of the spread of the ideas presented in that source material. The early American press was an interwoven web, and the dataset which I have constructed as part of this project allows for the tracing of ideas about Canadians through that web and reveals the important role that ideas about Canada played in the formation of a unique American national identity.

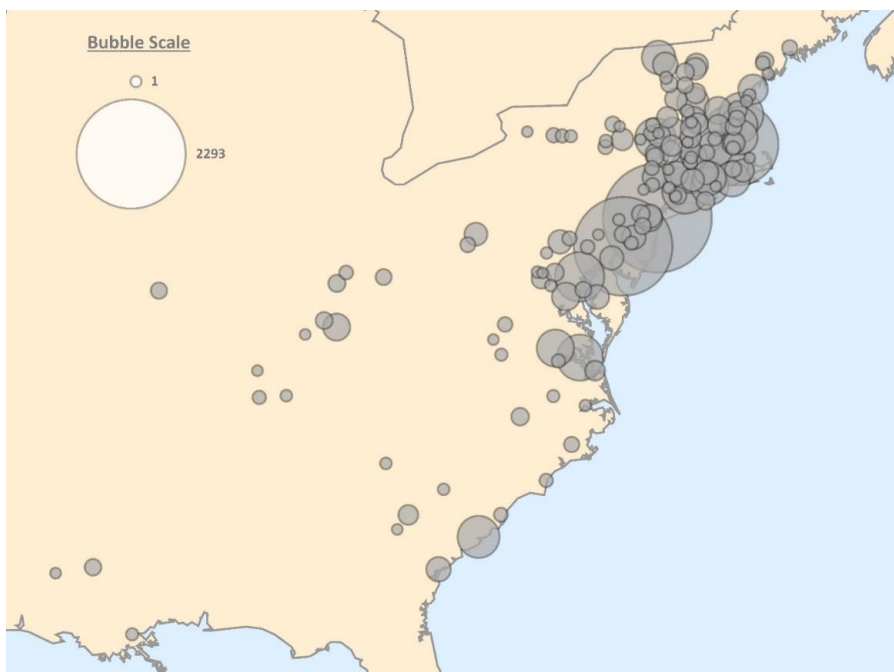


Figure 1: “Portrayals of Canadians in the American Press, 1754-1812.” Image. 2022. Created using Wolfram Research, Inc., Mathematica, Version 12.1, Champaign, IL, (2019).

I have chosen newspapers as my primary source base because the early American press functioned in many ways as a social network, reinforcing a sense of group identity amongst its readers, subscribers, and followers. As important sites of identity creation and development, early American newspapers provide a unique window into American public opinion. While the views presented in the press did not necessarily reflect the dominant ideas in the American public mind, they maintained a constant interplay with those ideas. As a medium through which early Americans interacted with their world, particularly with the world beyond their home regions, newspapers were perhaps the most important means by which Americans came to have a unified sense of group identity. As such, the portrayals of Canadians that were presented in American newspapers had a significant impact on the ways that Americans viewed their Canadian neighbours. Viewed in total, the majority of the portrayals that appeared between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812 were negative. While both positive and negative portrayals of Canadians served the purpose of reinforcing key aspects of the American identity for American readers, negative portrayals seem to have resonated more

strongly with those readers. These negative portrayals in particular served to cement for Americans that theirs was a superior identity, that they were a superior people. In this way, the othering of Canadians mattered to the formation of a unique American identity. In Canadians, Americans were often presented with a stereotyped version of what they were not, reinforcing what they were. In time, American readers became both more confident in their own identity and more repulsed by the purported Canadian identity. Though portrayals of Canadians went in waves, oscillating between positive peaks and negative valleys throughout the period between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, the negative depictions that filled the press reflect the general American public opinion of their northern neighbours. According to the images that appeared in most American newspapers, Americans were nothing like Canadians, and that was a fact to celebrate.

Though I use the terms “Canada” and “America” throughout this dissertation to describe the regions of North America initially settled by the French and the English respectively, these terms are in many ways anachronistic for much of the period explored in this study if one expects them to refer to different countries and their residents. Both the region I have termed “Canada” and the region that I have termed “America” underwent significant geographical and political changes throughout the years covered in this study. In terms of Canada, the term was initially used to refer exclusively to the region that is roughly now the province of Quebec, evolved to mean this area as well as the significant area in the west around the Great Lakes that was added to Quebec by the Quebec Act, and eventually coming to mean all the land in North America controlled by the British empire in the post-Revolutionary world. In terms of America, the term evolved from one that denoted a hemisphere, to one that denoted a continent, to one that denoted a country. That country also saw significant geographic change as the American colonies and later states expanded along the east coast and into the west. Throughout these various evolutions, however, the terms “Canada” and “America” were used continually by American newspapers, often in ways that served to paint the regions as homogeneous, when in reality they were often anything but. I have chosen to explore the use of the broad terms “Canada” and “America,” and more specifically “Canadians” and “Americans,” as a means of exploring the ways in which American newspaper editors

sought to encourage a sense of intercolonial and eventually interstate English American unity by presenting American readers with a conflated image of “Canada” and of “Canadians.” Though the terms “Canada” and “America” were largely anachronistic throughout the era covered in this study, they were also terms that were used widely throughout the early American press, words that carried with them meaning for American readers. As such, I have chosen to explore the perceived national and group identities that were associated with these terms. This is not to argue that significant regional identities did not exist or thrive in this period, but to assert that when American newspapers spoke of “Canadians” and “Americans” they did so as a means of saying something about the perceived or imagined unified national and group identities that were developing in those broad regions.

Like all identities, these national and group identities were slippery and messy. Like race, national identities are socially constructed, meaning that they require constant working and reworking to remain relevant as contexts change with time. This process is clearly evident in portrayals of Canadians in the early American press. The American identity, and subsequently the ways that American newspapers portrayed the Canadian identity by contrast, changed remarkably between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812. The question of exactly when a uniquely “American” identity developed has been fervently debated in the American historiography. Some historians, like J.M. Bumsted, have argued that an American identity developed incredibly quickly following the founding of the first English American colonies.¹⁹ Others, like Jon Butler, have argued that the American identity emerged in the early eighteenth century as the English American colonies began to grow and interact with one another.²⁰ Still other historians, like John M. Murrin, have argued that a unique American identity did not truly develop

¹⁹ J.M. Bumsted, “‘Things in the Womb of Time’: Ideas of American Independence, 1633 to 1763,” *William and Mary Quarterly* Vol 31 No 4 (1974).

²⁰ Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1990).

until after the signing of the Constitution.²¹ Unlike the work of these historians, my study does not place a specific date on the emergence of a unique American identity, but it reveals that the process of national and racial “othering” crucial to identity formation was already occurring by the outbreak of the French and Indian War. This identity was muddled and chaotic, in constant flux, and how American newspaper editors portrayed the Canadian identity by contrast reveal many subtleties in the ways that Americans interacted with their own socially-constructed group identity. Comparisons with Canadians, generally negative comparisons, served as an important tool in the evolution of American understandings of themselves.

The focus of this dissertation is American understandings of their own unique group identity, using American press depictions of Canadians as a means of illuminating the ways that Americans were thinking about themselves. This dissertation does not aim to illuminate the realities of the Canadian identity in this period. The portrayals of Canadians that appeared in the pages of the American press were not accurate depictions, nor were they intended to be. Newspaper editors and contributors were essentially imagining what Canadians were, and as such, Canadians could be whatever those editors and contributors wanted them to be. In this way, Canadians were an incredibly useful and malleable counterexample for the developing American identity. Though some articles attempted to describe Canadians relatively objectively, most writers were not committed to truth-telling. There were constant attempts to lead, and to mislead, readers about the Canadian character and about Canadian sentiment. This dissertation does not describe the realities of the Canadian identity, but rather looks only at the perception of Canadians as expressed in American newspapers. And generally speaking, that perception was largely homogeneous. There were very few attempts at addressing the regional complexities of Canada, and so the terms “Canada” and “Canadian” came to serve generally as terms to describe the entire French population of North America. There were essentially no references to “Quebecers” or to “Quebecois.” Instead, the term used across the press was

²¹ John M. Murrin, “A Roof Without Walls: The Dilemma of American National Identity,” in Richard Beemen, Stephen Botein, and Edward C. Carter II, eds., *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of South Carolina Press, 1987).

“Canadian.” I have found remarkable consistency in the use of the terms “Canada” and “Canadian” as opposed to regional or local labels, suggesting that American newspapers thought of the region and its people as a single unit. While this use was problematic, it served American newspapers well. Canadians could be whatever American newspapers needed or wanted them to be, and as such were a valuable foil against which to help define the slippery and messy American identity. Notions of a unique American identity had to be socially constructed, and I argue that portrayals of Canadians were an important aspect of that construction. Canadians were the perfect “other,” and American newspapers were quick to exploit them as such.

In many ways, the manner by which Indigenous nations were othered in the sixteenth and seventeenth century American public mind laid the foundation for the ways that Canadians would be similarly othered in the following century. In a process that began very soon after the European rediscovery of North America, by the mid-eighteenth century, European Americans had largely come to define their collective identity against that of their Indigenous neighbours. Peter Silver has argued that America’s White population came to view themselves as a distinct, cohesive group in response to what they viewed as the Indigenous threat on their frontiers, eventually forging an identity that prided itself on being tolerant of differences within the White community while simultaneously excluding and demonizing the Indigenous community.²² Jill Lepore has similarly argued that, in the aftermath of King Philip’s War, White settlers painted their Indigenous enemies as barbarous and depraved while simultaneously portraying the White community as restrained and civilized.²³ Once such distinctions had been drawn between European American and Indigenous, association with the racialized Indigenous “other” could be employed against portions of the White community. Robert G. Parkinson has argued that Revolutionary American leaders consciously utilized the notion of a White American “Common Cause” by associating the British with their Indigenous allies and subsequently branding them race traitors, outside civilized White

²² Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), 74-84.

²³ Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2009), ix-xxiii.

society.²⁴ Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, American identity increasingly defined itself along racial lines, excluding Indigenous peoples from a place within that definition. As American national identity evolved in the aftermath of the American Revolution, Indigenous societies were pushed even further to the margins. Deborah A. Rosen has argued that, using Emerich de Vattel's 1758 treatise *The Law of Nations*, post-Revolutionary Americans argued that Indigenous confederacies were not nations, and as such, possessed no sovereignty.²⁵ As American national identity emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it defined itself against what it was not, and increasingly, what it was not, was Indigenous. Indigenous communities provided early Americans with a foil against which to define their collective White American identity, a process that would eventually be repeated with Canadians in the decades to come.

Indigenous peoples were not the only group that was othered in early colonial America as a means of reinforcing internal White group identity. Black Americans also came to be similarly excluded from the developing White American identity throughout the early colonial era. Edmund S. Morgan has argued that American notions of slavery and freedom in Virginia evolved in tandem with one another throughout the early colonial period. As accessible land began to grow scarce after the mid-seventeenth century and survival rates among indentured servants began to increase, indentured servitude became far less economically sound, motivating an increased reliance on slave labour and the subsequent development of racial lines designed to justify perpetual chattel slavery. As labour shifted from indentured servitude to racial slavery, Morgan argued that notions of slavery and freedom were established which mutually reinforced one another, drawing Whites together and isolating Black Americans from White society.²⁶ While the cohesion and solidarity of that White Society has since been

²⁴ Robert G. Parkinson, *The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 4-6.

²⁵ Deborah A. Rosen, *Border Law: The First Seminole War and American Nationhood* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2015), 46-51.

²⁶ Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), 4.

challenged by historians like Woody Holton and Michael McDonnell,²⁷ Whiteness remained an important aspect of the American identity throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though it was constantly needing to be reworked as both White and Black American society continued to grow. Ira Berlin has argued that the relationship between notions of freedom and slavery required constant making and remaking as the expansion of plantation slavery exploded in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the Black American population swelled with it.²⁸ The system of racial hierarchy which was required to justify chattel slavery was not exclusive to the South, however. James O. Horton and Lois E. Horton have argued that free Black Americans in Northern cities were considered similarly inferior and were often forced to form their communities at the margins of White society.²⁹ This near universal isolation of racialized groups from White America was integral to the social structures of colonial and early America. Alexander Saxton has argued that White Americans developed and maintained racial hierarchies as an adaptation of the class hierarchies that had underpinned colonial American society prior to the Revolution.³⁰ Though gender hierarchies were generally left intact in the wake of the American Revolution,³¹ with men unquestionably at the top of familial hierarchies (despite the idealized popular image of marriage as a partnership³²), the class hierarchies that had ordered their society were theoretically gone. Though those class hierarchies were, in reality, still very much a part of the Early Republic, Saxton argued that Americans felt adrift, and so reinforced emerging racial hierarchies as a familiar

²⁷ Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Michael A. McDonnell, "Class War?: Class Struggles during the American Revolution in Virginia," *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol 63 No 2 (2006).be

²⁸ Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2003), 4-6.

²⁹ James O. Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community, and Protest among Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), ix-xii.

³⁰ Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Verso Books, 1991), 385.

³¹ Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York, Hill and Wang, 1998); Rosemarie Zagari, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

³² John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976), 82-99.

replacement. By racializing Black Americans, poor, low class White Americans could claim superiority and the advantages of a place within American conceptions of liberty that was increasingly restricted to Whites. And while recent immigrants were often viewed with suspicion and disdain by native born White Americans, the bottom rung on the race hierarchy was reserved for Black Americans. As White Americans developed new racialized hierarchies to replace the old class hierarchies allegedly thrown off in the Revolution, they wrote Black Americans, both free and enslaved, out of the American identity.

American newspapers often played on these conceptions of race in their depictions of Canadians. Throughout the era between the French and Indian War (the name of which itself served to cement the association between French Canadians and Indigenous nations in the English American public mind) and the War of 1812, American newspapers repeatedly defined French Canadians as being intermarried with Indigenous peoples. For most papers, Canadians represented a mixed-race people, unlike their conceptions of Americans. English American newspapers also accused French Canadians of using their connections to Indigenous communities to incite those Indigenous nations to frontier violence against the English American colonies. As far as most American newspapers were concerned, French Canadians were intimately associated with Indigenous peoples, and this was also true for their depictions of the Loyalists who would eventually become Canadians. American papers denounced White Loyalist participation in Indigenous war parties and in frontier battles which settlers defined as massacres.³³ During the Revolution, the Patriot press accused Loyalists of dressing up like Indigenous soldiers in order to commit violence unbecoming of Whites with their racialized allies.³⁴ These attacks are particularly interesting considering the decision by Americans to dress

³³ *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, January 7, 1779; *Pennsylvania Journal*, September 3, 1777; *Maryland Journal*, August 12, 1777.

³⁴ *Pennsylvania Packet*, August 13, 1778. These attacks are particularly interesting considering the decision to dress as Indigenous peoples during the Boston Tea Party. In cases like this, American newspaper could be very selective in the connections that they made when attacking Canadians and Loyalists. American newspapers also often ignored the many alliances that the United States had with neighbouring Indigenous nations and groups when they attacked the Canadians and Loyalists for their alliances with Indigenous nations.

as Indigenous peoples during the Boston Tea Party. In cases like this, American newspaper could be very selective in the connections that they made when attacking Canadians and Loyalists. Though they continually used allusions to Indigenous groups while stating Americans' settler colonial claim to the land as its native inhabitants, American newspapers were careful to separate such analogies from their attacks on the Loyalists and their connections with Britain's Indigenous allies. American newspapers also often ignored the many alliances that the United States had with neighbouring Indigenous nations and groups when they attacked the Canadians and Loyalists for their alliances with Indigenous nations. Like the British, Loyalists were subsequently excluded from what Parkinson defined as the White American "Common Cause."³⁵ American newspapers also condemned the British for what they viewed as an improper association with racialized others since enslaved Black Americans had been offered freedom for leaving their Patriot masters and joining the British army and many had taken up arms. These Black Loyalists fought alongside White Loyalists throughout the war, and American newspapers were keen to keep that fact front of mind for American readers. They attacked mixed-race Canadian regiments³⁶ and denounced British declarations of freedom for runaway slaves.³⁷ By branding French Canadians and Loyalists as race traitors for their associations with Indigenous allies and with Black American Loyalists during the Revolution and War of 1812, American newspapers reinforced the notions of internal unity within the White American community which had been forming throughout the colonial period. By excluding Canadians and Loyalists from that historic unity because of their alleged intermingling with supposedly inferior racial groups, the Revolutionary American press affirmed that part of being American was keeping to your own race. Though they never mention the Métis or mixed-race Canadians explicitly, American newspapers betrayed an anxiety about race-mixing in their portrayals of Canadians. Those that maintained relations with Black Americans and with Indigenous peoples had no place within the American identity being espoused by American

³⁵ Parkinson, *The Common Cause*, 4-6.

³⁶ *Connecticut Journal*, December 20, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, November 2, 1776.

³⁷ *Virginia Gazette*, November 23, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, December 5, 1775

newspapers. Of course, there were groups within America that were opposed to slavery, such as the Quakers, but just because those groups opposed enslavement, did not mean they supported interracial unions. Many groups that advocated an end to slavery, such as the Society for the Colonization of Free People of Color of America (eventually the American Colonization Society), did so using the argument that this would allow the races to be properly separated. Depictions of Canada expose the discomfort most Americans felt toward the concept of race-mixing and the relatively ambiguous position that Canadians held in the public mind. As such, they served as a unique and convenient foil against which to establish Whiteness as a key component of American identity.

Like race, conceptions of class were also a major aspect of American identity, one which underwent significant evolution during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Simon P. Newman has argued that chattel slavery was an evolution of bound labour practices already extant in the Atlantic which was precipitated by the price for White bound labour increasing and the price for slave labour decreasing. He surmised that Black Americans were placed in a perpetually fixed class at the bottom of existing social hierarchies.³⁸ For White Americans, this meant an era of seeming class equalization. T.H. Breen has argued that the market revolution, and the subsequent drop in the price of goods and luxuries formerly available only to the elite, further allowed middling Americans to begin blurring the line between the classes. By exercising choice within the commercial marketplace, Breen argued that Americans gained a new sense of individualism which would be foundational to the American identity.³⁹ Joyce Appleby has argued that post-Revolutionary Americans championed individualism and autonomy as replacements for the aristocratic hierarchies and rigid social positions that their parents' generation had thrown off in the Revolution.⁴⁰ Sarah Knott has similarly argued that Americans turned to notions of self as the proper co-use of logic and emotion to

³⁸ Simon P. Newman, *A New World of Labor: The Development of Plantation Slavery in the British Atlantic* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 1-7.

³⁹ T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2004), 153-157.

⁴⁰ Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), 2-6.

replace the hierarchical imperial social order they associated with Britain.⁴¹ Increasingly, what qualified a person for inclusion in the American identity was seemingly not their class, but rather their ability and ambition. Alfred F. Young has argued that common, White Americans largely bought into the notion that old class structures were a thing of the past, reveling in what they viewed as the end of social deference and elite privilege.⁴² For White Americans, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries seemed to offer them irrespective of class a full place within the American identity, a place which had never been open to so many before.

Many historians have argued, however, that the elite were wary of the newly empowered masses and did what they could to maintain the existing social and political order. Edmund S. Morgan has contended that the conception of “popular sovereignty” was a fiction used by the ruling classes during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to placate the masses and create the illusion of power resting in the hands of the people.⁴³ While such conceptions granted common Americans a place within American identity, it limited their political power. Woody Holton has similarly argued that the framers of the Constitution intended to reduce the political power of the masses, believing that “excess democracy” was the root of their problems. He surmised that the Constitution was an attempt at walking back the democracy established by the Revolution, as the framers felt that power rightly rested in the hands of the elite and that empowering the common man would result in mob rule and anarchy.⁴⁴ Though the Revolution promised to widely expand the political power of the lower classes, not all viewed this expansion as positive, and universal White manhood suffrage remained generations away. While American identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries expanded to include many of the poor Whites previously left outside, elites were careful to limit the power they actually held.

⁴¹ Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

⁴² Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1999).

⁴³ Edmund S. Morgan, *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1988), 14, 288-290.

⁴⁴ Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (New York, Hill and Wang, 2007), 3-10.

Though common Americans could celebrate the rise of individualism and the apparent demise of social deference, elite Americans maintained what they felt was necessary control over the mechanisms of political power. The common American, particularly the yeoman farmer, was often held up as the symbol of the virtuous American identity, while actual power remained largely where it traditionally had been.

American newspapers reinforced these emerging conceptions of American individualism and seeming classlessness in their depictions of Canadians. For much of the period between the French and Indian War and the Revolution, French Canadians were ridiculed as serfs. They were portrayed as being stuck in what the American press defined as a feudal system of seigneurial land ownership. French Canadian farmers were essentially understood as serfs working rented land, unlike the industrious, land-owning English Americans to the south. Since it was in the economic interest of newspaper editors to present readers with a flattering image of themselves when discussing the American identity to sustain readership and circulation, American newspapers were in many ways in the business of expressing American identity. The fact that much of their business revolved around reprinting material from contributors made it relatively easy to reflect the American identity back at itself. Curated by editors, newspapers served to focus the image being projected by the contributors. And one of the subtle ways in which newspaper content distilled this image was through attacks on its antithesis: the Canadian identity. The American press attacked French Canadians as illiterate peasants, blindly beholden to a system of aristocracy, feudalism, and papacy.⁴⁵ English Canadians they portrayed as similarly obliged to monarchy, the ultimate enemy of liberty and individualism.⁴⁶ By denouncing the seemingly passive acceptance by French and English Canadians of what they branded tyranny, American newspapers asserted that individualism and autonomy were the root of American identity. Americans were not beholden to old world notions of class like their northern neighbours, but rather, they were a people whose ambition and initiative defined their character.

⁴⁵ *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, December 27, 1813.

⁴⁶ *Farmers Repository*, September 28, 1815.

Amongst those marginalized in early American social structures, the position of women was particularly nuanced as they were also associated with both their race and class. In many ways, women were deemed dependents and were hung on the racial and class hierarchies on the rungs occupied by the men (fathers and husbands), though in a subordinated position to those men. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich has argued that early New England wives operated in a social space that subsumed women's public identities into that of their husbands. She further argued that respectable women who maintained this order were portrayed as moral and virtuous "goodwives," exemplars for their families and their communities.⁴⁷ Kathleen M. Brown has further argued that the early archetypes of good wives (moral) and nasty wenches (immoral) which had previously divided virtuous and disreputable White women were redefined with the emergence of racialized hierarchy to make all White women the embodiment of pure womanhood and all Black women as the archetype of what were previously perceived as female vices like lust and hypersexuality.⁴⁸ Similar racialized hierarchies existed across gender constructions. While they were denied power in the traditionally male political sphere, White American women wielded considerable power over racialized American women. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese has argued that White women in the plantation South always understood themselves as part of a racially superior, management class distinct from their slaves. She further argued that, rather than a gender-neutral system, slave society was framed along similar gender hierarchies as those of Whites, placing Black women at the bottom of vast racial and gender structures.⁴⁹ These women formed the foundational underpinning of the chattel slavery system. Jennifer L. Morgan has argued that Black women's reproductive capabilities made them vital economic commodities within the slave system, necessary for its perpetuation. She further argued that their sexuality was used to solidify the racial divide by emphasizing the supposed differences between the races as exemplified by the

⁴⁷ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 3-10.

⁴⁸ Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Races, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 1-9.

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 38-53.

Black female.⁵⁰ In a social structure that placed Black Americans at the bottom of racial hierarchies and women at the bottom of gender hierarchies, Black women occupied one of the lowest rungs on the eighteenth and nineteenth century social ladder.⁵¹ It is likely that Indigenous women would have occupied a similarly low rung on the social hierarchies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but they were often largely forgotten, relegated to the frontier and away from American society. Though Indigenous men were referenced relatively regularly in the press, Indigenous women, like women in general, make very few appearances. When they did, it was implicitly understood that they too occupied a position near or at the bottom of America's social hierarchies.

Though their position was far better than that of Black women, White women remained excluded from an equal place within the American identity. Stephanie McCurry has argued that yeoman farmers maintained authority along gender lines in the household similarly to how planters maintained authority along racial lines.⁵² While women were vital to the enterprise of America, their identities were folded into their husbands, denying wives a full place in emergent American identity. Linda K. Kerber has argued that this system of coverture eroded slowly from the nineteenth century onward as public notions regarding the obligations of citizenship changed. She surmised that notions of obligation slowly shifted from obligation to husband to obligation to state. The duty of the female citizen was performed in raising the next generation of patriots as a republican mother.⁵³ In this way, White women found themselves within the bounds of American identity, while remaining almost universally excluded from the political sphere. Mark E. Kann has argued that the founders defined politics as an exclusively manly (logical)

⁵⁰ Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 1-7.

⁵¹ It is possible that Indigenous women would have occupied a similarly low rung on the social hierarchies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but they were generally largely forgotten, relegated to the frontier and away from American society. Though Indigenous men were referenced relatively regularly in the press, Indigenous women, like women in general, make very few appearances.

⁵² Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), 91-93.

⁵³ Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies*.

preserve which they defined against the excluded female (passionate) sphere. Political structures were intentionally designed to favour the former over the latter.⁵⁴ Still, White women made inroads throughout the era. Mary Kelley has argued that early nineteenth century women's educational institutions provided women with the learning (and both a pride of that learning and confidence to use that learning) that they in turn used to expand their place within the public sphere by their participation in voluntary societies, reading rooms, salons, and their association with civil society.⁵⁵ Though they were often denied a political identity, White women came to be viewed as vital to the broader American identity as goodwives and republican mothers, responsible for bringing up the next generation with an appreciation of what it meant to be an American.

American newspapers rarely mentioned women in their portrayals of Canada. They appear mostly as "women and children," often portrayed as passive and lacking agency. Lacking agency, they are often faceless sufferers, often implied to have died in horrific, subhuman ways. Almost none of the women mentioned have names, appearing as wives and mothers, or simply as featureless, archetypal "women." Women's identities in the eighteenth and nineteenth century American press were often subsumed under that of men. When they did appear, portrayals of Canadian women were used to compare Canadians with Americans in similar ways as comparisons of Canadian and American men. To some papers, Canadian women were, like their men, backwoods remnants of the feudalistic past, unaware of their duties as republican mothers.⁵⁶ To other newspapers, however, they were models of citizenship, even outstripping Canadian men in literacy and education.⁵⁷ In many ways, the sad plight of Canadian women was blamed on the deficiencies of their men, who were largely portrayed as lacking civilized values. Canadian women gave American newspaper editors hope, however, that civilization may yet come to their northern neighbours. When it came to arguments about whether

⁵⁴ Mark E. Kann, *A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics* (New York, New York University Press, 1998), 1-3.

⁵⁵ Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

⁵⁶ *Farmers Repository*, September 28, 1815.

⁵⁷ *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy: Or, The Worcester Gazette*, December 2, 1790.

Canadian identity could be assimilated into American identity, the readiness of Canadian women to take on the duties of the republican mother was an integral, if often overlooked, part of the conversation.

Another aspect of eighteenth and nineteenth century American identity that has often been overlooked in the modern, secular age, is that of religious identity. To contemporary Americans, religion was of great importance, and many of the ways in which they defined their ingroup and othered their outgroup hinged on religious affiliation. Roman Catholicism was particularly despised. Charles Metzger has argued that American anti-Catholicism precipitated the American Revolution as Protestant Americans were outraged by the toleration of Catholicism in the Quebec Act.⁵⁸ Francis D. Cogliano has also argued that anti-Catholicism was an important factor in sparking the Revolution, though he further argued that during the Revolution, because of the alliance with Catholic France, anti-Catholicism began to dissipate in New England, replaced in many ways by a hatred and fear of things aristocratic and English, rather than things Catholic.⁵⁹ Even before the Revolution, distrust of the Anglican Church had been growing in colonial America. James B. Bell has argued that because the church was so closely tied to London, the Anglicanism was targeted by American Revolutionaries, particularly as fears of the possible establishment of an Anglican Bishop in America began to spread in the prelude to the American Revolution.⁶⁰ Peter M. Doll has similarly argued that the Anglican framework of close ties between church and state was incapable of dealing with the various American dissenters.⁶¹ By the early nineteenth century, dissenting traditions had increasingly come to define American Christianity. Jon Butler has argued that religious pluralism precipitated the evolution of a uniquely American brand of religious devotion that expanded throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth

⁵⁸ Charles H. Metzger, *The Quebec Act: A Primary Cause of the American Revolution* (New York: United States Catholic Historical Society, 1936), 37-63.

⁵⁹ Francis D. Cogliano, *No King, No Popery: Anti-Catholicism in Revolutionary New England* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1992), 1-3, 71-99.

⁶⁰ James B. Bell, *A War of Religion: Dissenters, Anglicans, and the American Revolution* (New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2008).

⁶¹ Peter M. Doll, *Revolution, Religion, and National Identity: Imperial Anglicanism in British North America, 1745-1795* (Madison, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000), 30-31.

centuries, coming to define the American religious identity.⁶² Again, Americans defined themselves by what they were not, though the situation was murkier in terms of American views of Anglicanism than it was in terms of their views of Catholics. Where Anglo-Americans had very rarely been Catholic, many were Anglican in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The clear association between the church and the British crown made support of the Anglican church a fraught thing in the United States, and so in the 1780s, the church renamed itself the Episcopal church and broke with the English church, becoming a stain-free protestant American church like the dissenting churches that largely made up the fabric of American religion.

Canadians proved perfect “others” for American newspaper contributors and religiously-minded editors seeking to reinforce dissenting Protestantism as a key pillar of American identity. Having a religious outgroup to other served to bring together the dissenting churches on the inside. The ways in which American newspaper contributors attacked Canadians reveals much about the ways in which they sought to cement dissenting Christianity as a universal American religious identity. And in this effort, Canadians proved excellent foils as they represented two of the most distrusted religious groups on the continent. French Canadians were denounced as abettors of popish plots and defiled papacy.⁶³ English Canadians were portrayed as conniving Anglicans, seeking to establish English religious authority over the American states.⁶⁴ More than any other way, in the mid-eighteenth century, Canadians were othered on religious grounds. Though this would slowly change following the Revolution, prior to that point, Canadians were an obvious antithesis to the overarching Protestant American identity. American newspapers continually returned to their supposedly tyrannical and aristocratic religions as examples of Canadian inferiority, and in so doing, emphasized their own superiority. American newspapers emphasized the shared American tradition of dissenting Protestantism by portraying their Canadian neighbours as beholden to primitive and restrictive practices long since thrown off by proper Americans.

⁶² Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*.

⁶³ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 23, 1769; *New-York Journal*, October 13, 1774.

⁶⁴ *Republican Farmer*, December 11, 1805.

The racial, gender, class, and religious identities that most Americans considered to be fundamental to the American identity were largely shared across the English colonies and later American states. Still, English Americans were not a monolithic mass, as various regional differences quickly sprang up in the areas that had been colonized by the British empire. From New England, to the Middle Colonies, to the Chesapeake, to the Lower South, American regions often differed quite significantly from one another. Jack P. Greene has argued that the early colonies were distinct from one another in nearly every way, save their shared sense of Britishness.⁶⁵ Largely developing separately from one another, the colonies established their own identities. Though they generally shared racial, gender, class, and religious identities, the various American regions typically formed cultural identities that were more influenced by the geography and climate of those regions than by any sense of connection to the other English American regions. Stephen Innes has argued that conditions in New England, which were harsh and inconducive to staple agriculture, were exactly what Puritans, with their emphasis on the family as the underpinning of their commonwealth, were looking for, further surmising that their emphasis on the importance of diligent labour and improvement encouraged an identity rooted in labour, trade and the market.⁶⁶ It was an identity that most in the north felt the south would do well to adopt. Bertram Wyatt-Brown has argued that contemporary Southern identity, relying on slavery and a highly organized social hierarchy, came to centre on notions of manliness and honour, which subsequently portrayed the Northern colonies as feminizing and depraved.⁶⁷ Like New England and the South, each of the American colonies and regions had their own unique cultural identities which often stood in stark contrast to one another. Still, they were not without their similarities. Bernard Bailyn has argued that the harsh conditions found by the colonists throughout America necessitated the modification of European social norms along rough,

⁶⁵ Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 170-206.

⁶⁶ Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (New York, W.W. Norton, 1995), 27-76.

⁶⁷ Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1890s* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

frontier lines, resulting in a blending of diverse cultures that had transplanted to America.⁶⁸ Jon Butler has similarly argued that, of necessity, the various American colonies followed similar development patterns, and as such came to relate to each other.⁶⁹ Factors like these slowly drew the American colonies and later states toward one another, and as time passed, conceptions of unity became a fundamental part of the American identity. Not only important to who they were, themes of unity were vital to their continued survival. And as the eighteenth and nineteenth century progressed, there were many factors which served to draw the White American population together.

One such unifying factor was the American press. American newspapers circulated widely throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, making their way from city coffeehouses to frontier taverns to everywhere in between, and they presented Americans with a relatively standardized worldview. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also saw a massive expansion of the press, from just a handful of papers to scores. Throughout this expansion, the press continued to hold an incredibly important place in the lives of Americans. Jennifer E. Monaghan has argued that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, American literacy increased and expanded greatly, becoming a key aspect of what it meant to be American for both men and women.⁷⁰ Fundamental to the expansion of this reading public was available reading material. Michael Warner has argued that the rise of the American press provided Americans with a largely classless medium of exchange which united them in a sense of shared experience.⁷¹ Available in public places like taverns and coffee houses and often read aloud at those locations, the press was accessible by almost all, and Americans across racial, class, and gender hierarchies consumed American newspapers. The relatively anonymous way that most contributors submitted their work also meant that

⁶⁸ Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1986).

⁶⁹ Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution before 1776* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 1-7.

⁷⁰ Jennifer E. Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 2005).

⁷¹ Warner, *The Letters of the Republic*, 40.

contributors could impersonate different classes as best suited their point. While writing ability and style could easily give one away, with a little skill, it was possible to assume new identities in the press. Charles E. Clark has similarly argued that the ritualized consumption of newspapers served to inform the public and also to unite them around their shared identity and communal participation in the public sphere. Clark further argued that throughout the era, American newspapers were generally drawn together in terms of content and opinion, eventually presenting Americans with remarkably similar discussions and ideas.⁷² As the press expanded in the Early Republic, however, it began to polarize. Jeffrey L. Pasley has argued that newspapers were vital to the success of early American political candidates, becoming the vehicle by which to organize political followers and espouse political thought, with subscription to certain newspapers often symbolically associating a person with a particular political party or ideology.⁷³ As a medium of exchange and key site of political and social discussion, the American press provides a unique reflection of the developing American identity. More than a mere reflection, however, the press also helped shape that opinion. By presenting Americans with the views of their fellow Americans, newspapers reinforced ideas that were already permeating in the American consciousness. Because they were edited by people with their own political beliefs and motivations, newspapers also helped shape the direction that American public opinion moved. Though their portrayals of Canadians were just one of the ways in which American newspapers both reflected and shaped American public opinion, they were unique and important depictions which also both reflected and shaped American identity.

The number of newspapers in colonial America grew steadily in the mid-eighteenth century, with major printing hubs established in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. These early American newspapers generally had relatively small printings, but quite large readerships. Richard L. Merritt has estimated that “on the eve of the Revolution approximately one issue of a newspaper appeared weekly for every sixty-five

⁷² Clark, *The Public Prints*, 4-11.

⁷³ Jeffrey L. Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers: Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 2001), 11-12.

colonists.”⁷⁴ This was a relatively large number of newspapers, particularly considering that most papers would have circulated widely amongst the friends and acquaintances of newspaper purchasers. Arthur M Schlesinger has argued of early American newspapers that “the readers always greatly outnumbered the purchasers.”⁷⁵ Public places like taverns and coffee-houses typically subscribed to at least one paper, usually several, and these papers were then read continuously, both silently by individuals and aloud for groups.⁷⁶ This meant that the consumers of newspapers greatly exceeded the number of subscribers, making the press a particularly useful tool for the public dissemination of ideas. This was particularly true in times of conflict or war, when people desperately began to seek out information and opinion on that conflict. This also meant that newspapers were the perfect medium by which to circulate propaganda, a common feature of the press. Alison Olson has argued that in particular, newspaper editors used ridicule and humour as a means of reinforcing their point for readers. She argued that “Repeated thrusts of humor undermine the reputation of government officials and their political followers and ultimately weaken the deference paid to them... Ridicule bonds the group of laughers not only with a sense of distinct values but also with one of superiority.”⁷⁷ Olson argued such humour was disseminated through “fables, silly poems, mock ads, fake news items, and ridiculous stories.”⁷⁸ All these tactics were used in American depictions of Canadians and had a profound influence on the ways in which Americans understood their northern neighbours. American newspapers used hyperbole, satire, and association to paint Canadians in a variety of ways. Often, the goal was to instill a sense of what Americans were by contrasting them with Canadians, and exaggeration and witty mockery tended to effectively reinforce those ideas.

⁷⁴ Richard L. Merritt, “Public Opinion in Colonial America: Content-Analyzing the Colonial Press,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (1963): 363.

⁷⁵ Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Prelude to Revolution: The Newspaper War on Britain, 1764-1776* (New York: Knopf, 1958), 303.

⁷⁶ Merritt, “Public Opinion in Colonial America,” 363-364.

⁷⁷ Alison Olson, “Political Humor, Deference, and the American Revolution,” *Early American Studies* Vol 3 No 2 (2005): 364.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 365.

Late eighteenth century American newspapers were in the business of shaping public opinion, particularly public opinion about the world beyond the local. Jordan E. Taylor has argued that early American newspapers focused their attention on foreign and interregional news as local news passed by word of mouth efficiently enough that printing it would have been redundant.⁷⁹ In this way, newspapers formed the key link most eighteenth and nineteenth century Americans had to the world outside their own region. As such, newspapers were instrumental in shaping public opinion, with printers actively embracing the idea that they were “curators of truthfulness.”⁸⁰ Taylor traced major conflicts such as the American Revolution and the partisanship of the First Party System to diverging definitions of political truth. He further argued that turn-of-the-century American printers and authorities sought to use what they viewed as an information revolution to influence neighbouring regions like Canada and Louisiana to revolution, with authorities in both regions seeking to use their own developing presses to counter these attempts.⁸¹ Taylor’s work placed far more emphasis on the transnational context of the press in early North America than has most of the historiography, and he has specifically explored the ways that American newspaper sought to project revolutionary ideas into Canada using both the American and Canadian presses, as well as the ways that Canadian authorities tried to use the Canadian press to stop them. His work, however, has focused on the ways in which American printers sought to influence Canada, and not the ways in which conceptions of Canada and of Canadians subsequently impacted the ways that American newspaper contributors understood and depicted the perceived American identity. This dissertation explores the effects that conceptions of Canadians had on the ways that American newspapers defined Americans and argues that perceptions of Canadians played an important role in shaping the image of American identity that American printers sought to curate in the pages of the press.

⁷⁹ Taylor, *Misinformation Nation*, 15-16.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 131-210.

Canadians were many things at many times for the American press. Like a damped sine wave whose amplitude decreases as time increases, eventually approaching zero (Figure 2), American portrayals swung drastically between extreme poles in the mid to late eighteenth century, going from depictions of bloodthirsty, backwoods devils in 1754 to depictions of rational, fellow strugglers for freedom in 1774, before tempering and becoming less extreme images in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the years that followed the end of the American Revolution, portrayals of Canada continued to swing back and forth as the relationship of the United States with Great Britain evolved, but unlike depictions in the early period, these portrayals tended to be less polarized, often presenting Canadians as lazy and ignorant rather than as violent and brutal, and as folksy and simple rather than as wise and reasoned. By the time war broke out again in 1812, the American press had largely abandoned their polarized depictions of Canadians as either a savage foe or a loyal friend. Generally, Canadians were seen as British stoolies, stooges who did the bidding of tyrants because it was easier to go along with it than to get along without it. Unlike Americans, by the turn of the nineteenth century, Canadians were portrayed as largely unworthy of upholding the liberty that defined the American character and nation. While they were no longer portrayed as a vicious threat to that liberty, nor were they depicted as friends to that liberty. Instead, they were toadies, sometimes exhibiting the individualism and industry that marked an American, but by and large portrayed as a mass of dullards, happy to stagnate under oppression so long as their homes were warm and their bellies were full.

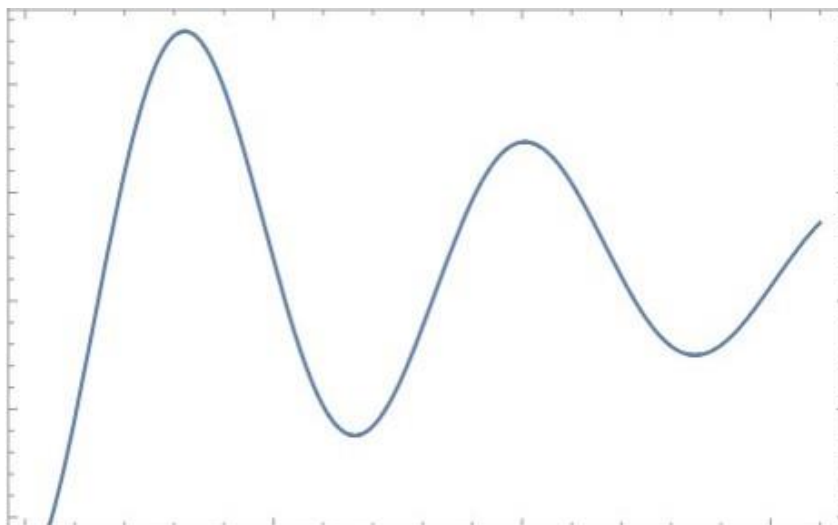


Figure 2: “Damped Sine Wave.” Image. 2022. Created using Wolfram Research, Inc., Mathematica, Version 12.1, Champaign, IL, (2019).

As American portrayals of Canada grew less and less hostile in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they also grew more regionally divided. Between the mid eighteenth century and the end of the American Revolution, American public opinion of Canadians remained relatively uniform, shifting from highly negative depictions to highly positive ones and doing so without significant regional variation. In the years following the Revolution, however, American popular opinion began to drift into two camps. As the first party system rose to prominence, dividing the electorate and pitting Democratic-Republicans, who largely opposed a strong central government and closer ties with Britain, and Federalists, who largely supported both of these, opinion about Canada also divided, often along party lines. While largely Federalist New England supported closer ties with their Canadian neighbours and opposed war with them, the largely Republican south continued to portray Canadians as a lurking enemy, supporting a war to remove the threat. While the portrayals of Canadians that were printed by both sides in the Early Republic were often far less extreme than their counterparts from the earlier colonial period, there were also now clear patterns as to where positive and negative opinion was concentrated. Whereas comparison between Canadians and Americans before the Revolution often presented a unified American identity in contrast to the Canadian character, by the turn of the nineteenth century, this unity was beginning

to fracture. With it fractured the unified American understandings of what it meant to be Canadian... and what it meant to be American.

Canadians were not the only group that was othered in the American press as a means of defining the American identity; nor were they the most prominently othered group. Still, portrayals of Canadians played an important role in the process of reinforcing to the American people exactly what it meant to be American, and American newspapers provide a detailed record of that process. Exploring this record reveals much about the subtleties of the ways in which American understandings of their own collective identity changed through time. When they wrote of Canadians, newspaper contributors and editors did not generally intend to speak on the American identity, but in many ways they did. Particularly in terms of reinforcing conceptions of Whiteness and religious plurality as key aspects of the American identity, depictions of Canadians played an important role in the formation of American conceptions of their own imagined community. In terms of race, Canadians were not necessarily racialized (though it was often assumed that many were at least mixed-race, due to their seemingly close relations with Indigenous peoples), but they occupied a social space that was relatively racially ambiguous. Canadians fought alongside Black Americans and married into Indigenous nations; things English Americans would not. By ridiculing Canadians for their alleged race mixing, American newspapers reinforced for American readers that proper Americans were White and did not intermingle with their perceived racial inferiors. In terms of religion, as Catholics, French Canadians represented the anti-Christ to most English Americans. And yet, when the Revolution necessitated it, those English Canadians willingly put aside their attacks on their northern neighbours in an effort to convince them to join the American union of states. In so doing, the American press emphasized the religious plurality (often plurality due to necessity) that would become fundamental to American understandings of their own collective identity. Robert G. Parkinson has noted the ways in which associations with the racialized were used to demonize the British during the American Revolution. Francis D. Cogliano has noted the ways in which revolutionary Americans gave up their printed attack on the French when the empire joined the American war effort in 1778. However, the trends that Parkinson and Cogliano noted have much deeper roots than the Revolutionary era. As they did to

the British in the Revolution, English American newspapers racialized their French Canadian enemies throughout the French and Indian War and its aftermath. At least four years before the Catholic French empire entered the war, American newspapers had already abandoned their attacks on the Catholicism of their French Canadian neighbours in North America. Though Canadians were perhaps never the only foil against which the American press defined what it was to be American, they were an important one. In many ways, Canadians were the closest thing to Americans that could be found, especially following the American Revolution when thousands of erstwhile Americans transplanted to Canada. As such, depictions of Canadians served an important role in the process of defining the American identity with precision. Comparisons with Indigenous groups or with Black Americans painted far too broad strokes. Comparisons with the British provided a certain level of precision, but as Europeans who hadn't experienced the American reality, this brush too was relatively broad. In Canadians, the American press found a precision brush capable of defining the edges of the American identity. Unlike Indigenous peoples and the enslaved, unlike the British or the French, Canadians were Americans in all but name. As such, they proved a very useful mirror for reflecting the American identity back at itself.

Modern Americans seem to seldom think of Canada or Canadians. For eighteenth and nineteenth century Americans, however, these were frequent topics of discussion. This dissertation explores the ways in which American press depictions of Canadians reinforced emergent racial, class, gender, and religious identities in the early American public mind. The White, propertied, dissenting male and the White, married, dissenting female developed as the definition of American identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Proper Americans were not Indigenous or Black. They were not unemployed "masterless men" or unmarried "nasty wenches." They were not Catholic and they were not Anglican. American men exercised their civic and voting responsibilities, utilizing their labour in the improvement of both their households and their county. American women laboured the domestic sphere, raising children to be good American men and women. In their depictions of Canadians, American newspapers reinforce these notions

of American identity by using Canadians as a canvas on which to define that identity, typically in contrast.

My research relates to the existing historiography in a number of ways. This study extends the scope of Parkinson's work on the ways in which American leaders sought to "other" the British by associating them with their racialized allies. I argue that this process was also used to other French Canadians, both prior to and during the American Revolution as a means of reinforcing internal American group unity. This study also extends the scope of Cogliano's work on the ways in which Americans in New England largely abandoned their overt anti-Catholicism following the French Alliance in 1778. I argue that this process actually began in 1774 when Americans began to tone down their anti-Catholic rhetoric as a means of attracting French Catholic Canadians to the American cause. These arguments support my larger argument about the importance of Canada to the formation of a unique American identity. In addition to these arguments, this study extends the scope of Lennox's work on the American Revolution back to the French and Indian War to explore the longer history of the importance of Canada. I argue that understandings of Canadians had a significant impact on the American identity that developed between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812 and that Canadians mattered to Americans throughout that time. Though Canada often remains an afterthought for most Americans, scholars have begun to look at the role understandings of Canada played in early American history. This work reveals both the longevity of Canadian images in the American press and how those images have fluctuated over time, corresponding with major events in North American history from 1750s to 1810s. In American newspapers, portrayals of Canadians intimately influenced American understandings of their own national identity and played a major role in the development of that identity. Put simply, Canadians mattered.

The roughly sixty years between the start of the French and Indian War and the start of the War of 1812 were instrumental in establishing the American national identity that would flourish in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was also the era that the very word used to describe that identity took final root, the appellation of "American." On August 16, 1803, a contributor to *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* waded into a debate regarding what citizens of the United States should be known as with a defense of

the word that was in common usage and had been for some time: American. The contributor asserted, “the word America is sometimes used to denote all the land, consisting either of Islands or continents, that lies in the Western hemisphere. Our nation, however, being the only independent community in this hemisphere, the word is most frequently appropriated to the territory which belongs to us.” The piece continued, “When I speak of my countrymen whom I have met at Paris or Berlin or Batavia, I never dream of calling them United States-men. I simply say they are Americans, American Merchants, Sailors or Travelers, and nobody can possibly mistake me.” The paper further surmised, “If I speak of aboriginal Americans I call them Indians; a Canadian, a West Indian, a Creole, French, Spanish or Dutch, sufficiently designate the other people of the Western hemisphere... As to us, we claim the dignity of being called Americans, and nobody denies our claim.”⁸² The dignity of being called “American” was a dignity that the newspapers of the United States guarded jealously. By 1812, the American identity was seemingly ascendant, no longer fledgling, but a confident, able, and aspiring world power. It remained, however, a dignity deeply rooted in notions of precisely what it was, and far more importantly, what it was not.

⁸² *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, August 16, 1803.

Part 1: “Undisciplined Savage Canadians,” 1754-1774

Chapter 1: “The Cockatrice in the Egg,” 1754-1763

Part One of this dissertation explores American opinion of Canadians during the French and Indian War and the dramatically fast shift in the ways that Canadians were depicted between that war and the American Revolution. During the French and Indian War, Canadians were widely portrayed as bloodthirsty and vicious, almost subhuman. During the Revolution, however, Canadians were generally depicted as rational and noble, almost like Americans. What caused this drastic shift in American portrayals of Canadians? What role did newspapers play in fomenting the change in attitude? And what does this rapid shift reveal about the ways that American identity was also changing between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution? This chapter seeks to explore these questions by analyzing the ways in which press portrayals of Canadians shifted in the twenty years between 1754 and 1774. The chapter begins by exploring American portrayals of Canadians during the French and Indian War. During the war, American newspapers roundly attacked the Canadian character, portraying Canadians as wild and vicious, pawns of a tyrannical Catholic church bent on spilling the blood of Protestants. The American press also made frequent associations between Canadians and their Indigenous allies in order to further tie Canadians to the brutal frontier violence that American papers blamed on Indigenous nations. In the immediate aftermath of the war, American public opinion of Canadians remained largely the same, though the increased contact between the regions began to produce a few more positive portrayals of the French Canadians that were now part of the British empire. The true impetus for the dramatically quick shift in portrayals of Canadians was the growing tension between the Anglo-American colonies and the British crown. Seeking a continental effort to resist Britain, American newspapers very quickly shifted their portrayals of Canadians as they sought to shore up support for resistance, and eventually rebellion, in Canada. By the eve of the Revolution, French Canadians had become reasoned lovers of freedom and liberty. Largely gone from portrayals were references to Catholicism or to their connections to Indigenous peoples. The shift was dramatic, an almost complete reversal from the portrayals of French Catholics that had animated the British and Anglo-American mind

for generations. And ultimately, the shift in portrayals said as much or more about the ways that Americans had changed than it did about the ways Canadians had changed.

American press portrayals of Canadians shifted dramatically between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. The prevailing image of Canadians that American newspapers presented to the American public went from one of heathen, blood-thirsty, subservient brutes to one of reasoned, brave, liberty-loving fellows in the course of less than twenty years, with the true shift occurring in the early 1770s. This swing in American opinion towards a community that included a large majority of Catholics, a community that had formerly been a bitter foe, preceded the thawing of anti-Catholicism that Cogliano identified around the time of the French alliance during the Revolution by several years.⁸³ By the time American public opinion began to soften toward the empire of France, that same process was well underway in regards to the French Catholic inhabitants of the empire's former Canadian colony. When the American Revolution broke out, most American papers were warmly depicting Canadians as fellow revolutionaries, ready to throw off the seeming yoke of the British empire. The shift in opinion was even more remarkable because throughout the French and Indian War, the English American press had castigated French Canadians as interbred with surrounding allied Indigenous nations, whom American newspapers were simultaneously portraying as blood-thirsty and uncivilized. Those papers often portrayed French Canadians as instigating their Indigenous allies to frontier violence and then joyously participating alongside in the bloodshed. Robert G. Parkinson has argued that American revolutionaries racialized their British opponents as a means of "othering" them and promoting internal American unity,⁸⁴ and similar methods were used during the French and Indian War to racialize and other French Canadians by emphasizing their links with surrounding Indigenous communities. As far as most Americans were concerned in the 1750s and early 1760s, Canadians were not White, fellow-Christians, but racialized heathens whose destruction would presage the coming millennium and the return of Christ.

⁸³ Cogliano, *No King, No Popery*, 71-99.

⁸⁴ Parkinson, *The Common Cause*, 1-6.

That American newspapers pivoted so dramatically in the decade or so between the end of the French and Indian War and the beginning of the American Revolution is incredibly noteworthy. Between 1763 and 1774, American opinion of Canadians shifted away from the anti-Catholicism and racialization that had typified depictions in the era of the French and Indian War and toward the portrayals of them as rational fellows who similarly yearned for freedom. Whether this swing in printed opinion reflected a true shift in American thinking about their northern neighbour or whether it reflected an understanding of the expediency of softening portrayals of Canadians at a time that American revolutionaries were also trying to enlist Canadian support in the Revolution, as far as American newspapers presented it, the very nature of Canadians had changed. In their respective books, Michael Warner and Charles E. Clark have argued that the late eighteenth century American press provided Americans with an egalitarian medium of social exchange that reached into nearly all American lives and which presented them with a relatively unified worldview.⁸⁵ Whether American editors and politicians shifted their portrayals of Canadians because they truly felt that Canadians had become the antithesis of what they had been depicting them as during the French and Indian War or whether they shifted their portrayals because they understood that continuing to depict Canadians as vicious fiends would work against their effort to cajole them into joining the revolutionary cause, the image that they presented to the American people shifted in a uniform manner, with portrayals swinging from bad to good almost en masse. As presented to the average American reader, the malicious, violent Canadians who had threatened their northern borders throughout the French and Indian War had subsequently transformed themselves into enlightened fellows, almost into countrymen, by the time the American Revolution was touched off at Lexington and Concord. It was one of the quickest, most dramatic shifts in popular newspaper opinion that occurred throughout the entire colonial era.

The evolution in American opinion regarding Canadians also reflected a similar change that was occurring simultaneously in American understandings of themselves.

⁸⁵ Warner, *The Letters of the Republic*, 40; Clark, *The Public Prints*, 4-11.

American identity saw a dramatic shift of its own between the end of the French and Indian War and beginning of the American Revolution as many English Americans who had never been prouder of their British identity turned into bitter enemies of the British crown. In 1754, like Britons themselves, English Americans defined their identity against that of the French, and because of its close proximity, against that of the inhabitants of French Canada. Above all, the English American identity in the mid-eighteenth century was one that was opposed to Catholicism and racial intermixing, an identity that found a perfect foil in the Indigenous-allied French Catholic Canadians. By the late eighteenth century, however, as Canada became incorporated into British North America and as the crown's tightening of colonial controls in the aftermath of the French and Indian War began to inspire resistance amongst the English American population, American revolutionaries began to preach colonial unity, often including Canada in the community of colonies. There were many reasons for this shift. In one sense, there appears to have been a sense of continentalism as revolutionaries tried to portray the conflict as one between natives and invaders. As American revolutionaries actively sought to portray the British as an outsider that was oppressing the American colonies, many American revolutionaries shifted their portrayals of Canadian remarkably quickly to portray them as natural American allies. French Canadians were now often portrayed as similarly oppressed and subsequently yearning for freedom. Symbiotically, as Americans came more and more to think of Canadians as like themselves and to think of themselves as less like the British, more American newspapers began to portray Canadians as possessing traits similar to those prized and viewed as integral to the American identity. The shift in public opinion and the shift in newspaper portrayals seemingly fed off one another, with Americans beginning to view Canadians as fellow sufferers and then having these views confirmed in the press. The result was a dramatic shift in American understandings of the Canadian character. Like the audience plant from the Canadian Peasant, Canadians seemed to be removing their many coats, one by one, in the lead up to the Revolution, right before the eyes of the American public in the pages of America's many newspapers. As the Revolutionary War began, most American newspapers agreed that Canadians were just a few coats away from transforming themselves completely into Americans. That those final coats never actually came off was a disappointment that

would influence the Canadian-American relationship and American understandings of Canadian identity, as well as their own identity, for generations to come.

Chapter One explores American portrayals of Canadians during the French and Indian War. Though the English American colonies had, by the mid eighteenth century, already fought numerous wars with the French Canadian colonies to their north, those Canadians seemingly failed to make an appearance in the few papers that made up the fledgling American press in the first half of the eighteenth century. This changed dramatically in the French and Indian War. By the time fighting broke out in 1754, there were scores of American newspapers. More than that, those American newspapers had made a noticeable shift toward printing news and current events. This meant that American opinion of the conflict was recorded and that that recorded opinion then circulated widely around the English American colonies. Often, the opinion focused on English America's eternal enemies, the French Canadians. Canadians were denigrated as backwoods peasants and bloodthirsty villains. They were painted as being intermixed with Indigenous communities and as having allowed those communities to strip them of their European civility. They were roundly debased as Catholic slaves and toadies. For the first time, the American press began to use portrayals of Canadians to define what the English American identity was. English Americans were pointedly none of the things that seemed inherent to the Canadian identity. English Americans were settled and sophisticated. They were properly White and maintained as much social distance as possible from racialized groups. They were dissenters whose religious faith was perceived as genuine, unlike that of the French Catholic papists. In a war that required colonial unity, Canadians served as a perfect outgroup to use as a means of strengthening American group identity. Othering Canadians allowed American newspapers to define the character of the English American colonies, and in the French and Indian War, the American press was liberal in their comparisons between French and English North America.

During the years of the French and Indian War, Canada mattered to Americans. Particularly early on in the war, French Canada seemed to pose an existential threat to the English American colonies and subsequently occupied a significant place in American popular culture. As a French, Catholic, Indigenous allied community, Canadians were a

perfect outgroup for reinforcing internal English American group cohesion. And for many papers, Canadians were more than merely Indigenous allied. Many American newspapers portrayed Canadians as intermarried with Indigenous nations, and used these associations to demonize French Canadians as a racialized other. The process that Parkinson identified of Americans attacking the British by associating them with racialized groups during the American Revolution⁸⁶ had its roots in the English American racialized othering of French Canadians during the French and Indian War. Understandings of Canada were incredibly important to Americans during the war, and the methods that they used to paint the Canadians as an enemy other pioneered many of the approaches that were later utilized during the Revolution and the War of 1812.

White American identity in the early and mid-eighteenth century centred on the British empire. Fred Anderson and Brendan McConville have each argued that, despite the temptation to teleologically read republicanism and Americanization back into this era, the period is more accurately understood in the context of imperialism and monarchy. Anderson has argued that the relatively light touch the Crown used in the administration of its North American colonies prior to the French and Indian War promoted a sense of loyalty and affection amongst the Anglo-American population.⁸⁷ McConville has further argued that Americans of the era understood themselves as fundamentally British, surmising that because of a fiercely royalist American press and the many American rites and holidays that celebrated the king and his Protestant victories over the forces of Catholicism, Americans formed a deep dedication to their monarch in the mid-eighteenth century at a time when devotion to the monarchy was waning in Europe.⁸⁸ American portrayals of Canadians from the mid-eighteenth century certainly support these arguments. American newspapers heaped praise on the king and on the military leaders of the Canadian campaign like William Howe, Jeffery Amherst, and

⁸⁶ Parkinson, *The Commons Cause*, 20-21.

⁸⁷ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), xvii-xxii.

⁸⁸ Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 7-10.

James Wolfe, reserving their criticisms for the empire of France and her Indigenous and French Canadian allies whom they had vanquished. For mid-eighteenth century Americans, the French were the ultimate antithesis of all things right and British, and French Canadians were the most commonly cited embodiment of this assumption in the American press. As Linda Colley has argued, anti-French sentiment was central to British identity,⁸⁹ and in North America, this hatred took on a racialized tinge. As racial lines hardened in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, French and English Americans came to view one another as fellow White Europeans,⁹⁰ but in the early and mid-eighteenth century, the racial lines Anglo-Americans drew between themselves and French Canadians were remarkably similar to the lines they also drew between themselves and Black Americans and between themselves and Indigenous peoples. Unlike Black or Indigenous groups, however, their devotion to Catholicism made French Canadians especially ominous in the American mind. Before the outbreak of the French and Indian War, a colonial American insider was largely defined as a White, English, Protestant imperialist. By the end of the war, this was more the case than ever.

Vital to amplifying this developing identity was the American press. As Monaghan argued, the ability to read was fast becoming universal in British America by the mid-eighteenth century. She further surmised, however, that the ability to write was not nearly as widespread because the teaching of literacy was designed to allow children to reproduce the ideas of their elders, rather than to compose their own thoughts. For most eighteenth century Americans, reading was passive rather than active.⁹¹ As the press expanded and, as Clark argued, its ritual consumption became a unifying factor in American life,⁹² the amplifying effect it had on the evolution of American identity expanded apace as a relatively small coterie of writers and printers produced newspaper opinion that was nearly universally consumed. This is evidenced by the extensive reprinting of one another's material that characterized the eighteenth and nineteen

⁸⁹ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

⁹⁰ Lepore, *The Name of War*, ix-xxiii; Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 74-84.

⁹¹ Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America*.

⁹² Clark, *The Public Prints*, 11.

century American press, and by the largely unified portrayals of Canadians that appeared in American newspapers throughout the French and Indian War. Though there was some slight variation of opinion, particularly opinion regarding the Canadian potential for improvement, American newspapers almost universally presented Canadians as backward Catholic peasants, blindly beholden to a regime that ignored their rights and stifled progress. Canadians were portrayed as racially and ethnically inferior, owing both to their French heritage and to their frequent intermarriage with Indigenous peoples, and as moral weaklings and cowards, a burden in the field of battle and a deadweight for trade. During the French and Indian War, American newspapers often made it clear that Canadians were all the things that Americans decidedly were not.

The French and Indian War was an emotional rollercoaster for most English American colonists. Anglo-American fear and anxiety had been growing in the early 1750s as the French built a string of forts along the Canadian frontier and to the west of the American settlements.⁹³ Calls to put down this French threat appeared in newspapers across the country, and early success at the Battle of Lake George made the American press optimistic about their odds of victory.⁹⁴ Following the French captures of Fort Oswego in 1756 and Fort William Henry in 1757, and a disastrous British defeat at Fort Ticonderoga in 1758, however, fear of the French army overrunning British America exploded through the press. Despite many dire predictions, the British capture of Fort Frontenac and Louisbourg in late 1758 and Forts Ticonderoga and Niagara in 1759 reignited the confidence of American newspapers in Britain's military might. The British captures of Quebec in September of 1759 and Montreal in September of 1760 were subsequently met with celebrations and declarations of victory throughout the Anglo-American press. As Montreal fell, all of Canada surrendered and English American confidence in the superiority of its culture and identity hit a record high. David Armitage has argued that, while many historians typically trace the origins of the British empire to

⁹³ *Boston Evening-Post*, July 28, 1755; *Boston News-Letter*, August 21, 1755; *Boston Evening-Post*, August 25, 1755; *Virginia Gazette*, September 5, 1755.

⁹⁴ *Boston News-Letter*, September 18, 1755; *Boston Evening-Post*, September 22, 1755; *Supplement to the Boston-Gazette, &c.*, September 22, 1755; *New-York Mercury*, September 29, 1755; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 9, 1755; *Maryland Gazette*, October 9, 1755; *Virginia Gazette*, October 17, 1755.

the conquest of India in the nineteenth century, the ideological underpinnings of that nineteenth century empire actually emerged in the eighteenth century as British intellectuals reacted to events such as the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution.⁹⁵ Victory in the French and Indian War gave Anglo-Americans confidence that their cultural identity was ascendant and throughout the war, and particularly after it, American newspapers worked busily to define just what that identity was in the American context. Though they were still Britons, it was clear they were also something more: Americans.

American newspapers left no room within their definitions of that American identity for their Indigenous neighbours. Lepore and Silver have argued that a sense of American identity emerged as European settlers were forced to confront the brutal realities of frontier warfare, largely justifying their own violence as necessary while demonizing the violence of their Indigenous neighbours as wanton.⁹⁶ James H. Merrell has further argued that European American settlers brought with them notions of "wilderness" as being dark and foreboding places which needed to be cleared in the interest of civilization, as had been done in Europe. As they largely associated Indigenous peoples with this concept of wilderness, Merrell argued that European Americans also viewed Indigenous peoples as an obstacle to civilization that needed to be removed. Merrell surmised that, as the population of white colonists began to rise precipitously and European conception of wilderness came to dominate, settlers came to understand Indigenous societies, no matter how large or sophisticated, as part of the woods, part of a wilderness that needed to be cleared.⁹⁷ And so, White American settlers generally sought to erase the Indigenous presence on the land, both as a means of removing what was seen as a potential threat and to justify White occupation. Patrick Wolfe has argued that American settlers used blood quantum laws to slowly whittle away at the number of Indigenous that could claim an ancestral right to the land that White Americans hoped to

⁹⁵ David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1-3.

⁹⁶ Lepore, *The Name of War*, ix-xxiii; Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 74-84.

⁹⁷ James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 19-27.

occupy.⁹⁸ Lorenzo Veracini also identified this process of justifying land transfer within settler colonialism, a process he called “transfer by accounting.”⁹⁹ By counting Indigenous people based on a quantum of heritage, Veracini and Wolfe argued that White settlers counted them away. Veracini also identified a number of other ways in which land was understood to transfer within settler colonial ideology, two of which he termed “transfer by conceptual displacement” and “perception transfer.” In the first process, Indigenous groups are mentally made into the other and the settler is made into the native. In the second, Indigenous nations “are disavowed in a variety of ways and their actual presence is not registered (perception transfer can happen, for example, when indigenous people are understood as part of the landscape).”¹⁰⁰ In both of these ways, Indigenous presence was erased. For many White Americans, Indigenous peoples not only didn’t have a place within the American identity, but they also didn’t have a place on the American land.

American newspapers made frequent reference to the purported violence and brutality of Indigenous warfare and culture. The *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* of February 21, 1757 informed its readers that the Delaware and Shawnee had “ravaged and depopulated whole Counties, butchered and captivated Hundreds of Families, and spread Terror and Desolation wherever they went.”¹⁰¹ Like many articles in the early American press, this article from the *New-York Gazette* was reprinted by a number of other papers.¹⁰² These themes of violence and destruction were extremely common in English American depictions of their Indigenous neighbours. The *Boston News-Letter* encouraged readers “to behold goodly Possessions, earn’d by... Toil and Sweat,

⁹⁸ Patrick Wolfe, “Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race,” *American Historical Review* Vol 106 (2001).

⁹⁹ Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 39-40.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 35-37

¹⁰¹ *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, February 21, 1757; *Boston News-Letter*, March 17, 1757; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 17, 1757; *Boston Evening-Post*, April 18, 1757.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* When an article was printed in multiple newspapers, or in the same newspaper but on multiple dates, I have listed those reprints following the original printing in my footnotes.

despoiled and plundered by brutal Savages!”¹⁰³ Recording an attack on the people of Montreal, the same paper contended that the Delaware and Shawnee had “burnt their houses, sacked their plantations, and put to the sword all the men, women, and children without the skirts of the town. One thousand French were slain in this invasion, and twenty-six carried off, and burnt alive.”¹⁰⁴ For American newspapers, Indigenous warfare was the antithesis of civilized warfare, and consequently placed Indigenous peoples outside of the European American identity and specifically othered them as being inherently different from Europeans. The *New-York Mercury* reported in 1755 that Indigenous raids were “generally attended with great Cruelties which these Savages think they may lawfully exercise upon their Enemies.”¹⁰⁵ In a rare moment of charity to the French, the paper contended that “The French Officers have often endeavored to inspire them with more Humanity in their Way of making War”¹⁰⁶ but concluded that “this Sentiment, so much respected by civilized Nations, appears quite ridiculous to these People, who pursuing merely the Dictates of Nature, think they cannot carry their Fidelity to their Friends or Malice to their Enemies too far.”¹⁰⁷ American newspapers portrayed Indigenous warfare as fundamentally different from European American warfare in terms of its violence, though this was far from the truth. Frontier warfare was violent and brutal, and while both Indigenous nations and European Americans practiced similar tactics of intimidation and ruthlessness, the American press of the mid-eighteenth century fixated solely on those utilized by Indigenous peoples. When Europeans killed Indigenous peoples, it was called a battle or a skirmish. When Indigenous peoples killed Europeans, it was called a massacre.¹⁰⁸

Alongside such depictions of violence, American newspapers also often portrayed Indigenous peoples as animalistic and subhuman, a part of the wilderness that European

¹⁰³ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, August 28, 1755; *Boston News-Letter*, August 29, 1755.

¹⁰⁴ *Boston News-Letter*, October 23, 1760.

¹⁰⁵ *New-York Mercury*, December 22, 1755; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 25, 1755.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Lepore, *The Name of War*, x-xi.

settlers hoped to eradicate.¹⁰⁹ The *New-York Gazette* reported during Pontiac's Rebellion that, upon hearing news that an attack on Fort Detroit had been called off, Pontiac's men "all got up and fled off, yelping like as many Devils; they instantly fell upon Mrs. Turnbell, (an English Woman, to whom Major Gladwin had given a small Plantation, about a Mile from the Fort) and murder'd and scalped her and her two Sons."¹¹⁰ Mrs. Turnbell is one of the only women mentioned by name alongside references to Canadians in the American press. The use of her name humanizes her. Rather than simply another woman who was murdered on the frontier, this was Mrs. Turnbell. To American readers, the murder was more horrific because they could relate closely to the woman who had been killed. The goal seemed to be terror. The *Boston Evening-Post* surmised that the Indigenous peoples involved in Pontiac's Rebellion sought "to distress, destroy and torment in a most wicked inhuman manner an Innocent people."¹¹¹ As Ian Steele has noted, articles concerning an attack on the evacuating garrison following the surrender of Fort William Henry in 1757 were particularly lurid in their depictions of frontier violence and insinuations of Indigenous inhumanity.¹¹² The *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* informed readers that "the unfortunate Garrison had scarcely cleared the Fort, e'er the voracious Blood-Hounds fell to stripping and plundering them of all their Clothes, Arms, and Baggage, killing and scalping every one that resisted, not even sparing the Wounded or sick."¹¹³ An extract of a letter from a member of that garrison, published in the same paper reported that, by the Terms of Capitulation, they were "to be protected from the Insults and Barbarity of the Indians. Notwithstanding which, we were most of us stripp'd, All our Sick were Murder'd and Scalp'd! and many others who straggled

¹⁰⁹ Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 19-27.

¹¹⁰ *New-York Gazette*, August 15, 1763; *New-York Mercury*, August 15, 1763; *Newport Mercury*, August 22, 1763; *Boston News-Letter*, August 25, 1763; *The Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, August 29, 1763; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 2, 1763; *Georgia Gazette*, October 13, 1763.

¹¹¹ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 27, 1760.

¹¹² Ian K. Steele, *Betrayals: Fort William Henry and the "Massacre"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

¹¹³ *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, August 29, 1757; *Boston Gazette*, September 5, 1757; *Boston Post-Boy*, September 5, 1757; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 9, 1757.

about.”¹¹⁴ Another article from the *New-York Gazette* went still further in its description, recording that:

the French immediately after the Capitulation, most perfidiously, let their Indian Blood-Hounds, loose upon our People... The Throats of most if not all the Women were cut, their Bellies ript open, their Bowels torn out and thrown upon the Faces of their dead and dying Bodies; and ‘tis said, that all the Women were murdered in one Way or other: That the Children were taken by the Heels, and their Brains beat out against the Trees or Stones, and not one of them saved.¹¹⁵

As Lepore and Silver argued, such descriptions served to unite Anglo-Americans around their perceived humanity in contrast to the perceived barbarity of their Indigenous enemies. Such sensationalized depictions also served business-minded, profit-seeking newspaper editors, as the more lurid the detail, the more the reading public lapped up papers. It behooved the newspaper editors to focus on the violent and lurid detail as this was what the reading public sought. In this way, newspapers both reflected the American identity and also helped shape it. American readers wanted to see stories about savage Canadians and Indigenous peoples and newspaper editors wanted to sell papers, so they gave it to them. In the process, they reinforced the ideas they presented. By fixating on, and often exaggerating, the purported violence of Indigenous groups, the American press portrayed English Americans as humane and civilized in the face of base savagery and brute violence. It was a tactic that would not be reserved solely for Indigenous communities, but one used to attack the humanity of their French Canadian allies as well.

As far as many American newspapers were concerned, what made a person a French Canadian (as opposed to a Frenchman) was their intermingling with Indigenous peoples. Questioning the toleration of Catholicism that was granted to French Canadians following the capitulation of Quebec, the *New-York Gazette* wondered “Does this Liberty include the Old Native French settler in Canada, &c? or does it include both the Native

¹¹⁴ *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, April 25, 1757; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 28, 1757; *Boston Evening-Post*, May 16, 1757; *Boston Gazette*, May 23, 1757.

¹¹⁵ *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, August 22, 1757; *New-York Mercury*, August 22, 1757; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 25, 1757; *Boston Gazette*, August 29, 1757; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 2, 1757.

French and the French Canadians, a Mixture of French and Indians by Intermarriage?”¹¹⁶ The *New-York Mercury* surmised “the Canadians inter-marry with the many different Nations of Indians that surround them; and are for ever Hunting with them, or on some Party to distress our Settlements.”¹¹⁷ Some newspapers supposed that this intermingling had been part of a French plan to “civilize” the First Nations and bring them into the French fold: a plan which they argued had failed. The *New-York Gazette* contended that “instead of reclaiming the savages, the Canadians became half savages themselves; and that involving them in perpetual wars, has been almost the sole produce of [French] possessions in that part of the globe.”¹¹⁸ As Linda Colley has noted, Europeans were often fixated on the idea of Europeans in foreign lands or in the wilderness abandoning their European ways and with it their civility.¹¹⁹ And in American newspapers, Canadians were often perfect examples of Europeans “going native.” Canadians were often portrayed as having adopted many aspects of Indigenous culture, and in the American public mind that was often read as an affinity to violence and bloodshed. In the American press of the mid-eighteenth century, there was an extremely thin line between French Canadians and Indigenous peoples. Such associations served to cement in American popular opinion that this was contrary to the American identity and that unlike Canadians, Americans didn’t “go native.”

French Canadians were often painted with same brush of cruelty and barbarism as their First Nations allies, and in the opinion of many American newspapers, they were responsible for equal brutality. *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser* called them “wild Canadians”¹²⁰ while the *Boston News-Letter* called them “undisciplined

¹¹⁶ *New-York Gazette*, April 4, 1763.

¹¹⁷ *New-York Mercury*, March 27, 1758; *Boston Gazette*, April 10, 1758; *Boston Post-Boy*, April 10, 1758.

¹¹⁸ *New-York Gazette*, April 14, 1760.

¹¹⁹ Linda Colley, “Going Native, Telling Tales: Captivity, Collaborations and Empire,” *Past & Present* No 168 (2000).

¹²⁰ *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, January 8, 1759; *Newport Mercury*, January 16, 1759.

Savage Canadians.”¹²¹ Referencing the American frontier, the *New-York Gazette* of December 1, 1760 read “There the savage Native, and more savage Canadian, was lately wont to seize the defenceless and inoffending Peasant, doomed, with his tender Wife, and helpless Children, to the most excruciating Deaths, or a more dreadful Captivity.”¹²² A speech praising the king that was published in the *Boston Evening-Post* in 1763 rejoiced “We in America have reason to be glad, That the heathen are driven out, as also that the Canadians are conquered, who, if they are not worse that heathen, are full as bad.”¹²³ Like their First Nations allies, French Canadians were also often portrayed as subhuman. Referencing French Canadians, the *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser* lamented the Anglo-American settlers who had been “exposed to the Cruelties, the nameless Cruelties, of those more than Brutes, in human Form!”¹²⁴ Their influence with the First Nations made French Canadians particularly reprehensible to English Americans. The *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* opined of the various Indigenous nations on the Anglo-American frontier;

should even one of those Nations, suppose the Cherokees, break down upon us like a Torrent, instigated, headed and assisted, by their kindred-Savages of European Extract, from Canada or Mississippi; how terrible would be the Consequences! what Horror and Consternation, what inhuman Murders, Tortures and Streams of Blood, would fill our land: the Siege of Jerusalem, or the Sacking of Constantinople by the Turks, could scarcely equal the Scene.¹²⁵

¹²¹ *Boston News-Letter*, July 1, 1762; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, July 1, 1762; *Boston Evening-Post*, July 5, 1762; *Boston Gazette*, July 5, 1762; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, July 5, 1762; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, July 9, 1762.

¹²² *New-York Gazette*, December 1, 1760; *New-York Mercury*, December 1, 1760; *Boston Gazette*, December 8, 1760; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, December 11, 1760. The use of the term “peasant” here is interesting. This is typically a term reserved for outsiders like the Canadians that seems to have been used relatively rarely to refer to American settlers. It is possible that the intention in terms of calling the settler a peasant was to invoke sympathy for would have been perceived as a simple, poor, relatively unoffending farmer.

¹²³ *Boston Evening-Post*, April 4, 1763.

¹²⁴ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, August 28, 1755; *Boston News-Letter*, August 29, 1755.

¹²⁵ *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, February 21, 1757; *Boston News-Letter*, March 17, 1757; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 17, 1757; *Boston Evening-Post*, April 18, 1757.

In the opinion of many American newspapers, French Canadians had rejected civility to perpetrate atrocities across the frontiers. As the *New-Hampshire Gazette* surmised in 1760, “the Canadian measure of iniquity be full, and if ever any country did, that country now certainly does deserve the judgement of extirpation.”¹²⁶ There was a clear assertion in many American newspapers that Canadians likely carried even more of the blame than their Indigenous allies precisely because, as at least part Europeans, they should have known better. As the American press attacked the colonies’ Indigenous neighbours as ruthless and uncivilized, they simultaneously stained French Canadians with the same brush of ruthlessness while also implying that, as White men who had forsaken their own race, Canadians were even more to blame.

Though American newspapers drew many associations between French and Indigenous nations in the context of vicious frontier warfare, they did not portray them as carrying equal weight in the field. Indigenous peoples in general were depicted as fearsome and deadly soldiers, tiny numbers of whom (relative to their European counterparts) could easily carry the day in the field. The article from the *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* which accused the Delaware and Shawnee of having “ravaged and depopulated whole Counties, butchered and captivated Hundreds of Families, and spread Terror and Desolation wherever they went”¹²⁷ was written as an argument for making allies of the English colonies’ Indigenous neighbours. It began, “However insignificant the Remains of the Indian Natives might appear to shallow Politicians, in Times of Peace and Security, every Man must now be convinced that they are the most important Allies, and the most formidable Enemies.”¹²⁸ By the contributor’s account, Indigenous soldiers were the difference between life and death in frontier warfare. It proposed that “consequently no Pains or Expence should be spared, to regain or secure their Friendship, or at least their Neutrality.”¹²⁹ The article argued that because, “in a wide-extended Country, mountainous and woody, the skulking Savages could

¹²⁶ *New-Hampshire Gazette*, May 2, 1760.

¹²⁷ *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, February 21, 1757; *Boston News-Letter*, March 17, 1757; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 17, 1757; *Boston Evening-Post*, April 18, 1757.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

conquer thrice their Number, and cannot be met with but by Accident,”¹³⁰ that “they would undoubtedly prove the best Defense of our Frontiers.”¹³¹ The contributor to the *New-York Journal* argued that despite their alleged racial inferiority, Indigenous allies were necessary to protect the American frontiers. And one of the groups that they felt the American colonies needed protection from was the French Canadians. The uncredited author continued by surmising that “It is utterly impertinent to object, as some are weak enough to do, ‘That the Indians are such a perfidious People, that we had best have nothing to do with them:’ For if we will not employ and trust them to defend us, the French will employ and trust them to destroy us.”¹³² The implication was that the French, and their tools in North America, the French Canadians, were to blame for unleashing the Indigenous warfare that threatened the colonial frontiers. They were, as far as the American press was concerned, instigating Indigenous nations to the kind of unspeakable violence that they often associated with racialized communities. Although they constantly questioned their humanity and continuously emphasized their purported cruelty, American newspapers repeatedly depicted Indigenous nations as a powerful and devastating military force on their colonial frontier, the participation of whom would often determine the outcome of battle.

In contrast to the presumed efficiency of French-allied Indigenous soldiers, the American press portrayed the French Canadian militia as disorganized and undisciplined. Where Indigenous companies were often seen as bringing decisive advantages, French Canadian militias were often viewed as a strategic disadvantage. Their seeming lack of discipline was particularly emphasized. In a letter to his troops before the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, General James Wolfe implored his men to “remember what their Country [expected] from them; and what a determined Body of Soldiers, inured to War, are capable of doing against five weak French Battalions, mingled with disorderly

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, February 21, 1757; *Boston News-Letter*, March 17, 1757; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 17, 1757; *Boston Evening-Post*, April 18, 1757.

Peasantry.”¹³³ This disorderly peasantry was the polar opposite of the way most American viewed the English American militias. Though they too could be quite undisciplined, most American newspapers touted the strengths of American militias, and held them up in stark contrast to the inefficient Canadians. Their poor discipline was yet another reason why the Canadians were different, and why the Americans were better. On top of being undisciplined, Canadian militia troops were also often portrayed as cowardly and ineffective. An extract of a letter from the Siege of Quebec, published in the *Boston News-Letter* in 1759, reported an engagement with “Canadians, chiefly the Peasants, which are about 11,000; who were so dastardly as not to pursue our Party that were repulsed from their Intrenchments.”¹³⁴ This inability or unwillingness to operate effectively in the field of battle could be attributed to a lack of experience and training as Canadian militiamen were not professional soldiers. However, as many mid-eighteenth century American newspapers contended, their lack of military prowess could also be chalked up to moral failings seemingly inherent to French Canadian character and culture. Again, this stood in stark contrast to English American self-perceptions. American newspapers portrayed English Americans as strong and brave in the field. Though they perhaps were not as efficient as Indigenous soldiers, they were by far the superior of the cowardly Canadians. By emphasizing Canadian cowardice, American newspapers reinforced bravery as a key characteristic of the American identity. Editors and contributors did not need to come right out and say if, for it was clear; Canadians were cowards and Americans were not.

Mid-eighteenth century American press depictions of Canadians repeatedly associated them with the supposed barbarity of Indigenous peoples, but also with the purported savagery of the French. Linda Colley has argued that British identity in this era evolved in relation with anxiety over the potentially existential threat posed by Catholic France and the need for a united national identity strong enough to face that seeming

¹³³ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 22, 1759; *New-York Gazette*, November 26, 1759; *Boston Evening-Post*, December 3, 1759; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, December 3, 1759; *Boston News-Letter*, December 6, 1759; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, December 7, 1759.

¹³⁴ *Boston News-Letter*, September 6, 1759; *Boston Evening-Post*, September 10, 1759; *Boston Gazette*, September 10, 1759.

danger. She surmised of the British population that “They came to define themselves as a single people not because of any political or cultural consensus at home, but rather in reaction to the [French Catholic] Other beyond their shores.”¹³⁵ Owen Stanwood had similarly argued that in the North American context, this hyperbolic fear of Catholics far outstripped the actual number of Catholics and the subsequent threat they could potentially pose to Protestant Americans.¹³⁶ That fear, however, was useful as a means of drawing America’s Protestant populations together with one another in the face of what they perceived as an imminent and potentially existential threat. The French came to represent everything the British were not and were continually depicted as a violent danger to Protestant Christendom. In such a climate, mid-eighteenth century American newspapers were dramatic in their portrayals of the seeming French menace. The article from the *Boston News-Letter* which spoke of “goodly Possessions, earn’d by... Toil and Sweat, despoiled and plundered by brutal Savages!”¹³⁷ attacked Indigenous nations as but a few of the inhuman forces acting on the American frontier. Referencing French ambition, the author who signed simply as W. opined:

Alass! [sic] my Country-men, it is not a little more Carnage, a little more Plunder, that will satiate these professed Cannibals, who wage War against the human Species; and destroy human Lives, not only without Horror, but with Delight. The Blood of all Protestant Christendom, is incapable of glutting their Ambition. Ruthless Savages they are, and more rapacious than African Lions, or the Vultures of Apulia. Let us therefore ward off the distant Blow. Let us crush the Cockatrice in the Egg.¹³⁸

Canadians were often portrayed as the worst of both groups, despoiled by both their French heritage and their intermingling with Indigenous communities. They seemed to possess the same savagery that American newspapers associated with Indigenous peoples *and* the same conniving nature that they associated with the French. Their seemingly

¹³⁵ Colley, *Britons*, 6.

¹³⁶ Owen Stanwood, *The Empire Reformed: English America in the Age of the Glorious Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

¹³⁷ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, August 28, 1755; *Boston News-Letter*, August 29, 1755.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

shared kinship with Indigenous nations was also a threat to the English American colonies as Americans believed that the perceived ultimate evil in the empire of France could use the interracial Canadians to incite North America's Indigenous populations to bloody violence. Canadians and Indigenous peoples were not autonomous groups in American generalizations, but pawns that could be played by their French puppet master. Americans prided themselves on being different. As far as they were concerned, Americans were not blindly devoted to a tyrant king or pope. Nor were they intermingling with the Indigenous communities that most Americans considered racially inferior. Canadians stood as a representation of what not to do. Canadians represented a link between cultures that the American press worried incessantly would one day be used to foment their destruction. W.'s article, and many more beside, implored English America to neutralize the French Canadian threat before it was too late.

Together, Indigenous peoples, French Canadians, and the French formed an unholy triumvirate for the mid-eighteenth century American press, as they did in a *New-Hampshire Gazette* lament for the sending of troops "to North America to be scalped by Indians or blown up by the more perfidious French, and those devils the Canadians."¹³⁹ In particular, American newspapers depicted French, First Nations, and French Canadians as pushing one another toward further barbarity. The "massacre" of English troops following the surrender of Fort William Henry was utilized extensively by the American press as an example of frontier savagery, carried out by Indigenous peoples, instigated by French officers, and supported by French Canadians. Referencing that attack, the *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* opined, "To what a Pitch of Perfidy and Cruelty is the French Nations arrived! Would not an ancient Heathen shudder with Horror, on hearing so hidious a Tale! Is it the Most Christian King that could give such Orders? Or could the most Savage Nations ever exceed such French Barabritie [sic]!"¹⁴⁰ Though, as Ian K. Steele has noted, the casualties of the "massacre" were likely no more than 8 percent of the total number of those attacked, the 69 to 185 deaths that Steele estimates were enough

¹³⁹ *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 19, 1759.

¹⁴⁰ *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, August 22, 1757; *New-York Mercury*, August 22, 1757; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 25, 1757; *Boston Gazette*, August 29, 1757; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 2, 1757.

to echo through the press, becoming increasingly sensationalized as relations with Indigenous nations continued to deteriorate.¹⁴¹ As far as most American newspapers were concerned, the attack at Fort William Henry was just one example of the numerous, debased plots that the unholy triumvirate of the French, French Canadians, and Indigenous were pursuing. The *Boston Evening-Post* reported further evidence of tripartite treachery in the form of “a most horrid Scheme” to take Halifax “with a Number of Canadians, Indians, and Regulars, and when they had taken the Town, they were to fire the Batteries upon the Ships; the Inhabitants all to be shut up in the Church and Fire put to it, and the Troops were all to be put to the Sword without Quarter.”¹⁴² While this article seems likely an early work of fake news, as no historical record of a planned attack on Halifax in November of 1755 seems to exist, it played on a long developed fear of the French Catholic and Indigenous other. For English American newspapers, their French, Indigenous, and French Canadian foes were often the epitome of brutality and moral bankruptcy. The fact that they were seemingly working together to further one another’s dastardly schemes made them all the viler in the English American mind.

Further intensifying Anglo-American attacks on these three groups was the perception of their servility to immoral forces. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* called the French “Slaves to Arbitrary Power”¹⁴³ while the *New York Gazette* called France “the Land of Slavery” and Canada “the American Carthage.”¹⁴⁴ Though Americans actively held numerous slaves at this time, their references to slavery in the Canadian context always hinged on Catholicism, using a system Americans were familiar with to portray French Canadian Catholics as subservient to the Pope while simultaneously associating slavery with regions beyond English America. The *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser* further contended of Canadians “Shall we the Sons of Britain, a Nation whom

¹⁴¹ Steele, *Betrayals*, 144.

¹⁴² *Boston Evening-Post*, November 3, 1755; *New-York Mercury*, November 10, 1755; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 13, 1755; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, November 13, 1755.

¹⁴³ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 11, 1755.

¹⁴⁴ *New-York Gazette*, October 6, 1760; *Boston Evening-Post*, October 13, 1760; *Boston Gazette*, October 13, 1760; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, October 13, 1760; *Boston News-Letter*, October 16, 1760.

neither the Roman Sword (to which the whole World besides bent the servile knee) nor the unnatural Designs of some of her own usurping Monarchs, could ever reduce to Bondage, tamely behold the Slaves of Lewis, invading the Territories of our gracious Sovereign?"¹⁴⁵ Depictions such as this painted a clear line between the courageous British people, who had beaten back even the mighty Romans, and the snivelling French who even to that day remained tame slaves of their tyrant King. The perceived slavishness of the French provided American newspaper editors with a clear other against which to define English American characters. Unlike the French, the English had seemingly never bent the knee as slaves, and as far as English American newspapers were concerned, unlike the French, they never would.

Portrayals of this perceived French Catholic servility were not reserved for the French Canadian relationship with the crown, however. There was an even more perfidious power to which the French were depicted as being subservient. English Americans held deep seated beliefs about their inalienable rights as Englishmen, and denigrated the French as lacking similar rights. Worse than merely lacking such rights, as far as Anglo-Americans were concerned, French Canadians seemed perfectly happy submitting to the tyrannical power of French Catholicism. The tyranny of the church and the state seemed to English Americans to be mutually reinforcing one another within the French empire. The state denied the people rights such as trials by jury and local assemblies, institutions that English Americans prided themselves on. Both seemed corrupted and intent on oppressing the people for financial gain. It was something English American newspapers subtly implied was not a character trait of English Americans. Whether to the state or to the church, Anglo-Americans were proud that they were not servile like their French Canadian counterparts. The seemingly all-encompassing French Canadian commitment to the church was of particular concern to many in English America. An extract of a letter from Quebec that was published in the *New-York Gazette* in 1761 complained "The Canadians have the least humanity for each other of all the People I ever saw; the parents care not if their Children starve, provided

¹⁴⁵ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, August 28, 1755; *Boston News-Letter*, August 29, 1755.

they can be supplied themselves... They are, however, very much attached to their Clergy, and support them in the greatest profuseness.”¹⁴⁶ As evidence, the letter writer cited “an instance I saw of it the other evening, when supping at a priest’s house, his table was served up with three different courses, of nine, seven, and five dishes, with variety of wines, whilst numbers of his parishioners, to my knowledge, had scarce a morsel of bread to eat, but what we gave them.”¹⁴⁷ This situation was despicable to the anonymous letter writer, evidence that the Catholic church was a self-serving affront to civility and humanity. It was implied that English Americans would never let themselves become so deluded as to continue patronizing such an institution. Derision of French Catholicism had long been an underpinning of British identity, and for Britain’s American colonies, French Catholic Canada often served a similar role.

Anti-Catholicism was an important part of Anglo-American life and identity. Carla Gardina Pestana has argued that the English Reformation and the Glorious Revolution produced an anti-Catholic attitude in Britain which was subsequently transplanted to North America.¹⁴⁸ Nathan O. Hatch has argued that eighteenth century American clergymen began to associate religious piety with notions of liberty in what Hatch termed “civil millennialism,” subsequently relating Protestant godliness with liberty and Catholicism with slavishness. He further argued that during the French and Indian War, this conflation led American religious leaders to associate victory over the forces of French Catholicism with the coming millennium and the end times.¹⁴⁹ In this religious milieu, the American press often emphasized the need for English Americans to defeat Catholic power and to convert the Catholic faithful, and for many American newspapers, the war with France became far more than an earthly contest. The *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser* contended of the conflict, “We fight for the

¹⁴⁶ *New-York Gazette*, September 21, 1761; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, September 28, 1761; *Boston Gazette*, October 5, 1761.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Carla Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

¹⁴⁹ Nathan O. Hatch, “The Origins of Civil Millenarianism in America: New England Clergymen, War with France, and the Revolution” *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol 31 No 3, 1974.

Cities of our God; and against an Enemy polluted with innocent Blood; guilty of the violation of Treaties; and instead of worshipping the Lord of the Universe, paying their Homage to graven Images.”¹⁵⁰ To the *Boston Evening-Post*, Catholicism was “dishonorable to God “ and “pernicious to us.”¹⁵¹ Following the defeat of Canada, the *New-York Gazette* surmised of French Canadians that “the Principles, both of their Religion and Politics, will make them dangerous Neighbours to our Colonies.”¹⁵² Using as an example the English toleration of Catholicism in Minorca, a situation that many Americans were likely unfamiliar with, the paper argued that “The Religious and Ecclesiastics enjoyed even more Liberty under the English Government, than under a Popish Government. Yet, we all know, that after Fifty Years Experience of the Blessings of English Liberty, they unanimously revolted and joined the French, upon their first Landing.”¹⁵³ The anonymous author maintained that, should toleration be granted to French Canadian Catholics, the same would happen on the North American continent. And as far as the letter writer and most American newspapers were concerned, this would be an affront to God’s divine plan.

In line with the conceptions of civil millennialism that Hatch identified in American sermons, American newspapers argued that, far more than a practical concern, the conversion of Canada was in fact of divine significance. Like contemporary sermons, American newspapers generally agreed that the conversion of the Canadians and the defeat of French Catholicism would usher in the millennium. Or if not the millennium, then at least the blessings from God that would be deserved after doing his supreme bidding. In 1760, an article appeared in the *Boston Evening-Post* by an author signing Philanthropos. Using as a pseudonym a Greek word translating roughly to “useful to humankind,” Philanthropos contended that “The reduction of Canada to the dominion of Britain, considered in all its circumstances, is without doubt the greatest, the most happy and glorious event that ever took place in America.” As far as Philanthropos was

¹⁵⁰ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, August 28, 1755; *Boston News-Letter*, August 29, 1755.

¹⁵¹ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 27, 1760.

¹⁵² *New-York Gazette*, April 4, 1763.

¹⁵³ *New-York Gazette*, April 4, 1763.

concerned, the defeat of French Canada was the most momentous thing that had ever happened on the continent as it signalled to the author the beginning of the death of Catholicism. Philanthropos proposed sending Protestant missionaries into Canada at the public expense as a divine duty “to recover that people (as well as the Indians) from their superstitious and idolatrous religions to the belief and practice of the true protestant religion as established in our mother country, or as is commonly maintained by the dissenters,” surmising that “such an attempt is the most likely means to obtain and secure the divine favour and blessing, since providence seems now in some respects in a peculiar manner to invite and call us to it.” The goal of defeating French Canada and converting the French Canadians to Protestantism was defined as a divine purpose, and American newspapers were adamant that it was a job that must be completed if the millennium was to begin. The author challenged those that supported the toleration of French Canadian Catholicism, arguing that “the religion of papists (which is the religion of Canada)... is false, ridiculous, offensive to God and dangerous to its professors... those who are retained to it are commonly so of necessity.” These Catholic Canadians were clearly not like Americans, whose religion was perceived as rational and pious. And there was a sense, now that the Conquest was over, that English American religion would sweep across the newly acquired Canadian province. The article from the *Boston Evening-Post* contended that it was the duty of all Protestants to convert the Canadians. Drawing a biblical comparison, Philanthropos noted that “the Canaanites when their country was given to the children of Israel, were by God’s express command to be destroyed.” He further alleged:

That the case of [Israel] relative to the Canaanites, and that of New-England relative to the Canadians are in many respects parallel... this being granted, it follows that the reasons of that command to the children of Israel to exterminate the Canaanites as a means to destroy an idolatrous and false religion, equally oblige New England tho’ not to extirpate the Canadians, yet by all proper means to endeavor the destruction of their religion.willi¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 27, 1760.

Like the Biblical Canaanites, Canadians were portrayed as blasphemous and vicious, and while Philanthropos stopped short of calling for a genocide of French Catholics, the divine significance that papers like the *Boston Evening-Post* placed on the conversion of French Canadian Catholics to English Protestantism was clear. Heathen Canadians were to be turned to “the true protestant religion as established in our mother country, or as is commonly maintained by the dissenters,”¹⁵⁵ the only faiths for proper Americans. The views of pan-Protestantism, the ideas of the unity between the Church of England and the dissenting churches, that were espoused by Philanthropos were relatively unique for the era (likely the views of an American dissenter), but represented the ways in which belief began to shift in the face of the perceived threat of Catholicism. The Anglican and dissenting churches seem to have been drawn together in the face of this threat. As far as Philanthropos was concerned, the enemy of an enemy was a friend. Their shared fear and hatred of French Catholicism brought the Church of England and the dissenting churches together in the mind of Philanthropos. This religious pluralism would become fundamental to the American identity that developed in the late eighteenth century. Though contested, the idea would become very important to American understandings of unity during the American Revolution.

While most Anglo-American newspapers by the 1760s were in favour of the annexation of Canada and the assimilation of the Canadians, some were not. These arguments often centered somewhat conversely on both the relative economic and military weaknesses of Canada and the difficulty of removing the French empire from a region where it had such deep roots. The author of an article published in the *New-York Gazette* in 1761 asked readers “can it be conceived, that the British Colonies, consisting of near 2,000,000 of Inhabitants, in Possession of all the Passes, and a Chain of Forts on the Frontiers, are not sufficiently protected against the Canadians, scarcely amounting to 100,000; according to some Estimates, not to more than forty Thousand?”¹⁵⁶ As far as the author was concerned, the Canadians posed no threat in terms of numbers, and so it did not need to concern English America. Anglo-Americans were numerous, unlike the

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 27, 1760.

Canadians, and this demographic advantage gave them both confidence and self-assurance. An article from *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser* made a similar argument from the perspective of trade. The anonymous author contended that “Canada, when in the possession of the French, was of no service to them on account of its trade... if we retain Canada, it would be of less service to us, than it was to the French, in point of trade... by retaining it, we can expect it to become no other than a colony without trade and inhabitants.”¹⁵⁷ The contributor argued that far from a threat, Canada was in fact not even worth English America’s time. Canada was a place with few inhabitants and no trade, unlike English America, which was well populated and which was growing wealthy. Americans were enterprising and brave, migrating to the Americas in large numbers and establishing a profitable trade network upon their arrival. Canadians were neither of these things, with few permanent settlers and a seemingly languishing trade. For the author of the article from the *Post-Boy*, the French threat was not in Canada, but in Louisiana, and their solution was removing French influence in the west while allowing them to retain Canada, concluding, “Remove them from Louisiana alone, and we shall quickly find Canada become the poor infirm colony we had ever reason to believe it to be, before the French settled in Louisiana.”¹⁵⁸ For the author, Canada was a cancerous appendage that was harming the French Empire more than it was helping them. Americans envisioned their own colonial enterprise in far different terms. As far as most Americans were concerned, they were the source of the empire’s wealth and prestige. The contributors to the *Gazette* and *Post-Boy* argued that Canada was not worth English America’s time as it was inhabited by very few people, even fewer of which seemed to have any desire, like Americans, to develop a thriving trade network. They thus argued that Canada could not be beneficially added to the English American colonies. These arguments were outliers, however. The majority of Anglo-American newspapers were heartily in support of the annexation of Canada into the British empire.

Such newspapers were not all convinced that Canadians were capable of throwing off their purportedly ignorant, servile, and superstitious ways and embracing what they

¹⁵⁷ *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, July 27, 1761.

¹⁵⁸ *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, July 27, 1761.

defined as “the Blessings of English Liberty.”¹⁵⁹ Many of the newspapers that were most supportive of the annexation of Canada were also the most vitriolic in their portrayals of the French and of French Canadians. Their arguments often centred on the threat posed to the English American colonies if their eternal enemy France was allowed to maintain a foothold on the North American continent. The August 28, 1755 article from the *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser* was strongly in favour of annexing Canada, but warned it had to be done quickly. The author W. argued that “The longer we procrastinate, the greater is our Danger. Soon perhaps will it be altogether Remediless. Now we can attack them in what they call their own Country... But should they make a Descent on different Parts of the Continent, we should all be in Confusion and Dismay.”¹⁶⁰ W. supported the idea of a conquest and annexation of Canada, but envisioned something far greater. Referencing France itself, they wrote “‘Tis not the readiest way of killing a Tree, to lop off the Branches. Lay the Ax to the Root, and it must infallibly perish. One Summer’s Campaign, against that pestilent Nursery of Robbers, would overwhelm them with irrecoverable Perdition. Till then, we cannot be safe.”¹⁶¹ France was a consummate threat to the British empire, and by extension, Canada was the same to Britain’s American colonies. An author signing A. Buckskin made a similar argument in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* that same year. Like the writer who suggested Britain take Louisiana but return Canada, Buckskin felt Canada was an inhospitable and desolate place, and that the real threat was posed from the west. They contended of Louisiana, that it was “a most fertile County, in a most agreeable Climate; a Country, which will soon tempt the Canadians, as the Indians express themselves, to flock thither like Pigeons, where the Severity of tedious Winters, will no longer expose them to the Danger of perishing Famine.”¹⁶² Rather than simply removing the threat from Louisiana, Buckskin proposed removing France from America entirely. The primary obstacle with this proposal, however, was the disunity of the various English colonies.

¹⁵⁹ *New-York Gazette*, April 4, 1763.

¹⁶⁰ *New-York Gazette*, April 4, 1763.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 11, 1755.

The unidentified Buckskin argued that “Our Form of Government... makes us a disunited, distracted People, or in the Indian Phrase, renders the English Colonies on this Continent, a Rope of Sand, the different Provinces being under different Administrations, and in Point of Government, quite independent of each other.”¹⁶³ Their solution was not a monarchy like that of the French, who Buckskin called “Slaves to Arbitrary Power,”¹⁶⁴ but in intercolonial unity. If the colonies could work together, the author argued, they could remove the French threat from the continent. Perhaps because the task of conquering Canada appeared particularly daunting in 1755, neither Buckskin nor W. gave much thought about what to do with the French Canadians should Canada fall into British hands. By the 1760s, however, this was a question which American newspapers were beginning to fixate on.

Alison Olson has identified sarcasm and satire as key elements of the early American press,¹⁶⁵ and many of the articles that appeared attacking French Canadians utilized it liberally. A sarcastic article published in the *New-Hampshire Gazette* in 1760 made the tongue-in-cheek case that Canada be returned to the French at the close of the war. Among the various reasons for this, an author signing only as A.Z. mockingly argued that Canada had to be returned “lest, thro’ a greater plenty of beaver, broad brimmed hats become cheaper to that unmannerly sect, the Quakers,”¹⁶⁶ further surmising, “We should restore Canada, that we may soon have a new war, and another opportunity of spending two or three millions a year in America; there being great danger of our growing too rich, our European expences not being sufficient to drain our immense treasures.”¹⁶⁷ Like Buckskin and W., A.Z. was particularly harsh with Canadians, and seemingly in this case, the proposed solution was annihilation. The article contented that:

tho’ the blood of thousands of unarmed English farmers, surprized and assassinated in their field; of harmless women and children murdered in their

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Olson, “Political Humor, Deference, and the American Revolution.”

¹⁶⁶ *New-Hampshire Gazette*, May 2, 1760.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

beds; doth at length call for vengeance... tho' the Canadian measure of iniquity be full, and if ever any country did, that country now certainly does deserve the judgment of extirpation: - yet let us not be the executioners of Divine Justice; it will look as if Englishmen were revengeful.¹⁶⁸

Not only were Canadians not like Americans, but they were so unlike Americans that papers like the *New-Hampshire Gazette* argued that the only solution was the extermination of the Canadian population. Even for the time, this call to violence was extreme, and reflected the growing sense that Canadians and Americans were polar opposites to one another. As far as the American press was generally concerned, Canadians were vicious others who stood well outside the English American imagined community. And typically, the contrasts that American newspapers drew between French Canadians and English Americans were incredibly stark, making it clear to American readers that Canadians were nothing like they were.

Not every American, however, thought that there was just no living with Canadians. A few even felt they could be assimilated into productive and moral Americans citizens. In 1761, an article published in the *Boston Evening-Post* made the explicit argument that Canadians could be assimilated. The anonymous author wrote “The inhabitants of Canada, if we keep it, will become more active and industrious; because they will have much greater encouragement to support themselves, by their own industry, than they formerly had.”¹⁶⁹ The contributor subtly argued that it was not something inherent in the nature of the Canadians that made them unproductive, but rather the amount of encouragement they had received from their empire. The author argued that if they received the type of support that English Americans had, they too would become industrious producers like their English American counterparts. Rather than an irreconcilable other, Canadians were portrayed as almost Americans, in want of only the push to become diligent, hard-working people. The article was not unwary of Canadian duplicity, though it assured readers that “the encouragement afforded them by

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ *Boston Evening-Post*, December 21, 1761; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, January 15, 1762; *New-York Gazette*, January 25, 1762.

the vicinity of a richer and better cultivated country, to harass and plunder its inhabitants, and to live in a state of war, even in the time of the most profound peace, will be entirely taken away.”¹⁷⁰ There remained a sense that Canadians were inherently prone to violence and plunder, but the author argued that without the possibility of profit by these means, Canadians would embrace their more civilized sides, the ones that English Americans had long since identified as integral to Anglo-American identity. This, the author contended, would bring French Canadians advantageously into the American fold, arguing that “We can easily prevent their having any communication with their old masters, if they should desire it: But if we supply them upon better terms, there is no reason why they should desire it.”¹⁷¹ Canadians could become Americans, and while they were not in any way the current equals of their American neighbours, the author in the *Evening-Post* argued that they one day could be. And unlike the article from *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser* which envisioned Canada as “a colony without trade and inhabitants,”¹⁷² this article argued that “The climate and soil is certainly much mended since the French first settled there; the former is become milder, and the latter more fruitful; farther cultivation, and greater population, the destruction of woods, the raising of towns and villages, will contribute to a farther melioration.”¹⁷³ Though their accomplishments were not on par with what had been accomplished in English America, the author believed some work had been done, evidence of Canadian potential. The author concluded that “whatever our new conquest may be, it will grow better and better, so long as it remains in our hands, and of consequence the inhabitants will grow richer.”¹⁷⁴ In addition to growing richer, or perhaps because of it, they would also grow more like the industrious Americans they were about to get as role models. Even though most newspapers demonized Canadians as unintelligent and bloodthirsty, a few papers made the argument that the influence of the English American identity would improve

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ *Boston Evening-Post*, December 21, 1761; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, January 15, 1762; *New-York Gazette*, January 25, 1762.

¹⁷² *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, July 27, 1761.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

the Canadians until they were up to the standards of their American neighbours. To the anonymous contributor, the Canadian people had potential. All they needed was the influence of their American betters.

Despite the general ill will toward the Canadian people, many English Americans were quite taken by the land that they inhabited. For many contributors to American newspapers, Canada itself was a land with potential. As far as the trade of Canada was concerned, they imagined there was nowhere to go but up. The contributor to *Green & Russell's* continued of the Canadians, "We can certainly supply all their wants, as easily, and at as cheap a rate as the French could do; and furnish them much better, for carrying on their trade with the Indians: so that whatever they acquire we shall have; and we shall have the more, the more they acquire."¹⁷⁵ As was the American nature, the author argued that Americans could beneficially improve the Canadian fur trade in ways that would be positive for both. Canadians were not an eternal other, but an other that could easily be brought into the American fold once the benefits of American culture and American identity became clear to them. Unlike the articles that portrayed Canada as either an economic wasteland or a savage back-wood, this article envisioned Canadians adopting English American culture and participating in its liberty and increase. Nancy Christie had argued that during this period, "French Canadian inhabitants were steadily incorporated into British trading and consumption networks."¹⁷⁶ This kind of assimilation was something that the author in the *Boston Evening-Post* argued would be beneficial to both French Canadians and to English Americans. English Americans would remove a threat and gain access to a potentially lucrative trade market while Canadians would be exposed to a superior cultural identity which they would one day adopt for themselves. For these reasons, the author ultimately concluded that "Upon the whole, therefore, the accession of such a territory, and such a number of people, must be very beneficial to this county, and therefore it seems best to keep it."¹⁷⁷ Though this author portrayed Canadians in a far

¹⁷⁵ *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, July 27, 1761.

¹⁷⁶ Nancy Christie, "Merchant and Plebian Commercial Knowledge in Montreal and Quebec, 1760-1820," *Early American Studies* Vol 13 No 4 (2015), 856.

¹⁷⁷ *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, July 27, 1761.

more favourable light than most of their contemporaries, this piece does share an important characteristic with other portrayals of Canadians during the French and Indian War. When choosing between what they defined as English liberty or French tyranny, the mid-eighteenth century American press universally agreed that for Canadians, the choice was pretty clear. Many even concluded that they were smart enough to make the right one.

An address from the “Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonality” of New York to Major-General Jeffery Amherst published in the *New-York Gazette* following the surrender of Canada made the differences between French and British rule plain. The party praised Amherst’s treatment of the Canadian people, concluding that “your compassionate Treatment of the vanquished Canadians, must appear most singularly amiable, to require of a disarmed, yet implacable Foe, whose Inhumanities have deserved the severest Strokes of vindictive Justice, nothing more than a quiet Submission to the gentle Dictates of British Rule, is indeed a disinterested Virtue,”¹⁷⁸ one which they were sure “must convince the attentive World that Britons never conquer to enslave.”¹⁷⁹ The address spoke to English American understandings of themselves and of the British empire. Against the foil of French Catholic tyranny and absolute rule, the party that addressed Amherst stressed that they, as Britons, were different. Where absolute empires like that of the French sought to enslave, benevolent and compassionate empires like their own British empire freed those under tyrannical empires. As far as the Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonality of New York were seemingly concerned, Amherst’s benevolent treatment of the French exemplified what it meant to be a part of the British empire. Philanthropos wrote in his article “I can’t but look upon it as a most favourable circumstance in the reduction of Canada, that General Amherst did not suffer our people, nor even the Indians that were with him, to take revenge on the French.”¹⁸⁰ He concluded that this was “A conduct so different from that of French commanders, that even the

¹⁷⁸ *New-York Gazette*, December 1, 1760; *New-York Mercury*, December 1, 1760; *Boston Gazette*, December 8, 1760; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, December 11, 1760.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 27, 1760.

barbarous Indians themselves could not but remark it to that people; and which, as it gives them a charming idea of benevolence and humanity of a people they have ever been taught to view as hereticks, and under the influence of a false religion.”¹⁸¹ British treatment of the Canadians in general was a point of pride across the American press. American newspapers were particularly impressed with the treatment of the Canadian people by the British troops, emphasizing the humanity Anglo-Americans showed to their recently bitter enemies. The letter from the soldier who ate 21 dishes at the priest’s home noted of Montreal, that “the poor, who had suffered by the calamity of the war, would certainly have perished in numbers this winter, had not a most humane act of British generosity been shewn them, by collecting about 400 l. among us, and buying the necessities of life for these needy wretches.”¹⁸² These soldiers seemed to exemplify the English American character when they purchased provisions as an act of humanity for their avowed enemies. And as far as the press was concerned, there were numerous examples of English American identity in the aftermath of the war. The *Boston Gazette* called the above act but “One of the Instances of Kindness and Generosity of the brave British Troops.”¹⁸³ This was perceived as something simply in the nature of English Americans. It noted that when the soldiers “had their Allowance of Provisions dealt out to them, on seeing the distressed Women and Children, whose Husbands, Fathers, and Brethren, had been, and some were then their inveterate Enemies, freely distributed half their Allowance to them, causing them to rejoice in receiving the Stuff of Life from those whom they had so great and aversion to.”¹⁸⁴ As Americans heaped burning coals on their enemies’ heads,¹⁸⁵ the American press enthusiastically praised them for it. The difference between the English Americans and the French Canadians was clear. One was humane,

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² *New-York Gazette*, September 21, 1761; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, September 28, 1761; *Boston Gazette*, October 5, 1761.

¹⁸³ *Boston Gazette*, December 17, 1759; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, December 17, 1759; *New-York Gazette*, December 31, 1759; *New-York Mercury*, December 31, 1759; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 3, 1760; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, January 3, 1760.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Romans 12:19-20 NIV. “Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’”

and the other was not. The *Gazette* asked its readers, “is it imagined that the Army of Contades, had that been victorious last Summer, would have behaved in like Manner to Hanover?”¹⁸⁶ Contrasted with perceived French Canadians’ incivility, the humanity that was shown by the English American militias was touted as representative of the English American character. Whether English American soldiers had indeed spent their rations to feed and clothe their enemies or not, the seeming civility of the officers and troops that took Canada was lionized across the American press. Quoting Wolfe, the *Boston Gazette* reminded its readers that “Britons breathe higher Sentiments of Humanity, and listen to the merciful Dictates of the Christian Religion.”¹⁸⁷ To be British, and therefore to be British American, was to be benevolent.

On October 1, 1759, the *Boston Evening-Post* reprinted an article from the *London Chronicle*, which was signed by “a New-Englandman” and which read remarkably like a manifesto of mid-eighteenth century British American identity. The article was a response to a letter, published in the *Chronicle*, which the author had found particularly offensive and which he set out to refute. The contributor began, “In your paper, No. 310, I find an extract of a letter, said to be from a gentleman in General Abercrombie’s army. As there are several strokes in it tending to render the colonies despicable, and even odious to the mother country, which may have in consequences... permit me to make a few observations on it.”¹⁸⁸ The first assertion in the letter by the gentleman in Abercrombie’s army was that Americans “still retain their original [Presbyterian and Independent] character, and they generally hate the Church of England.”¹⁸⁹ Like Philanthropus, the New-Englandman argued against that image, presenting Protestant unity as flourishing in America. The author surmised, “It is very true, that some resentment still remained for the hardships their fathers suffer’d, it might

¹⁸⁶ *Boston Gazette*, December 17, 1759; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, December 17, 1759; *New-York Gazette*, December 31, 1759; *New-York Mercury*, December 31, 1759; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 3, 1760; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, January 3, 1760.

¹⁸⁷ *Boston Gazette*, December 17, 1759; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, December 17, 1759; *New-York Gazette*, December 31, 1759; *New-York Mercury*, December 31, 1759; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 3, 1760; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, January 3, 1760.

¹⁸⁸ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 1, 1759.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

perhaps be not much wondered at,” but concluded that “the moderation of the present Church of England towards Dissenters in Old as well as New-England, has quite effaced those Impressions; the Dissenters too are become less rigid and scrupulous, and the good will between those different bodies in that country is now both mutual and equal.”¹⁹⁰ As far as the New-Englandman was concerned, an important part of the American identity was its religious unity, and that unity was in many ways the product of the fears of French Canadian Catholicism that circulated widely in mid-eighteenth century America. The next accusation was that American “equality also produces a rusticity of manner; for in their language, dress, and in all their behaviour, they are more boorish than any thing you ever saw in a certain Northern latitude.”¹⁹¹ To these, the New-Englandman categorically disagreed. Rather, he argued that Americans were as British in their dress as any in the British Isles. Regarding American fashion, he noted that Americans “wear the manufacture of Britain, and follow its fashions perhaps too closely, every remarkable change in the mode making its appearance there within a few months after its invention here,” something that he concluded was “a natural effect of [American’s] constant intercourse with England, by ships arriving almost every week from the capital, their respect for the mother country, and admiration of every thing that is British.”¹⁹² Colonial English Americans were not like colonial French Canadians. Where French Canadians were indeed rustic and rural, English Americans were sophisticated and well-dressed. The offense that was taken by the New-Englandman largely revolved around the ways in which cultured Anglo-Americans were being portrayed like backwoods French Canadians. As far as the author was concerned, that was something that could not stand.

The New-Englandman doesn’t focus his rebuttal on Canadians, but it is clear throughout that the popular image of French Canadians was one which he felt did not equally apply to English Americans. Regarding the American accent, which had also been attacked in the letter from Abercrombie’s army, he wrote “I appeal to all Englishmen here, who have been acquainted with the Colonists, whether it is not a

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 1, 1759.

¹⁹² Ibid.

common remark, that they speak the language with such an exactness both of expression and accent, that though you may know the native of several of the counties of England, by peculiarities in their dialect, you cannot by that means distinguish a North American.”¹⁹³ As David Hackett Fisher has argued, the regional identities of English Americans were heavily influenced by the regions of England from which they migrated,¹⁹⁴ yet the New-Englandman argued that, at least in speech patterns, Americans had created their own way of speaking, a way that was more precise and proper than that of the English themselves. In many ways, it paralleled the religious pluralism that had become an important part of the Anglo-American identity. Regarding American learning, the New-Englandman surmised that “All the new books and pamphlets worth reading, that are published here, in a few weeks are transmitted and found there, where there is not a man or woman born in the country but what can read.”¹⁹⁵ Unlike Canadians, Americans were avid readers by the author’s account. He was deeply offended that the letter writer to whom he responded could even dream to think that English Americans were anything like their ignorant Canadian neighbours. But the most egregious insult came in the gentleman’s condemnation of American military prowess. He contended that American troops “are remarkably simple or silly, and blunder eternally,” further surmising that “300 Indians with their yell, throw 3000 [American Provincials] in a panick, and then they will leave nothing for the enemy to do, for they will shoot one another; and in the woods our regulars are afraid to be on a command with them.”¹⁹⁶ To this, the New-Englandman responded with a list comparing several failures and defeats suffered by the regular troops alongside examples of gallantry and victory by American militiamen. He conceded that “These Regular Gentlemen... may possibly be afraid, as they say they are, to be on a command with us in the woods,” but concluded that as “the chance of our shooting them is not as one to a hundred, compared with that of their being shot by the enemy; may it not be suspected ... that a concern for their scalps weighs more with them than a regard

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ David Hackett Fisher, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹⁹⁵ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 1, 1759.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

for their honour.”¹⁹⁷ While Canadians more than lived up to such depictions, they were dissonant in terms of the American military. Throughout his letter, the New-Englandman made it clear that Americans were nothing like Canadians. While his purpose was not to compare Americans to Canadians, the cultural and character traits that the author valued were the same that Canadians were often considered to be devoid of. It was thus a travesty to have English Americans portrayed in ways similar to depictions of Canadians. In the opinion of the New-Englandman, British American identity was obviously superior to the French Canadian identity. It offended him that the letter writer from Abercrombie’s army could paint that superior identity as anything like its French Canadian counterpart.

In Canadians, the American press found the perfect out-group to present as a foil to the Anglo-American identity. The depictions of Canadians that featured in the American press were not objective attempts at accurately portraying the Canadian identity, but rather a means by which to define the American identity by contrasting it with an image of a blood-thirsty, slavish other. Where Canadians allegedly butchered unarmed women and children on the frontiers,¹⁹⁸ Anglo-Americans gave of their own rations to feed the destitute women and children of their enemies.¹⁹⁹ Where French Canadians intermingled and intermarried with First Nations,²⁰⁰ Americans kept their Indigenous allies at arm’s length as buffers to their frontier settlements,²⁰¹ and as Warren R. Hofstra has argued, also encouraged the settlement of frontier regions by foreigners like Germans as a similar layer of buffer.²⁰² Where French Canadians incited their First

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ *New-Hampshire Gazette*, May 2, 1760; *New-York Gazette*, December 1, 1760; *New-York Mercury*, December 1, 1760; *Boston Gazette*, December 8, 1760; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, December 11, 1760.

¹⁹⁹ *Boston Gazette*, December 17, 1759; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, December 17, 1759; *New-York Gazette*, December 31, 1759; *New-York Mercury*, December 31, 1759; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 3, 1760; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, January 3, 1760; *New-York Gazette*, September 21, 1761; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, September 28, 1761; *Boston Gazette*, October 5, 1761.

²⁰⁰ *New-York Mercury*, March 27, 1758; *Boston Gazette*, April 10, 1758; *Boston Post-Boy*, April 10, 1758; *New-York Gazette*, April 14, 1760; *New-York Gazette*, April 4, 1763.

²⁰¹ *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, February 21, 1757; *Boston News-Letter*, March 17, 1757; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 17, 1757; *Boston Evening-Post*, April 18, 1757.

²⁰² Warren R. Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

Nations allies to break terms and massacre unarmed prisoners,²⁰³ English Americans took no vengeance on their disarmed enemies and allegedly enforced the same amongst their Indigenous allies.²⁰⁴ Where Canadians were slavishly devoted to Catholicism,²⁰⁵ Americans had the liberty of Protestantism.²⁰⁶ Where Canadians were backwoods peasants,²⁰⁷ all Americans, men and women, could read.²⁰⁸ Where Canadians barely had the essentials of life,²⁰⁹ Americans wore all the latest British fashions and read all the latest British books.²¹⁰ Where Canadians were burdensome cowards in the field,²¹¹ Americans were brave and formidable.²¹² American newspapers emphasized these differences in their portrayals of Canadians throughout the French and Indian War, buttressing the American identity as the antithesis of all of Canada's moral and material failings. In articles like the one published by the *New-Englandman*, the American press reinforced what an American was. In articles condemning French Canadian Catholicism

²⁰³ *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, April 25, 1757; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 28, 1757; *Boston Evening-Post*, May 16, 1757; *Boston Gazette*, May 23, 1757; *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, August 22, 1757; *New-York Mercury*, August 22, 1757; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 25, 1757; *Boston Gazette*, August 29, 1757; *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, August 29, 1757; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 2, 1757; *Boston Gazette*, September 5, 1757; *Boston Post-Boy*, September 5, 1757; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 9, 1757.

²⁰⁴ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 27, 1760; *New-York Gazette*, December 1, 1760; *New-York Mercury*, December 1, 1760; *Boston Gazette*, December 8, 1760; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, December 11, 1760.

²⁰⁵ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, August 28, 1755; *Boston News-Letter*, August 29, 1755.

²⁰⁶ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 27, 1760; *New-York Gazette*, December 1, 1760; *New-York Mercury*, December 1, 1760; *Boston Gazette*, December 8, 1760; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, December 11, 1760.

²⁰⁷ *New-York Gazette*, September 21, 1761; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, September 28, 1761; *Boston Gazette*, October 5, 1761.

²⁰⁸ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 1, 1759.

²⁰⁹ *Boston Gazette*, December 17, 1759; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, December 17, 1759; *New-York Gazette*, December 31, 1759; *New-York Mercury*, December 31, 1759; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 3, 1760; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, January 3, 1760; *New-York Gazette*, September 21, 1761; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, September 28, 1761; *Boston Gazette*, October 5, 1761.

²¹⁰ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 1, 1759.

²¹¹ *Boston News-Letter*, September 6, 1759; *Boston Evening-Post*, September 10, 1759; *Boston Gazette*, September 10, 1759; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 22, 1759; *New-York Gazette*, November 26, 1759; *Boston Evening-Post*, December 3, 1759; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, December 3, 1759; *Boston News-Letter*, December 6, 1759; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, December 7, 1759.

²¹² *Boston Evening-Post*, October 1, 1759.

or racial mixing in Canada, the press reinforced what an American was not. The image of Canadians that Americans saw in the pages of their newspapers were not objective depictions of the people of Canada, but rather reflections of their own alter egos. As American newspapers constructed the American identity against and in juxtaposition to the Canadian identity, Canadians became the opposite of what Americans considered themselves to be. By the time the French and Indian War had ended, this had never been truer.

During the French and Indian War, American identity was British identity. Even the unique American identity presented by the New-Englandman might be described as an identity more British than even the British identity, a distillation of a certain strand of Britishness. In the defeat of French Canada, Americans celebrated the zenith of their British empire and the special place America held within it. They had vanquished the “American Carthage”²¹³ and made clear to the world the “Blessings of English Liberty.”²¹⁴ It would have been difficult in 1763 to imagine that in little more than a decade, the American colonies would be in open rebellion against the British empire, but the French and Indian War had brought many changes to North America, and those changes often bred conflicts; conflicts in which Canada increasingly found itself at the centre. Those Canadians, who throughout the war had been the epitome of evil and vice, were about to undergo a remarkable image rehabilitation. Within a decade, French Canadians who for generations had been the ultimate other for English Americans began to be portrayed as loyal friends. American opinion of Canadians seemingly turned completely on its head, and yet through that shift, portrayals of Canadians continued to serve largely the same purpose as they had during the war. The Canadian identity, as expressed in the American press, continued to be used to define the American identity by comparison. But where the comparisons had previously been almost entirely negative, as the American Revolution dawned, those comparisons shifted from focusing on perceived differences to focusing on perceived similarities. Remarkably quickly, portrayals of

²¹³ *New-York Gazette*, October 6, 1760; *Boston Evening-Post*, October 13, 1760; *Boston Gazette*, October 13, 1760; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, October 13, 1760; *Boston News-Letter*, October 16, 1760.

²¹⁴ *New-York Gazette*, April 4, 1763.

Canadians changed, and with them, Americans' understandings of their own collective identity.

Part 1: “Undisciplined Savage Canadians,” 1754-1774

Chapter 2: “The Worthy Inhabitants of Canada,” 1763-1774

Though Americans ended the French and Indian War with a relatively low view of the Canadian character, in the following decade, American opinion of their French Canadian neighbours would make a 180 degree turn, with Canadians going from savage, backwoods villains to enlightened and moral heroes. Instrumental in the shift in opinion of Canadians was the changing American view of the mother country. Following the Seven Years’ War, British governance aimed to take a more direct role in the management of the colonies, where they had previously used a relatively light touch. Fred Anderson has argued that British politicians alienated many Americans when they attempted to revise the metropole-periphery relationship after the war by treating the colonials more as subjects than as allies, as they previously had.²¹⁵ As far as many Americans were concerned, this trampled on their rights as Englishmen. And this process was accelerated by the press. Brendan McConville has argued that, in the years preceding the Revolution, opponents of royalism led a campaign that subverted the iconoclasm and symbolism of the royalists and turned it against them, essentially turning the previously royalist American press against the crown.²¹⁶ Anderson argued that British governmental attempts at treating French Canadians and Indigenous nations equitably through close colonial administration ultimately disaffected the Anglo-American population²¹⁷ while McConville argued that this sentiment was enhanced by American colonists who sought to “manipulate the language and rites of empire”²¹⁸ to turn the people against the king. American press portrayals of Canadians through this era show this transformation and its timing with clarity. In the late 1760s and early 1770s, American newspapers repeatedly harped on the legal and religious tolerations granted to French Canada and continued to depict Canadians as ignorant peasants and slaves to arbitrary Catholic power. With the

²¹⁵ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 557-616.

²¹⁶ McConville, *The King’s Three Faces*, 7-10.

²¹⁷ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 557-616.

²¹⁸ McConville, *The King’s Three Faces*, 9.

Boston Port Act and the Quebec Act in 1774, however, animosity shifted from Canadians to the British crown, as George III, and other British political figures like Lord North became the ones that much of the American populace came to associate with papacy and absolutism.

Anti-Catholicism was a foundational part of the mid-eighteenth century American identity, and many historians have noted the connections between such sentiment and the conflicts that sparked the American Revolution. Francis D. Cogliano has argued that, despite their own religious differences, Protestant New Englanders shared a common opposition to the Roman Catholic Church. He further argued that, in rebelling against the crown, New Englanders were reacting against what they viewed as royal complacency, often complicity, in allowing Catholicism to flourish.²¹⁹ Carla Gardina Pestana has similarly argued that there was a common American fear of both conspiracies and Catholicism, and that Protestantism served to bind the English American population together.²²⁰ In the early 1770s, these fears gradually shifted away from French Catholic conspiracies to English Catholic ones. Charles H. Metzger has argued that the Quebec Act, particularly its toleration of Catholicism and its expansion of the province of Canada to the west of the Appalachians behind the American colonies, helped precipitate associations between the British crown and the Catholic Church. For Metzger, anti-Catholicism underpinned colonial American identity, and the British crown's toleration of this purported supreme evil, as laid out in the Quebec Act, linked the king with the Popish threat that seemed to lurk everywhere in the mid-eighteenth century American mind.²²¹ As these fears migrated from the French Catholic peasant other to the English pseudo-Catholic monarchist other in the early 1770s, for the first time, Canadians were portrayed by the majority of American newspapers as potentially worthy of being adopted into the emergent American national identity, though the sentiment was not universal.

²¹⁹ Cogliano, *No King, No Popery*, 49-52.

²²⁰ Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire*.

²²¹ Metzger, *The Quebec Act*, 37-63.

Throughout the shift in opinion, Canadians remained an important means of defining the American identity that would be vital to the unified fight during the Revolution. As Robert G. Parkinson has noted, there were serious questions regarding whether or not the American colonies would be able to unite with one another closely enough to execute a revolution.²²² The shift in American press portrayals of Canadians reflects American attempts at establishing continental colonial unity in the years before the war. Many American revolutionaries imagined a complete expulsion of the British from North America and a nation that comprised all the former British American colonies, regardless of how long they had been British. Shifting printed portrayals of Canadians was prescient as part of the effort to attract Canadian support, but it was also a reflection of the ways in which American identity was shifting in the era between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. Unity was becoming an important aspect of that identity, one that would be fundamental if Americans were to win their independence, and as such, Americans began to see colonial and regional differences less starkly. There remained, of course, significant difference and rivalries between regions and states in the post Revolutionary era, but prized throughout these squabbles was American unity. The American colonies and later states had one another's back, as far as the Revolutionary American press was concerned (especially because the press was exaggerating the extent of that unity), and that loyalty extended to their newest sibling, Canada. Though the true shift in portrayals happened rather quickly toward the end of the interwar period, it was a process that began almost immediately following the end of the French and Indian War. Suddenly, French Canada, a region that had largely remained a mystery to the English American colonies, was opened up to American observation. And at first, Canadians remained a foil, a manifestation of the various character flaws that American newspaper editors were confident had been excised from the American identity.

Chapter Two explores the dramatic shift in American portrayals of Canadians between the end of the French and Indian War and the prelude to the American

²²² Parkinson, *The Common Cause*, 4-6.

Revolution about a decade later. During this time, American depictions of Canadians changed dramatically, with Canadians going from evil, bloodthirsty brutes to reasoned, loyal friends. For most of the decade, however, American opinion of Canadians changed very little. For years, Canadians remained a savage and vicious other, used to define the American identity by contrast. When the Anglo-American disputes began to intensify in the early 1770s, however, American opinion of Canadians began to change. Since unity was seen as integral to revolutionary success, American newspapers and officials began to paint a picture of colonial American unity, with French Canadians on the inside for the first time. In the 1770s, particularly in 1774 following the passage of the Quebec Act, American press portrayals of Canadians made a 180-degree turn. Very quickly, Canadians became enlightened and noble, almost perfect facsimiles of the perceived English American identity. Rather than being used as a foil against which to define American identity, Canadians were now used as a mirror, reflecting the American identity back at American readers. This shift in opinion was dramatic and, in many ways, unprecedented. In the course of a few years, American newspapers abandoned their attacks on French Canadian Catholicism and French Canadian culture, instead portraying the Canadians as friends and neighbours. The difference from the depictions of Canadians that filled the press in the years immediately following the end of the French and Indian War was stark. By 1774, the Canadians that appeared in the American press were nothing at all like the Canadians that had inhabited it in 1764.

Once again, Canada mattered to Americans. The shift in American public opinion of Canadians between the end of the French and Indian War and the beginning Revolutionary War was incredibly remarkable. Anti-Catholicism was deeply rooted in English American society, and the fact that Americans were able to largely abandon this sentiment within the course of a few years was extremely noteworthy. What makes the shift even more important is that the main swing occurred within the course of a couple of years surrounding the Quebec Act. The rapid pace of this change implies that many newspapers abandoned their anti-Catholicism out of expediency as revolutionaries sought to draw the Canadians into the revolutionary fold. Whatever the motivations, however, there was a dramatic change in the ways that the American press portrayed Canadians. As Cogliano has argued, Americans largely abandoned their anti-Catholicism when Catholic

France became an ally to the revolutionaries in 1778.²²³ This process of abandonment, however, began four years earlier when Americans began to tone down their attacks on French Canadian Catholics in the wake of the Quebec Act in an effort to attract Canadian support for the Revolution. Once again, understandings of Canadians mattered greatly to Americans. In the approximate decade between the end of the French and Indian War and the beginning of the Revolutionary War, however, they mattered for a different reason. Rather than a group that American newspapers sought to other, Canadians became a group that the American press looked to use as a means of reflecting the American identity back at Americans. Given the longevity of the anti-French Catholic sentiment that had circulated in the American press, this shift was remarkably swift and remarkably sharp. Seemingly overnight, Canadians appeared to change fundamentally.

The French and Indian War had been a great military victory for the British empire, but in many ways, it was a victory that would prove to be pyrrhic. National debt grew enormously, leaving the empire in desperate need of money. And this national debt impacted the already heavily indebted colonies. Harry D. Berg has argued that “the conclusion of the Seven Years War and with it the ending of England's lavish spending in the support of her armies and those of her allies left the western trading world in a state of acute distress.”²²⁴ Inflation had spiked during the war and unemployment was particularly high, particularly in the population centres of New England, which had lost many young men in the fighting and which now had large numbers of war widows on poor relief. In such an economic climate, American newspaper editors were understandably worried about the affect that incorporating French Canada, a region that had for years been portrayed as an economic sinkhole, would have on the other American colonies. Fears abounded as the British empire set about integrating French Canada into the colonial trade network, but in the end, they proved unfounded as Canada was quickly absorbed into the world of British

²²³ Cogliano, *No King or Popery*, 71-99.

²²⁴ Harry D. Berg, “Economic Consequences of the French and Indian War for the Philadelphia Merchants,” *Pennsylvania History* Vol 13 No 3 (1946), 185.

trade. By integrating Canada into the imperial trade fabric, Britain hoped to imitate what had been accomplished in the English American colonies with the Atlantic trade network. The English American colonies had been drawn into the imagined community of the empire through this trade network, and Britain hoped that the same would be the case for the new French Canadian province.

The consumer marketplace was, in many ways, foundational to the emerging American identity that would eventually be relied upon to promote colonial unity during the Revolutionary War. T.H. Breen has argued that general participation in the consumer marketplace gave the American population a shared experience which made it easier for the colonies to perceive of themselves as a united front. Though consumer trends in the American marketplace were often an imitation of English trends, Breen argued that their individual participation in a relatively affordable market brought Americans together around their shared consumption of consumer products.²²⁵ Though most American newspapers continued to view French Canadians with suspicion, many also touted the potential advantages of integrating their northern neighbours into this shared Anglo-American consumer culture to expand the market for British American goods and to provide additional raw materials. In the late 1760s, American newspapers began to offer products specifically marketed as Canadian. Such products were typically rugged and associated with wilderness, like Canadian beaver traps,²²⁶ Canadian red deer skins,²²⁷ and Canadian balsam (a kind of turpentine).²²⁸ These products seemed to reflect understandings of the French Canadian people. French Canadians were also considered to be rugged and were continually associated with the wilderness. In the American public mind, the products coming out of Canada were in essence very similar to the Canadians who had produced them. The Canadian horse, a muscular, hearty breed of draft and

²²⁵ Breen, *Marketplace of Revolution* 154-157.

²²⁶ *Virginia Gazette*, September 19, 1766; *Virginia Gazette*, September 26, 1766; *Virginia Gazette*, October 3, 1766.

²²⁷ *Boston Gazette*, January 22, 1770; *Boston Gazette*, January 29, 1770; *Boston Gazette*, February 5, 1770; *Supplement to the Boston-Gazette, &c.*, February 12, 1770; *Supplement to the Boston-Gazette, &c.*, February 19, 1770; *Supplement to the Boston-Gazette, &c.*, February 26, 1770.

²²⁸ *Virginia Gazette*, September 21, 1769.

riding horse descended from stock originally shipped to Canada in 1655 by Louis XIV,²²⁹ is perhaps the best example, and in the late eighteenth century it was by far the most widely circulating product in American newspapers with the Canadian brand. Canada and its inhabitants were portrayed much as their products, a place of rugged natural bounty ripe to be exploited by a rough and tough Canadian population. This image took some crafting, however, given existing American associations between Canada and frozen wilderness. In addition to the perceived physical conditions of Canada, English Americans were also very aware that the French Canadian population was small and did not seem to be growing rapidly. As Peter N. Moogk has argued, many of the French emigres to Canada in the eighteenth century ultimately made the decision to return home to France.²³⁰ This trend did not seem to speak well for the potential that could be found by English Americans should they decide to transplant to the new province, and this impression was something the British government worked hard to change.

Leading that charge was the Governor of Canada James Murray. In April of 1765, Murray issued a proclamation advertising land grants that were available in Canada, in which he asserted that “Whereas this Province has been represented barren and incapable of Improvement, from the Length and Severity of the Winter, it becomes necessary in this Proclamation, to remove these Errors.”²³¹ Acknowledging the image of French Canada that English Americans had in their minds, Murray was quick to argue that the image was untrue. He informed English Americans that “The Meadows, in a State of Nature, yield amazing Quantities of Hay; and the Droughts, so frequent in the more Southern Colonies, are not known here.” As far as Murray was concerned, English Americans with their skills and work ethic could make excellent use of what he portrayed as a wonderful geographic region. He further contended that “none of the Colonies are in a Situation to vie with this in the Articles of Lumber, Potash, Iron, and Ship Timber, as the whole

²²⁹ Judith Dutson, *Storey's Illustrated Guide to 96 Horse Breed of North America* (North Adams: Storey Publishing, 2005).

²³⁰ Peter N. Moogk, “Reluctant Exiles: Emigrants from France in Canada before 1760,” *William and Mary Quarterly* Vol 46 No 3 (1989), 463.

²³¹ *New-York Mercury*, April 29, 1765; *Newport Mercury*, May 13, 1765; *Supplement to the Boston-Gazette, &c.*, May 27, 1765; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 18, 1765.

Country abounds with the proper Materials; and is, every where, intersected with Rivers capable to convey them to the Great River Saint Lawrence.”²³² All that English Americans dreamed of could seemingly be had in Canada, and Murray was sure to stress this for readers. Murray further contended that “The populous Towns of Quebec and Montreal, afford Markets for every Thing the industrious Farmer can raise,” going so far as to assert that “the Air of the Province of Quebec, is as healthy as any under the Sun; for in no Country do People live to a greater Age, with more uninterrupted good Health.”²³³ In Murray’s view, there was only one thing holding Canada back from becoming an economic and industrial power centre: its inhabitants.

Despite the praise showered on their land, French Canadians were belittled across the American press as slothful and ignorant. In describing the agricultural potential of Canada, Murray contended that “The Lands in general are fertile, producing Wheat, and every other European Grain, at the Rate of Ten for One, from the Canadian Culture, which is perhaps the worst that is practiced by any civilized People.”²³⁴ The contention that Canadians were squandering the natural bounty gifted to them through their indolence and folly was echoed across the press. Like Murray, an article in the *New-York Gazette* published the same year as the above proclamation surmised of Canada that “The English Farmers, who are come here, tell us, there is no a better country for [farming] in the world.”²³⁵ Also like Murray, however, the anonymous author asserted of Canadians, “so ignorant are they of every advantage arising from industry and agriculture, that I could learn nothing of them, and so naturally lazy, even the better sort.” As the continual improvement on one’s land was considered both a Christian and European duty by many Americans,²³⁶ their apathy seemingly excluded Canadians from the American identity. While they were British Americans in name having been annexed, Canadians were not British Americans in nature, a seeming contradiction that would continue to spark debate

²³² *New-York Mercury*, April 29, 1765; *Newport Mercury*, May 13, 1765; *Supplement to the Boston-Gazette, &c.*, May 27, 1765; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 18, 1765.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *New-York Gazette*, December 30, 1765.

²³⁶ Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 19-53.

regarding the American identity as the imperial era of the United States began. As the anonymous author of the article from the *New-York Gazette* argued of Canadians, “if they can clear as much land as will grow them corn, and have sufficient to maintain their families, feed four horses, and the like number of milch cows, they have no idea of more.” Like stereotypes of Indigenous peoples, Canadians were portrayed as lazily satisfied with the bare minimum of survival. This was not the way of an American. Americans were industrious and hard-working, intent on improving their land and their fortunes and engaging in commercial agriculture, as opposed to mere subsistence farming. This stood in stark contrast to the Canadians, who were portrayed as nearly the complete opposites of their American counterparts. The *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser* described “the ignorance or folly of a deluded people”²³⁷ when referencing Canadians. The *Boston Evening Post* called Canadians “a most ignorant bigoted people.”²³⁸ Part of what made French Canadians seem so backward to English Americans was the seigneurial system of New France. All land in New France was technically owned by the king, with seigneuries granted along the St. Lawrence and other major waterways. Ownership of these seigneuries was essentially split between a seigneur who owned the land and habitants who worked and lived on the land. To English American eyes, this system reeked of serfdom, and was ridiculed as keeping Canadians firmly stuck in the feudal past. As the seigneurial system of New France generally prevented both seigneurs and habitants from becoming particularly wealthy, English Americans portrayed their Canadian neighbours as lazy and indolent, unwilling to break away from the constraining systems of the past and take advantage of superior British ways. For most American newspapers, the perceived Canadian lack of ambition and drive was something inherent. For those papers willing to grant Canadians the potential for improvement, an old enemy was responsible for French Canada’s backward and primitive ways: the Catholic church. As an article published in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle* and signed A.B. put it, “The inhabitants of Canada are generally a sober, good sort of people, whose only luxury is a pipe, and would be good British subject, but for the

²³⁷ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, October 5, 1774.

²³⁸ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 9, 1769; *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, October 23, 1769.

priests, who keep alive the aversion to Heretics, and the enthusiastic notions of the grand monarch.”²³⁹ In A.B.’s opinion, Canadians were happy being serfs because the Catholic church had ingrained it in them. Other newspapers contended that the church was in fact currently engraining beliefs far more odious.

In the late 1760s, the primary fear surrounding Canada in the American public mind was that Catholic priests and missionaries, particularly Jesuits (whom the *Connecticut Courant* called “the most artful and mischievous order of men that ever the world was plagued with”²⁴⁰), would disaffect Canadians from their Anglo-American neighbours and eventually encourage them to descend upon those neighbours in arms. In June of 1769, the *Boston Gazette* warned, “We hear from Quebec, that the Canadian inhabitants have lately shewn a very discontented spirit, which is said to have arisen from the influence of the Jesuits, a great number of whom are now in that part of the world.”²⁴¹ In October of that same year, the *Boston Evening-Post* surmised that “for want of learned and orthodox ministers to instruct our said loving subjects in the principles of true religion, divers [sic] Romish priests and Jesuits are the more encouraged to pervert and draw over our said loving subjects to Popish superstition and idolatry.”²⁴² The paper continued, “The Romish priests avail themselves greatly of the neglected state of the church of England in those parts, perswading [sic] the Canadians (who are most easily to be perswaded [sic], being a most ignorant bigoted people, and entirely devoted to the priests, especially the Jesuits) that we have not religion so much at heart as they.” A primary concern was that the priests would use this influence to incite the French Canadians to butcher their Protestant American neighbours, as most American newspapers felt was the endgame of Catholicism. This was a fear that was particularly strong in the New England colonies, an area that, as a frontier region, had faced the brunt of attacks from the French Canadians and from French-allied Indigenous nations. The western frontier was another region that, though it had few newspapers of its own, was

²³⁹ *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, January 2, 1769.

²⁴⁰ *Connecticut Courant*, October 31, 1774.

²⁴¹ *Supplement to the Boston-Gazette, &c.*, June 12, 1769; *New-York Journal*, July 27, 1769.

²⁴² *Boston Evening-Post*, October 9, 1769; *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, October 23, 1769.

portrayed as being especially vulnerable according to New England papers. The *Boston Evening-Post* argued of Canada that “The account from thence, on the breaking out of the next War will probably be that the Bishops and Seminarists have seduced French and Indians to rebel, with sudden desolation and slaughter of all the back settlers.” The threat was amplified by the proximity of the Catholic clergy and their perceived designs for English America. The *Connecticut Courant* argued of the Catholic priests in Canada,

They will serve excellently to maintain and increase the dark spirit of delusion and servile submission in the Canadians; and to extinguish every ray of light shining to them from the other provinces, and every rising spark of the generous fire of the spirit of Liberty which the Creator has inspired in the heart of man, and to blow up a dark fire of bigoted zeal in your breasts against Protestant hereticks, and so prepare them to come down upon the southern provinces at the nod of the Minister, as true sons of Apollion; thinking to merit heaven by destroying their neighbours.²⁴³

In the late 1760s and early 1770s, most American newspapers shared the opinion of the *Connecticut Gazette*, that Catholicism was “an impious Religion which delights in Human Blood, and teaches its professors that ‘they do God a service in breaking faith with Heretics, and pursuing them with fire and sword!’”²⁴⁴ As they had been during the French and Indian War, Canadians were portrayed as mindless slaves to the ultimate evil. The questions many Americans began to ask, however, was if that ultimate evil were to be destroyed, could the Canadians then be reformed? Away from the influence of French Catholicism, would they begin to assimilate to British norms and customs? Answering these questions required the destruction of Catholicism, and as the interwar American press began to speculate, that day did not appear to be coming soon. As far as many were concerned, the Catholic church was, if anything, growing stronger, even rooting itself within the British ministry.

Whereas in the American mind, the seat of that ultimate evil had rested in France during the war, in the decade following it, an increasingly vocal majority of American

²⁴³ *Connecticut Courant*, October 31, 1774.

²⁴⁴ *Connecticut Gazette*, November 18, 1774.

newspapers began to speculate that it had migrated into the British ministry and crown. It seemed to the American press that the Roman pope had finally gotten his hooks into the English king. In 1767, the *Providence Gazette* contended that the establishment of a Catholic bishop in Quebec was the result of “a secret article”²⁴⁵ in the Treaty of Paris. Similar assumptions about secret conspiracies and shady, back-alley dealings pervaded the American press. As Gordon S. Wood has noted, conspiratorial thinking pervaded the late eighteenth century public mind.²⁴⁶ Americans were constantly seeking out hidden conspiracies and secret plans, and to many, Quebec seemed an obvious place for such schemes to fester. Quebec was inhabited mostly by French Catholic Canadians, a group that the American press had for years been portraying as duplicitous and nasty, and was now ruled by a British ministry that many Americans were worried had been secretly infiltrated by Catholics. As a result, Quebec became a source of much anxiety for a number of American newspaper editors, particularly in New England. In 1772, the *Massachusetts Spy* contended that “no Romish Bishop would ever have been appointed to the See of Quebeck, had there not been an amicable convention previously subsisting between the two courts of London and Rome.”²⁴⁷ Ignoring the fact that the vast majority of the French Canadian population was Catholic and that one of the main goals of the British government in the aftermath of the French and Indian War was to placate their new French Canadian subjects, the *Spy* concluded that the only possibility was the Catholic infiltration of the British government. And it claimed to have details on the secret plot. The paper concluded that “the terms of that amicable convention were, that the Pope on his part should disallow the title of King to the present Chevalier Charles Stewart, and that George the Third on his part, should so far acknowledge the Pope’s supremacy, and be reconciled to the See of Rome, and to appoint a Popish Bishop to the See of Quebeck.” The *Spy* further alleged that “this amicable though secret convention has been carried into execution by both the high contracting parties.” The deed had been

²⁴⁵ *Providence Gazette*, February 14, 1767.

²⁴⁶ Gordon S. Wood, “Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol 39 No 3 (1982).

²⁴⁷ *Massachusetts Spy*, June 4, 1772; *Connecticut Journal*, June 12, 1772; *Connecticut Gazette*, June 26, 1772; *Essex Gazette*, June 30, 1772; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, July 15, 1772.

done and the British king had taken his place in the pocket of the pope. There were deep-rooted American fears that the English American colonies would be the next target of the unholy alliance. In 1774, the *Connecticut Courant* surmised that “Large betts are laid that the Popish religion will be established in England as the rational church by an act of parliament, and that the Host will be publicly carried through the streets of this metropolis in less than five years time.”²⁴⁸ This was the fear that underlay many of the conspiracies that circulated in the era, the fear that English Americans would have the religion of the anti-Christ, Catholicism, forced upon them. English Americans shuddered to think that they would be brought under the same religion as the servile French Canadians. The French Catholic church represented to English Americans pure state despotism. The amalgam of church and state that seemed to comprise the relationship between the papacy and the French crown was particularly terrifying to dissenting Protestant Americans. The French empire was one which, as far as Anglo-Americans were concerned, was thoroughly absolutist and which ruled exclusively through despotism. Many Americans further argued that it was not alone.

English Americans quickly began to see the absolutism which they so reviled in the French Catholic empire everywhere, even creeping into their own sainted political system. For many Americans in the 1770s, it seemed as though the British empire was descending into a similar state of absolutism and authoritarianism. Many American newspapers contended that legislation such as the Stamp Act of 1765 and the Quebec and Boston Port Acts of 1774 were evidence that the British ministry was seeking a despotic overthrow of the British constitution. The *Connecticut Courant* argued that “The free constitution of England abhors all ideas of slavery, and does not admit that the people inhabiting any part of its dominions should be under arbitrary power, and be slaves instead of subjects of the crown.” It further opined that the Quebec Act “contradicts the principles of our constitution, puts all the people under the despotic laws of France and established Popery and Tyranny. The bill is, indeed High Treason against the constitution

²⁴⁸ *Connecticut Courant*, September 12, 1774; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 16, 1774; *Boston Evening-Post*, September 19, 1774.

of England.”²⁴⁹ The fear that the Catholic church had infiltrated the British ministry and was now bending it to papist will was an anxiety that was deeply felt by many Americans. And again, those anxieties were amplified by the American press. As it was believed that “Popery Favors Arbitrary Power, and renders the neck of its votaries pliant to the yoke of bondage,”²⁵⁰ the connection between the British crown and the Catholic church seemed plausible to most American papers, which increasingly stoked fears of a secret conspiracy between the king and the pope. Many felt that the connection was already firmly established, like the *Courant*, which on September 12, 1774 read “It is reported that the Pope has been solicited to publish a Crusade against the rebellious Bostonians, to excite the Canadians, with the assistance of the British soldiery, to extirpate those bitter enemies to the Romish religion and monarchial power.”²⁵¹ Already paranoid about the secret plots seeping out from Rome, Americans were easily convinced that the tentacles of the pope stretched into the British government. After all, the British ministry had seemed to change tack incredibly quickly in the years following the French and Indian War. It wasn’t hard for many to believe that the reason was that Catholicism had finally taken root in the garden of British liberty. It seemed at least possible that their king was now in the pocket of the pope.

As tensions between the crown and the colonies grew in the 1770s, the fear that the British ministry would use a vicious army of French Canadians to put down Anglo-American dissent by force pervaded the American press. The *Essex Journal* accused the British ministry of thinking “it good policy to establish the slavish principles of Popery and arbitrary power through an immense track of the British dominions in America, as a check to and restraint upon the free spirit and constitutional proceedings of all our colonies in that country.”²⁵² The *New-York Journal* concurred, reporting, “We believe that the fear of offending the house of Bourbon, and to keep a large body of Popish

²⁴⁹ *Connecticut Courant*, September 12, 1774; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 16, 1774; *Boston Evening-Post*, September 19, 1774.

²⁵⁰ *Connecticut Gazette*, November 18, 1774.

²⁵¹ *Connecticut Courant*, September 12, 1774; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 16, 1774; *Boston Evening-Post*, September 19, 1774.

²⁵² *Essex Journal*, September 14, 1774.

Canadians in terrorem against our Protestant brethren in America, the true ground and principles of the bill.”²⁵³ The bill in question was the Quebec Act, legislation which officially tolerated Catholicism, affirmed the use of the existing French system of civil law and combining it with British criminal law, and extended the borders of the province into the trans-Appalachian west, and which American newspapers reviled. *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser* contended “The Quebec bill... is only a well concerted scheme to give a check to the rest of the colonies, and to keep them in awe,” arguing that “A difference in religion, laws, and dependency, will keep up a strong animosity; and there is no doubt but every encouragement that can possible be afforded to these licensed slaves, these children of Popery, supported by a Protestant Court, will be given, in order to subdue those head-strong Colonists who pretend to be governed by English laws.”²⁵⁴ This fear was especially poignant as, in the words of the *Boston Post-Boy*, Canada lay “behind New England, New York, Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, and on all occasions may be of great use in keeping up that superiority of the mother country over the colonies.”²⁵⁵ The fact that Canada was situated along what were perceived as the back borders of the other American colonies, meant that Canada could be remarkably useful in putting down dissensions in those various colonies. In an era where the Coercive Acts were already seen as attempting to set up a military government to keep the colonies at heel, there was a major fear that Canada might be used to violently hold the other colonies in submission. The paper accused the crown of setting up “a military government, by way of check to several provincial assemblies and proprietary rights of the other provinces on that continent.” The press further asserted that this military government would be perpetual. As *Dunlap's* argued of the British ministry:

They have transformed Frenchmen and Papists into Englishmen and legislators. They have armed 17 or 23 Papists (Canadians) with powers sufficient to force every Englishman out of that country; and if in the future progress of their deep-

²⁵³ *New-York Journal*, September 29, 1774; *Providence Gazette*, October 1, 1774; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 7, 1774.

²⁵⁴ *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, August 15, 1774.

²⁵⁵ *Boston Post-Boy*, August 15, 1774; *Boston Evening-Post*, August 22, 1774; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 24, 1774.

laid plans of despotism, they should find it necessary first to begin in America, a Canadian militia of 20,000 effective men, operating upon a barrier of near three thousand miles in extent, will be extremely favourable to their designs.²⁵⁶

This portrayal was hyperbolic as the Canadian legislators the author so worried about did not have quite the power they envisioned. And while it would have perhaps been possible to raise a militia force of 20,000 men from a total population of around 100,000,²⁵⁷ such a force would likely consist of nearly every able-bodied man in the province. In late October, 1774, *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser* surmised that “The only design of the bill, I believe, was to keep the Colonies in subjection, and to prepare the way for universal despotism in the British empire.”²⁵⁸ It was a contention with which the majority of the American press heartily agreed. The reception of the bill in French Canada was hardly considered. After portraying the Canadians for so long as indolent and lazy, it mattered little to most American newspapers whether the Canadians loved or hated the act. As servile French Catholics, they were like to be easily deceived and as such, their opinion mattered little. It was English Americans who recognized the danger, and if Canadians could not, that was likely because they were Canadian.

British parliamentary discussion of the Quebec Act began in 1773 as members of the House of Commons began to accuse the government of “sleeping for seven years over the affairs of Canada, leaving it without a government.”²⁵⁹ According to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, the primary concerns were the “improper manner of administering justice in Canada; the unprecedented hardships the inhabitants of that country labour under; [and] the shameful procrastination in the King’s servants upon every occasion of taking the direction of every national concern, particularly relative to money matters.”²⁶⁰ The paper argued that there was increasing necessity “for doing something, as soon as possible, in order to rescue the poor Canadians from the oppression they groan under.” In response,

²⁵⁶ *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, August 15, 1774.

²⁵⁷ Claude Bélanger, “Quebec 1763-1791: Terminology and Population,” Marianopolis College, 2000.

²⁵⁸ *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 31, 1774.

²⁵⁹ *New-York Journal*, June 17, 1773; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, June 21, 1773; *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, June 21, 1773.

²⁶⁰ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 30, 1773.

Lord North defended the government, arguing that the question of governing Canada “is found to involve so many objects, to be invellped [sic] in difficulties, and to be so connected with different interests, that it is by no means the work of a day.”²⁶¹ Perhaps there was some hesitation at tabling a bill that might further alienate the English American colonies, and so little was made public. Throughout that time, however, work had clearly been done on a bill, and by July of 1774, abstracts of the bill, which was meant to solve the various issues seen to be plaguing the administration of Canada began to appear in American newspapers. One of these, published in the *Boston Evening-Post*, asserted that the proposed bill would annex to Canada “all the neighbouring countries and districts not already described, to be within the limits of some other province, or already annexed to the government of Newfoundland,” would guarantee “the free exercise of [Roman Catholicism], subject to the King’s supremacy,” would grant Canadians “their property and possession, with all usages and customs, and all other their civil rights, without any impediment whatever,” would establish English law “in every instance and mode of trial and criminal prosecution whatever,” and would make it “lawful for his Majesty, his heirs or successors... to appoint a Council... who shall have power and authority to make ordinances for the peace and welfare of the said province.”²⁶² This council would carry on in a more official capacity the conversations and debates that were occurring throughout the American press. The contents of the council debates were then often printed in the country’s many papers, further reinforcing the ideas about the Quebec Act that they were presenting to the American public. Both were key sites where Americans familiarized themselves with the proposed bill. Though the Quebec Act (in a form quite similar to this) had actually received royal ascent in June of 1774, Americans were unaware of that fact for several months, and in that time American newspapers

²⁶¹ *New-York Journal*, June 17, 1773; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, June 21, 1773; *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, June 21, 1773.

²⁶² *Boston Evening-Post*, July 11, 1774; *Boston News-Letter*, July 14, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, July 15, 1774; *Newport Mercury*, July 18, 1774; *Essex Gazette*, July 19, 1774; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, July 20, 1774; *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer*, July 21, 1774; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, July 25, 1774; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 27, 1774; *New-York Journal*, July 28, 1774.

assiduously covered the parliamentary debate over the bill as British papers from months earlier began to arrive in American ports.

As Metzger argued, American opposition to the Quebec Act was largely built on what colonists viewed as evidence of a secret conspiracy between the Crown and the Pope to place them under arbitrary power, even though the terms of the Quebec Act didn't apply to other regions and didn't restrain Englishmen in Quebec.²⁶³ Much of this opinion had been imported from England itself. Parliamentary opponents of the act leveled criticism at every part of it. Summarizing a parliamentary debate on the subject, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* asserted that "Mr. T. Townsend stated many objections to the Bill, said it was meant to overturn the present form of Government at Quebec, and establish the Roman Catholic Religion and French Laws," that "Mr. C. Fox objected much to a clause respecting tythes being allowed to be collected by the Roman Catholic Priests," and that "Mr. Dunning [argued] that vesting a power in the Governor to appoint 17 or 23 Council... to be a Legislative Body, was a mere farce, for the Governor had not only the power of appointing, but suspending and dismissing, and therefore would have the Council entirely under his command."²⁶⁴ The *New-Hampshire Gazette* expanded on some of those arguments two days later, reporting that Townsend had argued that it was absurd that colonists "entitled and born to the Rights of Englishmen, settling on the Faith of the King's Proclamation, should... contrary to every Idea of the constitution, be subjected to French Papists, and French Laws."²⁶⁵ These parliamentary arguments typically centred on the unconstitutional nature of what opponents of the bill called the establishment of Catholicism in an English province, the establishment of foreign law in English domains, and the establishment of a non-representative royal government. Like American newspapers which asked, "Are your Majesty's unconquered subjects of this nation to tremble for their liberties, that Canada might reap the blessed effects of your

²⁶³ Metzger, *The Quebec Act*, 37-63.

²⁶⁴ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 10, 1774; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, August 10, 1774; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, August 15, 1774; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, August 15, 1774; *Norwich Packet*, August 25, 1774.

²⁶⁵ *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 12, 1774; *Boston Evening-Post*, August 15, 1774; *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer; or, the Connecticut, Hudson's River, New-Jersey, and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, August 18, 1774; *Newport Mercury*, August 22, 1774.

reconciling mercy and parental tenderness?”²⁶⁶ and concluded that the Quebec Act “seems to be a ministerial trick to exalt the prerogative of the crown at the expence [sic] of the constitution.”²⁶⁷ British parliamentary opponents of the bill painted the legislation as the beginnings of a power-grab by shady ministers and an increasingly tyrannical crown.

While most English American colonists agreed with the positions of these opposed British parliamentarians, the American context gave local arguments in the American press an added dimension, because acts relating to Canada were often associated with acts relating to the other colonies (such as conflation between the Stamp Act and liquor duties introduced in Quebec in 1765). The Quebec Act was similarly associated with what Americans had termed the Intolerable Acts, which were aimed at quelling dissent and rebellion in Massachusetts. Apart from arguments that the bill was designed to place an absolutist, Catholic army fiercely loyal to the crown at the back of the colonies as a means of keeping them in check, colonial Americans objected to other aspects of the legislation, as well. One was the way in which the act seemingly isolated French Canada and English America from one another. Lord North had suggested in August of 1774 “that it would be highly beneficial to the Canadians, if they had a communication with the West-Indies, in preference to North America.”²⁶⁸ Two months later, *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser* argued that “The Colonies would have little to fear from the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Canada, had a connection been preserved between us by means of commerce – But this is entirely prevented by the heavy duties imposed upon the only articles exported to Canada from the other Colonies.”²⁶⁹ Many English Americans believed that Canada should serve as a market for excess American produce. This was generally how

²⁶⁶ *Maryland Journal*, September 11, 1774; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, September 16, 1774; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, September 19, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, September 22, 1774; *New-York Journal*, September 29, 1774; *Connecticut Journal*, September 30, 1774; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 30, 1774; *Providence Gazette*, October 1, 1774; *Connecticut Courant*, October 3, 1774; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 7, 1774;

²⁶⁷ *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, August 15, 1774.

²⁶⁸ *Boston Post-Boy*, August 8, 1774.

²⁶⁹ *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 31, 1774.

Americans viewed Canada in the years preceding the Quebec Act, and as far as many American papers were concerned, the Act was an attempt at severing the English colonies' link to an important local market. And it was not only the economic links which seemed to be severed by the bill. It seemed there would also be no interaction through immigration. As a different article from *Dunlap's* argued, "no Protestant will reside in a place where his property and other personal rights are to be decided by laws, to the language in which they are written he is an entire stranger."²⁷⁰ American newspapers argued that Canada was being used by the British government as a means of keeping the English American colonies disunified and weak. The majority of the American press echoed the British parliamentarians that decried the establishment of Catholicism, French civil law, and non-representative government. They also lamented the expansion of Canada along the back of the American frontier, the French Catholic militias they feared were being raised there, and the seeds of discord they felt were being sown between the regions. The American press played a significant role in fanning those sparks into open flame. It was newspapers that gave English Americans the relatively unified worldview that helped them view one another as allies and kin when the Revolution began. It was also newspapers that decried what they viewed as British attempts at preventing the Canadians from joining Americans in that unified, American worldview.

Still, not all American newspapers supported the colonial American measures that had been taken against the Intolerable Acts, including the Quebec Act which was eventually lumped in together with those acts. Of those that opposed actions like non-importation, the goal was to prevent conflict. Though most papers were opposed to the acts, many were also fervently opposed to war with Britain. An article published in the *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, warned against civil war, arguing that "friends, when they come to be at variance, prove the bitterest and most implacable enemies; so fellow subjects when the common tie that united them is dissolved, and they unsheathe the sword against each other, are stimulated by the keenest and most unrelenting hatred."²⁷¹ The author's belief in the adage that civil wars are the most brutal was clear.

²⁷⁰ *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, September 5, 1774.

²⁷¹ *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, September 19, 1774; *Boston News-Letter*, October 6, 1774.

The anonymous author cautioned, “America is now threatened with the calamities of a civil war.”²⁷² Regarding what they called the “vast tract of country which skirts our back settlements, and where some promise themselves a sanctuary,” the author concluded “The Quebec bill cuts off that refuge. By that bill, which I highly disapprove in all respects, (but I must take things as they are) the province of Canada extends south as far as Carolina, and surrounds all our colonies from thence to Nova Scotia.”²⁷³ This seeming noose that encircled them was particularly anxiety causing for colonial English Americans. And all the more terrifying were the Canadian and Indigenous soldiers that the British could seemingly conjure from that encircling frontier. The article surmised that “In case of a civil war, all [the] Canadians and Indians would infallibly be let loose on our back-settlements, to scalp, ravage and lay every thing waste with fire and sword; so that we should be hemmed in on all sides.”²⁷⁴ Potentially a warning to the colonial elites that in the case of a rebellion they could not count on the back country, the article made clear that the situation on the frontier was precarious. The threat from Indigenous and French Canadian soldiers was portrayed as an existential threat to all the frontier settlements. This was a common theme in many of the articles that urged caution in terms of the colonial American response to the Intolerable Acts. A contributor signing *Pacificus* agreed in an address to the provincial congress, published in the *Boston Post-Boy* in November of 1774, writing “I am situated in one of the Towns, upon the Frontiers of this province, and am morally certain, should a War commence, I must lose my own, and most probably the Lives of all my Family, if silly enough to join in your Measures.”²⁷⁵ For the author, opposing the measures that were being taken against the empire were a matter of self-preservation. *Pacificus* assured the congress, “The Dread and Horror of being cut to Pieces with our Families by Canadians and Savages sink too deep into our Breast, for your Power, Example, or Authority to eradicate – We are determined not to risk every Thing that is near and valuable to us for mere Chimeras, or to please and

²⁷² *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, September 19, 1774; *Boston News-Letter*, October 6, 1774.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ *Boston Post-Boy*, November 14, 1774.

gratify you in your Politics,” concluding that “Whenever the Time comes, which I am convinced is too near at Hand, you may rest assured, we in the Frontier shall, from Necessity, be obliged to join the Canadians and Indians, and become your Enemies instead of remaining your Friends.”²⁷⁶ Though Pacificus did not necessarily consider the Indigenous peoples or French Canadians that he threatened to join to be insiders in regards to American identity, he threatened to join them anyway. If anything, the fact that the author could even contemplate turning against his own colony and embracing racialized and othered Indigenous peoples and French Canadians spoke to the dire situation on the frontiers. Though, like most of the American press, these articles were opposed to the Quebec Act, they argued that the actions of the congresses would have devastating consequences. Americans in frontier regions, regions that were chronically underrepresented in American assemblies, were particularly wary of the consequences they would face for any aggression from the over confident eastern regions of the colonies.

Some American papers even went so far as to publish defenses of the bill. One such paper was *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer*, which in 1774 published a note allegedly from a friend to the editor, James Rivington, which read, “I have often cautioned you against moderation, or the impartiality of letting us look through both sides of the glass... I told you it was for your interest, not to shew the least countenance of your being a friend to government or good order.”²⁷⁷ By including this note, Rivington subtly positioned himself as an imperial supporter while at the same time implying that his true purpose was to publish material to try and get to the truth of the Quebec Act and the affects it was likely to have. In terms of the friend who wrote to Rivington, noting himself a military man, the author, who signed T.M., contended, “Every man then in his vocation, Sir. ‘Tis my duty and principle, with my life, to oppose every scoundrel who attempts to subvert Church and State. And it is your interest, by your printing, to verge as

²⁷⁶ *Boston Post-Boy*, November 14, 1774.

²⁷⁷ *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer; or, the Connecticut, Hudson's River, New-Jersey, and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, October 6, 1774.

near to treason, rebellion and anarchy as possible.”²⁷⁸ Though Rivington positioned himself as an impartial source, T.M. was not convinced. This sort of interaction between seeming friends likely happened quite a lot during the Revolutionary era as Americans discussed the proper way forward. And as happened in the letter, many of these conversations likely ended with accusations of treason. The juxtaposition of Rivington as “being a friend to government [and] good order” by printing things “as near to treason, rebellion and anarchy as possible”²⁷⁹ appears to be a defence of his actions in printing material that would by many be considered treasonous. Printers were forced to walk a careful line as they reported on treasonous events so as not to give the impression that they supported any treasonous ideas that they might report on. It seems that Rivington was attempting to portray himself as above the fray, an objective observer simply reporting on facts. In truth, as T.M. alluded, the *Gazetteer* was a strong and blatant supporter of the British government, as the papers that survived the eventual British capture of New York usually were.

Though they were relatively rare, a few contributors defended the Quebec Act in the American press, arguing that the opposition to the act was overblown. In the same issue that featured Rivington’s note of warning was printed an article titled “The Justice and Policy of the late Act of Parliament,” which argued that the Quebec Act was in fact the most sound policy for administering Canada. In the piece, a Dr. Marriott summarized the arguments against the Quebec Act as, on the one hand, that “Nothing less than an absolute dominancy and legal establishment is said to have been given, in the one case, to the Roman catholic religion, to the depression and exclusion of that of the church of England and of all Protestants,” and on the other hand, that “Englishmen are said to be put under an arbitrary French judicature, and deprived of the right of trial by juries in all civil causes.”²⁸⁰ Marriott concluded of the charges, “Hard charges these upon the very great majority in both Houses which passed the bill, and upon our most benign and

²⁷⁸ *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer; or, the Connecticut, Hudson's River, New-Jersey, and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, October 6, 1774.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

religious King who gave his royal assent to it! But, I trust, things will not appear so bad upon examination.”²⁸¹ By Marriott’s estimation, the act did not establish Catholicism, but in fact worked toward just the opposite. He argued that “the Romish clergy... are by this act deprived of that right over the lands, persons, and properties of protestants; which is certainly putting the Romish clergy in a worse situation than they were before, and takes away all possible pretence to any establishment of that church and religion.” Marriott surmised that, far from the way it was being portrayed in the American press, the Quebec Act was designed to undermine Catholicism. And the author further believed that it could ultimately be the end of Catholicism in French Canada. He contended, “the operation of this part of the clause may, and probably will, be attended with consequences still more fatal to the authority of the Romish clergy, as it holds out to their people an exemption from [tithes] in the moment they declare themselves protestants.”²⁸² As far as Marriott was concerned, the Quebec Act could prove fatal to French Canadian Catholicism, and even if it didn’t, he concluded that it was no threat to the English Protestant colonies. By his estimation, the newspapers that said otherwise were fearmongering.

While Marriott did not refute the fact that the French civil law would continue in Quebec with the Quebec Act, he again questioned what the major problem with that was. To him it largely seemed a non-issue. Regarding the adoption of French civil law in Quebec, Marriott concluded, “I never remember to have heard... that our assemblies in the West-India islands have been exclaimed against for taking part of their laws, for regulating their slaves, from the Code Noir of the French... and yet what a deal of mischief is pretended to be apprehended from our doing the like in Quebec.”²⁸³ Though French Canadians were not enslaved, Marriott made it clear that they were not the same as English Americans, and as such should consider themselves lucky that more invasive restrictions were not being implemented. Britain was seen to have the right to administer Canada in much the same way that France administered its Caribbean colonies. As

²⁸¹ *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer; or, the Connecticut, Hudson's River, New-Jersey, and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, October 6, 1774.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh have argued, the British empire often functioned as a “many-headed hydra,” adapting its colonial policies to the particular circumstances it found.²⁸⁴ Decisions were tailored to the situation, and Marriott argued that that was exactly what was happening in Quebec. It shocked him that others would interpret such an innocuous clause to be so sinister. Most American newspapers were also aghast that there would be no elected assembly in Quebec, but once again, Marriott disagreed. He premised that “the restraints laid by this act upon the local legislature confine its discretionary powers within very narrow bounds, and almost reduce it to a necessity of exercising its authority for the general good only.”²⁸⁵ Again, as far as Marriott was concerned, the Quebec Act was a brilliant piece of legislation that, while it superficially looked as though it was designed to keep French Canada the way it was, in fact it was designed to subvert it and assimilate its residents into English Protestant America. Though the historiography has often focused on the American arguments in opposition to the Quebec Act, there were numerous American papers that supported the bill as the most prudent way to bring the Canadians into the American fold. For those papers, Canadians continued to serve as a foil, against which they defined the American identity. Unlike in past generations, however, the question of whether Canadians could be made into Americans was taken as a given. Though at the moment, the Canadian identity was one which differed from the superior American identity in a variety of ways, there was a tacit acknowledgement that they could, through encouragements like the Quebec Act, one day get there. Gone were the days where Canadians were irredeemable.

In terms of general American opinion of the bill, however, opponents of the Quebec Act held a massive numerical advantage over supporters of the act in terms of American newspaper content, a fact which the more government-aligned newspapers lamented bitterly. Paul Langston has explored the early American press in the context of the Quebec Act, arguing that “The increased distribution of the press in the years preceding the American War of Independence provided editors with a method to express

²⁸⁴ Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker. *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 3-4.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

concern regarding the Quebec Act, legislation that many feared would establish a more despotic government over North America.”²⁸⁶ As Langston argued, the press had grown significantly, and its influence on American public opinion had grown as well. As such, the understandings of American identity that appeared in the press, including those that made use of Canada as a foil, had an increasing impact on American thought. This was especially true when the press presented the same opinion across numerous papers, reinforcing the idea that those opinions were shared across the colonies. Importantly, the press presented the Quebec Act very similarly across the majority of papers. As Michael Warner and Charles E. Clark have each argued, the American press provided colonists with a relatively egalitarian and unified medium of exchange, making it an essential instrument in influencing public opinion. This was very much the case in regard to the Quebec Act, which was almost universally lamented. And as was often the case in early American history, the opinion of the newspaper editors slowly became the opinion of the people (while the reverse was also true). The majority of papers lambasted the bill; however, there were a few newspapers that still, at very least, continued to publish the opinions of those that supported the Quebec Act, though their voices were often shouted down by the much louder opposition.

Contemporary Americans that supported the Quebec Act were well aware of their minority position, both in terms of general sentiment and in terms of friendly newspapers. The issue of newspapers was a particular concern for many of the Americans who would eventually be called Loyalists. In December of 1774, an author signing “Massachusettensis” decried what he viewed as an immensely partial American press. According to a 2018 study, Massachusettensis was likely a writing partnership between Daniel Leonard and Jonathan Sewell,²⁸⁷ one which laid out the Loyalist position clearly and forcefully. Massachusettensis argued that “The press when open to all parties, influenced by none, is a salutary engine to a free state, perhaps a necessary one to preserve the freedom of that state,” but continued that “when a party has gained the

²⁸⁶ Paul Langston, “‘Tyrant and Oppressor!’: Colonial Press Reaction to the Quebec Act,” *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* Vol 34 No 1 (2006).

²⁸⁷ Colin Nicolson, Owen Dudley Edwards, Jamie Macpherson, and Kristen Nicolson K, “A Case of Identity: John Adams and Massachusettensis,” *New England Quarterly* Vo 91 No 4, 651-682.

ascendency so far as to become the licensers of the press, either by an act of government, or by playing off the resentment of the populace, against printers and authors, the press itself becomes an engine of oppression and licentiousness, and is as pernicious to society as otherwise it would be beneficial.”²⁸⁸ The authors argued that the press, which could be a remarkable instrument for liberty and freedom, could also be subverted to control the masses. *Massachusettensis* expressed significant concerns that Americans were practicing groupthink, simply taking at face value the unified view of the Quebec Act that appeared in most American papers. He argued that “It is too true to be denied [sic] that since our controversy with Great-Britain, the press in this town has been much devoted to the partizans of liberty, they have been indulged in publishing what they pleased, *fas vel nefas* (right or wrong²⁸⁹), while little has been published on the part of government.”²⁹⁰ This partisanship would grow even more stark when the Revolution itself began, with Patriot leaning newspapers dominating across the colonies, save for New York, which was held for much of the war by British troops. *Massachusettensis* concluded that “the effect this must have had upon the minds of the people in general is obvious... in short the charges have been rung so often upon oppression, tyranny and slavery, that whether sleeping or waking they are continuously vibrating in our ears, and it is now high time to ask ourselves whether we have not been deluded by sound only.”²⁹¹ The authors feared that the American people were being led into calamity because of a general ideological monopoly that existed within the American press.

Indeed, the press did present American opinion on hot button issues like the Quebec Act in remarkably unified ways, and this seems to have helped draw American colonists together around a shared sense of anxiety, shared opposition to British policy, and a shared belief in American unity. As far as many newspaper contributors were concerned, dissent from the prevailing view could hardly find a place in the colonial papers. The same month as the article from *Massachusettensis*, a contributor to the

²⁸⁸ *Boston Post-Boy*, December 5, 1774; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, December 30, 1774.

²⁸⁹ My translation.

²⁹⁰ *Boston Post-Boy*, December 5, 1774; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, December 30, 1774.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Boston News-Letter signing A Sailor, asked a number of questions of the “Friends of the Congress” which drove at a similar point. Among his queries, the Sailor asked, “Whether the Congress does not, in speaking to the Canadians, recommend the Liberty of the Press, as one of the liberties ‘without which a people cannot be free and happy?’”²⁹² The Sailor then questioned “Whether the Congress meant to encourage liberal and free sentiments concerning every other administration of government, but not to tolerate them when they relate to their own?”²⁹³ Seeming to have already decided the answer, the Sailor concluded by asking first “Whether the invaders of those rights and liberties which are essential to freedom and happiness, are not enemies to their country, and the pests of society?” and second “Whether the Sons of Liberty are capable of improving by these hints, and will shew that they are, by mending their manners?”²⁹⁴ Though many Americans were drawing together over their shared distaste for the Quebec Act and the British ministry that had enacted it, many others were growing increasingly concerned over the polarization that was happening in American society. While that polarization seems to have split American society (with common contemporary estimates being that one third of Americans supported revolution, one third supported the British empire, and one third remained undecided), this was not visible in the American press, where opposition to the bill was incredibly loud. Both *Massachusettensis* and the Sailor argued that their opinions were being marginalized and ignored by a partisan-controlled American press. It was a charge which their opponents would vehemently deny as slander, however true it might have been.

By the mid eighteenth century, a belief in the importance of a free press had become an important part of the American identity, and there were significant hopes that the American free press would soon find a foothold in Canada, transforming it as it had the English American colonies and producing reasoned and learned men and women. When in November of 1764, the *Boston News-Letter* informed English Americans that “A Printing-Office is also established in the City of Quebec, and a News-Paper published

²⁹² *Boston News-Letter*, December 22, 1774.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

there Weekly, under the Title of The Quebec Gazette, (La Gazette de Quebec)... in both the English and French Languages; The Paragraphs of News in English have the same in French printed on the opposite Columns,”²⁹⁵ it extolled the importance of this development. The *News-Letter* surmised that the paper would “be very serviceable to People of both Nations, but more especially to the Canadians, who have hitherto been ignorant of the Transactions in distant Parts of the World, and even in their own Neighbourhood.”²⁹⁶ The paper concluded that “It is probable that in a short Time no Part of North America, will be destitute of the Means of propagating Knowledge among the Inhabitants; and of enlightening those Tribes that have been long in Heathen Darkness.”²⁹⁷ Again, Canadians and Indigenous nations were conflated in the American mind, with the press serving as an instrument that English Americans felt could bring both out of what they viewed as their ignorance and darkness. A British belief in the value of a free press, that had been adopted by Americans as a quintessential American belief, was foundational to many aspects of American thinking. Newspapers were seen as the means by which a free people kept their fingers on the pulse of their government. They were a canary in the coalmine; it was only when you stopped hearing the bird chirping dissent that you needed to worry. Such understandings of newspapers were instrumental in Anglo-American portrayals of the press, particularly as American ire grew with the various acts of 1774 that seemed to threaten this free press with arbitrary control. As American newspapers and the Continental Congress began to appeal to Canadians to join the other colonies in resistance to what they portrayed as excessive British rule, they universally presented the free American press as one of the foundations of liberty, a guarantor of liberty which Americans offered freely but which the British sought to extinguish.

In November 1774, the *Norwich Packet* published an address from the First Continental Congress to the inhabitants of Canada which, among other things, extolled the value of the free American press. The congress contended that “The importance of

²⁹⁵ *Boston News-Letter*, November 15, 1764.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

this consists, besides the advancement of truth, science, morality, and arts in general, in its diffusion of liberal sentiments on the administration of government, its ready communication of thoughts between subjects, and its consequential promotion of union among them,” and alleged that it was this free press “whereby oppressive officers are ashamed or intimidated into more honourable and just modes of conducting affairs.”²⁹⁸ This freedom of the press was one of the rights the Congress promised to safeguard against British tyranny, and they implored Canadians to join them in that effort. In many ways, the congress portrayed Canadians as being on the inside of American identity. Though the letter was also notably condescending, it also carved out a space for Canadians within the American imagined community. And the letter from the Continental Congress was not alone in doing so. One month prior to the publication of this address in the *Packet*, the *Massachusetts’ Spy* published a similar address to the Canadians, this time from a group signing as the Sons of New-England, which emphasized the need for Canadian and American unity. The Sons wrote “We consider you as our brethren, entitled to all the liberties and privileges of Englishmen, and free Americans; and it is our earnest wish that you may forever share with us in freedom and happiness.”²⁹⁹ They assured Canadians that “The only reason why we condemn the Quebec bill, is that it lays a foundation for your and our slavery: we aim to establish a pure system of civil and religious liberty through all America, and that you should in all respects be as perfectly free as ourselves.”³⁰⁰ The Sons informed Canadians that their only concern was that the Canadians would be fixed in slavery by the British empire. American revolutionaries used metaphors of slavery like this routinely throughout the Revolution, and the use of this compassion was often intended to demonized the British empire. No longer France, the group seen as trying to fix those chains was now the British ministry and crown.

During the French and Indian War, American newspapers had condemned France as an absolute power seeking to enslave the free British world and Canadians as servile

²⁹⁸ *Norwich Packet*, November 10, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, November 10, 1774; *Boston Gazette*, November 14, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, November 17, 1774.

²⁹⁹ *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, October 13, 1774; *Essex Journal*, October 19, 1774; *Connecticut Courant*, October 24, 1774.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

minions of that Catholic despot. During the Revolution, American newspapers turned their accusations of slavery on the British crown, portraying George III as the absolute despot, bent on enslaving the free Americans. The question was whether the Canadians would prove as subservient in service to their new tyrant, or whether they would join with their fellow Americans to throw it off. Most revolutionaries hoped for the latter. The Sons warned Canadians that “We expect that the enemies to freedom, will endeavour to perswade [sic] you that we are unfriendly to you on account of your religion, be assured such a suggestion is false, we are your fast friends; we know that your interest and ours is closely connected. If we remain free, you will be free also, and whoever endeavours to divide us, is an enemy to both.”³⁰¹ They concluded the address, “We trust your generous bosoms are animated with the most free and noble sentiments, and that you will, with us, resolve to exert all you powers, and risk every thing for the defence of American Liberty. May the radiant smile of freedom forever shine on the inhabitants of Canada.”³⁰² This portrayal of Canadians differed sharply from those that predated 1774. Canadians were no longer ignorant, slavish, lazy peasants, but “free Americans” ready to “risk everything for the defence of American Liberty.”³⁰³ For one of the first times in their history, Canadians were included within the American identity. In a remarkably short period of time, they had gone from a savage, foreign other to a reasoned, loyal part of a potentially united America.

The address from the Continental Congress made the case for inter-American unity more explicitly and in greater detail than the address from the Sons of New-England. The congress surmised that “When the fortune of war, after a gallant and glorious resistance, had incorporated you with the body of English subjects, we rejoiced in the truly valuable addition, both on our own and your account; expecting, as courage and generosity are naturally united, our brave enemies would become our hearty friends,” enjoying “the inestimable advantages of a free English constitution of government, which

³⁰¹ *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, October 13, 1774; *Essex Journal*, October 19, 1774; *Connecticut Courant*, October 24, 1774.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

it is the privilege of all English subjects.”³⁰⁴ The address contended, however, that the Canadians had “artfully been kept from discovering the unspeakable worth of that form you are now undoubtedly entitled to, [and] we esteem it our duty, for the weighty reasons herein after mentioned to explain to you some of its most important branches.” In words dripping with paternalism and prejudice, the Continental Congress implied that Canadians would be unable to understand the benefits of their English form of government without having it explained by Americans. Canadians in many ways remained the other against which American understandings of their own political identity were defined. At the same time, however, there was a growing sense that, if it was explained to them in simple enough terms by benevolent enough American teachers, that Canadians might one day adopt the American identity and become truly beneficial members of the American colonial union. The Congress was confident that once the poor Canadians, who had been held in darkness for so long by both religious and political tyranny, saw the benefits that would accrue from adopting the American identity, like the Canadian Peasant they would happily choose to throw off their final Canadian coats and become Americans.

In addition to the right of free speech, the Congress also describe the right “Of the people having a share in their own government, by their representatives, chosen by themselves, and in consequence of being ruled by laws which they themselves approve, not by edicts of men over whom they have no control,” the right “of trial by jury,” the right of “Habeas Corpus... thereupon procure any illegal restraint to be quickly enquired into and redressed,” and the right “Of holding lands by the tenure of easy rents, and not by rigorous and oppressive services.”³⁰⁵ Again, the tone of the letter was condescending, implying that Canadians would be incapable of understanding the benefits of English style land tenure, at least at this point in their civilizing education. Unlike in past eras, however, the letter was contending that most Americans were seemingly willing to accept the Canadians if they joined them in unifying against the British ministry, which was fast

³⁰⁴ *Norwich Packet*, November 10, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, November 10, 1774; *Boston Gazette*, November 14, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, November 17, 1774.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

becoming the primary enemy for many in the American colonies. According to the Congress, “These are the rights a profligate ministry are now striving, by force or arms, to ravish from us, and which we are, with one mind, resolved never to resign but with our lives.”³⁰⁶ The notice argued that the Quebec Act had stripped Canada of the rights it was guaranteed as a British province. The address called for Canadians to “Seize the opportunity presented to you by providence itself. You have been conquered into liberty, if you act as you ought. This work is not of man. You are a small people, compared to those who with open arms invite you into a fellowship.” Congress was quick to note that Canadians were a numerically small group, but was also quick to imply that they could join themselves to something far greater and far stronger. The Continental Congress informed Canadians that “The injuries of Boston have roused and associated every colony, from Nova-Scotia to Georgia. Your province is the only link wanting to complete the bright and strong chain of union. Nature has joined your country to theirs... you join your political interests.”³⁰⁷ Once again, Canadians were not portrayed as a hostile and external other, but as an integral part of the fabric of North America. Canada was explicitly portrayed as the missing link between the American colonies in New England, the Chesapeake, and the South, and the colonies of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. The goal of colonial unity was incredibly important to American revolutionaries and to the newspapers that supported them, and this importance is evidenced by the ways in which newspaper portrayals of Canadians shifted so quickly and completely. American revolutionaries significantly valued colonial unity, and their overtures to Canada show the ways in which that desire for unity quickly trumped past prejudices. Though their letter continued to play on stereotypes of Canadians and their identity, they also offered Canadians the American identity, which they could wrap themselves in as long as they joined their new fellows in revolution. Most newspapers rapidly shifted their depictions of Canadians, though some did so with reservations.

³⁰⁶ *Norwich Packet*, November 10, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, November 10, 1774; *Boston Gazette*, November 14, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, November 17, 1774.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

Just where Canadian loyalties lay remained a question in late 1774 as conflicting reports filled the press. On October 13, the *Boston News-Letter* reported the arrival of Canada's new Governor, General Guy Carleton, in the province, reading "All the native Canadians, as well Clergy and Laity, are now become the happiest People in the World; their Gratitude to the King and Parliament is not to be expressed. The Quebec Bill gives great Satisfaction here, except to some individuals, whose Interest is affected by its operation."³⁰⁸ The piece continued, "General Carleton, had on his Arrival the Honor to be kissed by the Bishop, and was visited by every Frenchman, down to the meanest in the Place, but very little by the English, who are said to be displeased with him, on Account of the Quebec Bill, as they think it was framed under his Direction."³⁰⁹ Written for an American audience, as opposed to a Canadian one, the *News-Letter* intentionally built opposition to the new British Governor General by tying him directly to the French Catholic bishop and clergy. The paper also links him directly to all the "Frenchmen" in the region. Though newspaper portrayals were beginning to shift quite dramatically in the era, it was not an immediate process and many newspapers slowly shed the use of Canada as a foil against which to define American identity. Utilizing English American fears of French Catholicism remained useful for some time in the 1770s. Four days after Carleton's arrival, the *Boston Post-Boy* published an address from the clergy of Canada to Carleton which informed the Governor that "History will rank your name among the bravest of warriors, and the wisest of politicians, but gratitude is already imprinted on the heart of every Canadian. We know with what firmness you have supported our interests, and the testimony you bore of our fidelity to his most gracious Majesty and the parliament."³¹⁰ The clergymen continued, "We want [lack] words to express our sincere gratitude, but the universal joy, and the fervent expressions of allegiance, those public

³⁰⁸ *Boston News-Letter*, October 13, 1774; *Boston Evening-Post*, October 17, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, October 20, 1774.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ *Boston Post-Boy*, October 17, 1774; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, October 17, 1774; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 19, 1774; *Boston News-Letter*, October 20, 1774; *Norwich Packet*, October 20, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, October 20, 1774; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 21, 1774; *Boston Evening-Post*, October 24, 1774; *Newport Mercury*, October 24, 1774; *Maryland Journal*, October 26, 1774; *Providence Gazette*, October 29, 1774.

demonstrations, on the moment of your Excellency's arrival with your worthy family, are proofs too convincing to need any arguments to support them," promising that, "you will always find the clergy to be good and faithful subjects."³¹¹ As far as American newspapers were concerned, the warm reception was due to the fact that Carleton had been instrumental in getting the Quebec Act implemented. Indeed, Carleton had been vocally supportive of the bill, and it had been passed in many ways on his recommendation. American newspapers often blamed Carleton for the Quebec Act, and the reception he received from the Catholic clergy seemed ample evidence that he had been instrumental in writing the toleration of Catholicism into the bill. To the author of the article in the *Post-Boy*, the French Canadians were happy because the man who had implemented the Quebec Act, an act they adored, was now at their head. Though accounts such as these painted the Canadian populace as universally in support of the Quebec Act, many American newspapers quickly questioned the validity of reports espousing French Canadian satisfaction.

Many such accounts were deemed outright lies. On November 17, the *Boston Gazette* first noted reports that "The principle Merchants of [Quebec] had received a Letter from the General Congress; inviting them to subscribe to the Measures adopted by the southern Colonies, but that the Letter was burnt in the presence of them all save two New-England people, who had been for sometimes past cultivating Provision for their distress'd Brethren at Boston."³¹² The report continued that these New-Englanders' "Collection amounted to 25 bushels of Wheat, but when they applied for a Ship to carry the same to Boston they were refused from all quarters, nor could they for love or money have one for that purpose, so steady are these loyal and happy people to the interest and welfare of Government."³¹³ According to the reports that the *Gazette* writer alleged to

³¹¹ *Boston Post-Boy*, October 17, 1774; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, October 17, 1774; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 19, 1774; *Boston News-Letter*, October 20, 1774; *Norwich Packet*, October 20, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, October 20, 1774; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 21, 1774; *Boston Evening-Post*, October 24, 1774; *Newport Mercury*, October 24, 1774; *Maryland Journal*, October 26, 1774; *Providence Gazette*, October 29, 1774.

³¹² *Boston Gazette*, November 14, 1774; *Norwich Packet*, November 17, 1774; *Providence Gazette*, November 19, 1774.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

have seen, the Canadians were in full support of the British empire. The paper concluded, however, that it was all a lie. The *Gazette* informed readers that “In full Demonstration that this is a most infernal Falsehood, by ministerial Tools, Pensioners, &c.... Lately has arrived here 1040 Bushels of Wheat from the worthy Inhabitants of Canada.”³¹⁴ Rather than refusing to support American efforts, the paper surmised that Canadians had raised an enormous amount of wheat, which they had voluntarily sent to their southern neighbours. As far as the *Gazette* was concerned, the Canadian people had proven their devotion to the revolutionaries. Rather than British stooges, the Canadians were fellow liberty lovers. The paper continued, “the Canadians, French as well as British, are much dissatisfied with all the Revenue Acts for North-America; as also with what is called the Quebec Bill, thinking it too great a Sacrifice when entitled to a Toleration by a treaty on Conquest.” Rather than an image of Canadians content with the Quebec Act, the *Gazette* informed readers that the Canadians were as upset as the other colonials with the seeming tyranny of government. The paper further asserted that “Town-Meetings are held on those Affairs from Mont Real to Quebec, and reported that they have chosen Delegates for the Continental Congress.”³¹⁵ In so doing, the *Gazette* argued that Canadians had taken the first step toward throwing off their old, slavish coats and donning the American coat of freedom. As far as the paper was concerned, Canadians were ready to embrace the American character as their own. By the *Gazette*’s estimation, Canadians were on the very brink of rebellion against the British crown. They had seemingly shaken themselves from their servility and were at last taking matters of freedom and liberty into their own hands by throwing in their lot with the revolutionaries.

This view of Canadians was soon dominant across the American press. As the *New-York Journal* put it, Canadians “only want the same toleration as the King’s other Subjects, and the enjoyment of the same civil Liberties which they always expected; but are now to be treated in a more arbitrary Manner than before the Conquest.”³¹⁶ According

³¹⁴ *Boston Gazette*, November 14, 1774; *Norwich Packet*, November 17, 1774; *Providence Gazette*, November 19, 1774.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ *New-York Journal*, September 8, 1774; *Newport Mercury*, September 19, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, September 29, 1774.

to the *Journal*, the Canadians had experienced the same type of tyranny from the British crown as Americans had themselves. This shared experience was sure to bring the Canadians closer to the other colonies, and once they saw the advantages of American ways, they would certainly adopt them. The sense was that both Canadians and Americans were pushing for the same thing. This view was reinforced by an address purportedly from Canadian farmers to the Committee of Montreal which was published in the *Boston Evening-Post* and which informed the committee that “We the Canadian Farmers and others, being greatly alarmed at a late Act of Parliament, which re-establishes the ancient Laws of this Country, the bad Effects of which we too severely felt during the French Government.”³¹⁷ The farmers continued that they, “being entirely satisfied under the English Laws as administered in their Province, beg leave to acquaint the Gentlemen of the Committee for Montreal, that any legal Steps they shall take for the repeal of the said Act will be approved of by us, and we sincerely hope and pray that they will use all means in their power for the same.”³¹⁸ It is difficult to know if this address was real, or if it was a fiction created for the *Journal*, but whatever the case, it painted a vivid image for the American reading public. By ostensibly their own words, the farmers of Canada were proving that they valued the important traits of the American character as well. The farmers allegedly touted the “flourishing state of the Trade and Agriculture of his Province since the Conquest hereof, which we attribute to that Freedom which every one had enjoyed under the English Laws,” and declared that “we never had any Hand in a certain Petition said to be sent to his Majesty in the Name and in Behalf of all the Canadians for obtaining said Act, nor have we, nor any part of the Country where we reside been in any wise consulted thereupon.” By this account, the Canadian people did not support the Quebec Act. Instead, they were equally concerned about the potential for tyranny that the Act brought. The address concluded that “the said Petition was contrived and obtained in a clandestine and fraudulent Manner by a few designing Men, in order to

³¹⁷ *Boston Evening-Post*, November 21, 1774; *Newport Mercury*, November 21, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, November 24, 1774; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, November 28, 1774; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 30, 1774; *Newport Mercury*, December 5, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, December 15, 1774.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

get themselves into Posts of Profit & Honor.”³¹⁹ They were words that readers would recognize as American in their sentiment.

By late 1774, American newspapers were portraying French Canadians as being, like their Anglo-American neighbours, deeply dissatisfied with the Quebec Act. And in so being, they were proving that their brief time within the community of American colonies had changed them, had reformed them in the American mold. In the American public mind, Canada was no longer on the outside, but on the inside. There is, of course, a question to be asked as to whether this shift in opinion regarding Canadians represented a genuine shift in American thinking about their northern neighbours or whether it represented an understanding that insults and attacks are hard ways to win allies. The letter sent from Congress to the people of Great Britain seem to make it clear that for the revolutionary leaders at least the shift in their opinion of Canadians was a matter of expediency. As far as the views of the common American newspaper reader it is more difficult to say. What can be said for sure is that, in the years preceding the Revolution, readers would have seen article after article which, for the first time in the history of the English American press, almost universally portrayed the Canadians and brave, faithful, and loyal allies. The unified view that was being presented to Americans regarding the Canadian character would likely have had a significant influence on American popular opinion. When almost every newspaper presented a similar image, that image seemed a given fact. With increasing frequency, American newspapers were finding evidence that the Canadian people of the 1770s were not the Canadian people of 1760s. This reflected a change in the American identity as well. Americans were beginning to see one another, regardless of colony, as fellow Americans. Unity was becoming an important part of the American identity, and in the months before the Revolution began, many Americans felt as though that unity should include Quebec. French Canadians were no longer the anti-Christ for many Americans. Instead, they were portrayed as enlightened and loyal, like the other American colonies that had decided to pool their fortunes and push for liberty.

³¹⁹ *Boston Evening-Post*, November 21, 1774; *Newport Mercury*, November 21, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, November 24, 1774; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, November 28, 1774; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 30, 1774; *Newport Mercury*, December 5, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, December 15, 1774.

Although it remained a process, given the generations of hatred that English Americans had felt for French Canadians, those Canadians in the 1770s were increasingly seen as Americans that simply needed polish. Many felt that Canadians were well on their way to transforming from the “Canadian Peasant” into the American citizen. The American press specifically found evidence that Canadians were transforming into Americans in their refusals to join the English army. On December 15, the *New-York Journal* surmised that “Governor Carlton [sic] had attempted to raise a regiment of Canadians,” but concluded “That he first applied to the inhabitants, who to a man refused... [and] then solicited the Indians, who also refused meddling in the matter, saying that they considered the dispute like the falling out between father and son.”³²⁰ This reflected the reality that Carleton was indeed having a difficult time recruiting militias in French Canada, a region that largely didn’t see any reason to fight and die in an intra-empire conflict. Not only were they not interested in fighting for the empire, but according to the contributor to the *Journal*, and to many others, they were also warming up to their fellow colonists. The paper further contended that “We hear the letter of the general Congress to the inhabitants of Canada, had met with a very general and high approbation throughout that country, where a translation of it had been published.”³²¹ Five days later, the *Boston Evening-Post* informed readers that “application had been made to the French Inhabitants of Canada to arm themselves against the Colonies; but they rejected the Proposal with Indignation, and declared that if any one Canadian should be deluded so far as to go against their Sister Colonies, they would send ten to their Relief.”³²² Articles about the Canadians refusing to take up arms filled the press, and were reprinted numerous times throughout the colonies. They were hailed as evidence that the Canadians had seen the light and were about to join the revolutionaries’ fight.

³²⁰ *New-York Journal*, December 15, 1774; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, December 21, 1774; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, December 26, 1774.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² *Boston Evening-Post*, December 19, 1774; *Boston Gazette*, December 19, 1774; *Essex Gazette*, December 20, 1774; *Connecticut Journal*, December 21, 1774; *Essex Journal*, December 21, 1774; *Boston News-Letter*, December 22, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, December 22, 1774; *Boston News-Letter*, December 22, 1774; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, December 23, 1774; *Providence Gazette*, December 24, 1774; *Connecticut Journal*, December 28, 1774.

The same day as the article from the *Evening-Post*, the *New-York Gazette*, and *Weekly Mercury* read, “Reports we have had here of the Canadians and Indians being to be raised and sent to act against the People of Boston, &c. is entirely groundless; and that should a Thing of that Nature be proposed to the French, ‘twould be rejected with Disdain.”³²³

Like true Americans, the French Canadian people had allegedly refused to take up arms against their fellow colonies. Carleton had very little success in raising regiments to fight the Americans, and so events like this refusal likely happened in various places throughout the province. As far as most American newspapers were concerned, it was the beginning to the Canadians adoption into the community of soon to be states.

The year or so that preceded the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War were foundational days for the American identity that would fuel a revolution against the world’s preeminent empire. American portrayals of Canadians reflect the ways in which colonial Americans understandings of themselves changed in this important time. Like American opinion of the united American identity, in a few months, public opinion of Canadians shifted drastically. The *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser* informed readers on December 21 that “The old subjects have petitioned the King and Parliament to have [the Quebec Act] repealed, and represented the state of the province in a manner quite different from that which our thick headed Governor represented it.”³²⁴ Again, reports of Canadian satisfaction with the act were assumed to be false, and Canadians were assumed to be as desirous of united action as the other American colonies. The *Weekly Advertiser* continued, “The most sensible of the Canadians are as much averse to the French Laws being wholly revived as the English are. – It is only a few of their nobility (that is, those who, for their dexterity at handling a scalping knife, were dubbed Knights of St. Louis by the grand Monarch) that are glad of the change.” The French laws were, in fact, not to be wholly revived, with only French civil law remained, not French criminal law, but the *Advertiser*’s point was in many ways to cause anxiety. Fears of French Canadians had only recently begun to be put to rest, after all. Still, as was the

³²³ *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, December 19, 1774; *Connecticut Journal*, December 21, 1774; *Essex Gazette*, December 27, 1774.

³²⁴ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, December 21, 1774.

trend, Canadians were largely portrayed as Americans in waiting. As many papers did, the *Advertiser* concluded that “Their pride cannot endure, that the peasants should be independent of them.”³²⁵ Like Anglo-Americans, French Canadians were portrayed as a rational and moral populace, oppressed by a small coterie intent on arbitrary power and tyranny. By the end of 1774, as far as most American newspapers portrayed it, Canadians had largely taken their place within American fellowship and identity. Though many colonial American elites still had many reservations about Canadian loyalty, the American press in general shifted their portrayals of Canadians dramatically. As Figure 3 shows, positive American press portrayals of Canadians skyrocketed in 1774. American cities where negative portrayals of Canadians far outstripped positive ones since the French and Indian War suddenly became places where positive portrayals of Canadians abounded (Figure 4). For American readers, it must have seemed one of the quickest, most remarkable turnarounds in history. The servile, bloodthirsty Canadians had, in less than a decade, thrown off the majority of their coats, and like the Canadian Peasant, were poised to become Americans in more than mere name as they seemed to line up behind their new American brethren.

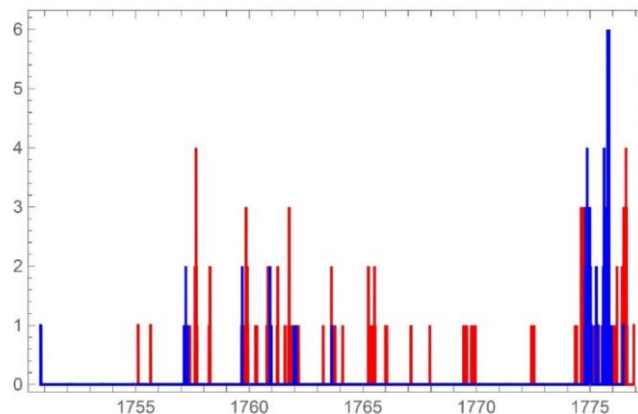


Figure 3: “Chart of Positive and Negative Portrayals of Canadians in the American Press, 1750-1784 (positive portrayals (blue) superimposed over negative portrayals (red)).” Image. 2022. Created using Wolfram Research, Inc., Mathematica, Version 12.1, Champaign, IL, (2019).

³²⁵ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, December 21, 1774.

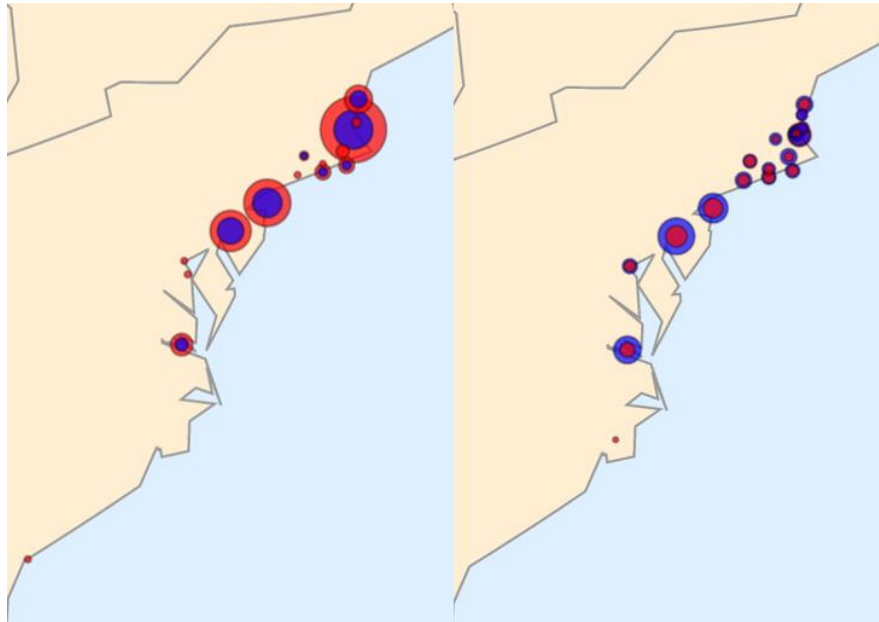


Figure 4: “Maps of Positive (blue) and Negative (red) Portrayals of Canadians in the American Press (Left: 1750-1774, Right: 1774-1776).” Image. 2022. Created using Wolfram Research, Inc., Mathematica, Version 12.1, Champaign, IL, (2019). Images are not to scale given the difference between the number of sources in the first map that covers twenty-four years and the second that covers two. The scale in the image on the right is larger so that the bubbles can be seen.

In the late 1760s and early 1770s, French Canadians were portrayed much as they always had been by the American press, as a foreign and hostile other; the antithesis of what it meant to be American. Where Protestant Americans were devoted to religious liberty and toleration,³²⁶ Catholic Canadians were intent on destroying those of differing faiths.³²⁷ Where Americans supported religious pluralism,³²⁸ Canadians were slavishly

³²⁶ *Norwich Packet*, November 10, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, November 10, 1774; *Boston Gazette*, November 14, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, November 17, 1774.

³²⁷ *Connecticut Courant*, October 31, 1774; *Connecticut Gazette*, November 18, 1774.

³²⁸ *Norwich Packet*, November 10, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, November 10, 1774; *Boston Gazette*, November 14, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, November 17, 1774.

devoted to the Catholic church.³²⁹ Where Americans were ambitious and innovative,³³⁰ Canadians were ignorant and lazy.³³¹ Where Americans were devoted to representative government,³³² Canadians were purported to favour arbitrary power.³³³ Prior to 1774, Canadians were othered as immoral and vicious, backwoods devotees of an evil and destructive religion. After the enactment of the Quebec Act, however, and the coalescing of the American colonies around opposition to it and the other Intolerable Acts, these portrayals changed dramatically and Canadians began to be depicted as loyal and steadfast Americans. Like Americans, Canadians were now opposed to tyrannical government and in favour of English laws and legislatures.³³⁴ Like Americans, they were now brave and gallant soldiers, ready to defend English law and culture.³³⁵ Like Americans, they were industrious, ambitious, and reasoned.³³⁶ Like Americans, they supported both religious and political liberty.³³⁷ Like Anglo-Americans, Canadians were now portrayed as loyal members of the American collective, as part of the American common cause. For the first time, they were not othered to define the positive aspects of American identity by comparison, but held up as an example *of* those positive aspects. By portraying the ways that Canadians were like Americans, the American press explored notions that there was a unique American identity that stood in contrast to those of

³²⁹ *Supplement to the Boston-Gazette, &c.*, June 12, 1769; *New-York Journal*, July 27, 1769; *Boston Evening-Post*, October 9, 1769; *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, October 23, 1769.

³³⁰ *New-York Journal*, January 10, 1771.

³³¹ *New-York Mercury*, April 29, 1765; *Newport Mercury*, May 13, 1765; *Supplement to the Boston-Gazette, &c.*, May 27, 1765; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 18, 1765; *New-York Gazette*, December 30, 1765.

³³² *Norwich Packet*, November 10, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, November 10, 1774; *Boston Gazette*, November 14, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, November 17, 1774.

³³³ *Connecticut Courant*, September 12, 1774; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 16, 1774; *Boston Evening-Post*, September 19, 1774; *Connecticut Gazette*, November 18, 1774.

³³⁴ *New-York Journal*, September 8, 1774; *Newport Mercury*, September 19, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, September 29, 1774; *Boston Evening-Post*, November 21, 1774; *Newport Mercury*, November 21, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, November 24, 1774; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, November 28, 1774; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 30, 1774; *Newport Mercury*, December 5, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, December 15, 1774.

³³⁵ *Norwich Packet*, November 10, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, November 10, 1774; *Boston Gazette*, November 14, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, November 17, 1774.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

Europeans. This was necessary to convince the American people that they shared more in common with one another than with Europe. Canadians stood in an unusual position in terms of the strategic use of American identity by American revolutionaries. In one sense, they could serve as a perfect foil against which to define what an American was, a foil which had been used successfully for generations to other Canadians as vicious and subservient. In another sense, they could also serve as an example of the ways in which the inhabitants of North America shared more in common with one another than with Europeans across the Atlantic, particularly as it seemed French Canadians were embracing the Revolutionary cause. As the Revolution dawned, American revolutionary leaders and newspapers decided on the latter. At least in the early years of the Revolutionary War, the American press intently portrayed Canadians as like their American siblings, an affirmation of the American identity rather than an other against which to accent its benefits.

This unique American identity did not emerge fully formed, but rather was the product of the various changes that racked both America and Europe in the late eighteenth century. Jack P. Greene has argued that seventeenth and eighteenth century notions of British rights had created the perception that America was a land in which individuals could pursue their own happiness in safety and security. For Greene, this pursuit was underpinned by the British Constitution and common law.³³⁸ When the Revolution began, the American identity was the British identity, and Americans argued that they were fighting to restore the rights that were legally theirs under the English constitution. To mobilize colonists in armed opposition to Britain, however, American leaders needed to turn the British into the “other” that the French had been in the previous war. Robert G. Parkinson has argued that during the Revolution, American leaders emphasized the idea that the American colonies shared a common cause with each other, and not their European counterparts as a means of uniting the colonies. He further surmised that a primary way in which they did this was to associate the British with Indigenous American and enslaved populations, concluding that, where the common

³³⁸ Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 170-206.

cause had once meant the cause of Protestantism in opposition to Catholicism, it shifted to mean the cause of Americans in opposition to the cause of Europeans.³³⁹ By 1774, most American newspapers defined Canadians as a part of the united, continental struggle, no longer racialized alongside Indigenous peoples and no longer denigrated as Catholic slaves, but as trusted American allies. For the first time, Canadians were included in the common Anglo-American cause, no longer enemies, but fellows, seemingly worthy of a place within what was emerging as a unique American identity.

It seems likely that this rapid shift in portrayals was at least partially aspirational, an attempt to persuade readers to let go of their long-held negative images of Canadians. The fact that American newspapers shifted such depictions en masse strongly implies that the issue of Canadian support for the Revolution was important to Americans. Canada mattered to the revolutionaries because it represented one of Britain's last footholds in America. It mattered because continental unity was considered paramount by those revolutionaries. It mattered because Canadians themselves seemed to hold the key to a union between Canada and the new United States. And because Canada mattered, American newspapers shifted their depictions of Canadians. While this didn't necessarily mean that American newspaper editors had changed their opinions of Canadians or that the American people agreed completely with the views now being presented in their newspapers, there was a dramatic shift in American portrayals of their Canadian neighbours. This swing preceded the alliance with France, and represented a remarkable change in American images of Canadians. Canadians were no longer total others, but rather they had worked their way toward the inside, so much so that many American newspapers considered them Americans in waiting.

The drastic shift in American opinion of Canadians has not yet been explored within the historiography, and the implications of the sudden change within the political crisis point of the American Revolution have not been fully analyzed. The image of Canadians was rehabilitated remarkably quickly in American eyes, and this rapid shift is significant. While changes in opinion are often understood as the result of long, slow

³³⁹ Parkinson, *The Common Cause*, 4-6.

processes, the sudden 180 degree turn in American portrayals of Canada shows the influence that moments of crisis can have on understandings of personal and group identity. Among other things, it reveals the dynamic way in which in-grouping and out-grouping can change rapidly in a political situation that requires unity. American revolutionaries sought to establish amongst the English colonists a sense that their shared Americanness made them kin. To withstand the British empire, the revolutionaries understood that the colonies would all need to stand together as one, and as such, they worked hard to instill a sense of American unity within English Americans. As this became a priority, so too did assimilating the Canadians into the unified identity. Canadians suddenly became more useful as examples of American uniqueness and unity than they were as a foil. The shift in opinion of Canadians reveals the growing importance of unity to what it meant to be American and to the very practical cause of winning the affection of the Canadians. Seemingly gone were the days when Canadians needed to be kept on the outside. As far as most American newspapers were concerned in the months before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, it was time to take the Canadian other and to make a Canadian brother.

Part 2: “True Friends to America,” 1774-1794

Chapter 3: “The Brave and Enlightened Canadians,” 1774-1783

Part Two of this dissertation explores the slow slip in American public opinion of Canadians during and in the aftermath of the American Revolutionary War. The spike in flattering portrayals of Canadians in American newspapers in 1774 would prove a highwater mark in terms of positive depictions of Canada. The trend in American opinion of Canadians in the twenty years following the outbreak of the American Revolution was the mirrored opposite of the trend seen in the twenty years prior. Between 1754 and 1774, American understandings of Canadians had shifted from bloodthirsty, backwoods heathens to reasoned and brave lovers of liberty. Between 1774 and 1794, understandings largely shifted back to the familiar tropes that had characterized depictions in the mid eighteenth century. Though the portrayals of Canadians were not as vitriolic as they had been during and in the years following the French and Indian War, American newspapers shifted back to excluding Canadians from their own American identity, often along religious or racial lines. A new image of Canadians also emerged in the press, one that was not as crafty and wicked as earlier iterations, but that was instead lazy and ignorant. Canadians had seemingly been unwilling or unable to fully grasp the benefits of throwing off the British yoke, and American newspapers adjusted their depictions accordingly. Rather than a sinister and malevolent force bent on bloodshed, Canadians were instead often portrayed as childlike versions of Americans, beings in the early stages of understanding the values of republicanism and liberty who, though unable to fully grasp the concepts at present, might one day learn enough from their neighbours to the south that they might stride into adulthood. Though they were reviled as traitors, the Loyalists who relocated into Canada at the close of hostilities were at the same time often portrayed by the American press as having a positive influence on the seemingly childlike and lazy French Canadian population. There was a sense that the Loyalists were instilling values of hard work and industry through their example and teaching. Loyalists were remembered as traitors, but the fact that they were seen as sharing certain aspects of the American character, such as hard work and valuing improvement, was seen as evidence of the superiority of the American identity. The Loyalists were not a positive

influence in regard to their political views, but they were often seen as a positive motivating influence on the French Canadians inhabitants of Quebec. As to the understanding of the values of republicanism and liberty that the Loyalists so sorely seemed to lack, the American press envisioned these as being slowly cultivated within the population by the post-war American immigrants into the province. In the postwar era, American opinion shifted from heady praise of the supposed revolutionary spirit of the Canadians to patronizing explorations of the ways that, like children, they were continuing to learn as they repeatedly fell short of American ideals.

The shift back to mid-eighteenth century tropes occurred relatively slowly during the Revolutionary War and in the years immediately following its end, but as war erupted two years after the close of the Revolution between the new American government and the Northwestern Confederacy, a coalition of Indigenous nations in the Midwest, American opinion of Canadians cratered. Especially after the bodies of Canadians were discovered among the dead after a number of battles, a fact that was widely publicized in American newspapers, American public opinion shifted rapidly back to the types of portrayals common in the French and Indian War. Canadians were again intimately associated with Indigenous communities, particularly with the frontier violence that Americans viewed as being in the very nature of Indigenous peoples. Their Catholicism again was sometimes used to question their loyalty, and in many ways their humanity. As had been the case in the pre-Revolutionary shift, this shift was not a complete reversion to past tropes. Though Canadians were once again racialized and once again othered due to their religion, the venom and bile that had characterized depictions in the mid-eighteenth century had been reduced significantly by the late century. The image of Canadians as liberty-loving comrades proved as hard to shake in post-Revolutionary America as the image of Canadians as bloodthirsty heathens had been to shake in the era following the French and Indian War. The Canadians that inhabited the pages of the American press in the two decades following the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, and especially in the decade following its end, were not the Canadians that could be found there in the 1750s. They were similar, but they weren't quite the distant outsiders their ancestors were made out to be.

For a brief time during the Revolutionary War itself, Canadians had ceased to be the foil against which Americans defined their own identities and instead appeared in more American newspapers as nascent Americans. The qualities that Americans praised in one another they similarly praised in the Canadians. Americans were proud that they were, allegedly unified in their resistance to British might, often at significant risk to their own lives, and they simultaneously praised Canadians for being willing to do the same. When Canadians refused to take up arms against their American neighbours, risking imprisonment at a minimum, American newspapers felt they saw the seeds of their own American identity. Americans prided themselves on their ability to sniff out the secret conspiracies of tyranny, and they were overjoyed that the Canadians seemed to recognize the same in the Quebec Act. As articles circulated that purported to expose Canadian distaste for and opposition to the Quebec Act, many American papers believed they were witnessing the beginning of a metamorphosis. For a brief moment, it appeared in the American press as though the Canadians were finally about to throw off their final coats and, like the Canadian Peasant, become true Americans. There had never seemed to be so few coats to go as there were in the early 1770s, but when those final coats never actually left Canadians shoulders, portrayals of those Canadians largely returned to their traditional foil against which Americans defined their own character. Though depictions were more tempered than they had been in the mid eighteenth century, the intention was the same. By commenting on the laziness and ignorance of the Canadians, American newspapers emphasized industriousness and education and key aspects of the independent American identity. For a young nation trying to establish itself amongst the great powers of the world, a spirit of hard work and improvement would be necessary. The very traits that Canadians lacked in the depictions of them that appeared in the American press were the ones that American newspapers felt were most necessary to instil within the newly free American population. In that pursuit, as they always had, portrayals of Canadians played a useful role.

Chapter Three explores American press portrayals of Canadians during the Revolutionary War. When the war began, American opinion of Canadians was at all-time high. American newspapers had largely abandoned attacks on French Canadian race and religion, and instead began to portray Canadians as Americans in waiting. As unity

became fundamental to the American war effort in the prelude to and the early days of the war, American papers began to appeal to Canadians by portraying them as being worthy of inclusion in the American identity. It was an honour that most Americans believed Canadians would reciprocate by joining the American cause, or at least they hoped so for the military advantages that could bring. When American troops marched on Canada in the war, most American newspapers surmised that the Canadian population would rise up and welcome the American troops as liberators and join them in driving the British occupiers into the sea. When this Canadian support never materialized, and when in fact, many French Canadians joined in a spirited defense of Quebec City that halted the American advance and eventually began to drive the American army out of Canada, American public opinion of Canadians collapsed. Though many American newspapers continued to tout Canadians as Americans in waiting, most American papers reverted relatively quickly to the old stereotypes of French Canadians that had evolved during the French and Indian War. It seems the idea of Canadians in waiting was less a sincere belief and more a form of useful wartime propaganda, due to how quickly this idea disappeared. By the time the war ended, Canadians were largely back to being used as a foil against which to define the American identity. Though the depictions of Canadians were not as extreme as they had been during the French and Indian War and its aftermath, they were built on the same themes of racial and religious difference. Though there was a brief moment where Canadians were used to reflect the American character back onto itself, by the end of the Revolutionary War, that moment had largely passed. Canadians would enter the postwar era once again as “others”, excluded from the American imagined community and used negatively to define the characteristics of that community by contrast. Canadians were once again a foil.

As had been the case during the French and Indian War, Canada mattered to Americans during the American Revolution, for both similar and very different reasons compared with that previous war. Canada again posed a potentially existential threat, though this time the threat stemmed from the British empire rather than the French. Canada was one of the last major strongholds of the British in America, and as such was a major target. The Canadian people also mattered to Americans. In the early years of the Revolution, Canadians were largely portrayed as Americans in waiting, as a group so

similar that union was all but inevitable. As the Revolutionary War dragged on, however, the image of Canadians reverted to an other, and portrayals of Canadians once again began to be used to contrast the American identity. The racialization or pseudo-racialization of the Canadians that had happened during and following the French and Indian War now served the revolutionaries well. As Parkinson has argued, American revolutionaries intentionally associated the British army with racialized groups as a means of painting them as a vicious other.³⁴⁰ In addition to Indigenous peoples and Black Americans, highlighted in Parkinson's work, this dissertation shows that those revolutionaries also utilized Canadians as a racialized other by which to tarnish the British. Canadians, who had largely been "racialized" by a similar process in the French and Indian War were now used to racialize the British. In this way, Canadians mattered both as mirror to reflect the purported American identity back at Americans and as a racialized foil that could be used to taint the British by association. Though the uses changed, the usefulness of Canadians remained remarkably consistent. Canada continued to matter.

As the American Revolution dawned, one of the primary obstacles to effective resistance and rebellion against Great Britain was the seeming discord between the various English American colonies. Robert G. Parkinson has argued that common sense had it that the American colonies were too different and harboured too much animosity to one another to effect something like a prolonged rebellion. He further argued that to promote the requisite unity, American leaders adapted notions of the Common Cause (which had originally been understood as the common cause of Protestants against externalized Catholic threats) to suit their new motives. Parkinson concluded that American leaders and newspapers had asserted that the American colonies in fact shared a common cause with each other that stood in opposition to that of their European counterparts. Parkinson further argued that American officials and newspaper editors sought to instill ideas of this common cause in the American public mind by associating

³⁴⁰ Parkinson, *The Common Cause*, 20-21.

their British enemies with Indigenous peoples and Black populations that the British often came to rely on during the war. By stressing that the British had freed and armed Black slaves during the Revolutionary War, and by emphasizing that they had a long history of inciting Indigenous nations to frontier violence, early American leaders promoted a sense of White unity within the Anglo-American settler population by associating the British with traditional, racialized “others.”³⁴¹ As far as American officials and newspaper editors were concerned, the British ministry had betrayed their fellow White Britons by stirring up those racialized others against the American colonists. Though the Indigenous and Black allies that the British army found throughout the war had their own reasons for joining the conflict, this was a fact that was largely ignored or missed by most American leaders. Most Americans seem to have believed that most racialized groups lacked the agency to think for themselves, and so, those racialized groups were seen as the pawns of White Britons, ready to mindlessly carry out the tyrants’ will. The claim was that the British had incited the racialized to unleash chaos in the colonies, and in so doing forfeited their place within the definitions of White that were animating the American Revolutionaries. Edmund S. Morgan has argued that another way in which American leaders promoted intercolonial unity was through the promotion of popular sovereignty. Morgan contended that in the eighteenth century, notions of authority were shifting from authoritarian to “popular,” but concluded that despite this change, conceptions of popular sovereignty remained a way for “the few to govern the many.”³⁴² By appealing to notions that power rightly rested in the hands of the people, American leaders and newspapers promoted a sense that colonial popular sovereignty was being trampled on by the British crown. Though Morgan argued that popular sovereignty was a fiction used by the ruling classes during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to placate the masses and create the illusion of power resting in the hands of the people,³⁴³ conceptions of both a White American common cause and a

³⁴¹ Parkinson, *The Common Cause*, 4-21.

³⁴² Morgan, *Inventing the People*, 14.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

violated popular sovereignty proved to be powerfully unifying factors in Revolutionary America.

By 1775, the belief that the British ministry was covertly trying to usurp the colonists' liberty and enslave them to arbitrary power pervaded the American public mind, buoyed by both suspicions of Roman Catholic plots³⁴⁴ and the tightening of colonial governance.³⁴⁵ Bernard Bailyn has argued that in the late eighteenth century, "fear of a comprehensive conspiracy against liberty throughout the English-speaking world" was being disseminated in pamphlets and newspapers across the colonies, and that this fear "lay at the heart of the Revolutionary movement."³⁴⁶ For Bailyn, these anxieties about conspiracy were inherited from the English Civil Wars and intimately influenced the ways in which Americans viewed the British crown. He argued that American revolutionaries intentionally coopted language from the late seventeenth century in their campaign against the British monarchy.³⁴⁷ Bailyn primarily explored the sentiment that appeared in pamphlets, though similar sentiment can also be seen in the American newspaper press. In many ways, press portrayals of Canadians often reflected Americans' own identity back at them. Particularly in the early years of the war, American newspapers depicted Canadians as oppressed by the same arbitrary power as the English colonies and as similarly yearning to throw off the yoke. Whatever Americans were opposed to, it seemed that Canadians were also opposed to. In 1774, articles began to appear in the American press that asserted that Canadians, both French and English, were steadfastly opposed to the Quebec Act. Though in actuality this appears to not have been the case for most Canadians, particularly for French Canadians who were seemingly quite pleased with much of the act, American newspapers were confident that, like them, the Canadians were opposed to the Quebec Act, viewed it as the first step toward tyranny. As far as those papers were concerned, Canadians, like Americans, had sensed the danger and responded to it. This led many papers to conclude

³⁴⁴ Cogliano, *No King, No Popery*, 49-52.

³⁴⁵ McConville, *The King's Three Faces*.

³⁴⁶ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), ix.

³⁴⁷ Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*.

that Canadians were becoming Americans in both thought and deed. By the early years of the Revolutionary War, for many American newspapers Canadians had seemingly become full-fledged, equal members in the American struggle against tyranny; in the minds of many Americans, a fourteenth American state. The course of the war, however, and particularly the failed invasion of Canada, would make American newspapers far less confident in the character of the Canadians at the end of the war than they had been at the beginning.

One of the first large-scale military actions undertaken by the American Continental Congress was the invasion of Canada. After troops under Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold surprised and captured Fort Ticonderoga in May of 1775,³⁴⁸ the goal of taking Canada seemed within American reach. In September of that year, Arnold led a detachment of men through the Maine wilderness, making for Quebec City,³⁴⁹ while Richard Montgomery laid siege to Fort St. John's, Quebec.³⁵⁰ Following the capitulation of St. John's and Quebec Governor Guy Carleton's evacuation of Montreal for Quebec City,³⁵¹ the American press was confident that Quebec would soon fall, and the conquest of Canada be complete.³⁵² American newspapers were filled with accounts of how welcoming Canadians had been toward American troops,³⁵³ how they had refused to take

³⁴⁸ *Virginia Gazette*, June 1, 1775.

³⁴⁹ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, January 3, 1776.

³⁵⁰ *Constitutional Gazette*, October 7, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, October 9, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, October 10, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 11, 1775; *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, October 12, 1775; *New-York Journal*, October 12, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 13, 1775; *Story & Humphreys's Pennsylvania Mercury, and Universal Advertiser*, October 13, 1775; *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, October 14, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 16, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, October 16, 1775; *Norwich Packet*, October 16, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, October 16, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, October 16, 1775; *Maryland Journal*, October 18, 1775; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy Or, American Oracle of Liberty*, October 20, 1775; *Essex Journal*, October 20, 1775.

³⁵¹ *Virginia Gazette*, October 12, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, October 16, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 20, 1775.

³⁵² *Virginia Gazette*, October 27, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, October 28, 1775.

³⁵³ *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, November 27, 1775; *Maryland Journal*, December 13, 1775.

arms against those troops,³⁵⁴ and how much they desired to join the American union.³⁵⁵ Then, in the dead of a stormy night on New Year's Eve, 1775, Montgomery and Arnold led an assault on Quebec, but were repulsed with significant losses after the death of Montgomery in one of the battle's opening volleys.³⁵⁶ Though Arnold maintained a loose siege for several months, over the next year, British forces under Carleton and John Burgoyne slowly retook Canada.³⁵⁷ For the rest of the war, the American conquest of Canada remained unachieved. For their part, the majority of French Canadians were seemingly wary of acting against their beloved clergy or their relatively accommodating government, and offered little to no support to the American goal of conquering the region. Though the American press often emphasized the large numbers of Canadians that were turning out to join the American war effort, this was more an act of spin than of objective reporting. Though some Canadians had indeed joined the Americans, the numbers were quite small, with most seemingly taking the pragmatic approach of lending support only when forced to do so. This realization had a notable chilling affect on American portrayals of Canadians. In the later years of the American Revolution following the disastrous American invasion of Canada, American newspapers drifted back into their old prejudices about Canadians. Where accounts of Canadian-perpetrated frontier massacres and denunciations of French Canadian Catholicism had faded from the American press in the early years of the Revolutionary War, they began to creep back in

³⁵⁴ *Virginia Gazette*, January 26, 1775; *Constitutional Gazette*, September 27, 1775; *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, September 28, 1775; *New-York Journal*, September 28, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, September 30, 1775; *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, September 30, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, October 2, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, October 2, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 2, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, October 2, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, October 2, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 6, 1775; *Essex Journal*, October 6, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 10, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, October 12, 1775; *Norwich Packet*, October 16, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, October 19, 1775; *Boston News-Letter*, October 26, 1775.

³⁵⁵ *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, September 28, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, October 9, 1775.

³⁵⁶ *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, February 26, 1776; *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, March 2, 1776.

³⁵⁷ *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, July 18, 1776; *Norwich Packet*, July 29, 1776; *Newport Mercury*, August 5, 1776; *Virginia Gazette*, August 10, 1776.

toward the end of the conflict.³⁵⁸ While many newspapers still praised Canadians as liberty-loving fellow Americans, many others began to associate them with what they viewed as the treachery of Loyalism. By the end of the war, Americans were far less sure than they had been (or appeared to be) in 1775 that Canadians could be assimilated into the American identity.

Though religious and ethnic prejudices persisted, at the start of the Revolutionary War, the American press was encouraged by the seeming receptiveness of the Canadian people to the American cause. Though some newspapers continued to belittle French Canadian Catholicism and the intermingling of French Canadians and Indigenous peoples, many others were filled with accounts of Canadians, both French and Indigenous, refusing to arm against the colonists. In January of 1775, the *Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal* informed readers “that the Canadians laughed at the puffs of an army from thence, as it was not in the power of Government to raise 1000 men, of the refuse of that country for the infamous design.”³⁵⁹ Canadians were showing their hand by refusing to join the British army. As far as most American newspapers were concerned, that was tacit support for the Revolutionary cause. The fact that Canadians were refusing to join the fight against their fellow North Americans was touted throughout the American press. The *Constitutional Gazette* read, “the Canadians have positively refused to take any part at all in the dispute.”³⁶⁰ The *Virginia Gazette* surmised that Canadians “looked upon the other colonies as their brethren,” concluding “that they

³⁵⁸ *Virginia Gazette*, March 8, 1776; *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, May 30, 1776; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, June 1, 1776; *Providence Gazette*, June 1, 1776.

³⁵⁹ *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, January 5, 1775; *Boston Evening-Post*, January 9, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, January 9, 1775; *Essex Gazette*, January 10, 1775; *Essex Journal*, January 11, 1775; *Norwich Packet*, January 12, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, January 13, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, January 14, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, January 16, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, January 24, 1775.

³⁶⁰ *Constitutional Gazette*, September 27, 1775; *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, September 28, 1775; *New-York Journal*, September 28, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, September 30, 1775; *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, September 30, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, October 2, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, October 2, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 2, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, October 2, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, October 2, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 6, 1775; *Essex Journal*, October 6, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 10, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, October 12, 1775; *Norwich Packet*, October 16, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, October 19, 1775; *Boston News-Letter*, October 26, 1775.

will by no means take up arms against [the colonists],” further contending “that it was generally imagined, by gentlemen, best acquainted with the disposition of the Canadians, that it would be impossible to raise a single regiment in all Canada.”³⁶¹ Exactly why the French Canadians, who had only recently been attacked by the English colonists and who seemingly had a fair amount of affection for the Crown that had left them with their civil laws, would wish to throw off the monarchy and join with the American mob was not addressed by the *Gazette*. It seems likely that the Canadians in question merely hoped to keep out of what they viewed as a family squabble. While this desire to avoid becoming involved in the conflict seems to be the most likely reason for Canadians avoiding service in the British army, American newspapers viewed this avoidance as tacit support for the Revolution. By their account, by refusing to fight for the British, the Canadians were declaring for the Americans, no matter whether they ended up joining the American forces or not.

Numerous newspapers touted the seeming inability of the Crown to muster troops in Canada. Citing a letter from an anonymous gentleman in Canada, the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* read, “Proper persons were immediately employed in collecting what Canadians they could, in order to take up arms; and I have the pleasure to assure you they met with little or no success.”³⁶² As Canadian recruitment failed to meet expectation, British officials began to take more direct action. In July of 1775, the *Providence Gazette* reported that “Governor Carleton had not been able to prevail upon either Indians or Canadians to take up Arms against us, unless we should attack Montreal, in which Case the Canadians have agreed to help defend it; and that Carleton was obliged to threaten to burn the City, to get them to promise even that.”³⁶³ Whether or not Carleton actually made such a threat seems a matter of debate. Justin H. Smith has noted that while organizing the defences of Montreal Carleton had “said something that went about as a

³⁶¹ *Virginia Gazette*, January 26, 1775.

³⁶² *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, October 21, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 23, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 25, 1775; *Constitutional Gazette*, October 28, 1775; *New-York Journal*, November 2, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, November 2, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, November 3, 1775; *Constitutional Gazette*, November 4, 1775.

³⁶³ *Providence Gazette*, July 29, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, July 31, 1775; *Massachusetts Spy*, August 9, 1775.

threat to burn the city and retire to Quebec.”³⁶⁴ Whether this threat was real or not, it seems that Carleton did in fact have a somewhat difficult time recruiting men voluntarily for militia service, even in defence of the city. Months after his alleged threat to burn Montreal, on November 22, 1775, Carleton issued a proclamation which asserted that because “certain rebellious Persons [had] invaded this Province, ” and because “Persons resident here Contumaciously refused to enroll their Names in the Militia Lists, and to take up Arms in Conjunction with their Fellow Citizens” in the defense of the city, that anyone refusing to take up arms in defense of the city should “quit the Town in four Days from the Date hereof, together with their Wives & Children, and to withdraw themselves out of the Limits of the District of Quebec before the first Day of Decr next, under Pain of being treated as Rebels or Spies.”³⁶⁵ Moreover, Carleton ordered that, given that “the Country abounds with the Necessaries of Life,”³⁶⁶ those persons leaving the city would not be allowed to leave with their provisions. Carleton encouraged “every such Person & Persons to deliver in forthwith to the Honble George Alsop Esqr Commissary a true Inventory or List of their Provisions and Stores in Order that they may be fairly & justly valued and the full Price paid to their respective Proprietors before their Departure.”³⁶⁷ As perhaps a predictable result of this proclamation, five hundred men in Montreal took up arms in defense of the city, a mix of both English and French inhabitants.³⁶⁸ The American press emphasized, however, how precarious such threat-based support could be. The *Pennsylvania Evening Post* informed readers, “We hear from Canada, that the Lieut. Governor, who commands at Quebec during the absence of Carleton, has about a thousand Canadians embodied, but they are so strongly suspected that it is thought prudent not to trust them with a larger quantity of ammunition than four rounds.”³⁶⁹ Like

³⁶⁴ Justin H. Smith, *Our Struggle for the Fourteenth Colony: Canada and the American Revolution* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1907), 218.

³⁶⁵ Guy Carleton, “A Proclamation,” November 22, 1775. In the *John Hancock Papers*.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁸ Hal T. Shelton, *General Montgomery and the American Revolution: From Redcoat to Rebel*, New York: New York University Press, 1996.

³⁶⁹ *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, October 21, 1775; *Dunlap’s Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 23, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 25, 1775; *Constitutional Gazette*, October 28,

the *Virginia Gazette*, most newspapers agreed that Canadians were “greatly dissatisfied at the governor’s attempting to raise troops amongst them to fight the Americans.”³⁷⁰ And like their American counterparts, Canadians were seemingly no longer willing to take it. Again, Canadians were like their American neighbours. This was a theme in the early days of the Revolution. Almost completely gone were depictions of Canadians as racialized, barbarous Catholics. Instead, they were rational, White fellow North Americans. The American press was sure that a people so similar to themselves would not take up arms against them.

The American press was enamoured with the idea that the British empire was failing miserably in its attempts to raise French Canadian militias. In August of 1775, months before Carleton’s proclamation and the subsequent spike in recruitment, the *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, gleefully reported that “Gov. Carlton, having in vain endeavoured by fair means to engage the Canadians in the service against the colonies... attempted to compel them by force, on which there was an insurrection of 3000 men to oppose that force.”³⁷¹ The *Ledger* concluded, “they did not disperse till they received assurances that no compulsion should be used. It is said they are determined to observe a strict Neutrality.”³⁷² These Canadians were like Americans as far as the American press was concerned. Two days later, the *Connecticut Courant* reported that “About three weeks ago an attempt was made to force the Canadians to take up arms.”³⁷³ By the *Courant*’s

1775; *New-York Journal*, November 2, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, November 2, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, November 3, 1775; *Constitutional Gazette*, November 4, 1775.

³⁷⁰ *Virginia Gazette*, October 5, 1775.

³⁷¹ *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, August 12, 1775; *Maryland Journal*, August 16, 1775; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, August 16, 1775; *Story & Humphreys's Pennsylvania Mercury, and Universal Advertiser*, August 18, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, August 26, 1775.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ *Connecticut Courant*, August 14, 1775; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy Or, American Oracle of Liberty*, August 16, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, August 16, 1775; *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer; Or, The Connecticut, Hudson's River, New-Jersey, and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, August 17, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, August 18, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, August 19, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, August 19, 1775; *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, August 19, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, August 21, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 22, 1775; *New-York Journal*, August 24, 1775; *Essex Journal*, August 25, 1775; *Virginia*

account, the British “were about to hang some in every parish, when the Canadians arose in a body of near three thousand men, disarmed the officer that was after recruits, and made him flee, being determined to defend themselves in the best manner they could by a full resistance, rather than be forced to arm against the colonies.”³⁷⁴ There were many reasons why French Canadians refused to fight. One of the most influential was likely that they didn’t see it as their conflict. As Holly A. Mayer notes, there was a desire among “many French Canadians to steer clear of a war between what many deemed occupiers and outsiders.”³⁷⁵ The Americans were certainly outsiders to the French Canadians, very similarly to the ways that Canadians served as an outgroup for Americans, and there was seemingly little appetite to ally with their former and current invaders. Attitudes toward the British were little different, as few Canadians seemed willing to serve as cannon fodder in Britain’s imperial wars. That was not the way the American press saw it, however. As far as many papers were concerned, Canadian reticence to join the British army was read as support for the American cause. Many of those papers argued that in return for that support, Americans would welcome their Canadian brethren into the American union and identity. In most revolutionary American newspapers, Canadians were not portrayed as outsiders, nor were they depicted as considering their Anglo-American neighbours to be outsiders. Like Americans, Canadians were seen as willing to resist tyranny and injustice. American officials and newspaper editors were consciously portraying the American colonies as being oppressed by a tyrannical British ministry, and many of those newspaper editors began to argue that the Canadians had tasted equally of that oppression. The same assertions the American press made about oppression in the English colonies, they made about Canada and it seems to have proved quite endearing. The *Providence Gazette* reported of Canadians, “there hath been an Insurrection among them, to prevent their being forced to act against

Gazette, August 31, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, September 2, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, September 18, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, September 19, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 20, 1775; *Essex Journal*, September 22, 1775; *Story & Humphreys's Pennsylvania Mercury, and Universal Advertiser*, September 22, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, September 25, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 26, 1775.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Holly A. Mayer, “Canada and the American Revolution,” *Museum of the American Revolution*.

us... We hear Governor Carlton [sic] has imprisoned a Number of Canadians, for refusing to act against the Colonies."³⁷⁶ That Canadians were seemingly unwilling to take up arms and were willing to face imprisonment in solidarity with the English colonists was profoundly encouraging to the patriot American press. That support was seen by many American commentators as evidence of the ways in which Canadians had become more like themselves. Many newspapers began to entertain the idea that Canadians might be more like Americans than they had realized.

In April 1775, the *New-York Journal* reported on an interesting trend apparently appearing in Canada. It informed readers that, "On a Report of a design to form an army in Canada to join the King's regular forces in fighting against and enslaving the other British colonies; the Canadians were greatly alarmed, and took the best method in their power to secure themselves from the hateful service."³⁷⁷ According to the *Journal*, "as by the laws of France, married men cannot be compelled to serve in the Militia, the Canadians considered Marriage as a Protection, to which, since their new laws, they have so universally had recourse, that it is said there is hardly an unmarried man to be found in all the country."³⁷⁸ Again, the question of whether Canadians were marrying to avoid fighting specifically for the British, or whether they were marrying to avoid an imperial war they felt they had no part of, was not asked by American newspapers. The use of marriage to avoid military service was taken as evidence that Canadian men opposed the British, and only the British. Those same men were not joining the American forces, but their opposition to British military service endeared them to Americans. Though there was not significant or active support of the American cause amongst Canadians, many American newspapers portrayed Canadian refusals to join the British as a decision to join the American cause. Those Canadian men were doing more than simply getting married; they were marrying in support of Revolutionary America.

³⁷⁶ *Providence Gazette*, September 2, 1775.

³⁷⁷ *New-York Journal*, April 6, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, April 10, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, April 12, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 12, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, April 14, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, April 15, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, April 17, 1775; *Essex Gazette*, May 2, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, May 5, 1775.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Rather typically, very little attention was paid to the women who were also getting married in seemingly record numbers. Though they are explicitly referenced only a few times in mid eighteenth century portrayals of Canada, conceptions of women and gender were fundamental to both American identity, and American understandings of Canadian identity. When they did appear in the press, white women were often depicted as passive extensions of their husbands, victims to be massacred along with their children on the American frontiers.³⁷⁹ This image of White American women stood in stark contrast to broadly held American opinion about racialized women. Kathleen M. Brown has argued that in the eighteenth century, racialized women were often maligned as insatiable, corrupting, and hypersexualized.³⁸⁰ In contrast, she argued that White women were often idealized for their purity,³⁸¹ and increasingly, English American women began to be portrayed as the bedrock of republicanism and American society. This was the image of White American women that appeared in the American press the few times that women were addressed at all. Linda K. Kerber has argued that in the Revolutionary period, notions of republican motherhood began to take hold in the English colonies, defining American women in a more active, though still politically isolated role within the American home. She further surmised that, as notions of duty slowly shifted from husband to state, White women began to be idealized as the primary republican educators. As republican mothers and American citizens, the gendered role of White American women was to raise their children (most importantly their sons) in the ways of republicanism.³⁸² Their responsibility was the domestic sphere, and the idealized vision for most Americans was that of settled yeoman families with father in the field and mother in the home. As depictions of Canadians began to swing toward the favourable in the early Revolutionary era, so too did portrayals of Canadian gender roles. Like English American women, White Canadian women, and especially the homes they facilitated, were increasingly depicted as a foundation of Canadian society. And as far as the

³⁷⁹ *New-York Gazette*, December 1, 1760; *New-York Mercury*, December 1, 1760; *Boston Gazette*, December 8, 1760; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, December 11, 1760.

³⁸⁰ Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

³⁸² Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies*.

American press was concerned, this seeming improvement in Canadian women was subsequently improving French Canadian society. The *Pennsylvania Ledger* reported that “The inhabitants of Canada have nearly doubled since its conquest.” By the *Ledger*’s account, this doubling in population had been the result of natural increase, while in reality postwar immigration also played a significant role. Of that immigration, the majority were English immigrants, migrating to Canada from either Britain or the British colonies to the south. Though they continued to portray Canadians as a largely French monolith, the *Ledger* did recognize the growing English presence in Canada, and it credited that presence with the improvements that it felt had occurred in the northern province. The paper further opined that “Under the French, all their men able to bear arms were registered in the militia, and were often draughted and sent as far as Louisiana, and to the several posts to the west of the Mississippi [sic].”³⁸³ The *Ledger* argued that because of this, “the flower of their youth spent the vigour of their life in toilsome marches of many thousand miles, and in intrigues with the Indian woman.”³⁸⁴ The paper concluded of the Canadians that “while under the English government they stay at home, cultivate lands, enjoy the comforts of matrimony and a settled life, beget abundance of children, for the women are amazingly prolific, and to all appearance are the happiest of people.”³⁸⁵ By the reckoning of the *Pennsylvania Ledger*, the English conquest had established proper gender roles in Canada, and as such had led to rapid improvement of their domestic situation and therefore of Canadian society, reinforcing the settle colonial myth. Like Anglo-Americans, French Canadian men were no longer portrayed as fraternizing with Indigenous women in the dark forests, but as supporting their White Canadian wives and families on their small farms. French Canadian women were no longer rough peasants, forced to carry out the rugged labour of their absent husbands, but fertile cultivators of White domesticity and expansion. It was a significant shift in thinking.

³⁸³ *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, April 1, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, April 21, 1775

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Though many revolutionary Americans seemingly considered French Canadian women to be White, their place within the developing racial hierarchies in America were somewhat ambiguous. Canadians had for a long time been considered a mixed-race group comprised of colonists born from unions between the French and Indigenous peoples. And as the Revolution dawned, the attempts of American officials to associate the British army with racialized groups like Indigenous peoples and Black Americans also served to associate the Canadian militias fighting alongside that British army with those racialized others. At the same time, however, as will be discussed below, Canadians were also used *as* a racialized other, the association with which was intended to demonize the regular British army. American newspapers often listed Canadians alongside other racialized groups when trying to paint the British as a tyrannical army that was breaking the rules of respectability by inciting racialized others to join what was in essence a White civil war. At the same time, however, American papers used evidence that Canadians had joined Indigenous war parties to argue that the White Canadians had similarly betrayed their fellow White Americans. As was their opinion of Canadians in general, American understandings of Canadian race were in flux in the revolutionary era. As Americans sought to draw Canadians into their colonial union, most American papers seem to have implicitly concluded that Canadians were White, just as they defined Americans to be. The expediency of this shift was intimately related to the necessities of wartime, to the need to make and keep allies, and it was not only Canadians that saw their image in the American public mind shift during the Revolution.

Though they largely remained racialized others, early refusals from Indigenous nations in Canada to join the British in arms also encouraged the American press and led to more favourable depictions of them as a group. In July 1775, the *Newport Mercury* reported, “we have authentic advice, that the Canadian Indians have absolutely refused to act against the colonies.”³⁸⁶ Three days earlier, *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser* had informed readers that “We have had positive accounts from many of the Indian tribes, who are certainly applied to by Governor Carleton to distress the

³⁸⁶ *Newport Mercury*, July 10, 1775.

settlements, but they say they have received no offence from the people, so will not make war with them.”³⁸⁷ Such accounts served to comfort American readers as they assured those readers that there would not be waves of Indigenous attacks emanating from Canada. The neutrality of the North America’s Indigenous populations was very important to American revolutionaries, and so the fact that Indigenous nations in Canada were refusing to join the British army was met with celebration across the American press in the early days of the war. Even after the invasion of Canada had failed, American newspapers emphasized the neutrality of the Indigenous nations in Canada. In August 1776, the *New-York Journal* contended that “General Burgoyne has endeavoured to persuade some tribes of the Canadian Indians to join the British army, but they absolutely refused, and were determined not to take any part in the present unhappy dispute.”³⁸⁸ Two weeks later, the *Virginia Gazette* asserted that “The Indians have absolutely refused Carleton in Canada, and Butler at Niagara, to have anything to do in their quarrel; and applaud, in the highest terms, our wisdom and candour for not requiring them to meddle.”³⁸⁹ This went a long way with American newspapers. Like French Canadian refusals to join the British army, Indigenous refusals to join the British war effort were seen by American newspapers as tacit support for the American cause. As the *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette* put it, “The Indians are for us.”³⁹⁰ The paper did not mean by that statement that Indigenous peoples were taking up arms for the Americans, simply that they weren’t taking up arms against them. This led to a rapid rehabilitation of the image of Indigenous peoples in the American press. While Indigenous communities

³⁸⁷ *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, July 3, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 5, 1775; *New-York Journal*, July 6, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, July 13, 1775.

³⁸⁸ *New-York Journal*, August 15, 1776; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, August 15, 1776; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, August 19, 1776; *Connecticut Journal*, August 21, 1776; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, August 21, 1776; *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, August 22, 1776; *New-England Chronicle*, August 22, 1776; *Essex Journal*, August 23, 1776; *Providence Gazette*, August 24, 1776; *The Freeman's Journal, OR New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 24, 1776; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, August 26, 1776; *Providence Gazette*, August 31, 1776.

³⁸⁹ *Virginia Gazette*, August 30, 1776; *Virginia Gazette*, August 31, 1776.

³⁹⁰ *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, October 19, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, October 25, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, October 28, 1775; *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, October 28, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, October 30, 1775; *Maryland Journal*, November 1, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, November 11, 1775.

were never compared against Americans as favourably as Canadians were, there was a notable shift in the ways that American newspapers portrayed the Indigenous nations that refused to take up arms against them. Throughout the Revolutionary War, Americans worked anxiously to maintain a neutrality among Indigenous peoples that many saw as vital to the war effort.

The American press recorded many meetings between American officials and leaders of the Indigenous nations in Canada. In August 1775, the *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser* reported, “There are some Indians from St. Frances, about 45 leagues from Quebec, who have come down with friendly dispositions to us, four of them have stayed, the other, who is the chief is returning by way of Ticonderoga; all the machinations of Carlton [sic] and his emissaries have not been able to move them against the colonies.”³⁹¹ In February 1776, the same paper informed readers that “There is now here the chiefs of three tribes of Canadian Indians, thirteen of the Chicknawagah’s have been here eight days; the two other tribes came but yesterday.” The *Journal* continued, “the former Indians dine with generals Washington and Putnam, and spend one half their time at colonel Mifflins, which together with some tawdry cloathing that has been given them, has pleased them much, and they desire that we may look upon them as our assured friends.”³⁹² Exactly which nations or groups American newspapers were referring to when the mentioned “Canadian Indians” is difficult to discern given the vagueness of most accounts. It seems that the printers themselves often were no more aware of which groups they were speaking of when they talked about “Canadian Indians,” though at least in some cases, they may have been referring to the Seven Nations of Canada. The Seven Nations were not a unified ethnic group, but rather a confederacy of seven communities that intertwined with French Canadian settlements along the St. Lawrence River. Darren Bonaparte has identified these communities as consisting of one Onondaga, three

³⁹¹ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, August 30, 1775.

³⁹² *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, February 7, 1776; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, February 12, 1776; *Constitutional Gazette*, February 14, 1776; *Maryland Journal*, February 21, 1776; *Virginia Gazette*, February 23, 1776; *Virginia Gazette*, February 24, 1776; *Connecticut Gazette*, March 22, 1776; *Virginia Gazette*, April 6, 1776.

Mohawk, two Abenaki, and one Huron, running from east to west along the river.³⁹³ The Seven Nations had been allies of the French during the Seven Years War, during which conflict one of the first recordings of the confederacy occurred when a Mohawk soldier with the Seven Nations, who was set up for an ambush along with the French, identified other Mohawk soldiers marching into the ambush with the British and called out to them asking them who they were. According to Peter McLeod, the answer was “Mohawks and Five Nations,” and when asked the same question in return, the first speaker replied “We are the 7 confederate Indian Nations of Canada.”³⁹⁴ Though the reply that had been recorded from Mohawk oral tradition by John Norton in 1816 gave the reply by the Seven Nations soldier as “We are Caghnawagues & other Tribes,”³⁹⁵ it seems likely that at least in many cases when the American press referred the “Canadian Indians,” they were referring to this confederation. It also seems that maintaining the neutrality of the Seven Nations was considered a priority by many American newspapers.

Along with the councils and gift giving that they carried out themselves, American leaders also encouraged their own few Indigenous allies to urge First Nations in Canada to neutrality. In June 1775, the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* contended that “A firm foundation now turns up to view, for the influence of the Stockbridge Indians amongst the Six Nations and matters stand well with the Canadians Indians... The Canadian Indians farther told our Indians, That if they did fight at all, they would Fight Against the Regulars, for they did not like them.” The *Pennsylvania Ledger* printed the First Nations’ response in “an Answer to a Speech the Caughnawagas, or Canadian Tribes of Indians, near Montreal, sent by the Stockbridge Indians returned 15th June, 1775.”³⁹⁶ The Caughnawagas purportedly assured the Stockbridge Indians, “Brothers! You tell me that I must sit still and have nothing to do with this Quarrel, I am glad to hear

³⁹³ Darren Bonaparte, “The Seven Nations of Canada: The Other Iroquois Confederacy”, *The Wampum Chronicles*, date unknown.

³⁹⁴ *Memoranda Book, Claus Family Papers*, National Archives of Canada, 71–72.

³⁹⁵ John Norton, *The Journal of Major John Norton*, 1816, Carl F. Klinck and James Talamn, eds., Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1970, 266.

³⁹⁶ *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, July 22, 1775.

you – I shall do as you tell me... I shall do as you advise me to do – I shall sit still – there is seven Brothers of us (meaning seven Tribes) we are all agreed in this.”³⁹⁷ As had happened with portrayals of the French Canadians, as the Revolutionary War began and many First Nations seemingly refused to take arms against the colonies, American press portrayals of the Indigenous peoples in Canada softened. Largely avoided were depictions of frontier violence and massacre, replaced by portrayals of wise chiefs, rationally choosing peace. In reality, the Seven Nations of Canada allied with the British, as did the Seneca, Onondaga, and Cayuga nations of the Haudenosaunee, along with other Indigenous nations like the Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole. Though some Indigenous communities chose to join the Americans, significantly much of the Oneida and Tuscarora nations of the Haudenosaunee, the vast majority of Indigenous nations that chose to participate in the conflict chose to side with the Crown against the ever encroaching American settlers. The American goal of mass Indigenous neutrality in the conflict was also not to be, as most nations that chose to take up arms eventually allied themselves with the British. As the war dragged on and few Indigenous peoples rallied to the American cause, depictions of Indigenous groups in the American press largely reverted to their old stereotypes of savagery and bloodlust. As would be the case for generations, Indigenous peoples were again an other, used as a foil against which to define the American identity in broad strokes.

Far more than depictions of Indigenous peoples, portrayals of Canadians in the early days of the Revolution quickly shifted positive. The Canadians who began to inhabit the press during the war were unlike those that had appeared before. These Canadians were reasoned and intelligent, like Americans themselves, capable of recognizing the value of the British and American identities. Before the Revolutionary War itself broke out, the press emphasized the seeming Canadian desire to be under English law. In January 1775, the *Virginia Gazette* reported that “the farmers and tradesmen were preparing a petition to the court of Great Britain, begging that the French laws might not take place, but that the English laws might be continued, which they had

³⁹⁷ *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, July 22, 1775.

found, by experience, to be much better, and with which they were extremely well satisfied.”³⁹⁸ In early April of that year, about two weeks prior to Lexington and Concord, the *New-York Journal* asserted that “upwards of 1200 of the inhabitants of that place (chiefly French) had signed a petition to his Majesty, for the Repeal of the Quebec bill, lately passed in the British parliament, for the new regulation of the government of that province,” continuing that “it was not doubted but that the Petition would be signed almost universally by all the people in the whole province.”³⁹⁹ There is historical evidence that groups within Quebec sent petitions to the crown for repeal of the Quebec Act, with records of petitions being sent in 1774 and 1778,⁴⁰⁰ but whether or not these petitions had popular support is another question. The petitions from 1774 and 1778 do not contain nearly 1200 signature (the petition from 1774 contains around 200 names while the petition from 1778 contains 25). In addition to that, the names that appear on those two petitions are notably English sounding. And, as the petitions were both written in English, it seems quite likely that any petitions against the Quebec Act would have been coming from the English minority in the province. This fact was lost in most American newspapers, however, with the majority portraying Canadians, both English and French as standing in opposition to the British actions surrounding the act. As fighting broke out, American newspapers remained optimistic. In August, the *Constitutional Gazette* informed readers of Canadians, “They seem to be well pleased with the proceeding of the colonies, and... had received letters from the Congress which were very agreeable to them.”⁴⁰¹ Most papers naively surmised that the only thing stopping Canadians from joining the American union was the occupying British force. Though it seems that this was in no means the case, it was an impression that American

³⁹⁸ *Virginia Gazette*, January 26, 1775.

³⁹⁹ *New-York Journal*, April 6, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, April 10, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, April 12, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 12, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, April 14, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, April 15, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, April 17, 1775; *Essex Gazette*, May 2, 1775; *Essex Journal*, May 3, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, May 5, 1775.

⁴⁰⁰ Canadian Archives, Haldimand Papers, B 43, p. 13; Canadian Archives, Q 11, p. 98.

⁴⁰¹ *Constitutional Gazette*, August 30, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, September 4, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, September 4, 1775; *Essex Journal*, September 8, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, September 15, 1775.

newspaper editors worked diligently to uphold. Many American papers advanced the claim that the Canadians had refused to join the British army because they supported the Americans. They further contended that the reason that they had not then joined the American army in very large numbers was because the large British force in Canada prevented it. The presumed Canadian desire to join with the Americans, however, was praised across the American press. The *Virginia Gazette* argued that “The Canadians anxiously wish to see us establish such a superiority in their country as may protect them in a declaration to join us, which there will be no danger of our doing if Montgomery gets possession of St. John’s.”⁴⁰² The *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette* contended that “the brave and enlightened Canadians are as fully sensible of the Blessings of a free Government as their Southern Brethren, and will doubtless soon join the great Union now formed for the Defence and Preservation of American Liberty.”⁴⁰³ Such depictions were vastly different from portrayals during the French and Indian War when Canadians were seen as dull and ignorant, completely unfit to understand the value of English government. Indeed, Canadians had very little experience with democratic institutions, but the American press had no interest in drawing attention to that fact. In fact, they did quite the opposite. In 1775, the Patriot press almost universally portrayed Canadians as Americans in waiting, needing only a show of support from their fellow colonies to throw off the yoke of British tyranny. For one of the first times, Canadians were portrayed as intelligent and reasoned, able to understand the benefits of the revolutionary ideals espoused by American leaders, and willing to take up arms and join those revolutionaries in the field.

Further complicating their argument that Canadian support of the American revolutionary cause was born from a political understanding of the advantages the revolutionaries were offering was the fact that the majority of the Canadians that seemed to support the American cause were neither educated nor elite. Like the prototypical Americans that had risen up, it seemed that it was largely the common Canadians lining

⁴⁰² *Virginia Gazette*, October 27, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, October 28, 1775.

⁴⁰³ *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, September 28, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, October 9, 1775.

up behind the Revolution, those very Canadians who seemingly had the least experience with political participation. *Story & Humphreys's Pennsylvania Mercury, and Universal Advertiser* reported in September, “The Canadians, in general, are our firm and steady friends, that is to say, the peasants; but what they call or term in Canada the Noblesse, are for despotic measures, which prevents many from appearing more open than they do for us.”⁴⁰⁴ Noting that the British had been unable to round up Indigenous allies to fight the colonies, the *Virginia Gazette* surmised “the priests and noblesse, employed to round the French Canadians, have met with no better encouragement.”⁴⁰⁵ In fact, the majority of the French Canadian populace remained loyal to the Crown, and the continued loyalty of their clergy played a significant role in maintaining that loyalty. The idea that the French Canadians were throwing off both the British government and the Catholic church, however exaggerated, was particularly appealing to the American press as it made the Canadians seem like even less of an “other.” Despite the overtures to the French Canadians, many Americans were still very wary of those Canadians’ Catholic faith. The idea that the Canadians were now rejecting their clergy to join the Americans implied that perhaps they were done with the church altogether. Little could have made Canadians more appealing to the average English American.

The American press was encouraged by far more than simply this idea that the Canadians were going against their priests. There was a further sense that they were beginning to throw off French ways as well. Of the Canadians, the *Connecticut Courant* informed readers, “The common people there cant bare to have the old French laws take place again amongst them.”⁴⁰⁶ Though they remained wary of Canadian clergymen and

⁴⁰⁴ *Story & Humphreys's Pennsylvania Mercury, and Universal Advertiser*, September 15, 1775

⁴⁰⁵ *Virginia Gazette*, January 26, 1775.

⁴⁰⁶ *Connecticut Courant*, August 14, 1775; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy Or, American Oracle of Liberty*, August 16, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, August 16, 1775; *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer; Or, The Connecticut, Hudson's River, New-Jersey, and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, August 17, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, August 18, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, August 19, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, August 19, 1775; *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, August 19, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, August 21, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 22, 1775; *New-York Journal*, August 24, 1775; *Essex Journal*, August 25, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, August 31, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, September 18, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, September 19, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 20, 1775; *Essex Journal*, September 22, 1775; *Story & Humphreys's Pennsylvania Mercury, and Universal Advertiser*,

nobles, and of many officials, in 1775 the American press often portrayed the common Canadian people as embodiments of American virtue. A letter from an American soldier in Canada, reprinted in the *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal* read, “More hospitable people (than the Canadians) I never saw; you cannot enter into a peasant’s house, at any time, but they immediately set a loaf of bread and a pan of milk before you.”⁴⁰⁷ Where a few years prior, common Canadians had been portrayed as ignorant, vice-loving slaves to arbitrary power in the American press, Canadian farmers and tradespeople were now depicted as virtuous and reasoned fellows, worthy of taking their place within the great American union. Whether public opinion had indeed changed so drastically or whether such depictions reflect an effort by American printers to make the Canadian people less objectionable as allies is difficult to ascertain. As there is no evidence of a coordinated effort on the part of American newspapers, it seems likely that both options were true, simultaneously reinforcing one another. Likely, as American newspapers began to portray Canadians more positively, a growing number of the American people began to view the Canadians more positively, further encouraging the printers to continue rehabilitating the image of Canadians that they had spent years demonizing. As more Americans began to view the Canadians as friends and fellows, more American newspapers began to reflect that sentiment, in turn reinforcing it in the American public mind as newspapers across the country began to portray a unified, relatively positive view of Canadians.

Despite the general portrayals of Canadians as honourable and liberty-loving that pervaded the press and the impact on public opinion that they likely had, there remained an underlying anxiety regarding the loyalty of the Canadian people. In June 1775, the Continental Congress sent a second address to the Canadians, combining flattery and threats in a way which betrayed this unease. Published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on June 14, 1775, the address read, “Since the Conclusion of the late War, we have been

September 22, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, September 25, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 26, 1775.

⁴⁰⁷ *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, November 27, 1775; *Maryland Journal*, December 13, 1775.

happy in considering you as fellow-sufferers with us.”⁴⁰⁸ With colonial unity a major preoccupation of the Continental Congress, painting Canadians as fellow sufferers of oppression was an obvious approach. In many ways, the goal was to intimate to Canadians that Americans considered them kith and kin. The address continued, “As we were both entitled by the Bounty of an indulgent Creator to Freedom, and being both devoted by the cruel Edicts of a despotic Administration to common Ruin, we perceived the Fate of the Protestant and Catholic Colonies to be strongly linked together.”⁴⁰⁹ Though one of their primary problems with the Quebec Act was its toleration of Catholicism, the Continental Congress was quick to assure Canadians that they were not a threat to Catholicism, but rather its best chance at survival. The address invited Canadians “to join with us in resolving to be free, in rejecting with Disdain the Fetters of Slavery, however artfully polished.”⁴¹⁰ Of course, as far as the Continental Congress was concerned, the Canadians were inherently unable to see the chains through the polish. The Congress condescendingly informed Canadians that “By the Introduction of your present Form of Government, or rather Form of Tyranny, you and your Wives and your Children are made Slaves,” arguing that “the Enjoyment of your very Religion, on the present System, depends on a Legislature, in which you have no Share, and over which you have no Controul, and your Priests are exposed to Expulsion, Banishment and Ruin, whenever their Wealth and Possessions furnish sufficient Temptation.”⁴¹¹ Far from condemning Catholicism as a previous generations of English Americans had, the Congress actually used the continued protection of Catholicism as an offer. By the

⁴⁰⁸ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 14, 1775; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, June 14, 1775; *Story & Humphreys's Pennsylvania Mercury, and Universal Advertiser*, June 16, 1775; *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, June 17, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, June 19, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, June 20, 1775; *Maryland Journal*, June 21, 1775; *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer; Or, The Connecticut, Hudson's River, New-Jersey, and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, June 22, 1775; *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, June 22, 1775; *New-York Journal*, June 22, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, June 22, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, June 23, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, June 26, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, June 26, 1775; *Norwich Packet*, June 26, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, June 28, 1775; *Massachusetts Spy*, June 28, 1775; *Essex Journal, Or, The Massachusetts and New-Hampshire General Advertiser, &c.*, June 30, 1775.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

Continental Congress's estimation, French Catholic Canadians could only have their religion protected within the American fold of religious plurality. This hypocritical approach echoed throughout Congress's letter as a whole.

The letter both tried to cajole Canadians with praise and flattery and at the same time intimidate Canadians with threats and insults. Taking a quite condescending tone, the Congress both praised and threatened the Canadians to whom they expressed firm friendship. Flattering Canadians somewhat passively-aggressively, the Congress wrote, "It cannot be presumed that these Considerations will have no Weight with you, or that you are so lost to all sense of Honour. We can never believe that the present Race of Canadians are so degenerated as to possess neither the Spirit, the Gallantry or the Courage of their Ancestors."⁴¹² This reference to the "Race of Canadians" stated directly what had been implied in numerous American newspapers during the French and Indian War, that Canadians were of a different race from English Americans, a different race that had intermarried with Indigenous peoples. Elizabeth A. Fenton has argued of Article XI in the Articles of Confederation, which addressed the means by which Canada could join the American union, that its "simultaneous assertion of unity with and distinction from Catholic Quebec embodies ongoing late-colonial discussions about the relationship between religion and nation."⁴¹³ This same dichotomy is present in Congress's overture to the Canadians, with the Congress focusing on both the distinctness of French Canada and the unity between French Canada and English America. Characteristically of the passive-aggressive nature of the address, it asserted that Canadians "certainly will not permit the Infamy and Disgrace of such Pusillanimity to rest on you own Heads, and the

⁴¹² *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 14, 1775; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, June 14, 1775; *Story & Humphreys's Pennsylvania Mercury, and Universal Advertiser*, June 16, 1775; *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, June 17, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, June 19, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, June 20, 1775; *Maryland Journal*, June 21, 1775; *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer; Or, The Connecticut, Hudson's River, New-Jersey, and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, June 22, 1775; *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, June 22, 1775; *New-York Journal*, June 22, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, June 22, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, June 23, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, June 26, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, June 26, 1775; *Norwich Packet*, June 26, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, June 28, 1775; *Massachusetts Spy*, June 28, 1775; *Essex Journal, Or, The Massachusetts and New-Hampshire General Advertiser, &c.*, June 30, 1775.

⁴¹³ Elizabeth A. Fenton, "Birth of a Protestant Nation: Catholic Canadians, Religious Pluralism, and National Unity in the Early U.S. Republic," *Early American Literature* Vol 41 No 1 (2006), 30.

Consequences of it on your Children for ever.”⁴¹⁴ More than passive aggression, the address carried some incredibly threatening tones. The Congress wrote, “Be assured that your unmerited Degradation had engaged the most unfeigned Pity of your Sister Colonies; and we flatter ourselves you will not, by tamely bearing the Yoke, suffer that Pity to be supplanted by Contempt.”⁴¹⁵ The Congress made sure to emphasize to Canadians that it was in fact their duty to their southern colonial neighbours to stand with them in unity. As it was the duty of the English colonies to band together, so it was the duty of the formerly French colony to do likewise. The address concluded, “As our Concern for your Welfare entitles us to your Friendship, we presume you will not by doing us Injury, reduce us to the disagreeable Necessity of treating you as Enemies.”⁴¹⁶ As if they were talking to a group, in their opinion a “Race of Canadians,” that was unlikely to respond to a carrot alone, Congress made it clear that if the Canadians did not stand with the revolutionaries, they stood against them. Though the Congress assured Canadians, “we are your Friends, and not your Enemies... you may rely on our Assurances, that these Colonies will pursue no Measures whatever, but such as Friendship and a Regard for our mutual Safety and Interest may suggest,” they also warned about the dangers of their “Contempt” and the “Necessity of treating [Canadians] as Enemies.”⁴¹⁷ Congress was sure to flatter the Canadians and do their best to assure them of American friendship, but they were also sure to make it clear in no uncertain terms that the consequences of rejecting the overture would be martial. The passive-aggressive nature of the address seems perhaps inimical to the ultimate goal of winning Canadian friendship, as one rarely needs to threaten one’s friends, and this fact was not lost on Anglo-American observers. While the *Constitutional Gazette* contended that Canadians “had received letters from the Congress which were very agreeable to

⁴¹⁴ Fenton, “Birth of a Protestant Nation.”

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

them,”⁴¹⁸ other American newspapers worried quite reasonably that the address might offend their northern neighbours.

In July 1775, the *Boston News-Letter* published an account which read, “The continental congress have sent another address to the Canadians, in which, they are again trying by flattery and promises, to attach them to their Interest; but it is most probable, it will, like the other, rather provoke their resentment than in any answer the end they have in View.”⁴¹⁹ Of that earlier, 1774 address, the *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury* reported in April of 1775, “The Address from the Continental Congress, attracted the Notice of some of the principal Canadians, it was soon translated into very tolerable French,” surmising that “the decent Manner in which the Religious Matters were touch’d; the Encomiums on the French Nation, flattered a People fond of Compliments.”⁴²⁰ The report continued that upon hearing it, the Canadians “begged the Translator, as he had succeeded so well, to try his hand on the Address to the People of Great-Britain.”⁴²¹ The *Gazette* further informed that “he had equal Success in this, and read his Performance to a numerous Audience,” but concluded, however, that “when he came to the Part which treats of the new modelling the Province; draws a Picture of the Catholic Religion, and the Canadian Manners, they could not contain their Resentment, nor express it but in broken Curses, Oh! The perfidious, double-faced Congress.”⁴²² The two addresses do seemingly paint quite different pictures of Canadians. To the British, who were far more like the Americans in their suspicion of Catholicism, the Canadians were portrayed as a dangerous other. To the Canadians themselves, however, their Catholicism was portrayed as the very least of concerns. The address to the Canadians read, “We are too well acquainted with the liberality of sentiment distinguishing your nation, to imagine, that difference of religion will prejudice you against a hearty amity with us. You-know, that

⁴¹⁸ *Constitutional Gazette*, August 30, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, September 4, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, September 4, 1775; *Essex Journal*, September 8, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, September 15, 1775.

⁴¹⁹ *Boston News-Letter*, July 13, 1775.

⁴²⁰ *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, April 10, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, April 14, 1775

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*

⁴²² *Ibid.*

the transcendent nature of freedom elevates those, who unite in her cause, above all such low-minded infirmities.”⁴²³ Using the Swiss cantons as an example, the address continued “Their union is composed of Roman Catholic and Protestant states, living in the utmost concord and peace with one another, and thereby enabled, ever since they bravely vindicated their freedom, to defy and defeat every tyrant that has invaded them.”⁴²⁴ In their address to the people of Great-Britain, however, the Congress wrote:

the dominion of Canada is to be so extended, modelled, and governed, as that by being disunited from us, detached from our interests, by civil as well as religious prejudices, that by their numbers daily swelling with Catholick emigrants from Europe, and by their devotion to Administration, so friendly to their religion, they might become formidable to us, and, on occasion, be fit instruments in the hands of power, to reduce the ancient, free, Protestant Colonies to the same state of slavery with themselves.⁴²⁵

In combination with the not-so-subtle threats contained in the second Canadian address from Congress, American newspapers, and particularly Loyalist papers, argued that the manner in which the Continental Congress was addressing Canadians was in fact doing more harm than good. The majority of the displeasure with the condescending address of the Congress was not directed at the offer to incorporate Canada into the union of English American colonies, as it might have been only a few years prior. Instead, the displeasure was directed at the two-faced way that Congress had approached the Canadians. No strangers at being condescended to, many Americans seemingly felt that it was perfectly reasonable that the Canadians should resent the address from the Continental Congress. Had such an address been made to Americans, they would likely have been incensed, and by 1774, many Americans believed that Canadians should also be righteously indignant. And by all accounts, many were.

Perhaps trying to dull some of this resentment, in July 1775, George Washington published his own address to the inhabitants of Canada that was subsequently published

⁴²³ *Norwich Packet*, November 10, 1774; *Virginia Gazette*, November 10, 1774; *Boston Gazette*, November 14, 1774; *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas's Boston Journal*, November 17, 1774.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁵ *Maryland Journal*, November 7, 1774.

in the *Norwich Packet*, among other papers. The address eschewed the vague threats of the Congress's second address, instead focusing on the ways in which Americans and Canadians were alike. Washington began "Above all, we rejoice, that our enemies have been deceived with regard to you ----- They have persuaded themselves, they have even dared to say, that the Canadians were not capable of distinguishing between the blessings of liberty, and the wretchedness of slavery; that gratifying the vanity of a little circle of nobility --- would blind the eyes of the people of Canada."⁴²⁶ In clear contrast to the address from the Continental Congress, Washington portrayed the Canadians as already cognizant of the benefits of liberty. Like Americans, he surmised that they had not been kept in the dark by the tyrannical British ministry. Washington continued, "instead of finding in you that poverty of soul, and baseness of spirit, they see with a chagrin equal to our joy, that you are enlightened, generous, and virtuous --- that you will not renounce your own rights, or serve as instruments to deprive your fellow subjects of theirs." Washington argued that the bonds of unity which were increasingly drawing the English American colonies to one another were also drawing in the French Canadians. As many Americans had already come to view their Canadian neighbours as enlightened friends, it seemed an obvious conclusion. The general then invited, "Come then, my brethren, unite with us in an indissoluble union, let us run together to the same goal... We look forward with pleasure to that day not far remote (we hope) when the inhabitants of America shall have one sentiment and the full enjoyment of the blessings of a free government." Unity was an increasingly important part of the American identity, and Washington made a clear appeal to ideas of unity when he called on the Canadians to join with the English

⁴²⁶ *Norwich Packet*, July 31, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, September 14, 1775; *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, September 21, 1775; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy Or, American Oracle of Liberty*, September 29, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, September 30, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, October 2, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 3, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, October 4, 1775; *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer; Or, The Connecticut, Hudson's River, New-Jersey, and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, October 5, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 6, 1775; *Constitutional Gazette*, October 7, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, October 7, 1775; *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, October 7, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 9, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, October 9, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, October 9, 1775; *Maryland Journal*, October 11, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 11, 1775; *New-York Journal*, October 12, 1775; *Story & Humphreys's Pennsylvania Mercury, and Universal Advertiser*, October 13, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, October 20, 1775; *Boston News-Letter*, October 26, 1775.

American colonies as brethren. The colonies had allegedly already come to view one another as kin. While this was a hyperbolic argument, given divisions between New England and the South were pervasive and persisted through the Revolution to Civil War, there was a sense in the press that the colonies had come together as one. In his letter, Washington argued that it was time for Canadians to do the same. Washington assured Canadians that the American army advancing on Canada came “not to plunder, but to protect you.” He continued, “The cause of America, and of liberty, is the cause of every virtuous American citizen; whatever may be his religion or his descent, the united colonies know no distinction but such as slavery, corruption and arbitrary dominion may create,” concluding, “Come then, ye generous citizens, range yourselves under the standard of general liberty--- against which all the force and artifice of tyranny will never be able to prevail.” Unlike the second address from the Continental Congress, Washington made no mention of what would happen should Canadians reject American entreaties. Rather, he focused on ascribing to French Canadians the same virtues that Patriot papers attributed to English Americans. Seemingly, Washington believed he would catch more flies with honey than vinegar, and the tone that he struck in his address lacked the masked hostility that characterized Congress’s letter. Unlike the Continental Congress, who threatened the Canadians, Washington enticed them with flattery that was not tempered by intimidation. American papers were not settled on which tactic was the most effective, but in 1775, at least one of the strategies seemed to be working.

In September of that year, the *Providence Gazette* reported, “There has been a French gentleman here lately from Canada, who has put our men in great spirits, by assuring us that the greatest part of the Canadians would join us upon our arrival, but that they dare not make themselves known to be our friends, till we are landed among them.”⁴²⁷ The cowardice that this implied was not something considered to be part of the American character, and so such portrayals served as a foil against which to define that brave American identity. As far as the *Gazette* was concerned, the cowardly Canadians were not yet prepared to act as Americans had, with bravery and determination. The same

⁴²⁷ *Providence Gazette*, September 23, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, September 30, 1775.

month as the article from the *Providence Gazette*, the *Constitutional Gazette* similarly argued that the Canadians would “join the strongest party, although they supply both with provisions for the ready penny.”⁴²⁸ Again, the implication was that the Canadians, lacking moral principle, would do whatever was in their economic self-interest. The American identity, full of self-sacrifice, stood in stark contrast. Though portrayals were changing, old stereotypes of Canadians did not disappear, and in articles like this, the supposedly inherently two-faced and greedy nature of Canadians was on plain view. Still, rather than simply attacking Canadians, such pieces now also implied that the Canadians could be prevailed on, particularly if their pocketbooks profited.

Other newspapers went still further and argued that, rather than money, the Canadians were drawing themselves to the American cause for moral and ethical reasons. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* attributed the support of the Canadians to ideological motivations. The paper contended tongue-in-cheek that the British “need not expect Assistance from the Canadians, for the New-England Emissaries had been among them, and poisoned their Minds with the Word Liberty. Whereby it was thought that on the Arrival of the New-England Forces, they would be received and joined by the Canadians.”⁴²⁹ Most papers agreed with the *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*’s contention that “the Canadians are much in our favour.”⁴³⁰ On October 13, 1775, “A select Company of Gentlemen, all true Friends to America, met and din’d at Mr. Folsom’s Tavern, on a fine Turtle,”⁴³¹ after which, they drank a number of toasts, the fifth of which was to “The brave Canadians, whose Virtue prompts them to join in a just

⁴²⁸ *Constitutional Gazette*, September 27, 1775; *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, September 28, 1775; *New-York Journal*, September 28, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, September 30, 1775; *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, September 30, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, October 2, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, October 2, 1775; *Dunlap’s Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 2, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, October 2, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, October 2, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 6, 1775; *Essex Journal*, October 6, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 10, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, October 12, 1775; *Norwich Packet*, October 16, 1775; *Boston News-Letter*, October 26, 1775.

⁴²⁹ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 11, 1775.

⁴³⁰ *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, October 19, 1775; *Norwich Packet*, October 23, 1775; *Constitutional Gazette*, November 1, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, November 2, 1775.

⁴³¹ *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 17, 1775.

Defence of American Liberty.”⁴³² And in 1775, those “true Friends to America” seemingly had every reason to drink to the Canadians. Unlike portrayals that painted Canadians as cowardly war profiteers, papers like the *New England Chronicle* depicted Canadians as brave and virtuous defenders of American liberty who were signing up every minute to help defend the American cause. American newspapers often assured their readers that Canadians were joining their southern brethren in droves. In reality, the numbers were relatively small, a few hundred here, a few hundred there. Most of the Canadians that joined the American cause subsequently left with the army when the invasion collapsed, an exodus that seems to have hardly influenced the Canadian population. Still, as far as the average American reader must have been concerned, the Canadians were active in the war effort. Nearly all newspapers assured their readers that the Canadians were flocking to their cause, and that more were sure to follow as the American forces liberated their regions. It was a sentiment that echoed across the colonies.

The goal behind such propaganda seems to have been to build support for the invasion of Quebec and to further cement the bonds of unity which were developing between French Canada and the English American colonies. Though the actual number of Canadians joining the American forces were relatively small, by emphasizing that it was happening and by possibly inflating the numbers, American newspapers painted a picture of Canadian-American unity that was desperately important to the revolutionaries, not only because it was needed to bring Canada into the American fold, but also because it was needed to reinforce unity as a key aspect of the American identity and to justify their narrative of liberation, as opposed to invasion. As with depictions of Canadians in general, such propaganda operated in multiple ways both as a reflection of American public sentiment and as a shaper of American public sentiment. American press propaganda both reflected the ways in which American opinion of Canadians had changed and also reinforced this shifted view as the universal American public opinion. And in addition to simply changing opinion of Canadians in the American public mind,

⁴³² *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 17, 1775.

American newspaper propaganda also helped reinforce changes to understandings of the American identity. Revolutionary America, the newspapers asserted, was a unified place, a place where citizens from all walks of life were able to come together and pull toward a common goal. The propaganda that focused on Canadians reinforce this goal by painting Canadians as a part of that unified, revolutionary America. And in terms of public opinion, their reinforcement cycle seems to have operated relatively well, reinforcing the idea that Canadians were flocking to the American cause... irrespective of the actual facts.

The numbers of French Canadian men that the American press estimated were joining or pledging to join the American cause were relatively substantial, an impression that likely gave American forces significant confidence in their upcoming invasion. In September, the *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette* reported that “if our army will come on [the Canadians] will join us with four thousand men.”⁴³³ In October, the *New-York Journal* cited a letter from Canada which informed readers “that 4 or 500 Canadians had joined our Army, that great numbers of others were employed in providing necessaries for it, and that the people in general appeared very friendly, and ready to promote our design.”⁴³⁴ The *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette* reported that the American army had been “joined by 300 Canadians in Arms”⁴³⁵ at Chamblee and by “2000 Canadians”⁴³⁶ between Montreal and Fort St. John’s. The *Pennsylvania Evening Post* also cited “two thousand Canadians”⁴³⁷ at Chamblee and Montreal, while the

⁴³³ *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, September 7, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, September 18, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 19, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, September 25, 1775.

⁴³⁴ *New-York Journal*, October 19, 1775; *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, October 19, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, October 23, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 23, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 25, 1775; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, October 25, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, November 2, 1775.

⁴³⁵ *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, September 28, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 10, 1775.

⁴³⁶ *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, September 28, 1775; *New-York Journal*, September 28, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, September 30, 1775; *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, September 30, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, October 2, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 2, 1775.

⁴³⁷ *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, October 7, 1775; *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, October 7, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the*

Constitutional Gazette surmised that “Fifteen hundred Canadians have voluntarily joined our army.”⁴³⁸ As many newspapers had predicted, it seemed that as the American army marched into Canada, Canadians were joining in droves. The *Virginia Gazette* noted that General Schuyler was “on his march to Quebec, joined hourly by thousands of Canadians. It is thought he will also succeed in his attack on that metropolis.”⁴³⁹ Particularly as the campaign was unfolding, it seemed as though Canadian support was strong and building. To most readers it must have seemed that if Canadians kept pouring into the American ranks as they were, that Canada could be taken with hardly a fight. With Fort Ticonderoga captured, Fort St. John’s defeated, Montreal abandoned, and Quebec under siege, by the end of 1775, it appeared that Canada was closer than ever to becoming the fourteenth American state. In the pre-dawn morning of December 31, 1775, with a snowstorm raging and Carleton holed up in Quebec with a small garrison of regulars and Canadians, American forces launched an attack on the last British stronghold in Canada. It was to be the revolutionaries’ first major defeat of the war.

On Christmas Day, 1775, the *Connecticut Courant* published a letter from Montgomery to Carleton, calling for the surrender of the city. Montgomery asserted that “Notwithstanding the personal ill-treatment I have received at your hands, notwithstanding the cruelty you have shewn to the unhappy prisoners you have taken, the feelings of humanity induce me to have recourse to this expedient to save you from the destruction which hangs over your wretched garrison.”⁴⁴⁰ The general continued, “I am well acquainted with your situation; a great extent of works in their nature incapable of defence, manned with a motley crew of sailors, most of them our friends, and citizens,

General Advertiser, October 9, 1775; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, October 11, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 20, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, October 21, 1775.

⁴³⁸ *Constitutional Gazette*, October 7, 1775.

⁴³⁹ *Virginia Gazette*, October 12, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, October 16, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 20, 1775.

⁴⁴⁰ *Connecticut Courant*, December 25, 1775; *Constitutional Gazette*, January 17, 1776; *New-York Journal*, January 18, 1776; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, January 22, 1776; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, January 22, 1776; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, January 23, 1776; *Connecticut Gazette*, January 26, 1776; *Essex Journal*, January 26, 1776; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy Or, American Oracle of Liberty*, January 26, 1776; *Virginia Gazette*, February 2, 1776; *Essex Journal*, June 28, 1776; *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, July 11, 1776.

who wish to see us within their walls, a few of the worst troops that call themselves soldiers, the impossibility of relief, and the certain prospect of wanting every necessary of life.”⁴⁴¹ Montgomery informed Carleton, “I am at the head of troops accustomed to success, confident of the righteous cause they are engaged in, inured to danger and fatigue, and so highly incensed at your inhumanity, illiberal abuse, and the ungenerous means employed to prejudice them in the minds of the Canadians,”⁴⁴² Similarly to the dichotomous way that Congress portrayed Canadians in their address to them, Montgomery both enticed Canadians to his cause by implying they were innocents tricked by a dastardly Carleton, and also made it clear that should the Canadians not reject Carleton, they would face the wrath of Montgomery’s Indigenous allies. Given the view of Indigenous peoples as inherently bloodthirsty and violent, the threat was particularly forceful. Though he made an early overture to the Canadians by placing the blame squarely on Carleton, Montgomery spent most of his address focused on threats. He concluded by warning Carleton (and subtly warning the Canadians in general), “Should you persist in an unwarrantable defence, the consequences be upon your own head. Beware of destroying stores of any for, public or private, as you did at Montreal or in the river, if you do, by Heavens there will be no mercy shewn.”⁴⁴³ Where Washington had relied on flattery, Montgomery relied on intimidation. Seemingly, however, neither could prevail on the Canadians holed up in Montreal, who had already by that point been threatened by Carleton that should they break ranks, he would treat them as the enemy. It was in many ways a coerced force that gathered to defend Quebec, and because of this, the American forces likely believed the city would fall quickly, if it didn’t ultimately fall from within.

⁴⁴¹ *Connecticut Courant*, December 25, 1775; *Constitutional Gazette*, January 17, 1776; *New-York Journal*, January 18, 1776; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, January 22, 1776; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, January 22, 1776; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, January 23, 1776; *Connecticut Gazette*, January 26, 1776; *Essex Journal*, January 26, 1776; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy Or, American Oracle of Liberty*, January 26, 1776; *Virginia Gazette*, February 2, 1776; *Essex Journal*, June 28, 1776; *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, July 11, 1776.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*

Carleton, however, had no intention of surrendering the fortifications of Quebec City, and when he refused to surrender, Montgomery prepared his attack. According to the *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, “[Montgomery’s] plan at first was to have attacked the upper and lower town at the same time, depending principally for success against the upper town. But discovering, from the motions of the enemy, that they were apprised of his design, he altered his plan.”⁴⁴⁴ Unfortunately for the American army, in the ensuing attack, Montgomery and his men “entered the Picquets through a very heavy Fire of Cannon and small Arms, which killed and wounded many of our Men, among whom was the General.”⁴⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Arnold’s troops had been surrounded by British soldiers and Canadian militia on their attack, forcing him to retreat as well. The *Connecticut Courant* concluded of the attack, “had it not been for the unlucky circumstance of deserters getting into town, which induced the General to alter his plan, they would have carried the town.”⁴⁴⁶ As it was, however, Quebec remained in the hands of the British and the good will toward Canadians that had characterized press depiction in 1775 began to fade. At the same time, support for the Crown began to grow amongst the Canadian population as the American invasion force was driven back. This perhaps marked the high point of Canadian support of the American revolutionary cause. From this point in the war onwards, American opinion of Canadians began to slip.

While most portrayals of Canadians that appeared in the American press in 1775 were relatively positive, there remained an undercurrent of distrust, particularly regarding religion. In March 1775, the *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser* lamented the ministry’s “permitting the

⁴⁴⁴ *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, January 25, 1776; *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, January 27, 1776; *Constitutional Gazette*, January 31, 1776; *Maryland Journal*, January 31, 1776; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 31, 1776; *New-York Journal*, February 1, 1776; *Providence Gazette*, February 3, 1776; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, February 5, 1776; *Newport Mercury*, February 5, 1776; *Norwich Packet*, February 5, 1776; *Connecticut Journal*, February 7, 1776; *Thomas’s Massachusetts Spy Or, American Oracle of Liberty*, February 9, 1776.

⁴⁴⁵ *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, February 26, 1776; *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, March 2, 1776.

⁴⁴⁶ *Connecticut Courant*, February 19, 1776; *Connecticut Gazette*, February 23, 1776; *Constitutional Gazette*, February 24, 1776.

scoundrel Canadians to worship in their own way.”⁴⁴⁷ As it was still often seen as the mission of Protestant America to convert the French Catholic Canadians, this alleged establishment of the practice of Catholicism in Canada horrified the *Ledger*. Other papers still feared the perceived threat from Catholic French Canada. In April, the *Essex Journal* accused the ministry, “Thou art arming Papists to cut the throats of Protestants!”⁴⁴⁸ The legal rights guaranteed to the Catholic church in Canada in particular seemed to some American papers as magnifying the threat that the French Canadians posed. Later that same month, the *Maryland Journal* mourned, “And in Canada, how melancholy the reflexion!... We behold a Popish Bishop and a military Governor, invested with powers unknown to the English constitution; a power that extends over one half of British America.”⁴⁴⁹ The paper continued, “Popish laws in that vast country are established by a British parliament;... Popish customs are cherished by a British ministry, and the representative of the see of Rome has become the confident and companion of a British monarch,” concluding, “A superstitious, bigotted Canadian papist, though ever so profligate, is now esteemed a better subject to our gracious Sovereign George the Third, than a liberal, enlightened New -England Dissenter.”⁴⁵⁰ In a few papers, anti-Catholic sentiment never fully disappeared. Such depictions of Canadians, however, were rare in 1775, and most American newspapers moved away from overtly anti-Catholic portrayals since it seemed that the Canadian people were sympathetic to the American cause. Though the Canadian support that the American press envisioned never materialized, it seemed expedient to begin to draw down overt attacks on Catholicism if the Canadians were to be brought into the revolutionary fold. For some printers, and likely for a number of readers, there was likely a genuine change of heart in regards to their view of Canadians. It seems similarly likely, however, that the vast majority tempered their attacks on the Church of Rome out of practicality. And for quite some time, it seems that

⁴⁴⁷ *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, March 25, 1775

⁴⁴⁸ *Essex Journal*, April 12, 1775.

⁴⁴⁹ *Maryland Journal*, April 19, 1775.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

the American press was particularly wary about risking Canadian support by attacking their religion.

After the failure of the invasion of Canada, explicitly anti-Catholic depictions of Canadians remained relatively rare. In May 1776, the *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser* surmised that “A number of Canadians, at the instigation of their priests, arose, with a design to cut off the guards at Point Levy.”⁴⁵¹ Two days later, the *Connecticut Gazette* reported that “Our People have had a small Engagement below Quebec, with a Number of Canadians who had collected together by the Influence of a Priest.”⁴⁵² These reports, however, lacked the explicit references to the evil nature of Catholicism that characterized such articles years before. Even a report from the *Virginia Gazette* in March 1779 eschewed moral judgements about Catholicism itself, reading “By advices from Canada, by way of Halifax, we learn that the Bishop of Quebeck had issued his bull against all Canadians, of whatever rank or condition, that are found in arms against their lawful Sovereign, George III,”⁴⁵³. Because Canada remained a goal for the Continental Congress and because the Canadian people remained seemingly receptive to the American cause, the American press seems to have largely set aside criticisms of French Canadian Catholicism throughout the Revolutionary War. Francis D. Cogliano has argued that during the Revolution, due to the alliance with Catholic France, anti-Catholicism was slowly done away with in New England, replaced in many ways by a hatred and fear of things English, rather than things Catholic.⁴⁵⁴ Very conscious efforts were made following the French alliance to downplay anti-Catholicism, particularly in New England where it was particularly strong. Rather than a process that began with the French alliance, however, American attempts at reigning in public anti-Catholic sentiment began in earnest in 1774 when American newspapers began to shift their portrayals so as not to offend potential Canadian allies. Newspaper evidence suggests that well before the French alliance, Americans were already used to tempering their attacks

⁴⁵¹ *Essex Gazette*, April 4, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 12, 1775.

⁴⁵² *Connecticut Gazette*, May 10, 1776.

⁴⁵³ *Virginia Gazette*, March 26, 1779.

⁴⁵⁴ Cogliano, *No King, No Popery*, 71-99.

on Catholicism, having done so for years to appeal to the Canadian neighbours. In fact, by the time the French alliance became a reality, American newspapers were already used to tempering their attacks on Catholicism, having done so for years to appeal to their Canadian neighbours. As Canadians showed seeming support for the rebellion and as Americans in general began to view the conquest of Canada as a strategic war aim, the fact that most French Canadians were Catholic carried less and less weight in newspaper accounts. Again, this shift was likely one born more of expediency than a genuine change of heart, but given the influence of American newspapers on the American public mind, it is likely the shift in rhetoric encouraged a shift in public opinion. And from there, it seems likely that the shift away from attacking Catholicism in the Canadian context served as a template for shifting away from attacks of the Catholicism of the French. Particularly as the French alliance became vital to the American war effort, it became similarly vital to avoid offending those French allies. As the war reached its later stages, it became clear to American printers that continued French support would be necessary for victory, but by that point in the war, the same could not be said of the Canadians. Particularly late in the war, significantly less effort was made not to offend the Canadian populace. In many cases, portrayals reverted to what they had been at mid-century, with Canadians once again occupying the space of a clear “other.”

As opinion of Canadians slipped, old racial stereotypes began to re-emerge in American press portrayals. Robert G. Parkinson has argued that Revolutionary American newspapers intentionally othered the British army in America by associating them with racialized groups like Black and Indigenous communities.⁴⁵⁵ Within this racialized hierarchy, portrayals of French Canadians occupied a somewhat vague space. Sometimes, they were similarly othered by association with racialized minorities. By constantly associating French Canadians with their Indigenous and Black allies, American newspapers built a connection between French Canadians and racialized others that served to lower those Canadians in the American public mind. In this case, their associating with racialized inferiors was a stain on their character and identity. At other

⁴⁵⁵ Parkinson, *The Common Cause* 20-21.

times, their depictions were used similarly to portrayals of Indigenous and Black North Americans, utilized to taint the British army by association. In this case, the French Canadians themselves served as the racialized other that was used to lower the British in terms of American opinion. In April 1775, before the American invasion of Quebec, the *New-York Journal* reported “there is gone down to Sheerness, seventy eight thousand guns and bayonets, to be sent to America, to put into the hands of the negroes, the Roman Catholicks, the Canadians; and all the wicked means on earth used to subdue the Colonies.”⁴⁵⁶ The press explicitly tied French Canadians to Black Americans, utilizing them as an other to promote internal American group identity. A force of Black Americans and French Canadians Catholics was a terrifying thing to Americans, and American newspapers played on those fears. In February of that year, the *Boston Gazette* surmised that the “administration have conceived a bloody plan of mustering great numbers of the French Canadians, and remote tribes of Savages, and to bring them against the province, in order to effect their system of despotism and tyranny over the inhabitants of these colonies.”⁴⁵⁷ As the Revolutionary War progressed, American newspapers returned to associating French Canadians and Indigenous peoples with one another. Canadians were again considered inextricably linked to their Indigenous allies. Like depictions of religion, such racialized othering faded from the press almost entirely in the latter half of 1775 as the conquest and integration of Canada into the American union seemed within reach. Following the Battle of Quebec and the subsequent failure of the invasion of Canada, however, the othering of Canadians by association with racialized minorities exploded throughout the American press.

As had been the case during the French and Indian War, accusations that French Canadians were joining Indigenous nations and massacring American settlers on the frontiers permeated the press. Referencing an attack on a fort called the Cedars, the *New-York Journal* reported in June 1776, that the fort had been “attacked by a large body of

⁴⁵⁶ *New-York Journal*, April 27, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, May 1, 1775; *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, May 2, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, May 3, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 3, 1775; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, May 3, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, May 5, 1775; *Massachusetts Spy*, May 17, 1775.

⁴⁵⁷ *Boston Gazette*, February 13, 1775; Supplement to *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer*, February 23, 1775.

Savages and Canadians,” continuing, “then a scene of Savage barbarity ensued, and many of our people were sacrificed to their fury, butchered with tomahawks and other instruments of murder. The enemy consisted of about 100 Canadians, and 400 Savages, who immediately stripped the prisoners almost naked, and drove them to the fort.”⁴⁵⁸ There is little distinction in the account between French Canadians and Indigenous peoples. Both are portrayed as acting the same, ravaging helpless frontiersmen. In January 1777, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* informed readers that “a scouting and scalping party of Savages, to the amount of 80, together with some Canadians and Regulars, to the amount of about 150, had set out from Canada; they were to have 20 l. for every scalp they might bring in.”⁴⁵⁹ To the horror of the American press, Canadians and British soldiers were alleged to be participating alongside Indigenous parties. These were atrocities that Americans would supposedly never do. Though Americans also had a long history with scalp taking, newspapers ignored this inconvenient fact to paint the practice as something pursued by only Indigenous peoples, Canadians, and the British. The participation of these latter two groups in what was defined as an Indigenous vice was depicted in particular as crossing a racial line that was sacred to Americans. Only the Canadians and the British would stoop so low. In December 1776, the *Massachusetts Spy* printed a copy of a sermon preached by a Reverend Tenent to the American army at Mount Independence. The reverend informed the soldiers:

There is no retreat for you, and if you are taken prisoners, no doubt you would soon be discharged, as our friends, who were lately captivated, were with their baggage and a few days provision, but with this additional and horrid

⁴⁵⁸ *New-York Journal*, June 20, 1776; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, June 22, 1776; *Connecticut Courant*, June 24, 1776; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, June 24, 1776; *Maryland Journal*, June 26, 1776; *New-England Chronicle*, June 27, 1776; *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette, or, The Baltimore General Advertiser*, June 28, 1776; *Essex Journal*, June 28, 1776; *Norwich Packet*, July 1, 1776; *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette Or The Baltimore General Advertiser*, July 2, 1776; *American Gazette, or, the Constitutional Journal*, July 2, 1776; *Maryland Gazette*, July 4, 1776; *Connecticut Gazette*, July 5, 1776; *Freeman's Journal, or New-Hampshire Gazette*, July 6, 1776; *Virginia Gazette*, July 6, 1776.

⁴⁵⁹ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 12, 1777; *Boston Gazette*, February 24, 1777; *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, February 27, 1777; *Independent Chronicle*, February 27, 1777; *Providence Gazette*, March 1, 1777; *Norwich Packet*, March 3, 1777; *Freeman's Journal, Or New-Hampshire Gazette*, March 4, 1777; *Connecticut Journal*, March 5, 1777; *Connecticut Gazette*, March 7, 1777; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, March 11, 1777; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, March 11, 1777; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, March 12, 1777.

circumstance, that, before you are two miles from this encampment, you will be overtaken, in your disarmed condition, by Savages, Canadians and Hessians, who will at once plunder and sacrifice your lives with barbarity, which cannot be described.⁴⁶⁰

Depictions of Canadians had come full circle. Though American newspapers praised both French and Indigenous Canadians for refusing to join the British against the colonies in 1775, by the later stages of the war, many had fallen back into emphasizing frontier violence as a means of reinforcing unity within the Anglo-American population.

Another way American newspapers strengthened internal English American unity was by stressing the multi-ethnic make-up of the British army. Lists of the various ethnic and racial groups present within the British ranks abounded from 1776 onwards, and Canadians featured prominently amongst the motley crew which American printers associated with the British forces. In March of that year, three months after his defeat and death, an article appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* which featured a dialogue between the ghost of General Montgomery and a delegate from Philadelphia. The general informed the delegate, “Your friends (as you call them) are too few, too divided, and too interested, to help you; and as for your enemies, they have done their worst. They have called upon Russians, Hanoverians, Hessians, Canadians, savages, and negroes, to assist them in burning your towns, desolating your country, and in butchering your wives and children.”⁴⁶¹ The *Pennsylvania Evening Post* similarly informed readers, “we will have our towns burnt, our country desolated, and our fathers, brothers, and children be butchered by English, Scotch and Irishmen; by Hanoverians, Hessians, Brunswickers, Walbeckers, Canadians, Indians and Negroes.”⁴⁶² The *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal* surmised, “The ---- of England delights in blood; yea, thirsteth for the blood of America. Hessians, Hanoverians, Brunswickers, Canadians, Indians, Negroes, Regulars and Tories are invited to the carnage.”⁴⁶³ The repetition throughout these newspapers was

⁴⁶⁰ *Massachusetts Spy*, December 4, 1776.

⁴⁶¹ *Virginia Gazette*, March 8, 1776; *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, May 30, 1776.

⁴⁶² *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, June 1, 1776; *Providence Gazette*, June 1, 1776.

⁴⁶³ *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, June 24, 1776; *Maryland Journal*, June 26, 1776; *Massachusetts Spy*, June 28, 1776; *Constitutional Gazette*, July 3, 1776.

no accident. The intention was to keep the names of those undesirables front of mind whenever a reader thought about the British army. It would not do to have Americans feeling an ethnic connection with the redcoats, so instead, the American press hoped to make Americans feel racially anxious when they thought of the British forces, an army that the *Independent Chronicle* called a “bugbear of an army.”⁴⁶⁴ In such instances, Canadians were both othered by their association with ethnic and racial others, and also used as a prototypical other with which to tarnish the British by association. Though Canadians never occupied as low a rung on the American perceived racial hierarchy as did Black and Indigenous peoples, they were not far off in the late Revolutionary American mind. As with other negative portrayals of Canadians, racial attacks on Canadians faded from the press in the first years of Revolution. Soon, however, as Canadian support seemed less and less important to the outcome of the Revolution, portrayals began to shift back to associations between Canadians and racialized groups like Black and Indigenous communities. By the later stages of the Revolutionary War, racialized portrayals of Canadians were again very similar to what they had been at mid-century. The process of racialization identified by Parkinson seems to have been even more complicated than one simply of associating the British army with Black and Indigenous communities. Understandings of Canadians were also part of that process, sometimes as a racialized other and sometimes as fellow Whites who had betrayed the White race and thrown in with racialized others.

Often, French Canadians, Black Americans, and Indigenous peoples were portrayed as the new unholy triumvirate, with formerly enslaved Africans taking the place of French. In April 1776, the *Virginia Gazette* read, “When we consider the infinite pains that the ministerial tools have taken to stir up the Canadians, Indians, and slaves, against us, and how happily they have been disappointed in their attempts, and how they were detected in their plots, we must think we have experienced an interposition of Providence in our favour.”⁴⁶⁵ The *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, meanwhile, attacked the British ministry, asking:

⁴⁶⁴ *Independent Chronicle*, April 10, 1777; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 30, 1777.

⁴⁶⁵ *Virginia Gazette*, April 5, 1776.

Have they not attempted to spirit up the Indian savages to ravage our frontiers, and murder, after their inhuman manner, our defenceless wives and children? Have not our Negro slaves been incited to rebel against their masters, and arms put into their hands to murder them? Have not the King of England's own slaves, the Hanoverians, been employed? And were not the poor Canadians made slaves, that they might be made fit instruments, with other slaves and savages, to make slaves and more wretched beings than savages us?⁴⁶⁶

In the account, Canadians were listed alongside Indigenous peoples, the enslaved, and the Hanoverians in an attempt to demonize the British by association. Indigenous peoples and the enslaved were understood to be fundamentally racialized others, but French Canadians and Hanoverians occupied a somewhat more ambiguous place. Their Whiteness was not taken for a given, however, and throughout the period between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, both were often viewed as racial others. Most American papers linked Black Americans, Indigenous peoples, and French Canadians when they attacked the British for using what they deemed as inferior, immoral forces. In January 1776, the *Maryland Journal* argued that “The Ministry have taken every pitiful, and contemptible method to distress the Colonists,” first surmising that “They first ordered the ship retreated Lord Dunmore to give arms and freedom to the Negroes; this the very Negroes refused to take at his hands.”⁴⁶⁷ The *Journal* continued, “They then sent tomahawks, scalping knives, arms and ammunition to all the Indian tribes; and to encourage them the more, they gave them back the vast tract of lands they had conquered and taken from them the last war, to courage them to attack the Colonists in the back settlements.”⁴⁶⁸ Finally, the paper asserted, “They established also before papacy in Canada, and ordered an army to be raised of Roman Catholics, to attack the southern provinces,” concluding triumphantly, however, that “All these failed.”⁴⁶⁹ Though they were never demeaned to the same extent as were Black and Indigenous

⁴⁶⁶ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, February 28, 1776; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, March 25, 1776; *Essex Journal*, April 5, 1776.

⁴⁶⁷ *Maryland Journal*, January 3, 1776.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

communities, French Canadians seem to have occupied a similar place in the American mind. Race was a relatively ambiguous construction in the eighteenth century. As European settlers justified enslaving Africans and taking land from Indigenous peoples by appealing to emerging conceptions of race, they also began to appeal to notions of race when “othering” less obviously racialized enemies. As Parkinson argued was the case for Black and Indigenous peoples, comparisons with French Canadians served to degrade the British army in the public imagination by associating them with what was perceived as an inferior group, portrayals which simultaneously racialized the Canadians themselves.

Though opinion of their character had softened dramatically, the military prowess and intelligence of French Canadians continued to be ridiculed. Referencing the blockade of Quebec, a letter from an American soldier in Canada that was printed in the *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser* read, “the blockade was kept up with about 500 men, exclusive of a few Canadians, in whom little or no dependence could at that time be put, nor indeed at any time, without a greater force of Continental Troops.”⁴⁷⁰ Again, Canadians were portrayed as a liability in the field, the opposite of their determined American counterparts. Many papers concluded that trusting the Canadians in a military situation could prove disastrous. *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser* surmised of Ethan Allen’s capture, “Col. Allen has been taken prisoner from his trusting too much to the fidelity of the Canadians; for he took only 17 men and 70 Canadians with him; The latter deserted him on the appearance of 250 soldiers and others, who attacked him out of Montreal with 2 field pieces.”⁴⁷¹ The Canadians were portrayed as being, by nature, cowardly and untrustworthy. Such portrayals served to cement the idea that Americans were the opposite, brave and staunch. Unlike Canadians, they could be counted on in the

⁴⁷⁰ *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, March 9, 1776; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, March 11, 1776; *Connecticut Courant*, March 11, 1776; *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette Or The Baltimore General Advertiser*, March 12, 1776; *Connecticut Journal*, March 13, 1776; *Maryland Journal*, March 13, 1776; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 13, 1776; *Essex Journal*, March 22, 1776.

⁴⁷¹ *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 30, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, November 11, 1775.

field. Regarding the intelligence of Canadians, Benedict Arnold wrote on his arrival in Canada in 1775, “The people are poor and illiterate, and appear to have no other end in view, than keeping their souls and bodies together, and preparing for the next world, being exceedingly devout.”⁴⁷² Disparaging remarks aimed at the Catholicism of French Canadians also crept back into the American press as the hopes of taking Canada began to fade. The *Virginia Gazette* lamented the Canadian “Clergy, the Knights of the Croix de St. Louis, the Seigneurs, and that tribe of titled beggars that Canada swarms with.”⁴⁷³ As had been the case during the previous war, Canada was once again depicted as being a nest for the papacy. As it seemed that the Canadian populace was drifting back to the British in the latter stages of the war, old notions of Canadians began to resurface as American newspapers examined anew whether Canadians were capable of truly becoming Americans.

Depictions of Canadians in the Loyalist press followed a similar, though inverted arch. Rather than positive portrayals in 1775 followed by increasingly negative portrayals as the war progressed as happened in the Revolutionary press, the Loyalist press largely ignored French Canadians until after the failed invasion of Canada, then began to portray them as good and honest subjects who, through their sense of loyalty, had steadfastly remained at the king’s side. Fundamental to the Loyalist argument about Canadian devotion was the Quebec Act. Loyalist papers contended that, contrary to the reporting in the revolutionary press, the Canadian people were firmly in favour of the legislation. An article published in the *Boston Post-Boy* in March of 1775 described the Quebec Act as having been “adapted to the genius and manners of the Canadians, formed upon their own petition, and received with every testimonial of gratitude.”⁴⁷⁴ An article in the *Connecticut Courant* argued that “In the course of all the evidence that has been laid before the public, we find that the Canadians have expressed one constant uniform wish to be governed by their own laws, and that the English have as fervently desired to be governed by the laws of England.” The paper continued, “The Canadians are above

⁴⁷² *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, January 3, 1776.

⁴⁷³ *Virginia Gazette*, February 11, 1775.

⁴⁷⁴ *Boston Post-Boy*, March 20, 1775.

100,000, the English not more than 2000, men, women, and children. The legislature was therefore to consider whether the law and government ought to be adapted to the many or the few.”⁴⁷⁵ In February 1775, the *Boston Post-Boy* read:

It is a strange kind of reasoning to argue, from the French inhabitants of the conquered province of Quebec, being tolerated in the enjoyment of the Roman Catholic religion in which they were educated, and in which alone they repose their hope of eternal salvation, that therefore government intends to deprive us of the enjoyment of the protestant religion in which alone we believe, especially as the political interest of Britain depend upon protestant connexions, and the King’s being a protestant himself is an indispensable condition of his wearing the crown.⁴⁷⁶

For Loyalists, the Quebec Act seemed to have endeared the Crown to the Canadian people, and they predicted that because of that legislation, French Canadians would prove loyal subjects of the king. In June 1775, the *Connecticut Journal* published a letter from Canada that read, “This is a favourable moment for Canada, and I am very glad that the ministry have seized it; whatever the narrow minded men may say, the act is consonant to sound policy, humanity and that moderation which becomes an enlightened nation.”⁴⁷⁷ The anonymous letter writer continued, “to conquer has been often the lot of the British nation, but to conciliate the affections of the conquered, has been reserved to the reign of George the 3d. and I may venture to say, that the Canadians will upon every occasion shew their fidelity and gratitude.”⁴⁷⁸ As American troops retreated from Canada in 1776 and Canadians began to join the British forces in greater numbers than they had the year before, the Loyalist press repeatedly praised Canadians for proving themselves loyal subjects of the king and, unlike the Patriots, true and proper British subjects.

Most of the letters from Canada that were printed in the Loyalist press took pains to relate the fidelity of the Canadian people. In October 1776, the *New-York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury* published a letter from Canada that informed readers, “The

⁴⁷⁵ *Connecticut Courant*, January 2, 1775.

⁴⁷⁶ *Boston Post-Boy*, February 6, 1775.

⁴⁷⁷ *Connecticut Journal*, June 7, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, June 16, 1775.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Canadians, I can assure you, whatever has been said of them, are not to be ranked but amongst the most faithful of his Majesty's subjects."⁴⁷⁹ A letter printed in *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser* in November 1776 contended "We shall want no foreign troops here, the Canadians being very hearty in the cause, well attached to his Majesty, and they seem very desirous to shew their zeal, by offering hundreds at a time to join our forces."⁴⁸⁰ A perceived Canadian desire to prove themselves loyal subjects of the king was particularly praised by Loyalist writers. In his account of the defense of Quebec, Governor Guy Carleton wrote, "The militia, British and Canadian, behaved with a hardiness and resolution that could hardly have been expected from men unused to arms. Judges and other officers of government, as well as merchants, cheerfully submitted to every inconvenience to preserve the town; the whole indeed upon the occasion shewed a spirit and perseverance that do them great honor."⁴⁸¹ This sentiment was echoed in other papers. A month after Carleton's letter was published, the *New-York Gazette* surmised "The Royal Canadians which General Carleton raised, are very respectable soldiers, for the siege has quite perfected them in their duty."⁴⁸² Another letter published a week later in the same paper reported that "During six Months of a Winter's Campaign, which was extremely fatiguing, all the Canadians who were within the Walls did Duty the same as the common Soldiers," further contending that "The Clergy were the most steady and firm Subjects the King had in this Country, during the present Troubles, both by Preaching and Persuasion they did all they could; the very Seminary Boys bore Arms all the Time with much Chearfullness, and strove to exert themselves on all Occasions of Duty."⁴⁸³ For the Loyalist press, Patriot reports that the Canadians supported the American rebels were vastly overblown. And indeed, that does

⁴⁷⁹ *New-York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury*, October 21, 1776.

⁴⁸⁰ *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, November 12, 1776; *Virginia Gazette*, November 29, 1776.

⁴⁸¹ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, September 18, 1776; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, September 19, 1776; *New-York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury*, September 30, 1776; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 4, 1776; *Virginia Gazette*, October 4, 1776; *Providence Gazette*, October 5, 1776; *Norwich Packet*, October 7, 1776.

⁴⁸² *New-York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury*, October 21, 1776.

⁴⁸³ *New-York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury*, October 28, 1776.

seem to have been the case. Relatively few Canadians joined the revolutionary cause, and the Loyalist press was quick to refute claims that they were flocking to the American banner in droves. In March 1778, the *Royal Gazette* opined that “The disaffected at Albany were all in the dumps, on learning from Montreal, that the report of the revolt of the Canadians, and their accession to the rebel confederation, was peremptorily contradicted, and utterly without foundation.”⁴⁸⁴ In the view of Loyalist papers, most Canadians were rejecting the American union. They argued that the tolerant policies that had been pursued by the Crown had instilled a sense of loyalty within the French Canadian population that would be extremely hard to shake. It is very likely that, like Patriot reports of Canadian support for the revolutionary cause, Loyalists reports of Canadian support for the crown were also overblown. In many ways both the Patriot and Loyalists presses played on extremes, portraying a relatively pragmatic and unenthused Canadian populace as either firmly in the American camp or firmly in the British one. In reality, most Canadians likely tried to remain as uninvolved as possible. That did not stop American newspapers from using them as props, however, as the Loyalists press did when it touted Canadian loyalty to the Crown and to the Quebec Act that it had implemented. But Crown policies were just one of the reasons that Loyalist newspapers contended that Canadians had chosen to remain in the British fold. They further argued that a large part of the reason was what they perceived as a duplicitous Continental Congress.

Primary targets of the Loyalist press were the Continental Congress’s addresses to the Canadians. Unlike Patriot newspapers, which had contended that the Canadians had largely been pleased with the addresses, Loyalist papers surmised that the Canadian people had instead been quite offended. Echoing the articles from 1774 which had reported that Canadians had been offended when reading and comparing the addresses to themselves and to the people of Great-Britain together, the *Royal American Gazette* argued in 1781 that “Congress in their address to the people of England, had enumerated, in the list of their grievances, the establishment of Popery in Canada; a religion say they,

⁴⁸⁴ *Royal Gazette*, March 14, 1778; *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, March 30, 1778.

‘that has deluged your island in blood, and dispersed impiety, bigotry, persecution, murder and rebellion, through every corner of the world.’⁴⁸⁵ The paper continued:

And yet, that the same Congress scrupled not, at the same moment, to declare to the Canadians, when they attempted to cajole them into revolt, that prejudice arising from difference in religious matters, were “low-minded infirmities, and that they were too well acquainted with the liberality of sentiment that distinguished their nation, to imagine, that difference in religion would prejudice them against a hearty amity.”⁴⁸⁶

As far as the *Royal American* was concerned, the addresses by the Congress had been two faced. The actions of the Congress were depicted as unacceptable. Three years earlier, the *Boston Post-Boy* made a similar argument, contending that the Continental Congress’s “attempt to alienate the affections of the inhabitants of the new conquered province of Quebec from his Majesty’s government, is altogether unjustifiable.”⁴⁸⁷ The *Post-Boy* argued that “In the truly jesuitical address to the Canadians, the Congress endeavour to seduce them from their allegiance, and prevail on them to join the confederacy... insinuating that they had been tricked, duped, oppressed and enslaved by the Quebec bill.”⁴⁸⁸ Like the *Post-Boy*, most Loyalist papers concluded that the Continental Congress did not think Canadians were capable of thinking in their own self interest. In October 1776, the *New-York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury* asked of the Continental Congress, “let us suppose them to have arrived, through the most horrid scenes of distress and bloodshed, to that state of independence, which they appear to have been aiming at, since the conquest of Canada: Will they be happier than they have been?” continuing, “Or will the Canadians, who they resolve to conquer, and at whose toleration they so loudly exclaim, think themselves safe under the despotic government of rigid Calvinists?”⁴⁸⁹ Loyalist newspapers argued that Canadians were acting in their own self-interest, and that

⁴⁸⁵ *Royal American Gazette*, March 20, 1781.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷ *Boston Post-Boy*, March 20, 1775.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁹ *New-York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury*, October 7, 1776.

their interest lay with the British crown. Even when France joined the war in 1778, the Loyalist press maintained a steadfast confidence in the loyalty of the Canadian people.

Francis D. Cogliano has argued that the alliance between America and France during the Revolutionary War did much to temper Anglo-American distrust of and prejudice against Catholicism.⁴⁹⁰ For Loyalist Americans, however, Congress's alliance with Britain's eternal enemy was further evidence of the treachery of the revolutionary cause. Well before the actual alliance in 1778, Loyalist-leaning papers began to surmise that the revolutionaries were plotting with the French. That tactic seemed to fly in the face of everything it meant to be British. In 1776, *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette Or The Baltimore General Advertiser* reported that "We are informed that Lord Weymouth has just received a copy of the treaty between America, France and Spain, of which the following are the leading articles: The Americans propose ceding Canada and Nova-Scotia to France. West Florida and the Illinois to Spain. Grenada to be reserved, and Porto Rico [sic] to be given to the Americans. Jamaica to be delivered up to Spain."⁴⁹¹ Such a deal with Britain's eternal enemy seemed the peak of duplicitousness. The seeming French desire to retake Canada reappeared in June of 1782 when the *Royal Gazette* alleged that a French fleet had been defeated on its way to reconquer their former holdings. The paper contended that "This formidable fleet, now totally routed, with a land force of above 12,000 men, was not intended to act against Jamaica, but to file off from the Cape directly, to the River St. Lawrence, and proceed to Quebec."⁴⁹² The *Gazette* continued that, "if [Quebec] was not immediately carried, it was not to be regarded, but the land-forces were to take possession of all above that city, in high expectation to be joined by the clergy, and the greatest part of the Canadians." This was an intriguing prospect as it had seemingly been the clergy which had prevented many Canadians from joining the American cause. With the clergy on board, it seemed to the American press as though the floodgates would open and Canadians would pour into the American ranks. It was a prospect that many papers welcomed. Many other American newspapers remained

⁴⁹⁰ Cogliano, *No King, No Popery*, 71-99.

⁴⁹¹ *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette Or The Baltimore General Advertiser*, November 19, 1776.

⁴⁹² *Royal Gazette*, June 1, 1782.

incredibly wary of their French allies, however, and the Loyalist press worked hard to capitalize on that anxiety. The *Gazette* further contended that the end goal was to “thoroughly possess the country, and fortify all the inlets; re-occupy all the upper posts; renew their former friendship with the Indians; put in full execution the plan they had adopted and began to execute in 1754... and open a communication with their force at Gloucester and York in Virginia, which they were to fortify and keep possession of, as well as of all that dominion.”⁴⁹³ As far as the *Gazette* was concerned, the French had a plan to take all of America, the same plan that the English American colonies had helped put down in 1754. The paper surmised that the French had “a deep laid scheme to bridle and enslave America, and to prevent, if possible, the English and Americans, though joined from being capable to resist,” concluding, however, that “The whole scheme is, by this victory, (in all human probability) blasted and now rendered impracticable.”⁴⁹⁴ Alongside accusations that the French sought to retake Canada, the Loyalist press also charged France with trying to undermine Canadian loyalty. And in November 1778, there appeared in the *Independent Ledger* a notice from a French admiral in America that seemed to prove their point. The notice was from the Comte D’Estaign, a commander in the French navy who was participating in the Revolution on the American side, and it bid Canadians to join him in lining up behind the American cause.

The notice caused a stir in the American press. About two weeks after the notice first appeared in the Patriot *Independent Ledger*, the Loyalist *Royal Gazette* reported on “a declaration addressed by the Comte D’Estaign in the name of the French King, to all the ancient French in North America, tending to induce the Canadians to comply with the invitation which Congress formerly gave them, by joining in the confederacy of the rebel states.”⁴⁹⁵ The *Gazette* contended that “He employs such persuasions as holding up to view how pleasing such a step would be to their former Prince, and the whole French nation; as well as the absolute freedom respecting religion, which the Congress engaged

⁴⁹³ *Royal Gazette*, June 1, 1782.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁵ *Royal Gazette*, December 19, 1778.

they should enjoy.”⁴⁹⁶ This claim was particularly perplexing to Loyalist newspapers, given that the arguments that had been made by Congress were now being made by French officials. D’Estaing’s address was clearly calculated to influence the minds and hearts of the formerly French subject of Canada. The address began “You were born French; you never could cease to be French... As a French gentleman, I need not mention to those among you who were born such as well as myself, that there is but one august house in the universe, under which the French can be happy, and serve with pleasure.”⁴⁹⁷ D’Estaing asked, “Can the Canadians, who saw brave Montcalm fall in their defence, can they become the enemies of his Nephews? Can they fight against their former Leaders, and arm against their Kinsmen? At the base mention of their names, the weapons would fall out of their hands.”⁴⁹⁸ Appealing to their kinship with the people of France and espousing the name of French heroes who fought in Canada like Montcalm, D’Estaing defined the Canadians as being inherently different from the English, and he presented the French empire as the only place in which Canadians could be happy. With tongue in cheek, the Comte asserted:

I shall not represent to that people, nor to all my countrymen in general, that a vast monarchy, having the same religion, the same manners, the same language, where they find kinsmen, old friends, and brethren, must be an inexhaustible source of commerce and wealth, more easily acquired, and better secured, by their union with powerful neighbours, than with strangers of another Hemisphere, among whom every thing is different, and who, jealous and despotic sovereigns, would sooner or later treat them as a conquered people, and doubtless, much worse than their late countrymen the Americans.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁶ *Royal Gazette*, December 19, 1778.

⁴⁹⁷ *Independent Ledger*, November 30, 1778; *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, December 3, 1778; *Independent Chronicle*, December 3, 1778; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy Or, American Oracle of Liberty*, December 10, 1778; *Norwich Packet*, December 14, 1778; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, December 16, 1778; *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 19, 1778; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, December 22, 1778; *Connecticut Gazette*, December 25, 1778; *Maryland Journal*, December 29, 1778; *New-Jersey Gazette*, December 31, 1778.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

The point was difficult to miss. French Canadians were not like their English Canadian neighbours, a group D’Estaign was happy to paint more as oppressors than neighbours. He continued, “I shall not urge to a whole people, [that] to Join with the United-States, is to secure their own happiness; since a whole people, when they acquire the right of thinking and acting for themselves, must know their own interest,” concluding cheekily, however, that “I will declare, and I now formally declare, in the name of His Majesty, who has authorized and commanded me to do it, that all his former subjects in North-America, who shall no more acknowledge the supremacy of Great Britain, may depend upon his protection and support.”⁵⁰⁰ D’Estaign was careful to say that while the French Canadians were vastly different from the English, they were not as different from the Americans. As far as D’Estaign painted it, the Americans were the Canadians’ best hope to secure their happiness, and he encouraged them to seize the opportunity. While this address was calibrated specifically to the Canadians, it was also quite worrisome to many English Americans, who would likely have sensed in it a plan to re-establish a French presence in North America. There was concern that the French empire had designs on returning to the North American continent to again take up their place as the seemingly natural ally of North America’s Indigenous nations. That aim sounded abhorrent to many Americans, but many others felt would be necessary if Canada was to be brought into the American fold. The address from D’Estaign was then seen as a necessary evil, one which would eventually bring peace. After all, anything was better than having the British in Canada. Despite this address, however, Canadian support for the revolutionary cause never materialized. Still, American newspapers had not abandoned plans for assimilating the Canadians into the American identity, and while their portrayals were not as glowing as they had been in 1775, as Figure 5 shows, many Patriot papers refused to give up on the Canadians throughout the war.

⁵⁰⁰ *Independent Ledger*, November 30, 1778; *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, December 3, 1778; *Independent Chronicle*, December 3, 1778; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy Or, American Oracle of Liberty*, December 10, 1778; *Norwich Packet*, December 14, 1778; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, December 16, 1778; *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 19, 1778; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, December 22, 1778; *Connecticut Gazette*, December 25, 1778; *Maryland Journal*, December 29, 1778; *New-Jersey Gazette*, December 31, 1778.

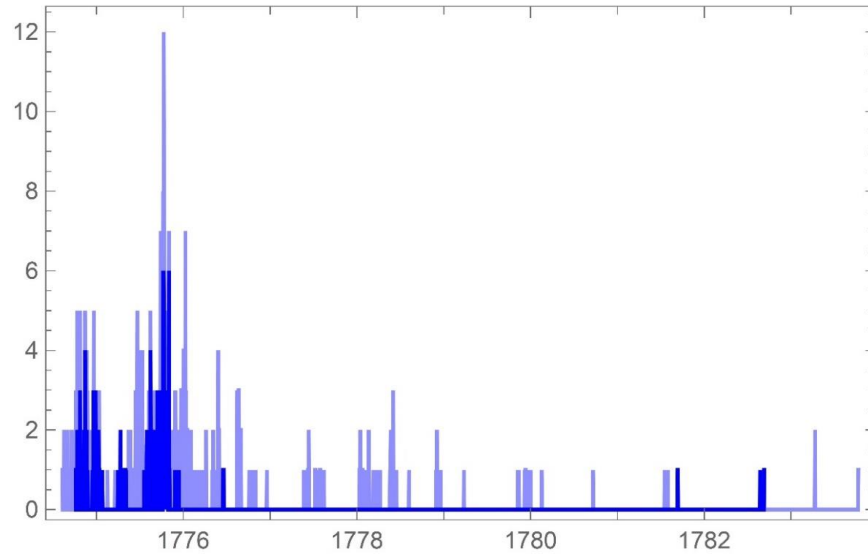


Figure 5: “Chart of Positive Portrayals of Canadians in the American Press, 1774-1784 (explicitly positive portrayals (blue) superimposed over implicitly positive portrayals (light blue)).” Image. 2022. Created using Wolfram Research, Inc., Mathematica, Version 12.1, Champaign, IL, (2019).

Revolutionary papers contended throughout the Revolutionary War that the British were driving Canadians straight into American arms. While Loyalist newspapers argued that Congress was alienating the Canadians, Patriot newspapers contended that it was in fact the British who were driving the Canadians into the American camp. In both cases, the Canadians were largely an unthinking mass, pushed and pulled by the two sides without much agency of their own. They were depicted like a dog placed in the centre of a room and called by two would-be owners. As the Revolution progressed an image of Canadians as indecisive began to develop as American papers predicted that large numbers of Canadians would join the American cause and then, for one reason or another, they did not. Historians like George McKinnon Wrong and Gustave Lanctôt have noted that Canadians themselves were relatively lukewarm in their support for either side.⁵⁰¹ This did not stop the sides from continuing to try to build significant support

⁵⁰¹ George McKinnon Wrong, *Canada and the American Revolution: The Disruption of the First British Empire* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1968); Gustave Lanctôt, *Canada & the American Revolution, 1774-1783* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

amongst the Canadian population, and as the war dragged on, those calls largely hinged on attacking the other side as evil and villainous. In August 1776, the *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser* informed readers, “It is reported that Gen. Carlton [sic] has used the Canadians who favoured us very barbarously, which has provoked them very much.”⁵⁰² Two months later, the *Newport Mercury* surmised that “the Canadians had been so plundered and abused by them, that they would not join the British army.”⁵⁰³ More than simply not joining the British, Patriot American newspapers often argued that Canadians were taking active part in the conflict. In 1777, the *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser* informed readers that “the Canadians were disaffected with the British troops, and had burnt most or all their stores at St. John’s.”⁵⁰⁴ Two months after that, the *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser* read, “By accounts from Canada we learn, that the enemy will be able to do very little this campaign, as they have scarce the men sufficient to garrison Quebec, Montreal, Chamble, St. John’s, &c. against the Canadians, whom they very much distrust and accuse of burning their stores the last winter.”⁵⁰⁵ This was not the only time the American press argued that some Canadians had taken arms against the British. In 1778, the *Connecticut Journal* reported that Carleton had “ordered a number of Canadians from every parish to take up arms, and on their refusal sent the German troops to compel them, on which an engagement had ensued, and fifty Germans fell.”⁵⁰⁶ Five months before this engagement, the *Boston Gazette* had asserted, probably far too

⁵⁰² *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, August 17, 1776.

⁵⁰³ *Newport Mercury*, October 21, 1776; *Independent Chronicle*, October 31, 1776; *Maryland Journal*, December 18, 1776

⁵⁰⁴ *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, May 22, 1777; *Freeman's Journal, Or New-Hampshire Gazette*, May 24, 1777; *Boston Gazette*, May 26, 1777; *Connecticut Journal*, May 28, 1777; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, June 4, 1777; *Maryland Journal*, June 10, 1777.

⁵⁰⁵ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, July 9, 1777; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, July 10, 1777; *Virginia Gazette*, July 25, 1777; *Independent Chronicle*, July 31, 1777; *Freeman's Journal, Or New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 1, 1777.

⁵⁰⁶ *Connecticut Journal*, May 20, 1778; *Connecticut Gazette*, May 22, 1778; *Pennsylvania Packet*, May 23, 1778; *Providence Gazette*, May 23, 1778; *Boston Gazette*, May 25, 1778; *New-Jersey Gazette*, May 27, 1778; *Independent Chronicle*, May 28, 1778; *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette Or The Baltimore General Advertiser*, June 2, 1778; *Exeter Journal or, The New Hampshire Gazette, and Tuesday's General Advertiser*, June 2, 1778; *Freeman's Journal, Or, New-Hampshire Gazette*, June 2, 1778.

overconfidently, that “the Canadians have taken up Arms against General Carleton and the English Troops, engaged and drove them into Quebec, where they are now surrounded by them. – The Canadians expect to be supported by our People as soon as the Lakes open.”⁵⁰⁷ Though this report from the *Gazette* was fictional, the Patriot press imagined thousands of Canadians in arms, beckoning their American brethren for assistance. This was important as it served to instill a sense that the Canadians were doing everything they could to support the American cause. The idea that Canadians, of their own accord, had taken up arms and trapped Carleton in Quebec was a beautiful thought for revolutionary Americans, and papers like the *Gazette* reinforced such thoughts for readers, even though the purported attack seems to have been an early example of fake news. The point, however, was not to present facts, but to build American morale. Though the droves of Canadians that American newspapers imagined were gathering around their cause didn’t actually exist, it served the American press to depict that they did. As American leaders were trying to rally the American populace around their alleged shared commonalities, the American press touted those commonalities by asserting that the patriotic Canadians shared many of those revolutionary characteristics.

To most of the Patriot press, Canadians remained on the verge of becoming Americans throughout the Revolutionary War, a fourteenth state in waiting. In August of 1778, the *Pennsylvania Packet* reported that “the Canadians have acceded to the confederacy of the United States; that their Deputies were arrived at the Congress; but no other condition of their accession had transpired than that they were to raise an army of 4000 men, with which they had engaged to undertake the siege of Quebec, as soon as the ice broke.”⁵⁰⁸ There is no further mention of any accession to the Continental Congress or of the army that the Canadians were alleged to be raising until 1782. That year, the

⁵⁰⁷ *Boston Gazette*, January 12, 1778; *Connecticut Courant*, January 13, 1778; *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, January 15, 1778; *Independent Chronicle*, January 15, 1778; *Connecticut Courant*, January 20, 1778; *Freeman's Journal, Or, New-Hampshire Gazette*, January 20, 1778; *Connecticut Journal*, January 21, 1778; *Massachusetts Spy*, January 22, 1778; *Connecticut Gazette*, January 23, 1778; *Norwich Packet*, January 26, 1778; *New-Jersey Gazette*, February 11, 1778; *Pennsylvania Packet*, February 11, 1778; *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette Or Baltimore General Advertiser*, February 17, 1778; *Maryland Journal*, February 17, 1778.

⁵⁰⁸ *Pennsylvania Packet*, August 8, 1778.

Independent Gazetteer informed readers that “The Canadian people in the interest of the Thirteen United States of America, had sent a deputation of three persons to Congress, to consult on a mode of confederating that colony as a fourteenth, and for renewing hostilities against the British in Canada.”⁵⁰⁹ If the Canadian deputation indeed appeared before Congress, which seems highly unlikely, once again little came of it. The article was reprinted only once, and the story of the Canadian overtures to Congress do not seem to have resonated in the press, or to have been recorded elsewhere. These stories of Canadian overtures to Congress, however, reflect the hopes of American leaders and the American press that eventually, the Canadians would see the value of joining their southern brethren. Though Canada never did join the American union, by the end of the Revolutionary War, they seemingly remained welcome. Though portrayals of Canadians slipped back into negativity in the later years of the Revolutionary War, the door remained open and many American newspapers continued to tout the Canadians as being just on the cusp of joining with the American states. In September of 1781, the *Connecticut Courant* contended that “the generality of the Canadians are as good Whigs as any in the United States.”⁵¹⁰ As the Revolutionary War ended, however, Canadians still had not joined the union, and the voices in the press contending that Canadians were “as good Whigs as any in the United States” were soon drowned out by the voices loudly espousing portrayals far more similar to understandings of Canadians from 1755 than 1775. Though postwar American opinion was now also informed by Canadian actions during the Revolution, it generally re-embraced the stereotypes that had animated portrayals of Canadians in the era prior to 1774. Canadians were again a foil, as they often were in the American press.

Despite the era of good feelings that Canada and the American states seemingly entered in 1774, the American press continued to other Canadians in several ways

⁵⁰⁹ *Independent Gazetteer*, August 24, 1782; *Massachusetts Gazette*, September 10, 1782.

⁵¹⁰ *Connecticut Courant*, September 11, 1781; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, September 12, 1781; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, September 12, 1781; *Connecticut Journal*, September 13, 1781; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy Or, The Worcester Gazette*, September 13, 1781; *Connecticut Gazette*, September 14, 1781; *Newport Mercury*, September 15, 1781; *Providence Gazette*, September 15, 1781.

throughout the Revolutionary War. French Canadians occasionally remained untrustworthy Catholics,⁵¹¹ were still often seen as childishly susceptible to threats and bribes,⁵¹² were racialized by association with Indigenous peoples, Black Americans, and foreigners,⁵¹³ and were portrayed, at least by the Patriot press, as poor and cowardly soldiers.⁵¹⁴ On the other hand, Americans were staunch Dissenters,⁵¹⁵ were firm and unshakable in their principles,⁵¹⁶ were at proper arm's length from their Indigenous allies,

⁵¹¹ *New-York Journal*, April 27, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, May 1, 1775; *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, May 2, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, May 3, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 3, 1775; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, May 3, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, May 5, 1775; *Massachusetts Spy*, May 17, 1775.

⁵¹² *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 14, 1775; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, June 14, 1775; *Story & Humphreys's Pennsylvania Mercury, and Universal Advertiser*, June 16, 1775; *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, June 17, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, June 19, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, June 20, 1775; *Maryland Journal*, June 21, 1775; *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer; Or, The Connecticut, Hudson's River, New-Jersey, and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, June 22, 1775; *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, June 22, 1775; *New-York Journal*, June 22, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, June 22, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, June 23, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, June 26, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, June 26, 1775; *Norwich Packet*, June 26, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, June 28, 1775; *Massachusetts Spy*, June 28, 1775; *Essex Journal, Or, The Massachusetts and New-Hampshire General Advertiser, &c.*, June 30, 1775.

⁵¹³ *Virginia Gazette*, March 8, 1776; *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, May 30, 1776; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, June 1, 1776; *Providence Gazette*, June 1, 1776.

⁵¹⁴ *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 30, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, November 11, 1775; *Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, March 9, 1776; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, March 11, 1776; *Connecticut Courant*, March 11, 1776; *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette Or The Baltimore General Advertiser*, March 12, 1776; *Connecticut Journal*, March 13, 1776; *Maryland Journal*, March 13, 1776; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 13, 1776; *Essex Journal*, March 22, 1776.

⁵¹⁵ *Maryland Journal*, April 19, 1775.

⁵¹⁶ *Norwich Packet*, July 31, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, September 14, 1775; *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, September 21, 1775; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy Or, American Oracle of Liberty*, September 29, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, September 30, 1775; *Connecticut Courant*, October 2, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 3, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, October 4, 1775; *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer; Or, The Connecticut, Hudson's River, New-Jersey, and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, October 5, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 6, 1775; *Constitutional Gazette*, October 7, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, October 7, 1775; *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, October 7, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, October 9, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, October 9, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, October 9, 1775; *Maryland Journal*, October 11, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 11, 1775; *New-York Journal*, October 12, 1775; *Story & Humphreys's Pennsylvania Mercury, and Universal Advertiser*, October 13, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, October 20, 1775; *Boston News-Letter*, October 26, 1775.

had no Black allies,⁵¹⁷ and were brave and courageous in the face of battle.⁵¹⁸ Still, despite these differences, both the Patriot and Loyalist presses actively drew French Canadians into their ranks throughout the Revolutionary War. In Patriot press portrayals, both Canadians and American patriots recognized the importance of liberty and the threat posed to it by tyranny,⁵¹⁹ and both had tasted the British ministry's oppression and despotism.⁵²⁰ Both were willing to take up arms to defend their liberties and their homes.⁵²¹ Both hated the Quebec Act and looked forward to the restoration of English liberties of the establishment of American liberties.⁵²² Contrastingly, in the Loyalist press, both Canadians and American Loyalists remained steadfastly loyal to their king.⁵²³ Both did their military duty well and without complaint.⁵²⁴ Neither had been duped by the arguments of the Revolutionaries or appeals of rabble-rousers.⁵²⁵ Both were reasoned and

⁵¹⁷ *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, July 22, 1775.

⁵¹⁸ *Massachusetts Spy*, December 4, 1776.

⁵¹⁹ *New England Chronicle, or Essex Gazette*, September 28, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, October 9, 1775.

⁵²⁰ *Providence Gazette*, September 2, 1775.

⁵²¹ *Connecticut Courant*, August 14, 1775; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy Or, American Oracle of Liberty*, August 16, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, August 16, 1775; *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer; Or, The Connecticut, Hudson's River, New-Jersey, and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, August 17, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, August 18, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, August 19, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, August 19, 1775; *The Pennsylvania Ledger: or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, & New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, August 19, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, August 21, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 22, 1775; *New-York Journal*, August 24, 1775; *Essex Journal*, August 25, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, August 31, 1775; *Virginia Gazette*, September 2, 1775; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, September 18, 1775; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, September 19, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 20, 1775; *Essex Journal*, September 22, 1775; *Story & Humphreys's Pennsylvania Mercury, and Universal Advertiser*, September 22, 1775; *Boston Gazette, or, Country Journal*, September 25, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 26, 1775.

⁵²² *Virginia Gazette*, January 26, 1775; *New-York Journal*, April 6, 1775; *New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury*, April 10, 1775; *Connecticut Journal*, April 12, 1775; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 12, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, April 14, 1775; *Providence Gazette*, April 15, 1775; *Newport Mercury*, April 17, 1775; *Essex Gazette*, May 2, 1775; *Essex Journal*, May 3, 1775; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, May 5, 1775.

⁵²³ *New-York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury*, October 21, 1776; *Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, November 12, 1776; *Virginia Gazette*, November 29, 1776.

⁵²⁴ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, September 18, 1776; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, September 19, 1776; *New-York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury*, September 30, 1776; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 4, 1776; *Virginia Gazette*, October 4, 1776; *Providence Gazette*, October 5, 1776; *Norwich Packet*, October 7, 1776; *New-York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury*, October 21, 1776.

⁵²⁵ *New-York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury*, October 7, 1776.

both understood the justice of the Quebec Act and the benefits of remaining within the British Empire.⁵²⁶ American Loyalists had not been deceived by the Congress and Canadians had not been seduced by the appeals from their former sovereign, the French king.⁵²⁷ Both the Loyalist and Patriot presses largely portrayed Canadians as a facsimile of themselves and the antithesis of their opponents throughout the war. As the Revolution proceeded, Canadians had become insiders to both Loyalist and Patriot contexts. Canadians were now a group whose character Americans sometimes compared positively to their own. The Canadian identity went from one which American newspapers used to define what wasn't inherently American to one that was occasionally used to define what was.

Joyce Appleby has surmised that “Because political union preceded the formation of a national identity, the first generation was forced to imagine the sentiments that might bind the nation together.”⁵²⁸ Appleby argued that the first generation of Americans championed individualism and autonomy as replacements for the aristocratic hierarchies and set social positions that their parents' generation had thrown off. In their minds, the United States, as the only free and democratic society in existence, was a beacon to the rest of the world, an example of how the old ways could be thrown off in productive ways.⁵²⁹ Other historians have located the origins of a unique American identity to other moments. Jon Butler claimed that the identity developed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries⁵³⁰ while John Murrin asserted that it didn't truly begin to develop until the Constitution in 1787.⁵³¹ Whether the process began in the seventeenth century as Butler asserts, the immediate post-revolutionary era as Appleby asserts, or the

⁵²⁶ *Connecticut Journal*, June 7, 1775; *Connecticut Gazette*, June 16, 1775.

⁵²⁷ *Independent Ledger*, November 30, 1778; *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, December 3, 1778; *Independent Chronicle*, December 3, 1778; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy Or, American Oracle of Liberty*, December 10, 1778; *Norwich Packet*, December 14, 1778; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, December 16, 1778; *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 19, 1778; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, December 22, 1778; *Connecticut Gazette*, December 25, 1778; *Maryland Journal*, December 29, 1778; *New-Jersey Gazette*, December 31, 1778.

⁵²⁸ Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution*, 262.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁰ Butler, *Becoming America*, 1-7.

⁵³¹ Murrin, “A Roof Without Walls.”

Constitutional era as Murrin asserts, the era surrounding the American Revolution was of tantamount importance to the development of American identity. This throwing off of old ways was often a slow process, and their replacements were often social structures Americans were familiar with. Alexander Saxton has argued that nineteenth century Americans maintained racial hierarchies as a means of keeping the class structures that underpinned society familiar to them.⁵³² Kariann Akemi Yokota has argued that anxieties over their cultural standing in the world drove elite Americans to emulate British culture as the familiar and convenient way to assert and bolster America's international standing, concluding that as such attempts were generally lambasted by Europeans themselves, Americans eventually turned from attempting to emulate Europe, to attempting to better it.⁵³³ During this process, both French Canadians and English Canadians were utilized as convenient others against which to define what independent Americans were, and as significantly, what they were not. As they had in past, Canadians would serve whatever role American newspaper editors needed. Typically, this role was as a foil to the ideal American, and in the postwar era, that was exactly what Canadians returned to being.

⁵³² Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic*, 385.

⁵³³ Kariann Akemi Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary American Became a Postcolonial Nation* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 8-12.

Part 2: “True Friends to America,” 1774-1794

Chapter 4: “This Moral Antipode of the United States,” 1783-1794

Many historians have explored the various insecurities about American identity that pervaded the United States in the early years of the republic. Yokota has argued that post-Revolutionary Americans continued to emulate their British counterparts since this imbued social respectability in a nation without a unique, established culture of its own. She contended that anxieties over their cultural standing in the world drove elite Americans to imitate British culture as the familiar and convenient way to assert and bolster America’s international standing, but concluded that, as such attempts were generally rebuffed by Europeans themselves, Americans turned from attempting to copy Europe, to attempting to surpass it.⁵³⁴ Broadening the scope, Eliga Gould has argued similarly about the way in which American leaders portrayed the nation as a whole to the world. Gould argued that contemporary notions of national independence were intimately tied to recognition and place within the community of European nations. He surmised that American revolutionaries styled their rebellion as a revolution by declaring independence so that they could take advantage of the benefits afforded to nations in the international tradition known as the laws of nations; international norms of conduct codified in Emerich de Vattel’s 1758 treatise *The Law of Nations*. For Gould, Americans recognized that gaining national status required becoming enmeshed in the interdependence of European nations, with each legitimizing one another’s claims to nationhood. He argued that Americans sought to emulate European political norms as a means of gaining access to that community.⁵³⁵ While America gained access to this

⁵³⁴ Yokota, *Unbecoming British*, 8-12.

⁵³⁵ Eliga Gould, “Independence and Interdependence: The American Revolution and the Problem of Postcolonial Nationhood, Circa 1802.,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol 74 No 4, 2017. Gould further surmised that other rebellions, like that in Haiti and the attempted establishment of the State of Muskogee in Creek Indian territory, styled themselves along similar lines. In the cases of Muskogee and Haiti (along with other attempted postcolonial ethnic nations like Sierra Leone), while some nations interacted with them unofficially as nations, officially they were denied international recognition due to their ethnic majorities and the perception, particularly in the case of Muskogee, that these nations would negotiate sovereignty on their own cultural terms, rather than by adopting the European form, unlike the United States.

community of nations following the Revolutionary War, their culture remained ridiculed in Europe for many years. Michal J. Rozbicki has argued that “Condescension directed by genteel society in the metropolis toward colonists in the New World was a persistent theme in British writing of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”⁵³⁶ Portrayals of Americans served the British identity in remarkably similar ways in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as portrayals of Canadians served the American identity in the late eighteenth century. Both were a means by which to define the identity of the ingroup, of the metropolis, by first defining the negative qualities of an outgroup and establishing the ingroup’s identity as the opposite. Rozbicki continued, “This barrage of hauteur and ridicule struck those colonists who, by the eighteenth century, aspired to legitimate status as gentlemen.”⁵³⁷ As Americans sought to change the way that the European gentry was portraying them, they deflected the barbs northward onto the Canadians. American depictions of Canadians as ignorant and rude served to establish that Americans were not ignorant and rude. Despite what the Europeans might say, Americans were able to look around themselves and conclude that they were the most enlightened group in North America. After doing the previously unthinkable and throwing off the British crown, they came to see themselves as the most enlightened group in the western hemisphere, and as they looked about the continent for proof, Canadians remained an important touch-stone of the newly independent American identity.

American public opinion of Canadians was at least a contributing and important factor in the development of ideas about what constituted the American character. Postwar Canada provided Americans with two distinct cultural groups, each of which was incredibly useful to American attempts at defining the American identity. French Canadians remained a significant other, as they had for generations. French Canadians were culturally different, as was evidenced by their allegedly weak work ethic and meagre intelligence. They were religiously different, as was evidenced by their continuing allegiance to the Catholic church. They were racially different, as was

⁵³⁶ Michal J. Rozbicki, “The Curse of Provincialism: Negative Perceptions of Colonial American Plantation Gentry,” *The Journal of Southern History* Vol 63 No 4 (1997), 727.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*

evidenced by their close ties to their Indigenous neighbours and allies. Though the American Revolution had served to temper American opinion of French Canadians, there remained a clear undercurrent of stereotype within the American popular mind. As such, French Canadians remained a perfect foil against which to define the aspects of the American character that were inherent to their cultural heritage and ethnicity. But in the postwar era, French Canadians were not the only European heritage group that inhabited Canada in relatively large numbers. There were also the English Canadians, former American Loyalists who had fled with the British following the end of the Revolutionary War. Unlike the French Canadians, who were culturally and ethnically very different from English Americans, English Canadians resembled their American counterparts very closely. They were the same in terms of cultural heritage, religion, and race. And yet, there were differences which the American press still emphasized as a means of further defining the American identity. The former Loyalists were painted as opportunistic cowards, always ready to stab their friends and countrymen in the back if it meant reward. They were seen as meekly willing to bow before tyranny, ever ready to be used as pawns by their evil overlords. As Americans envisioned the American identity as the polar opposite of this, English Canadians also became an incredibly useful foil against which to define what an American was and was not. This was particularly important in an era where the unique American national identity was yet fledgling and Americans were still searching for what it truly meant to be an American, not merely an inhabitant of the Americas, but a citizen of the United States of America.

As Americans unhitched their identity from the British identity in the years after independence, they largely turned to notions of individualism as a foundation of the identity they were building. As Joyce Appleby has argued, this generations of Americans that followed the Revolution turned to personal responsibility and autonomy as replacements for the hierarchical social order they had thrown off in the war.⁵³⁸ One place where this new sense of individualism found fertile ground was the American consumer marketplace. T.H. Breen has argued that general participation in the consumer

⁵³⁸ Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution*, 262.

market gave the American population a shared experience which made it easier for the colonies to perceive of themselves as a united front later in the century. Though consumer trends in the American marketplace were often an imitation of English trends, individual participation in a relatively affordable market gave Americans the ability to establish a shared culture through consumer products. Breen argued that the consumer marketplace provided an area of colonial social life that was truly shared by all, and as such was uniquely positioned to serve as a unifying force and antecedent to the American Revolution.⁵³⁹ By making individual decisions within the shared American marketplace, Americans cemented both their own personal identities and the identity of Americans as a group. Those identities were in many ways quite different, with the personal American identity built on ideas of individuality and the group American identity built around unity. And yet they seemed to balance one another nicely, with American group identity prizing the individuality of its various members. As that group identity continued to coalesce in the decade following the Revolutionary War, however, it grew increasingly exclusionary toward Canadians. Though there were occasional moments when the American press wondered if Canada might still throw off the British yoke and join the American union, most newspapers gradually concluded that it was probably for the best that America had never annexed Canada. As the United States strove to take its place within the community of European nations, negative depictions of Canadians were repeatedly used to reinforce a sense of American superiority in the face of European ridicule of American culture. In the first decade after the American Revolution, Canadians became for Americans what Americans had been for Europeans; an outgroup against which to define what was perceived as a superior identity.

Chapter Four explores the era between the end of the American Revolutionary War and the signing of the Jay Treaty in 1795. This was an era when American portrayals of Canadians continued the trends that had begun in the later parts of the war. Though they were not as extremely bloody or as extremely violent as they had been in depictions from the French and Indian War, portrayals of Canadians largely returned to old

⁵³⁹ Breen, *Marketplace of Revolution* 154-157.

stereotypes. Though their Catholicism was not talked about as often or as fervently, Canadians remained an other, intimately associated with the Indigenous nations of North America. This association became even more cemented in the American public mind as the American army turned its sight to a new war in the new American west. When conflict broke out in 1786 with the Northwest Confederacy, a confederation of Indigenous nations in the Great Lakes region, the bodies of Canadians were found, dressed as Indigenous soldiers, amongst the dead in several battles throughout the conflict and consequently American public opinion of Canadians plummeted. The British empire had refused to give up its forts in the American west, and this strain was exacerbated by American perceptions that Canadians were up to their old tricks in the west, using the presence of the forts to incite their Indigenous allies and kinsmen to frontier slaughter. Again, Canadians became vicious, backwoods instigators in the American public mind, having thrown in with Indigenous peoples to commit atrocities on their fellow Whites. French Canadians returned to being a foil for the American identity, and in the postwar era, another group also began to be used as such a foil: English Canadians. Many of the American Loyalists who had fought alongside the British throughout the war evacuated to Canada during and after the war, becoming the United Empire Loyalists in Canada. As Americans who had until very recently been included as insiders within the American imagined community, these English Canadians were utilized in a number of ways by American papers. Often, they were othered as villainous traitors and craftly backstabbers. At the same time, however, many American newspapers began to tout the positive impact that the work ethic and focus on progress that was inherent to that American identity was having on French Canadians. Still, throughout the era, Canadians, both French and English, were primarily used as foils to depict what Americans were not. Despite this souring of opinion, there were certain papers that continued to surmise that a rebellion was brewing in Canada. Though the British government introduced the Canada Act in 1791, an act that was seemingly well loved by both English and French Canadians, many American newspapers continued to argue that Canadians were chafing at the bit to rise up and throw off the British yoke. Throughout the decade or so that followed the American Revolution, as tension with Canada continued to build, American newspapers began to fan the flames of conflict. By the early

1790s, it appeared that another war might be fought between the regions, but in 1795, the United States and Britain concluded a treaty that seemed to settle many of the outstanding grievances that were souring their relationship. The treaty did little, however, to temper increasingly negative American portrayals of their Canadian neighbours, which continued to be utilized as a foil against which to define the new American national identity.

As American public opinion of Canadians shifted back to negative in the post-Revolutionary War era, Canadians remained an important aspect of the process by which Americans defined their national identity in the era following independence. Essentially, Canadians reassumed their traditional place as a foil. Canada once again mattered as an example of what Americans in the new United States were not. And once again fundamental to American portrayals of Canadians was race. The rapid pace at which American newspapers returned to old racialized stereotypes of Canadians in the postwar era reveals the relative superficiality of the shift in American opinion of Canadians during the war. Depictions of Canadians quickly reverted to their traditional place, as a foil against which to define the American identity. Canadians continued to matter to Americans, though in the postwar era, they returned to being an outgroup that was used to reinforce internal group cohesion in the first decade of an independent United States. The brief moment when positive depictions of Canadians filled American newspapers had passed. Canadians were again an other, useful as a foil that reinforced American superiority, just as they had been in the French and Indian War.

Though depictions of Canada had been growing increasingly negative toward the end of the Revolutionary War, many American newspapers continued to emphasize continued Canadian dissent and opposition to the Quebec Act for many years.⁵⁴⁰ Products specifically marketed as Canadian flooded the press,⁵⁴¹ and American papers cheered

⁵⁴⁰ *Massachusetts Centinel*, June 12, 1784; *Salem Gazette*, June 15, 1784; *Connecticut Courant*, June 22, 1784; *Massachusetts Gazette*, June 22, 1784; *Connecticut Gazette*, June 25, 1784; *Pennsylvania Packet*, June 29, 1784; *New-Haven Gazette*, July 1, 1784; *Maryland Journal*, July 2, 1784; *Vermont Gazette*, July 5, 1784; *The Freeman's Journal: or, The North-American Intelligencer*, July 7, 1784; *Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser*, July 8, 1784; *New-Jersey Gazette*, July 19, 1784.

⁵⁴¹ *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, October 29, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, October 31, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*,

what seemed an attempt by the Canadian North West Company to break the fur trading monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company.⁵⁴² Canadian production of staples such as wheat, however, were ridiculed, and the purportedly low production was often blamed on the supposed incompetence of the French Canadian settlers.⁵⁴³ When Canada was divided into Upper and Lower Canada in 1791, the American press was divided in their opinion, with some arguing that this was a tacit admission from Britain that they had erred in their handling of the rebellion and predicted this was a step toward autonomy for Canada,⁵⁴⁴ while others argued the British were simply trying to divide and conquer as they always had, with each group standing ready to put down rebellion in the other.⁵⁴⁵ As the Northwest Indian War, as American newspapers sometimes referred to it, raged on the American frontier and Canadian militias were discovered fighting alongside the British-supplied Western Confederacy, public opinion of Canada soured drastically, with negative opinion spiking throughout the conflict when Canadians would be found amongst Indigenous dead (Figure 6). By the time General Anthony Wayne broke the strength of the confederacy at Fallen Timbers in 1794, Canadians were once again widely reviled. As open talk of war between the United States and Great Britain began to pervade the press, many newspapers began to advocate loudly for a war of retribution against Canada.⁵⁴⁶ The slide in American opinion that had begun after the failed invasion of Canada during the Revolutionary War continued in the decade following the conflict,

November 8, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, November 17, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, November 20, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, November 25, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, November 28, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, December 3, 1794.

⁵⁴² *National Gazette*, December 8, 1791; *Connecticut Courant*, December 19, 1791; *New-Jersey Journal*, December 28, 1791; *Daily Advertiser*, January 26, 1792; *City Gazette*, February 7, 1792.

⁵⁴³ *New-Haven Gazette*, September 9, 1784.

⁵⁴⁴ *General Advertiser*, May 18, 1791; *Western Star*, May 24, 1791; *City Gazette*, June 17, 1791.

⁵⁴⁵ *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, July 8, 1791; *Independent Gazetteer*, July 9, 1791; *New-York Daily Gazette*, July 12, 1791; *New-York Daily Gazette*, July 12, 1791; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, July 13, 1791; *New-York Packet*, July 14, 1791.

⁵⁴⁶ *Connecticut Gazette*, August 28, 1794; *Philadelphia Gazette*, September 3, 1794; *General Advertiser*, September 4, 1794; *Guardian of Freedom*, September 4, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, September 6, 1794.

and by the time of Wayne's victory, Canadians were again portrayed in the press as the antithesis of what it meant to be American.

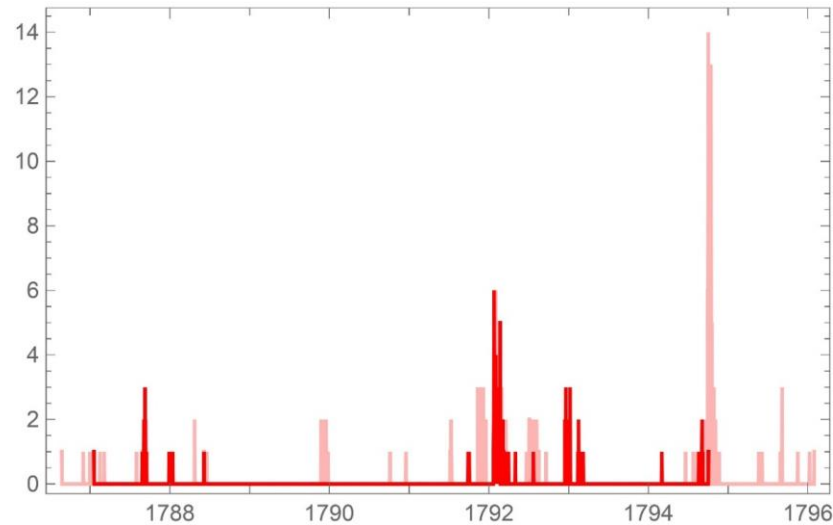


Figure 6: “Chart of Negative Portrayals of Canadians in the American Press, 1786-1795 (explicitly negative portrayals (red) superimposed over implicitly negative portrayals (light red)).” Image. 2022. Created using Wolfram Research, Inc., Mathematica, Version 12.1, Champaign, IL, (2019).

Such opinion did not appear in a vacuum, but rather was often built on portrayals of French Canadians produced by the British and by Anglo American merchants and farmers (and eventually American Loyalists) in early nineteenth century Canada. To these English and English American observers, Quebec itself held significant potential, but it was potential that was being squandered by the French Canadian inhabitants themselves. One such report came from a judge in Quebec, likely Isaac Ogden, a Loyalist who had gone to England following the war before settling in Quebec.⁵⁴⁷ In 1787, the *Massachusetts Centinel* printed an article titled “A brief state of the Province of Quebec, as to its constitution, number of inhabitants, laws, commerce, circulating property, tenure of real property, science, &c. drawn up by Mr. Ogden of the city of Quebec, for the

⁵⁴⁷ William Ogden Wheeler, *The Ogden Family in America*, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1907, 66-103.

information of Prince William Henry.”⁵⁴⁸ Like its title, the account was comprehensive and it closely reflected the opinion of Canada that appeared throughout the popular American press. Ogden made several contentions regarding the Canadian people themselves. He informed the prince, “The inhabitants were numbered by order of General Haldimand in 1783, when they amounted to about one hundred and thirteen thousand English and French, exclusive of the loyalists, who have lately settled in the upper parts of the province, to the number of ten thousand,”⁵⁴⁹ further surmising that “These are daily increasing; and vast numbers of loyalists from the different American States, to the number of fifteen thousand, have petitioned for lands and liberty to remove into the province, to settle and become British subjects.” The region that Ogden portrayed was ripe with potential, particularly given the perceived superiority of the American identity. He continued, “If these are admitted, large numbers of other loyalists from the States will follow them; and it will be in the power of government to settle the greatest part of the vacant lands in the lower parts of the province in a very short space of time.”⁵⁵⁰

Increasing the number of British and American settlers in Canada was necessary to Ogden, as he felt that generations of French rule had stunted French Canadians. He wrote that because of “[feudal] tenures the inhabitants are held in a state of vassalage, which, as in all other countries where lands are held under similar tenures, has impeded agriculture and improvements, and has had a tendency, added to the religion of the country, to keep the people in a state of dependence and wretched ignorance.”⁵⁵¹ This was an opinion shared by most of the American press. Canadians had for a very long time been portrayed as peasants, and while these depictions had largely disappeared during the Revolution, they resurged in the postwar era. This stood in stark contrast to Americans, for whom private land ownership was of tantamount importance. Ogden further asserted, “Science in the province among the Canadians, is at its lowest ebb. Excepting the clergy and a few

⁵⁴⁸ *Massachusetts Centinel*, December 29, 1787; *New-York Morning Post*, January 8, 1788; *Pennsylvania Packet*, January 15, 1788; *General Advertiser*, September 29, 1791; *Daily Advertiser*, October 3, 1791; *Herald of Vermont*, July 23, 1792.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Canadian gentlemen, there are no persons who have any pretensions to it. Out of the towns of Quebec and Montreal, there are not, upon an average, three men in a parish who can read and write.”⁵⁵² This again stood in stark contrast to Americans, for whom literacy was foundational. And like many Americans, Ogden placed the blame for this shameful illiteracy at the feet of the Catholic church. He opined that “This extreme ignorance is to be attributed to many causes,” writing, “It has always been the policy of the clergy to confine knowledge and information within the walls of the church: Hence they preserve their dominion over the peasantry. The only schools in the province are in the cities of Quebec, Montreal, and Three Rivers, and in the hands of the church: Of consequence, the clergy have the power of dispensing knowledge to whom they please.”⁵⁵³ Ogden’s answer was to anglify the Canadians and he contended that “Nothing will have a greater tendency to anglify them, than illuminating their understandings, when they will discern the advantages resulting from the mildness of a British government.”⁵⁵⁴ By Ogden’s account, Canadians were not incapable of meeting British and American cultural standards; they had simply been prevented from improving by the Catholic clergy. Surrounded by Britons and Americans, Ogden felt the Canadians could be civilized. This was a view that was not always shared by contemporary American newspapers.

In 1788, the *Massachusetts Centinel* reprinted a 1759 letter by General Wolfe, which read of Canadians, “they are a disjointed, discontented, dispirited peasantry, beat into cowardice by Cadet, Bigot, Moncalm [sic], and the savages.”⁵⁵⁵ More than thirty years later, that opinion re-emerged and once again pervaded the American press. In 1792, the *Federal Gazette* printed a letter from an Anglo American in Canada which informed its recipient, “I send you a few of our city Gazettes – you will find little worth notice in them, this being the most recluse corner of all America for intelligence, at least during two thirds of the year; and besides, the abject ignorance and moral servitude of the

⁵⁵² *Massachusetts Centinel*, December 29, 1787; *New-York Morning Post*, January 8, 1788; *Pennsylvania Packet*, January 15, 1788; *General Advertiser*, September 29, 1791; *Daily Advertiser*, October 3, 1791; *Herald of Vermont*, July 23, 1792.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁵ *Massachusetts Centinel*, June 7, 1788; *New-Haven Gazette*, and *Connecticut Magazine*, June 19, 1788.

majority of the inhabitants (Canadians) afford little room or badly recompence any efforts to render newspapers useful or interesting.”⁵⁵⁶ The American letter writer was unimpressed with the intellectual climate they found in Canada, and was particularly appalled by the relative lack of a flourishing press. Since support for the free press had become an essential part of the American identity through the years of Revolution, Canada’s press became a key marker that Americans used to test the capacity of the people as a whole. The letter writer continued that “of upwards of fifty thousand families, in lower Canada, not five hundred read public newspapers, or in fact read any thing at all. It is thus education, that first and greatest interest of society is neglected in this moral antipode of the United States, and you know it is impossible that printing should flourish, where education is so neglected.”⁵⁵⁷ In this account, Canada was the polar opposite of the United States, the “moral antipode” of the identity that was foundational to the American nation. This seeming aversion to reading was very different from the ways that American newspapers portrayed the American identity. For Americans, reading and writing were foundational. As reading the scriptures in their own language was fundamental to Protestant Americans, reading was a paramount importance to the Protestant American identity. In addition to its spiritual value, reading and writing were considered essential to being a responsible citizen for both American men and women, with reading in particular being viewed as a safeguard against the return of tyranny. It was understandable to many Americans, then, that Canada, which had a pitifully small reading public, should also be largely duped by the tyrannical British. Learning to read was a responsibility for Americans, and the American letter writer lamented that it seemed as though it was not for the Canadians. Many American papers commented on the lack of motivation shown by the Canadians in regard to their education. As far as many Americans newspapers

⁵⁵⁶ *Federal Gazette*, December 15, 1792; *Gazette of the United States*, December 15, 1792; *The Mail; or, Claypoole's Daily Advertiser*, December 17, 1792; *New Jersey State Gazette*, December 19, 1792; *The New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register*, December 22, 1792; *Potomak Guardian and Berkeley Advertiser*, December 24, 1792; *Connecticut Journal*, December 26, 1792; *Litchfield Monitor*, December 26, 1792; *Connecticut Gazette*, December 27, 1792; *Weekly Register*, January 1, 1793; *Western Star*, January 1, 1793; *Mirror*, January 7, 1793; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, January 7, 1793; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, January 7, 1793.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

were concerned, Canadians were not merely uneducated, but inherently lazy and unintelligent.

Canadian skill at agriculture was often pointed to as evidence of this inherent laziness and lack of motivation. Where Americans prided themselves on their abilities as planters and farmers, Canadians seemingly could not care less. Refuting a plan presented by the British Lord Sheffield to make Canada the sole provider of wheat to the West Indies,⁵⁵⁸ a contributor to the *New-Haven Gazette* contended, “the French Canadians, in number about one hundred thousand souls, have not yet exhibited any signs of spirit or vigorous industry, beyond what is necessary for the sustenance of life.”⁵⁵⁹ Canadians were portrayed as inherently lazy, and as such of little advantage to the empire. The contributor continued, “the state of the population precludes all hope of a speedy increase of supplies. Not more than two or three British families have purchased lands for cultivation, since the province was first ceded to us by France: The few loyalists who have lately gone thither are chiefly trading people.”⁵⁶⁰ Of Canadian wheat they wrote, “The quality is far inferior to the wheat of either Great-Britain or the middle colonies of America, and upon competition sells accordingly.”⁵⁶¹ As Britain openly pondered using bounties to establish Canada as the sole supplier of wheat to the Indies, the American press ridiculed Canadian wheat production and portrayed Canadians themselves as inefficient and lazy. Such accounts did not particularly care to mention the shorter growing season and poor soil conditions on or near the Canadian Shield as their point was not really to compare the region’s wheat production, but to emphasize American capability in contrast to Canadian ineptitude. Though there had been a short time when depictions of Canadians turned positive, very quickly, the American press reverted to using Canadians as a foil, an exemplar of the flaws that Americans did not possess. For many papers, gone were the days when they carefully avoided causing offence to their

⁵⁵⁸ *Independent Journal*, October 9, 1784.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁰ *New-Haven Gazette*, September 9, 1784.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Canadian neighbours. Instead, many papers now actively attacked Canadians, often deflecting accusations from Europe that they were equally rough and rude.

Though portrayals of Canadians slowly returned to the old stereotypes that had been engrained during the French and Indian War, some American papers continued to argue that Canadians could improve and were improving. Like Ogden, many American papers felt that the influence of Anglo Americans would further enlighten the minds and improve the culture of Canada's French Canadians. Interestingly, the fact that those Anglo Americans were Loyalists did not seem to matter all that much to America's newspaper editors. The *Freeman's Journal: or, The North-American Intelligencer* informed readers in 1784 that Canada was "improving by the additional number of good farmers, drove from this country to settle there, for the Canadians are (like the French) very bad farmers, tho' much better since the war, being instructed by officers and soldiers of the different corps of loyalists."⁵⁶² The Loyalists were a group who had just fought a civil war with the United States, and yet one year following the end of that war, American newspapers were praising the positive affect that those Loyalists were having on the French population of Canada. To such newspapers, the American identity was so vastly superior that even traitors like the American Loyalists retained a character that was inherently better than the French Canadians. This was an opportunity to both define the American character against the French Canadian character, and also to define the American character by comparing it to the favourable parts that still remained in the Loyalist character. As far as American newspapers were concerned, the Loyalists were having some positive influence on French Canada. The *Freeman's Journal, Hough's Concord Herald* argued in 1793 that "several loyalists, from different parts of America, had settled in Canada to great advantage. Canada is a pleasant, flat country, and very fertile. English farmers find there great advantages; their butter and cheese in particular bring an higher price than that of the Canadians."⁵⁶³ Again, there seemed to be little resentment in the account from the *Herald*. Loyalists were praised for the positive

⁵⁶² *Freeman's Journal: or, The North-American Intelligencer*, March 24, 1784.

⁵⁶³ *Hough's Concord Herald*, September 12, 1793; *Hough's Concord Herald*, September 19, 1793; *Hough's Concord Herald*, September 26, 1793; *Hough's Concord Herald*, October 3, 1793; *Hough's Concord Herald*, October 10, 1793.

influence they were having on the French. In this way, the American identity was reinforced as superior, evidenced by the fact that even those that had betrayed their fellow Americans still retained enough of the inherently superior character that animated Americans that they were able to spread those character traits to a group that had been historically lacking in such virtues. French Canadians continued to serve as a foil against which to define American identity, while English Canadians became a mirror which seemed to reflect the superior aspects of that identity, and also a poignant foil for negative qualities. While dismissive portrayals of Canadian ignorance and ineptitude quickly pervaded the press in the years following the Revolution depictions of the land itself trended positive, and both Canadians and Americans looked to it with high hopes, particularly in terms of its capacity to produce fur.

To many, it seemed that Canada was uniquely positioned to supply the world with furs. Ogden surmised that the Canadian “fur trade of the interior country must be enjoyed without a rival. The easy mode of conveying goods by water, for the supply of the Indians, must enable the merchants of Canada to under sell the adventurers from the United States.”⁵⁶⁴ American newspapers contended, however, that this was only part of the story, and accused the British of refusing to give up the frontier forts so that they could continue to interfere in American attempts at entering the trade. Many historians have agreed with this point, arguing that the continued presence of British troops in the frontier forts contributed significantly to hostile Anglo-American relations. The British were indeed holding on to the frontier forts, both as a means of keeping the Americans in check by holding troops on their frontiers and as a means of maintaining as much control as possible over the fur trade. The trade was a very valuable, and the United States felt entitled to it. In 1786, the *Independent Gazetteer* printed a letter from Britain which asserted, “The Americans pretend that the Forts on their back Settlements were by the late Treaty to be given up, and though they are insignificant Places of themselves, yet from their Situation they consider them of great Importance” because “they prevent their

⁵⁶⁴ *Massachusetts Centinel*, December 29, 1787; *New-York Morning Post*, January 8, 1788; *Pennsylvania Packet*, January 15, 1788; *General Advertiser*, September 29, 1791; *Daily Advertiser*, October 3, 1791; *Herald of Vermont*, July 23, 1792.

having free Communication with the Indians, who are now persuaded to carry their Furs, &c. to the Canadian Market to the great Prejudice of the United States.”⁵⁶⁵ Americans agreed with the British letter writer that this was why Britain was maintaining possession of the forts, but stridently questioned the legitimacy of these actions. Most American newspapers echoed the government in urging the British to give up the forts. In 1784, the *American Mercury* reported that “Congress have sent a formal deputation to demand of Gov. Haldermand [sic] the surrendery of the frontier posts agreeably to the treaty.”⁵⁶⁶ Despite that formal deputation, little to nothing changed with regard to the frontier forts, to the point that many American newspapers pressed for a military intervention.

To many papers, it seemed the only way that the United States would have the British out of the frontier forts was to go and forcibly remove them. Two years after the deputation to Haldimand, the *Maryland Journal* reported that “Congress have ordered a large military force to march into the back settlements towards the Seneca and Oneida nations, in order to settle and affix the boundaries of the Fur Trade, which they say have been encroached upon by the Canadians.”⁵⁶⁷ The issue of British forts in the west was one which would remain a thorn in the American side until the War of 1812. Caught up in the American resentment were the Canadians, who were instrumental to the continuing prosperity of the fur trade in the west. As American opinion of Canadians began to slip in the years following the Revolution, the continued participation of Canadians in the British western fur trade added fuel to the fire. It was also another example of Canadians being a bit too chummy with Indigenous communities for American taste. As had been the case at mid century, accusations that the Canadians had undue influence with Indigenous nations and were using that influence to unleash death on the American frontiers once again exploded through the press. In 1787, the *Maryland Journal* informed

⁵⁶⁵ *Independent Gazetteer*, September 2, 1786; *New-York Morning Post*, September 7, 1786; *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, September 9, 1786; *New-Jersey Gazette*, September 11, 1786; *The Freeman's Journal: or, The North-American Intelligencer*, September 13, 1786; *Carlisle Gazette*, September 27, 1786; *Norwich Packet*, September 28, 1786; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, September 30, 1786; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 6, 1786.

⁵⁶⁶ *American Mercury*, July 19, 1784; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, August 18, 1784; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 28, 1784; *Salem Gazette*, August 31, 1784; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy: Or, Worcester Gazette*, September 2, 1784.

⁵⁶⁷ *Maryland Journal*, August 25, 1786.

readers, “We are at last fortunate enough to destroy that nest of pirates, posted at Muscle-Shoals, and who have been the cause of so much calamity to this settlement for more than two years past,” continuing, “We now find that the whites were a motely crew of Spaniards, Canadians, and Tories, who without authority came within the limits of the United States, on a pretence to trade with the Indians, and under colour of which excited the unfriendly part of the Cherokees and Creek to murder and plunder our defenceless inhabitants and traveling to this country and Kentuckey [sic].”⁵⁶⁸ Once again, Canadians were the evil paymasters, driving Indigenous nations to frontier violence. Many papers contended that continued conflict between Indigenous peoples and the United States served Canadian interests well. The *American Mercury* argued that “The inhabitants of Canada, depend on the Indian trade for their support – It is their interest to keep up broils between us and the savages; in order to prevent an intercourse, for fear we should share some part of their trade.”⁵⁶⁹ The *Mercury* contended, “the inhabitants of Canada, wish to magnify the difficulty of subduing them; and would gladly have us cede away all the lands north and west of the Ohio; and perhaps to have our people retreat to this side of the Aligahana [sic] Mountains.”⁵⁷⁰ As they had in 1750, American newspapers accused the Canadians of stoking discontent amongst Indigenous nations for their own benefit, contributing greatly to continued slide in American public opinion of their northern neighbours. Once again, the seeming Canadian tendency to ally with Indigenous nations meant they were political and racial outsiders. Such connections ran incredibly deep and ideas that the Canadians and Indigenous nations were close allies significantly persisted

⁵⁶⁸ *Maryland Journal*, August 28, 1787; *Pennsylvania Packet*, August 30, 1787; *Pennsylvania Mercury*, and *Universal Advertiser*, August 31, 1787; *Delaware Courant*, September 1, 1787; *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, September 1, 1787; *Independent Gazetteer*, September 3, 1787; *New-York Packet*, September 4, 1787; *Connecticut Journal*, September 5, 1787; *Fairfield Gazette*, September 5, 1787; *New-Jersey Journal*, September 5, 1787; *New-Hampshire Spy*, September 8, 1787; *Boston Gazette*, September 10, 1787; *American Herald*, September 10, 1787; *American Mercury*, September 10, 1787; *Litchfield Monitor*, September 10, 1787; *Middlesex Gazette*, September 10, 1787; *Massachusetts Gazette*, September 11, 1787; *Salem Mercury*, September 11, 1787; *Country Journal*, September 12, 1787; *Massachusetts Spy*, September 13, 1787; *Newport Herald*, September 13, 1787; *Columbian Herald*, September 17, 1787; *Newport Mercury*, September 17, 1787; *Cumberland Gazette*, September 20, 1787; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, October 1, 1787.

⁵⁶⁹ *American Mercury*, February 27, 1792; *Windham Herald*, March 10, 1792; *Boston Gazette*, March 19, 1792.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

in the American press. For expediency's sake, American newspapers turned their portrayals away from ideas about Canadian racial inferiority during the Revolution, but the turn would prove remarkably short-lived. In the postwar era, American newspaper editors largely returned to ideas of the Canadians as racialized others, happily cavorting with Indigenous peoples, having long abandoned their European civility.

Despite economic tensions and the re-emergence of several tropes regarding Canadians, the slide in American public opinion of Canada was a long process, and the idea that Canadians had supported the American cause in 1776 often died hard. In the years immediately following the war, many newspapers continued to emphasize a perceived Canadian instinct toward republicanism. In November of 1784, the *Independent Journal* reported on a "Petition from the inhabitants of the Province of Quebec, which was presented to the British House of Commons by Mr. Powis, before the prorogation of Parliament, [containing] the three following requests."⁵⁷¹ The first request was "that the Quebec Act passed in the year 1774, immediately before the late American war (of which it was, conjointly with the Act for altering the Charter of the Massachusets-Bay, a principal cause) may be immediately and totally repealed."⁵⁷² This request echoed the demands for repeal that had preceded the American Revolution, and would easily have been read by contemporary Americans as evidence that the work that they had begun in Canada during the Revolution was continuing apace in the province. The second request was "that the Province may be governed for the future by an Assembly of the Freeholders thereof."⁵⁷³ This was a common request of English Canadians, the loudest voice for an assembly in Canada as they believed that it would be a body which they themselves would control. The third request was "that certain improvements (which are specified in the Petition, and are thirteen in number) may be made in the Government of the Province over and above the repeal of the Quebec Act,

⁵⁷¹ *Independent Journal*, November 27, 1784; *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 3, 1784; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, December 4, 1784; *American Herald*, December 20, 1784; *New-Jersey Gazette*, January 10, 1785.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*

and the establishment of a House of Assembly.”⁵⁷⁴ Not only had the petition been made by Canadians, but by the paper’s account, it had also garnered a relatively significant amount of support from the Canadian populace. The *Journal* surmised, “This petition is signed by about two hundred and thirty persons, mostly of the British inhabitants of the province, and is said to contain the sentiments of that whole body, who are now increasing to the number of six thousand.” By the *Journal*’s reckoning, the English Canadians were appearing very much like Americans in their behaviour. They were requesting the removal of the Quebec Act and the establishment of an assembly. Like Americans had before them, Canadians were now readying the soil to plant the same tree of liberty that the Americans had to the south. Once again, the American press portrayed English Canadians as having a positive impact on their French Canadian counterparts. The paper continued of the petition, “It is also signed by some few of the French, or Canadian inhabitants of the said province; and Mons. Adhemar, and Mons. de Lisle, two Canadian gentlemen of Montreal, who have been deputed by their countrymen to represent their sentiments to his Majesty’s Ministers.”⁵⁷⁵ This was seen as significant by the *Journal*. Adhemar and Lisle were relatively prominent citizens, having regular correspondence with the attorney general of Quebec.⁵⁷⁶ Because of the inclusion of prominent citizens such as these, the *Journal* concluded that “the above mentioned Petition may be justly considered as an expression of the general wishes of the inhabitants of the Province of Quebec, Canadians or French, as well as British, with respect to the regulation of their government.”⁵⁷⁷ It was, of course, presumptuous to assume that a few prominent French Canadian citizens spoke for all of French Canada, but their inclusion alongside what was portrayed as all of English Canada went a long way. It demonstrated to American readers that the prominent French Canadians were

⁵⁷⁴ *Independent Journal*, November 27, 1784; *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 3, 1784; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, December 4, 1784; *American Herald*, December 20, 1784; *New-Jersey Gazette*, January 10, 1785.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁶ Francis Maseres, “Questions submitted and proposed to Messrs Powell, Adhemar and de Lisle by the Baron Maseres with the answers of these Messrs, given in their meeting on March 13, 1784,” March 13, 1784. In Pierre du Calvet’s *Appel à la justice de l’État*.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

coming around. Soon, the American influence would also trickle down to the lower classes, who would similarly adopt American character traits. Many American newspaper portrayed this as a process that was well under way. In January of that year, the *New-York Daily Gazette* contended that “The form of Canadian government was rendered arbitrary at the cession of the province to England, on the principle of its being best suited to the genius and wishes of the French; they have, however, since earnestly petitioned for its being altered congenial to the spirit of the British constitution, but as yet to no purpose.”⁵⁷⁸ As far as the *Gazette* was concerned, there was evidence that the mass of the French Canadian populace was in support of adopting a British form of government. While this was a form of government that the Americans had thrown off, it was also one that was familiar to them and one that could be seen as a stepping stone to true American liberty. Now that the French Canadians had seemingly advanced culturally to the point that they wanted to partake of that free government, however, the British seemed to be delaying. As far as many newspapers were concerned, this delay was likely to spur a rebellion, and as they had done during the Revolution, many papers began to argue that Canada was the fourteenth state in waiting. All it would take was one more minor rebellion.

The idea that Canadians looked on Americans as fellows who they yearned to join took some time to fade, and never truly disappeared. In June of 1784, the *Massachusetts Centinel* informed readers that “the Canadians behold our present growing importance, in the scale of empires, with a longing eye.”⁵⁷⁹ It was a sentiment that had appeared and reappeared throughout the Revolution, and the *Centinel* argued that similar conditions were brewing in Canada as had ignited the Revolution. The paper continued, “Oppressed with the weight of tyrannick jurisprudence – connected to the inhabitants of the United States by vicinity – and prompted by the part the illustrious monarch of their mother

⁵⁷⁸ *New-York Daily Gazette*, January 7, 1790; *Pennsylvania Packet*, January 12, 1790.

⁵⁷⁹ *Massachusetts Centinel*, June 12, 1784; *Salem Gazette*, June 15, 1784; *Connecticut Courant*, June 22, 1784; *Massachusetts Gazette*, June 22, 1784; *Connecticut Gazette*, June 25, 1784; *Pennsylvania Packet*, June 29, 1784; *New-Haven Gazette*, July 1, 1784; *Maryland Journal*, July 2, 1784; *Vermont Gazette*, July 5, 1784; *The Freeman's Journal: or, The North-American Intelligencer*, July 7, 1784; *Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser*, July 8, 1784; *New-Jersey Gazette*, July 19, 1784.

country, and his subjects, have taken, they most seriously meditate a revolt from their present usurped masters, and seem determined to add another Star in the American constellation.”⁵⁸⁰ Though Congress would likely have been loathe to support a Canadian rebellion and spark another conflict with Britain in the immediate aftermath of the Revolutionary War (particularly while they were investing so much effort into warring with the Northwestern Confederacy), American newspapers repeatedly bandied the idea about. Two months earlier, the *Maryland Journal* had reported that the British troops stationed in Canada “are in a very delicate situation, about two thirds of their non-commissioned officers and private men being entitled to their discharge, which nevertheless cannot be granted them without imminent danger to the province (the Canadians being exceedingly disaffected).”⁵⁸¹ This supposed disaffection was relayed throughout the American press. In July of that year, the *American Mercury* contended that “a general disaffection prevails among the people of Canada to the British Government, and especially to the administration of General Haldermand [sic].”⁵⁸² Governor of Quebec from 1778 to 1786, Sir Frederick Haldimand was portrayed in the American press as harsh, tyrannical, and universally hated. He was in many ways a personification of the negative opinions Americans had concerning the British crown, and American newspapers argued that his autocracy was producing extreme discontent amongst the Canadians. That same month, the *New-York Journal and Patriotic Register* reprinted a letter from Canada which read of the province, “Business is dead. Bankrupts daily croud [sic] the Gazette, and what will become of us here, we know not, the General says as ‘he hopes to be da----n’d (a common phrase with him) he will make all Canada

⁵⁸⁰ *Massachusetts Centinel*, June 12, 1784; *Salem Gazette*, June 15, 1784; *Connecticut Courant*, June 22, 1784; *Massachusetts Gazette*, June 22, 1784; *Connecticut Gazette*, June 25, 1784; *Pennsylvania Packet*, June 29, 1784; *New-Haven Gazette*, July 1, 1784; *Maryland Journal*, July 2, 1784; *Vermont Gazette*, July 5, 1784; *The Freeman's Journal: or, The North-American Intelligencer*, July 7, 1784; *Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser*, July 8, 1784; *New-Jersey Gazette*, July 19, 1784.

⁵⁸¹ *Maryland Journal*, April 2, 1784; *Pennsylvania Packet*, April 8, 1784; *New-Jersey Gazette*, April 13, 1784; *New-York Journal and Patriotic Register*, April 15, 1784; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, April 21, 1784; *Independent Gazetteer*, April 24, 1784; *The Freeman's Journal: or, The North-American Intelligencer*, April 28, 1784.

⁵⁸² *American Mercury*, July 19, 1784; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, August 18, 1784; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 28, 1784; *Salem Gazette*, August 31, 1784; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy: Or, Worcester Gazette*, September 2, 1784.

tremble at him.”⁵⁸³ Letters like this gave American newspapers evidence that the mood in Canada was hostile and gave them hope that their union would soon expand by one. Many papers continued to hope that Canadians would yet embrace American conceptions of freedom and liberty.

This expansion was about more than simply the Canadians. Contemporary Americans were very concerned about the continued presence of Britain on the continent. The American republic was new and fragile, and it seemed a real possibility that the British empire might soon recapture its recalcitrant colonies. At the same time, there were growing imperial ambitions within the United States, and to such American imperialists Canada was a region that needed to be brought into the newly forming American empire. Many American newspapers hoped that it would be a task that Canadians would undertake themselves, though there remained some consternation over whether or not Canadians, with all their character faults, would be able to actually bring such a goal to fruition. Despite the encouraging signs American newspapers perceived amongst the Canadian populace, the American press was far from universal in its opinion of Canadians. The letter from the *New-York Journal* concluded “Every Canadian languishes to be out of the English government; but their pusillanimity makes them Spaniel like, kiss the rod that scourges them.”⁵⁸⁴ This was a portrayal which found its antecedents in the French and Indian War or before. Anglo-American accusations that Canadians were timid slaves to arbitrary power reappeared, with the arbitrary power of the Catholic Church replaced with the arbitrary power of the British crown. However much they might want to join with the United States, the *Journal* argued that the Canadians were too cowardly to reach out and take it. This was yet another characteristic that marked Canadians as

⁵⁸³ *New-York Journal and Patriotic Register*, July 1, 1784; *Political Intelligencer*, July 6, 1784; *Connecticut Journal*, July 7, 1784; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, July 7, 1784; *The Freeman's Journal: or, The North-American Intelligencer*, July 7, 1784; *Freeman's Chronicle*, July 8, 1784; *Connecticut Gazette*, July 9, 1784; *Maryland Journal*, July 9, 1784; *Independent Gazetteer*, July 10, 1784; *Providence Gazette*, July 10, 1784; *Independent Ledger*, July 12, 1784; *Vermont Gazette*, July 12, 1784; *Salem Gazette*, July 13, 1784; *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, July 15, 1784; *United States Chronicle*, July 15, 1784; *Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser*, July 15, 1784; *Essex Journal*, July 16, 1784; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, July 17, 1784; *Newport Mercury*, July 17, 1784; *South-Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, July 29, 1784.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

different from the Americans. Americans had bravely thrown off tyranny, while Canadians were still cowering like the submissive spaniel. As had been the case during the Revolution, many American papers questioned whether Canadians truly possessed the stomach for revolution, and whether they even deserved to take a place in the American union.

Interestingly, the passing of the Canada Act of 1791, which granted the requests mentioned in the Canadian petition, did little to change their minds about Canadian desires for rebellion. According to the *New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register*, the Act included “the division of the province into Upper and Lower Canada,” the purpose of which was “to draw a line between the ancient Canadians and the modern settlers, and by assigning to each a distinct province, to do away those competitions which had hitherto distracted this settlement,” as well as the granting to each of “a local jurisdiction, and bringing this closely as possible to the model of the British constitution, to make it consist of a Governor, a Council, and a House of Assembly.”⁵⁸⁵ Furthermore, the *Journal* surmised that on “The great question of taxation by the British Parliament which had excited so much discontent in other colonies, it was proposed to give up in this instance, and to declare that no tax could be imposed by Parliament but for the purpose of commercial regulation, and the amount of those taxes to be applied to local uses by the assemblies of those provinces respectively.”⁵⁸⁶ Though American newspapers continued to argue that Canadians were fed up with their government, with the passing of the Canada Act, they lost one of their primary pieces of evidence as to why the Canadians were oppressed. Perhaps some printers were a bit jealous that, for nothing, Canada had received a deal for which the United States had fought and bled. The paper concluded that “The petitions from the provinces claimed little more than what was here granted, excepting only an extension of the habeas corpus act, of which they were now in possession, by a temporary ordinance of the executive government of this country.”⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁵ *The New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register*, April 27, 1791; *Columbian Centinel*, May 4, 1791; *New-York Daily Gazette*, May 21, 1791; *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, May 23, 1791; *The Freeman's Journal; or, The North-American Intelligencer*, May 25, 1791; *City Gazette*, June 10, 1791.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

While many papers continued to argue that the Canadians were angry, some predicted that this new constitution would forever bind Canada to the British empire. Memory of the Quebec Act, legislation that American newspapers had at the time argued was alienating the Canadians, but that turned out to be a key aspect of maintaining Canadian loyalty, was still fresh, and some papers believed the Canada Act could easily be similarly influencing the Canadian populace. The *New-York Daily Gazette* surmised that “The organization of a new form of Government for the extensive region of Canada, upon a broad base of liberty, will so far conciliate the affections of the people as to prevent emigrations to the other American States,” because “if denied the blessings of a free constitution, the liberal-minded among them would necessarily seek that blessing in the neighbouring republics, which they could not obtain in their native province.”⁵⁸⁸ The *Gazette* determined, however, that Canada was not denied that blessing. In fact, Canadians themselves seemed quite happy with the Act. The *Gazette of the United States* published a letter from Canada in February of 1792 which read, “How flattering to Canadians of all ranks, that this corner of the empire becomes the first of any of its remote appendages, upon that envied foundation!”⁵⁸⁹ The letter continued:

the general gratitude of the country, for so honorable a pre-eminence over the rest of the provinces; (I trust) it will be most sensibly felt by the devout Canadian, whose recollection of the hard condition of these neglected branches of the dominion of France will admire and adore, that mysterious providence, by which the separation of Canada from that kingdom, became the way of her escape, from the miseries to which France (as we can now see) was then destined, and that the conquest so much dreaded here from the long continued enmity of the rival provinces in her vicinity, by drawing this country into connection with a brave and generous nation, which has been the means of accelerating the advancement of the Canadian French to that degree of felicity and security, which neither the provinces lately British, nor the European French, who put every thing at risk for it, as yet have acquired, and which England free as her spirit is, never gave to the colonies planted by her own hand.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁸ *New-York Daily Gazette*, April 7, 1791; *Independent Gazetteer*, April 16, 1791; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy: Or, The Worcester Gazette*, April 21, 1791.

⁵⁸⁹ *Gazette of the United States*, February 1, 1792; *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, February 2, 1792; *General Advertiser*, February 2, 1792; *The Mail*; or, *Claypoole's Daily Advertiser*, February 2, 1792; *Litchfield Monitor*, February 22, 1792; *Morning Ray, or, Impartial Oracle*, March 6, 1792.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

By the *Gazette*'s reckoning, any improvements that had happened in Canada were the doing of the United States. Reminiscent of the Revolution, the account argued that "devout Canadians" were yearning to draw together with "a brave and generous nation," a nation which the paper credited with bettering the Canadians to a significant degree. Again, the American identity was portrayed as one which could benefit those who sought to emulate it. In the minds of American readers, this reinforced the idea that the American identity was superior and expanding as that identity was even improving its neighbours. There was a sense that Canadians were yet in the process of removing their final coats. The *Gazette* believed that Canadians still sought to be Americans, and as such, it portrayed the Canada Act as nothing but smoke and mirrors. Despite such seeming evidence of Canadian satisfaction, in the following years many American newspapers began to argue that the Act was just another way that a corrupt British government could pull the wool over the eyes of the ignorant Canadians.

Not all papers portrayed the Canada Act as evidence of British corruption, however. In May of 1791, the *General Advertiser* reported that "The sentiments held forth in the speech of England's prime Minister on the organizing the Canadian Government, were such as the world did not expect."⁵⁹¹ The *Advertiser* continued, "Fifteen or twenty years ago this was the language of Great Britain, "We have an undoubted right to tax the Rebels in America – let us treat their remonstrances with contumely – and levy the subsidies with fire and sword!," concluding "But now they entertain (and it was dire experience, the dismemberment of their Empire, taught the lesson,) sentiments so different that it can scarcely be reconciled, they should proceed from the Mouth Piece of the same people."⁵⁹² Again, it is possible that jealousy of the ease by which Canada was given their constitution influenced the portrayals of the Act. Of course, the ultimate conclusion was that the granting of rights, for which Americans had fought and died, to the Canadians without the spilling of a drop of blood would unite the Canadians to the government more firmly than ever before. The *Federal Gazette*

⁵⁹¹ *General Advertiser*, May 18, 1791; *Western Star*, May 24, 1791; *City Gazette*, June 17, 1791.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*

concluded in August of 1792 that “This province is now entirely Englified, and if the English can succeed to englify the Canadians, the country in a few years, will have no appearance of having been formerly a French colony.”⁵⁹³ While this anglicization was something that many American newspapers had praised as bringing the French Canadians up to a level of civility that they had never reached before, it didn’t necessarily bode well for their hopes that Canada would one day join the American union. As far as the *Federal Gazette* was concerned, the Canada Act had put the final nail in the coffin of ideas that Canada was the fourteenth state in waiting. Despite their experience with the Quebec Act, however, the majority of the American press disagreed.

Most American newspapers in fact portrayed the Act as very similar to the Quebec Act it replaced. *Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser* read, “One would think that the pithy lesson, which this country so lately gave to the British King and Ministry, ought to have made them cautious in the exertion of assumed power over distant colonies.” To *Dunlap’s*, the Canada Act was just one more in a long line of oppressive British acts. The paper continued, “The lesson, no doubt, was a good one: but some unlucky hand tore the leaf out of the book, and inserted, in its stead, some of Mr. Burke’s high-flown ideas of rights of conquest, prescriptive right, &c.”⁵⁹⁴ By the paper’s account, the lesson that the Americans had taught so well in the Revolution had been forgotten by the British empire. It was a forgetting which the paper predicted would have significant consequences. *Dunlap’s* concluded, “These doctrines, being more soothing to the ear of Royalty, were soon got by heart, and have lately been published by authority, with notes and illustrations, under the title of the Canada-Bill – a Bill, which will probably draw after it a long train of serious consequences.”⁵⁹⁵ As other oppressive acts had before it, *Dunlap’s* argued that the Canada Act would instill resentment in the Canadian populace. One month prior, the same paper had argued, “‘Divide and Conquer,’ is a favorite maxim with politicians. Impressed with this idea, the British government seem determined, that the

⁵⁹³ *Federal Gazette*, August 25, 1792; *The Mail; or, Claypoole’s Daily Advertiser*, August 27, 1792; *Baltimore Evening Post*, August 29, 1792; *Albany Gazette*, September 10, 1792.

⁵⁹⁴ *Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser*, August 23, 1791.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

people of Canada shall never shake off the yoke of the mother country, and join their brethren on this side of the St. Laurence, under the banners of freedom.”⁵⁹⁶ According to the paper, the goal of the British was to prevent a sense of national identity from developing in Canada, the same type of flourishing of national identity that had resulted in the American Revolution. And *Dunlap’s* surmised that the way the British intended to do that was by keeping the English Canadians and the French Canadians at each other’s throats. The paper continued, “By separating English from French, Protestants from Catholics, they intend to perpetuate a national, as well as a religious distinction. Thus, in case the flame of Liberty should blaze forth in either of the provinces, they will, in the other, easily find an engine at hand, to extinguish it.”⁵⁹⁷ American newspapers had argued in the days of the Quebec Act that Canada was to be used to hold the English colonies in vassalage. Many argued of the Canada Act that it was intended to produce similar checks against rebellion by creating two distinct and hostile internal groups, separated by ethnicity and religion, that could be used to put down rebellions in the other. American newspapers had not given up on the idea that a national identity was developing in Canada that was a close clone of its American counterpart. Despite Canadian praise of the Act, the American press largely treated the Canada Act as a bump in the road toward Canadian rebellion, a trick that would not hold its shine for long. American newspapers contended that in fact the Act was tyranny, and that before too long, the Canadians would recognize it and throw off the shackles of British allegiance.

The accusation that the Canada Act was an act of oppression resounded in American newspapers. In July 1791, the *Independent Chronicle* asserted, “It appears by some of the last British papers, that the Parliament of that nation, are going to favor their colonists in Canada, with a new government, formed, as they pretend, upon the model of their own --- in which, any regard to the ‘Rights of Man.’ is to have no part.”⁵⁹⁸ The paper made a clear distinction between the British form of government and the American,

⁵⁹⁶ *Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser*, July 8, 1791; *Independent Gazetteer*, July 9, 1791; *New-York Daily Gazette*, July 12, 1791; *New-York Daily Gazette*, July 12, 1791; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, July 13, 1791; *New-York Packet*, July 14, 1791.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁸ *Independent Chronicle*, July 21, 1791; *General Advertiser*, July 29, 1791.

and it was clear which of the two was determined the superior. As far as the newspaper was concerned, the Canadians could only find true liberty with America, for the Canada Act was a farce. The *Chronicle* continued, “This constitution for their subjects, not their fellow citizens, or fellow-men, in this western hemisphere, is the same time, to be called a free government, if that government can be considered free, which depends on the will of a foreign power, to be altered at its discretion, without any respect to the opinion of the individuals for whose use it is intended.”⁵⁹⁹ As historians like Joyce Appleby have argued, this was an era in American history when ideas of individuality became foundational aspects of the American identity. The paper argued that under the Canada Act there was no individuation, and it concluded that because of that, Canadians must be chafing at the bit. Inherent in that argument was the idea that the Canadians’ identity was alike enough to the Americans that they both sought the same type of government. And like their American counterparts, the paper argued that the Canadians would be willing to take their liberty by force. Like many other papers, the *Chronicle* concluded that “How long it will be before the Canadians will take, what the British Parliament have not the virtue to bestow, cannot be determined with absolute certainty,” yet surmised that “it may fairly be presumed, from the example of their neighbours, and the superior benefits we enjoy, to what we ever did under the British government, that the period of their final emancipation from a foreign yoke, will not be long distant.”⁶⁰⁰ Even in the 1790s, there were American newspapers that had not given up on using Canadians as a means of reflecting the American national identity back on itself. Canadians were portrayed as chafing under an oppressive Act, and it was assumed that they would seek their freedom through revolution. In watching Canada seemingly surge toward rebellion, America watched an apparent facsimile of its own emancipation. It was something that fixated the press. Three years after the account in the *Chronicle*, the *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser* declared to the American people, “Canada will also be your’s; and I doubt not but even Nova-Scotia and Newfoundland will shortly wish to shake off the yoke, and become American states. Numbers of the Canadians are French, and I am well informed that two-

⁵⁹⁹ *Independent Chronicle*, July 21, 1791; *General Advertiser*, July 29, 1791.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

thirds of the inhabitants of that country are anxious for a revolution.”⁶⁰¹ Again, Canadians were back to being Americans in waiting, an American state waiting to raise its formerly yoked head. The idea had its roots in the American Revolution, and in the 1790s, it seemed to many Americans that it was now coming to fruition. As was often the case, the American press both reflected and reinforced American public opinion. Opinions of Canadians had continued to change in the years following the Revolution, and newspaper portrayals had changed alongside, further reinforcing the shift in the American public mind. Like an echo chamber, American newspapers contended that Canada was on the edge of throwing off their government. Many argued the United States should take the opportunity to assist.

Canada was often portrayed as being an easy target for the United States. In July 1794, the *Albany Gazette* argued, “Should our government declare war against Great-Britain, Canada would be very easily taken, as the Canadians are numerous and chiefly republicans. General orders were issued by Lord Dorchester for drafting men out of the militia to form regiments, but was not executed, in the vicinity of Quebec, the French having taken up arms to oppose them.”⁶⁰² Again, Canadians seemed to be in the American camp. The paper further reported that “A town meeting was held in Montreal last week, the business was to make the inhabitants take the oath of allegiance to the King of Great-Britain, the English people complied, but the Canadians refused, excepting a very few who are commissioned by government.”⁶⁰³ This was seen by the paper as even further evidence that the French Canadians were Americans in all but name. Like Americans, it seemed that French Canadians were ready to stand up and be counted. The *Gazette* further surmised that “The inhabitants in the province of Canada amount to at

⁶⁰¹ *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, March 25, 1794.

⁶⁰² *Albany Gazette*, July 31, 1794; *Vermont Gazette*, August 1, 1794; *American Minerva*, August 7, 1794; *Daily Advertiser*, August 8, 1794; *The Diary or Loudon's Register*, August 8, 1794; *Greenleaf's New York Journal & Patriotic Register*, August 9, 1794; *General Advertiser*, August 11, 1794; *Baltimore Daily Intelligencer*, August 11, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, August 11, 1794; *Herald*, August 11, 1794; *Guardian or New Brunswick Advertiser*, August 12, 1794; *Independent Gazetteer*, August 13, 1794; *Boston Gazette*, August 18, 1794; *Independent Chronicle*, August 18, 1794; *Salem Gazette*, August 19, 1794; *Oracle of the Day*, August 23, 1794; *The City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, August 23, 1794; *Southern Centinel, and Universal Gazette*, September 11, 1794.

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*

least 40,000 of French extraction, which would prove very favorable to the United States, if we may judge by the spirit they manifest.”⁶⁰⁴ Two days later, *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register* reported that “As to the Insurrection in Canada... [that] there actually exists a general discontent among the people of that government is well ascertained – and we believe it will ripen to a general rebellion, more especially if there should be a war with the United States, the people of which are held in great estimation by the Canadians in general.”⁶⁰⁵ As had been the case in the Revolution, many portrayals of Canadians focused on the similarities between the two groups. Like Americans, it seemed that the Canadians were about to revolt, and the American press could not have been happier about it. Two month later, the *Morning Star* published a letter from an anonymous source in Canada which read, “I find from what information I am able to obtain, that a revolution is on foot in lower Canada. The French tired of vassalage, are about emancipating themselves from their intolerable taskmasters the British,” continuing, “should this happen, the province of Canada will become a very easy conquest to the arms of the United Sates and the cause of war on our western frontiers very easily removed. The Canadians say they want nothing to carry their plan into complete effect, but persons of enterprize and perseverance to take the lead.”⁶⁰⁶ As in the Revolution, much of the American press continued to believe that Canadians would welcome them as liberators. Again, American papers seem to have interpreted a relatively

⁶⁰⁴ *Albany Gazette*, July 31, 1794; *Vermont Gazette*, August 1, 1794; *American Minerva*, August 7, 1794; *Daily Advertiser*, August 8, 1794; *The Diary or Loudon's Register*, August 8, 1794; *Greenleaf's New York Journal & Patriotic Register*, August 9, 1794; *General Advertiser*, August 11, 1794; *Baltimore Daily Intelligencer*, August 11, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, August 11, 1794; *Herald*, August 11, 1794; *Guardian or New Brunswick Advertiser*, August 12, 1794; *Independent Gazetteer*, August 13, 1794; *Boston Gazette*, August 18, 1794; *Independent Chronicle*, August 18, 1794; *Salem Gazette*, August 19, 1794; *Oracle of the Day*, August 23, 1794; *The City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, August 23, 1794; *Southern Centinel*, and *Universal Gazette*, September 11, 1794.

⁶⁰⁵ *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register*, August 2, 1794; *Philadelphia Gazette*, August 4, 1794; *Guardian or New Brunswick Advertiser*, August 5, 1794; *Vermont Gazette*, August 8, 1794; *The City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, August 25, 1794; *Augusta Chronicle*, September 6, 1794.

⁶⁰⁶ *Morning Star*, October 21, 1794; *Independent Chronicle*, October 23, 1794; *Herald of the United States*, October 25, 1794; *Oracle of the Day*, October 25, 1794; *Boston Gazette*, October 27, 1794; *American Herald of Liberty*, October 28, 1794; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 28, 1794; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy: Or, The Worcester Gazette*, October 29, 1794; *General Advertiser*, October 31, 1794; *Greenfield Gazette*, November 6, 1794; *Catskill Packet & Western Mail*, November 15, 1794; *Columbian Herald*, December 1, 1794.

small group of supporters as proof of relatively ubiquitous support amongst the populace. Though there were some within Canada who favoured union with the United States, and though such sentiment would come to a violent head in the Rebellions of 1837, American newspapers constantly overestimated Canadian support for union with the United States. There was always something new to convince them, and in the 1790s, many American newspapers began to opine that the Canadians' French heritage would be the final factor, particularly in the context of the French people's simultaneous struggle for liberty.

With the abolition of monarchy in 1792 during the French Revolution, American newspapers could no longer appeal to the French Canadians' apparent love of their former king. Those newspaper editors could, however, appeal to their sense of connection to their ancient ethnic brethren. In August of 1794, the *New-Hampshire Gazette* published a notice from "The free French people, to their brethren the Canadians."⁶⁰⁷ The appeal seemed to carry extra weight as it came from the "French people" and not an official like D'Estaing. By sending an appeal from the French people to the Canadian people, the author or authors of the address called on the historic kinship connection between the two. The address seems carefully calculated to appeal to the Canadians. It began, "While we groaned under an arbitrary government, we could but pity your situation, and regret those ties which united us to you... we did not dare any more than you to lift up our heads, depressed with the yoke of servitude." The address continued:

But now we are free, we have re-assumed our rights, our oppressors are punished, every branch of the administration of our government is regenerated, and confident in the justice of our cause, in our fortitude, and in our immense preparations for the destruction of all tyrants, it is in our power to avenge you, to make you free as ourselves – equally independent as your neighbours, the Americans of the United States. – Canadians, imitate their example and ours – the path is already delineated, one magnanimous enterprize may liberate you from the abject state of servitude in which you are plunged. It depends upon you to re-engrave upon your foreheads the primitive dignity of man, which nature gave, but which slavery has effaced.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁷ *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 12, 1794; *Independent Gazetteer*, August 23, 1794.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Though the address allegedly came from the French people, it yet cemented ideas of American superiority for American readers. Canadians were encouraged to follow America's example. The United States were portrayed as the defender of liberty and freedom, and Canadians were advised to emulate their example. As the supposed French writers were praising the kinship ties between themselves and Canadians, they were also touting the kinship ties between Canadians and Americans. As Jane Errington has argued, there were significant ties of kinship between Upper Canada and New York state, and this kinship was emphasized in the letter from the French people to the Canadians. While the foundational appeal was to French Canadians, the address also made it clear to English Canadians that Americans were their kin, more so really than even the English.

The ultimate goal of the letter was to incite Canadians to armed rebellion. The emissary claiming to speak for the French people informed Canadians, "The moment is favorable, and a revolution is for you the most sacred of duties, do not hesitate therefore, but recount the history of all your misfortunes to such as shall cowardly refuse their arms and assistance to so glorious an enterprize." The address wondered, would Canadians be brave and steadfast like their American neighbours had been, or would they be cowards? The French writers encouraged Canadians to use the Americans as an example, as they themselves had. The address continued, "Canadians you have among yourselves every thing which can constitute your happiness, enlightened, courageous, industrious, the friends of justice, what need have you that the care of your government should be intrusted to a stupid tyrant, a simply King, whose caprice may fetter your deliberations, and leave you without law for years together."⁶⁰⁹ The argument made by the French writers was the same as that which was generally made by the American press. They both contended that the British king and ministry intended to fetter the Canadians as tyrants ever do. The solution, as far as they were concerned, was to rise up. The address called the people of Canada to arms, reading "Canadians, it is time to arouse yourselves from that lethargic slumber, in which you are plunged; arm yourselves, call to your assistance your indian friends, and rely upon the aid of your neighbors, and of the French."⁶¹⁰ The

⁶⁰⁹ *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 12, 1794; *Independent Gazetteer*, August 23, 1794.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*

writers called for Canadians to do as their kin the Americans had done, to do as their kin the French had done, and to throw off monarchical tyranny forever. The goal was to draw Canadians into the identity of liberty that was springing up in the United States and in France. Canada was to be the next domino to fall. The address concluded by imploring Canadians to “Swear never to quit your arms, till you shall be liberated from your enemies; call Heaven and your consciences to witness the justice of your resolutions, and you will obtain that which resolute men never demand in vain, Liberty and Independence.”⁶¹¹ Liberty and independence had become key tenets of both the revolutionary American and the revolutionary French identities. The French letter writers, and American newspapers in general, contended that they were also key tenets of the Canadian identity, one which the Canadians would soon defend in arms.

American writers and newspapers made similar arguments as the French letter writers. In 1793, *Woods's Newark Gazette* published a piece by Philanthropus, which argued “Canada ought to be free! Can you, ye hardy Canadians, behold your gallic brethren contending, struggling, bleeding and dying for freedom, and not burst your British fetters, seize the sword, rush to the field, and perish or be free.”⁶¹² Despite such arguments however, a Canadian Revolution did not materialize. Though American newspapers called for one continuously, their ultimate goal seems to have been more about themselves than about the Canadians. A rebellion in Canada would essentially remove the British empire from the mainland of North America, a situation that American newspapers prayed for fervently. Their objective was to protect American liberty, and the best way to do that seemed to be to spread that liberty to the Canadians and draw them into the American fold. As the turn of the century approached, however, it was looking less and less likely to most papers that Canadians would take the final steps, remove their last coats, and become Americans. Though the American belief that Canadians wanted to be Americans did not die in the early 1790s, as the decade began and the Northwest Indian War raged on the frontier, such arguments began to fade,

⁶¹¹ *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 12, 1794; *Independent Gazetteer*, August 23, 1794.

⁶¹² *Woods's Newark Gazette*, August 7, 1793; *Massachusetts Mercury*, August 20, 1793. Two weeks later on August 21, a contributor to the same paper replied “Believe me Monsieur Phil, the Canadians can live and be free without ‘bleeding and dying’ to be free.’”

replaced by reports that French Canadians and American Loyalists were dressing up like Indigenous peoples to join their war parties and subsequent calls for retribution and war, reawakening in the American press old stereotypes.

The late eighteenth century saw a dramatic increase of essays on the origins and cultures of Indigenous North Americans in the American press. Though descriptions of purported Indigenous savagery faded somewhat from American newspapers following the American Revolution, the American press remained dismissive of Indigenous cultures. Evidence of Indigenous ingenuity was discounted and immediately assumed to have originated elsewhere. The *New-York Daily Gazette* surmised in 1790 that “evidence marks have been traced, by which it is known, that America had been visited by a people acquainted with the arts of improved life, as traces of fortifications and fortified camps have been discovered, and earthen ware, with instruments of husbandry, dug out of the earth in difference places; those people are, however, supposed to have been a colony from ancient Carthage.”⁶¹³ Telltale signs to modern archaeologists of Indigenous occupation were taken by the late eighteenth century American press as evidence that a European people on the brink of destruction must have come to the American continent in antiquity as European prejudice assumed such technology as earthenware and husbandry beyond the Indigenous nations in North America, unless brought by Europeans. Alongside such theories were descriptions. In December of 1785, the *Massachusetts Centinel* printed an article describing the physical differences in the world’s races. The *Centinel* asserted of Indigenous peoples in Canada, “In the most northerly parts of America, we find a species of Laplanders, similar to those in Europe, they are of an olive colour, and have short thick limbs, and are very robust and longlived,” continuing, “The savages along Hundson’s-Bay, and to the North of Labrador are small, ill made, and ugly, their visage is almost intirely [sic] covered with hair. The savages of Newfoundland, resemble those of David’s-Straits, they are of small statue, have little or no beard, broad faces, large eyes, and generally flat noses.”⁶¹⁴ The paper further contended, “To the South of these savages who are spread over the Northern

⁶¹³ *New-York Daily Gazette*, January 7, 1790; *Pennsylvania Packet*, January 12, 1790.

⁶¹⁴ *Massachusetts Centinel*, December 28, 1785.

regions of America, we meet with different and more numerous races, who occupy Canada, and other places as far as the Assiniboils, they are large, strong, well made, and all of them have black hair, black eyes, very white teeth, a swarthy colour, little beard, and hardly any hair on their bodies.”⁶¹⁵ While the incorrect place names and many misspellings don’t instill confidence in the learning of the writer, particularly in a modern audience, the sentiment in the article was common in eighteenth century America. Many other newspapers ruminated on similar themes. An article from the *New-York Daily Gazette* which argued that humans could thrive in extreme conditions of both hot and cold, used Inuit peoples and French Canadians as two of its examples of humans thriving in the cold. It read, “it is certain that the Canadians and Esquimaux, whose habitations extend to Hudson’s Bay, pursue the chase in winter in a cold not less extreme [than the extreme heat of Africa]... The savage of Canada is very lightly clothed in his winter hunting parties.”⁶¹⁶ The paper continued the next week by asking, “What gives the Canadian, the Greenlander, or the Esquimaux, the power of braving, as they do, the rigours of their winter with a naked breast? Whence comes it that they eat the fish they catch either raw, or roasted, indifferently?”⁶¹⁷ As fear of Indigenous peoples began to recede under the weight of massively superior European American population numbers, the American press began to view Indigenous communities with more curiosity and less terror.

This did not mean, however, that portrayals of purported frontier brutality disappeared from the American press, particularly during wartime. In 1787, the *New-Hampshire Spy* printed an article from a contributor that began, “To shew how the savages bear the greatest torments, I shall relate what happened to two Iroqueuse [sic]prisoners. The first was named Joseph, and taken by the Hurons... The poor man had already been most cruelly treated; they had crushed one of his hands between two stones, and sawed off one of the fingers; two fingers had been cut off the other hand with a

⁶¹⁵ *Massachusetts Centinel*, December 28, 1785.

⁶¹⁶ *New-York Daily Gazette*, July 23, 1789; *Daily Advertiser*, November 7, 1789.

⁶¹⁷ *New-York Daily Gazette*, July 24, 1789; *Pennsylvania Packet*, August 6, 1789; *Daily Advertiser*, November 9, 1789.

hatchet.”⁶¹⁸ Such sensationalized accounts served to sell papers to an audience that was often fixated on graphic violence, and it also served to cement in the American public mind the notion that Indigenous peoples perpetuated such violence. The implication was that this was the sort of thing that White Americans would never countenance. The piece continued, “At the break of day they brought him out of the village, where they spared him not; and as they saw him near expiring for fear he should die otherwise than as mentioned in the sentence, they cut off one foot, one hand, and the head. The distribution was made as had been prescribed, and the remainder of the body was put into the kettle.”⁶¹⁹ This accusation of cannibalism went even further in painting Indigenous peoples as subhuman. Their behaviour, widely considered to be racially inherent, excluded Indigenous groups from the White American identity. Of the second victim, the paper asserted, “The name of the sufferer was Onnontague, a venerable Iroquois chief, near a hundred years old... He was left to the merciless fury of four hundred soldiers, who for several hours cruciated him, being all busy in contriving what they thought most painful, in order to draw only one sigh from him; but they never could succeed.”⁶²⁰ Onnontague embodied the stoic stereotype, portrayed as noble and brave, but his fellow Indigenous people were portrayed as savage and bloodthirsty. Though portrayals of Indigenous peoples began to shift in this era, turning more to curiosity than fear, depictions of Indigenous peoples as an inhuman other continued to find a place in American newspapers. Captivity narratives and accounts of alleged massacres like that outside Fort William Henry in the French and Indian War were in many ways a horror genre within the American press. The gorier and more sensational the story, the more likely it was to get readers buying and reading. And the genre remained strong into the nineteenth century. Like the tales of massacre that had captivated the mid-eighteenth century press, narratives like the story of Onnontague painted Indigenous peoples as subhuman. Though portrayals were shifting from fear to curiosity, old stereotypes died hard, just as they did in depictions of Canadians. Though Indigenous nations were not as

⁶¹⁸ *New-Hampshire Spy*, January 19, 1787; *Boston Gazette*, September 10, 1787.

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*

significant a threat as they were in years past, most American newspapers seemingly did not see much point in finding common ground. It remained useful to maintain an other against which to define the American identity, and Indigenous communities remained convenient others as many of their ways were incredibly foreign to Anglo-Americans.

Misunderstanding various aspects of Indigenous culture, Americans assumed the only reason for such tortures was wonton cruelty. This image was often cemented in the American mind through captivity narratives, stories from White Americans who had been captured by Indigenous nations and who had either escaped or been ransomed. One such narrative that was included in Jonathan Carver's *Travels Through America* was printed in the *Connecticut Courant* in 1785 which read, "Some years ago, a small band of Canadian Indians, consisting of ten warriors attended by two of their wives, made an irruption into the back settlements of New England. They lurked for some time in the vicinity of one of the most exterior towns, and at length, after having killed and scalped several people, found means to take prisoner a woman who had with her a son of about twelve years of age."⁶²¹ The differences in the ways in which the Indigenous captors and the female captive are portrayed reveals much about the ways in which American newspaper editors were defining American identity in the postwar era. The narrative continued that the woman had "formed a resolution worthy of the most intrepid hero. She thought she should be able to get from her hands the manacles by which they were confined, and determined if she did so to make a desperate effort for the recovery of her freedom. To this purpose, when she concluded that her conquerers were in their soundest sleep, she strove to slip the cords from her hands."⁶²² The bravery the women showed was indicative of Americans, unlike the cowardice that had been shown by the Indigenous war party that had sneakily attacked and kidnapped her. The paper reported that:

Having done this, she put one of the tomahawks into the hands of the boy, bidding him to follow her examples; and taking another herself, fell upon the sleeping Indians several of whom she instantly dispatched. But her attempt was nearly

⁶²¹ *Connecticut Courant*, May 30, 1785; *New-Hampshire Mercury and General Advertiser*, July 5, 1785; *New-Hampshire Mercury and General Advertiser*, July 12, 1785; *New-Haven Gazette*, August 25, 1785; *Litchfield Monitor*, October 4, 1785; *Litchfield Monitor*, October 18, 1785.

⁶²² *Ibid.*

frustrated by the imbecility of her son, who wanting both strength and resolution, made a feeble stroke at one of them which only served to awaken him; she however sprung at the rising warrior, and before he could recover his arms, made him sink under the weight of her tomahawk; and this she alternately did to all the rest, except one of the women, who awoke in time, and made her escape.⁶²³

Like the Biblical Jael, who had killed the invading Canaanite commander Sisera as he slept in her tent, the unnamed woman had done what she had to do. Her efficiency was also indicative of the American identity. Multiple Indigenous men were killed as they slept by a White American woman, as far as the American press was concerned proving the superiority of even an American woman over Indigenous peoples. The narrative concluded, “The heroine then took off the scalps of her vanquished enemies, and seizing also those they were carrying away with them as proofs of their success, she returned in triumph to the town from whence she had so lately been dragged, to the great astonishment of her neighbours, who could scarcely credit their senses, or the testimonies she bore of her Amazonian intrepidity.”⁶²⁴ This Amazon intrepidity was again considered to be an inherent character trait of Americans. The fact that the woman scalped the Indigenous men that she had killed is also interesting. The narrative implies she did this to have proof of her successes, perhaps to collect a bounty, but the act itself was something that American newspapers had been portraying as subhuman for generations. It seemed that when Indigenous soldiers collected scalps, it was evidence of their primitivism, but when a White American did it, it was a mark of pride. This narrative was part of a long tradition of massacre and captivity narratives, like the narrative of the scalping of Jane McCrae and the capture and escape of Hannah Duston.⁶²⁵ These accounts, though heavily sensationalized, had a significant influence on the ways in which Americans understood their Indigenous neighbours. Such accounts kept the fear of

⁶²³ *Connecticut Courant*, May 30, 1785; *New-Hampshire Mercury and General Advertiser*, July 5, 1785; *New-Hampshire Mercury and General Advertiser*, July 12, 1785; *New-Haven Gazette*, August 25, 1785; *Litchfield Monitor*, October 4, 1785; *Litchfield Monitor*, October 18, 1785.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁵ The story of the unnamed woman from the *Connecticut Courant* is quite reminiscent of the story of Hannah Duston, who was captured by the Abenaki in 1697 and who killed and scalped ten of the family that held her captive. Duston’s story would burst back into American popular culture in the mid to late nineteenth century, not long after the account in the *Connecticut Courant*.

Indigenous peoples alive in the American public mind, and as conflict erupted on the frontiers, old prejudices were sustained.

In February 1793, several years into the Northwest Indian War, which had begun in 1786, the *Federal Gazette* made a chilling proposition. Relating that seven members of a Wabash delegation had died of disease while meeting officials in Pittsburgh, the paper asked “would it not be a good scheme, to send out interpreters, and make a trade of bringing in savages, under the pretence of chiefs, and having them killed up at the seat of government? It would be less expence than supporting an army. It cost but 1000 dollars to bring the late party as far as Pittsburg.”⁶²⁶ The paper continued, “It is a falsehood, which some assert, that there were but two for the party, real Indians, for there were three; and the rest were the next thing to it, mulattoes, and Canadian -----, that had intermarried in royal families.” Again, Canadians were associated with Indigenous peoples and with Black Americans, in this case on an even more level footing than most. Though many American papers in the 1790s were still portraying Canadians as potential Americans, the *Gazette* was not one. By the paper’s account, Canadians were intimately intertwined with Indigenous peoples and Black Americans. The conclusion was clear, that Canadians were a different race from Americans and deserved the same fate. As far as the *Gazette* was concerned, there was no place for Canadians within the American identity as Canadians were not racially eligible to be Americans. This argument cemented the idea that Americans were White, and more than that, that Americans did not mix with those that were not White. Though by the turn of the nineteenth century, racial mixing in Canada was not especially significant and White settler colonial ideals were increasingly instilled, as far as papers like the *Gazette* were concerned, Canadians were racial others. Not only did they hold different beliefs and mannerisms, but they were *inherently* different, as were Black people and Indigenous peoples. The paper concluded, “It is true these chiefs were at peace already, for they had never been out of the town of Port Vincents; generally drunk there; but then they might have got sober, and gone to war. It is

⁶²⁶ *Federal Gazette*, February 12, 1793; *The Diary or Loudon's Register*, February 15, 1793; *Washington Spy*, February 15, 1793; *Federal Spy*, February 19, 1793; *Delaware Gazette*, February 23, 1793; *Boston Gazette*, February 25, 1793; *American Apollo*, March 8, 1793; *American Mercury*, March 3, 1794; *Daily Advertiser*, August 20, 1794.

better to prevent crimes than to punish them.”⁶²⁷ How widely this likely satirical opinion was shared is impossible to know, though it was republished in at least six other papers. It seems that American readers found it amusing, and this serves as evidence of how widely such ideas were spread across the United States. While the paper did not necessarily mean what it said, the piece was funny because most readers likely knew someone who made that very argument non-satirically. And the article also took for granted that Canadians were kin to Indigenous communities, part of an interwoven network of intermarriage that had largely stripped them of their European civility. Indeed, in the year following the Revolution, associations between French Canadians and Indigenous peoples that had been born in the early century reappeared in force. And fueling the rise was renewed and ongoing military conflict.

As the Northwest Indian War simmered in the late eighteenth century, Americans were particularly aggrieved by Britain’s continued suppling of the Western Confederacy from Canada. The Western Confederacy was an alliance of Indigenous nations in the Great Lakes region that came together in the postwar era to wage war on the expanding settlements of the new United States. Most of the nations that comprised the confederacy had connections with the British, and the confederacy was supplied throughout the war by the western forts that the British had not surrendered. In 1792, the *National Gazette* surmised, “Whether the British government has an eye to the territory ceded, I shall not say – I rather think not: but certainly it has an eye to the Indian trade, and on this account supports the savages... Why else are the posts on the lakes not surrendered, when all pretence of the treaty not being fulfilled on our part is taken away?”⁶²⁸ The American press argued that continued conflict in the west also benefited the British. The paper

⁶²⁷ *Federal Gazette*, February 12, 1793; *The Diary or Loudon's Register*, February 15, 1793; *Washington Spy*, February 15, 1793; *Federal Spy*, February 19, 1793; *Delaware Gazette*, February 23, 1793; *Boston Gazette*, February 25, 1793; *American Apollo*, March 8, 1793; *American Mercury*, March 3, 1794; *Daily Advertiser*, August 20, 1794.

⁶²⁸ *National Gazette*, February 2, 1792; *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, February 3, 1792; *The Mail; or, Claypoole's Daily Advertiser*, February 3, 1792; *Daily Advertiser*, February 7, 1792; *New-York Daily Gazette*, February 7, 1792; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 8, 1792; *Columbian Centinel*, February 15, 1792; *Independent Chronicle*, February 16, 1792; *Connecticut Courant*, February 20, 1792; *Norwich Packet*, February 23, 1792; *Norfolk and Portsmouth Chronicle*, February 25, 1792; *Litchfield Monitor*, February 29, 1792; *Windham Herald*, March 3, 1792; *Middlesex Gazette*, March 10, 1792; *Hampshire Gazette*, March 14, 1792; *Concord Herald*, March 21, 1792.

continued, “How have the Indians, [illegible] of the lakes, been excited, and brought to the Miami village to engage in the war? – certainly, not by the Shawnese or Wabash Indians, but by the voice of the British agents who had stores at Detroit to supply them... with ammunition, cloathing, and provisions.”⁶²⁹ Accusations that the British were supplying the Western Confederacy filled the press during the war. This was seen as an act of treachery by Americans, and the duplicitousness of the British was emphasized in the American press. The *Gazette* further emphasized the presence of Canadian volunteers on the western frontiers, reading “Would Canadian volunteers of militia march to aid these Indians, and not the government solicit or enjoin it? That volunteers did turn out, as our phrase is, I know, though not to what amount they may have been in battle.”⁶³⁰ As they did in the past, American newspapers accused the Canadians and the British of inciting Indigenous nations against the Americans. More than simply inciting, many newspapers accused the Canadians of participating alongside those nations. The *Federal Gazette* reported that “An officer of this army has received authentic accounts from Post St. Vincent, stating that a large number of Indians have assembled at the Maume [sic] Towns – that they drew provisions, &c. at the British Post of Detroit, and that every encouragement was held out to the Canadians to join the Savages in hostilities against us.”⁶³¹ It was an invitation that most newspapers concluded the Canadians had accepted.

⁶²⁹ *National Gazette*, February 2, 1792; *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, February 3, 1792; *The Mail; or, Claypoole's Daily Advertiser*, February 3, 1792; *Daily Advertiser*, February 7, 1792; *New-York Daily Gazette*, February 7, 1792; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 8, 1792; *Columbian Centinel*, February 15, 1792; *Independent Chronicle*, February 16, 1792; *Connecticut Courant*, February 20, 1792; *Norwich Packet*, February 23, 1792; *Norfolk and Portsmouth Chronicle*, February 25, 1792; *Litchfield Monitor*, February 29, 1792; *Windham Herald*, March 3, 1792; *Middlesex Gazette*, March 10, 1792; *Hampshire Gazette*, March 14, 1792; *Concord Herald*, March 21, 1792.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶³¹ *Federal Gazette*, November 12, 1791; *General Advertiser*, November 12, 1791; *The Mail; or, Claypoole's Daily Advertiser*, November 12, 1791; *National Gazette*, November 14, 1791; *Maryland Journal*, November 15, 1791; *Daily Advertiser*, November 16, 1791; *New-York Packet*, November 17, 1791; *Connecticut Courant*, November 21, 1791; *Connecticut Gazette*, November 23, 1791; *Connecticut Journal*, November 23, 1791; *Litchfield Monitor*, November 23, 1791; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy: Or, The Worcester Gazette*, November 24, 1791; *Norfolk and Portsmouth Chronicle*, November 26, 1791; *The New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register*, November 26, 1791; *Western Star*, November 29, 1791; *Osborne's New-Hampshire Spy*, December 3, 1791; *Boston Gazette*, December 5, 1791; *Salem Gazette*, December 6, 1791; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, December 6, 1791; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, December 7, 1791; *Political and Sentimental Repository, or Strafford Recorder*, December 7, 1791; *Concord Herald*, December 14, 1791; *Vermont Gazette*, December 19, 1791.

The long history of cooperation between Canadians and a number of Indigenous nations was a particular grievance of Americans. Relating the account of an American soldier escaped from Canada, the *Albany Register* informed readers that “he saw continual supplies of provisions and ammunition of all kinds going to the Indians; and that the Canadians have a chain of [illegible] from Detroit to the Indian Camp, thro’ which these savages are supplied in the most ample manner.”⁶³² It continued, “And that on the return of the Indians, from their successful expedition, he saw a great many Tories, and other white animals completely disguised as Indians.”⁶³³ As far as the account in the *Register* was concerned, Canadians and Loyalists had forfeited their Whiteness and become animals by joining themselves to Indigenous peoples. They were a polar opposite to Americans, who it was assumed would never stoop so low or debase themselves so much as to intermix with Indigenous groups. Canadians had betrayed their fellow White men and taken up with Indigenous communities and with the formerly enslaved. The Canadians and the Loyalists were animals while Americans were men. As far as the piece in the *Register* was concerned, the Canadians were ineligible from ever joining the American union or adopting the American identity. American views of Canadian race were complicated. As the war dragged on, American newspapers began to denounce the Canadian volunteers serving with the Western Confederacy as race traitors (while at the same time portraying them as being of a different race). As far as the American press was concerned, old habits died hard in regard to the Canadians, and as they had in the French and Indian War and in the American Revolutionary War, American newspapers

⁶³² *Albany Register*, January 30, 1792; *New-Jersey Journal*, February 8, 1792; *The Mail; or, Claypoole's Daily Advertiser*, February 9, 1792; *General Advertiser*, February 10, 1792; *Weekly Museum*, February 11, 1792; *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, February 11, 1792; *Brunswick Gazette*, February 14, 1792; *Connecticut Journal*, February 15, 1792; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, February 15, 1792; *Connecticut Gazette*, February 16, 1792; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy: Or, The Worcester Gazette*, February 16, 1792; *Argus*, February 17, 1792; *Columbian Centinel*, February 18, 1792; *Newport Mercury*, February 18, 1792; *Boston Gazette*, February 20, 1792; *American Mercury*, February 20, 1792; *Morning Ray, or, Impartial Oracle*, February 21, 1792; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, February 21, 1792; *Litchfield Monitor*, February 22, 1792; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, February 22, 1792; *Osborne's New-Hampshire Spy*, February 22, 1792; *The Essex Journal & New-Hampshire Packet*, February 22, 1792; *Windham Herald*, February 25, 1792; *Eastern Herald*, February 27, 1792; *Weekly Register*, February 28, 1792; *Concord Herald*, February 29, 1792; *Hampshire Gazette*, February 29, 1792.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*

concluded that Canadians were active amongst the Indigenous nations fighting the Northwest War, and the Americans were particularly aggrieved.

In the 1790s, as conflict raged in the west, the American press reverted almost completely to old stereotypes of Canadians and their relationship to violence on the Indigenous frontiers. Like the *Albany Register*, many other papers accused Canadians of disguising themselves as Indigenous in order to commit atrocities. In many ways, this was quite similar to the ways in which American revolutionaries had donned ostensible Indigenous garb to enact the Boston Tea Party. Of course, the difference was that the Canadians were fighting alongside Indigenous peoples as equals, while the Americans had momentarily assumed the generalized identity of Indigenous peoples to make a point about their inherent rights as natives of America while Canadians had assumed that identity, Americans claimed, to try and strip Americans of those inherent rights. This made the Canadians race traitors, and as far as many American newspapers were concerned, there was little worse. The *Federal Gazette* read in 1792, “Accounts from the eastward mention, that in the engagement near the Miami Towns on the 4th of Nov. las[t], no less than twelve hundred white Canadians were intermingled with the Indians, and disguised like them.”⁶³⁴ This was an affront as far as American newspapers were concerned. Canadians were seemingly actively forfeiting any chance of joining the American identity by intermixing with Indigenous peoples, perceived racial inferiors in the American mind. And it was not just a few Canadians. The *Boston Gazette* likewise reported, “we are assured that Twelve Hundred Canadians were in the late action with St. Clair. --- If that was the case, we may judge who set them at it.”⁶³⁵ Implicit in these portrayals is Canadian Whiteness. Canadians are depicted as race traitors who had abandoned their race to take up with their Indigenous neighbours, to “go native” and rain down havoc on the American frontier. Despite the fact that the *Boston Gazette* had

⁶³⁴ *Federal Gazette*, March 5, 1792; *National Gazette*, March 5, 1792; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 7, 1792; *The Freeman's Journal; or, The North-American Intelligencer*, March 7, 1792; *Maryland Journal*, March 13, 1792; *Morning Ray, or, Impartial Oracle*, March 13, 1792; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, March 20, 1792; *Albany Register*, March 26, 1792.

⁶³⁵ *Boston Gazette*, February 20, 1792; *Norwich Packet*, February 23, 1792; *Eastern Herald*, February 27, 1792.

defined them as White, the race of Canadians remained ambiguous for many American newspapers. Six years earlier, the *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser* did not define a Canadian as white, noting that American troops had taken “28 Indians, one Canadian and three white prisoners.”⁶³⁶

Canadians continued to be associated with Indigenous peoples throughout the war, and the number of negative portrayals of Canadians expanded significantly, greatly outnumbering positive portrayals throughout the war (Figure 7). Two years after the action with St. Clair (a dramatic routing which came to be known as St. Clair’s defeat) in September 1794, the *Baltimore Daily Intelligencer* reported that “On the 20th ult. about 146 miles advanced of Greenville, the advance guard, consisting of two companies, were attacked by about 1100 Indians and Canadian militia.”⁶³⁷ Again, it was not just a few

⁶³⁶ *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, February 2, 1786; *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser*, December 2, 1786; *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 2, 1786; *Independent Journal*, December 9, 1786; *Carlisle Gazette*, December 13, 1786; *Columbian Herald*, December 14, 1786; *New-Hampshire Spy*, December 19, 1786; *Charleston Morning Post*, December 20, 1786; *Maryland Chronicle, or Universal Advertiser*, December 20, 1786.

⁶³⁷ *Baltimore Daily Intelligencer*, September 27, 1794; *Gazette of the United States*, September 30, 1794; *General Advertiser*, September 30, 1794; *Maryland Herald, and Eastern Shore Intelligencer*, September 30, 1794; *Philadelphia Gazette*, September 30, 1794; *American Minerva*, October 1, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, October 1, 1794; *General Advertiser*, October 1, 1794; *Independent Gazetteer*, October 1, 1794; *The Diary or Loudon's Register*, October 1, 1794; *Washington Spy*, October 1, 1794; *Columbian Gazetteer*, October 2, 1794; *Daily Advertiser*, October 2, 1794; *Gazette of the United States*, October 2, 1794; *General Advertiser*, October 2, 1794; *Herald*, October 2, 1794; *New-York Daily Gazette*, October 2, 1794; *Philadelphia Gazette*, October 2, 1794; *Southern Centinel, and Universal Gazette*, October 2, 1794; *American Minerva*, October 3, 1794; *The Diary or Loudon's Register*, October 3, 1794; *Daily Advertiser*, October 4, 1794; *Delaware Gazette*, October 4, 1794; *Greenleaf's New York Journal & Patriotic Register*, October 4, 1794; *Independent Gazetteer*, October 4, 1794; *New-York Daily Gazette*, October 4, 1794; *Albany Gazette*, October 6, 1794; *Albany Register*, October 6, 1794; *American Mercury*, October 6, 1794; *Baltimore Daily Intelligencer*, October 6, 1794; *Boston Gazette*, October 6, 1794; *Virginia Chronicle, & General Advertiser*, October 6, 1794; *Massachusetts Mercury*, October 7, 1794; *Morning Star*, October 7, 1794; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, October 7, 1794; *Oracle of the Day*, October 7, 1794; *Salem Gazette*, October 7, 1794; *Worcester Intelligencer: Or, Brookfield Advertiser*, October 7, 1794; *Connecticut Journal*, October 8, 1794; *Hampshire Gazette*, October 8, 1794; *Litchfield Monitor*, October 8, 1794; *New-Jersey Journal*, October 8, 1794; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy: Or, The Worcester Gazette*, October 8, 1794; *American Apollo*, October 9, 1794; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 9, 1794; *Georgia Gazette*, October 9, 1794; *Greenfield Gazette*, October 9, 1794; *Guardian of Freedom*, October 9, 1794; *Independent Chronicle*, October 9, 1794; *Norwich Packet*, October 9, 1794; *United States Chronicle*, October 9, 1794; *Virginia Chronicle, & General Advertiser*, October 9, 1794; *Mirrou*, October 10, 1794; *Catskill Packet & Western Mail*, October 11, 1794; *Courier of New Hampshire*, October 11, 1794; *Oracle of the Day*, October 11, 1794; *Providence Gazette*, October 11, 1794; *Windham Herald*, October 11, 1794; *Albany Register*, October 13, 1794; *American Mercury*, October 13, 1794; *Boston Gazette*, October 13, 1794; *Connecticut Courant*, October 13, 1794; *Eastern Herald*, October 13, 1794; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, October 13, 1794; *The South-Carolina State-Gazette, & Timothy & Mason's*

Canadians that were portrayed as acting in concert with Indigenous peoples, but many, tainting the entire community of Canadians by association. The *Gazette of the United States* estimated that “the number of Indians, Canadians, &c. in the action were a least 2000.”⁶³⁸ This action came to be known as the Battle of Fallen Timbers, and it proved a decisive victory for the American army. Following the battle, the *Gazette of the United States* reported that “Several British subjects (said to be Canadians) were left wounded among the Indians, and my information states that Wayne hung two of them.”⁶³⁹

Daily Advertiser, October 13, 1794; *Andrews's Western Star*, October 14, 1794; *Columbian Informer or Cheshire Journal*, October 14, 1794; *Federal Spy*, October 14, 1794; *Weekly Register*, October 14, 1794; *Worcester Intelligencer: Or, Brookfield Advertiser*, October 14, 1794; *The New Hampshire and Vermont Journal: Or, The Farmer's Weekly Museum*, October 17, 1794; *Windham Herald*, October 18, 1794; *Andrews's Western Star*, October 21, 1794; *Augusta Chronicle*, October 25, 1794; *Daily Advertiser*, November 4, 1794; *New-York Daily Gazette*, November 4, 1794.

⁶³⁸ *Gazette of the United States*, October 2, 1794; *Philadelphia Gazette*, October 2, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, October 3, 1794; *General Advertiser*, October 3, 1794; *American Minerva*, October 4, 1794; *Independent Gazetteer*, October 4, 1794; *The Diary or Loudon's Register*, October 4, 1794; *Baltimore Daily Intelligencer*, October 6, 1794; *Daily Advertiser*, October 6, 1794; *Herald*, October 6, 1794; *New-York Daily Gazette*, October 6, 1794; *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register*, October 8, 1794; *New Jersey State Gazette*, October 8, 1794; *New-Jersey Journal*, October 8, 1794; *Woods's Newark Gazette*, October 8, 1794; *Columbian Centinel*, October 11, 1794; *Providence Gazette*, October 11, 1794; *Times, or, the Evening Entertainer*, October 11, 1794; *Albany Register*, October 13, 1794; *American Mercury*, October 13, 1794; *Boston Gazette*, October 13, 1794; *Independent Chronicle*, October 13, 1794; *Andrews's Western Star*, October 14, 1794; *Federal Spy*, October 14, 1794; *Newport Mercury*, October 14, 1794; *The City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, October 14, 1794; *Worcester Intelligencer: Or, Brookfield Advertiser*, October 14, 1794; *Columbian Herald*, October 15, 1794; *Connecticut Journal*, October 15, 1794; *Hampshire Gazette*, October 15, 1794; *Litchfield Monitor*, October 15, 1794; *Massachusetts Spy*, October 15, 1794; *Greenfield Gazette*, October 16, 1794; *Medley or Newbedford Marine Journal*, October 17, 1794; *Impartial Herald*, October 18, 1794; *Middlesex Gazette*, October 18, 1794; *Oracle of the Day*, October 18, 1794; *Columbian Informer or Cheshire Journal*, October 21, 1794; *Salem Gazette*, October 21, 1794; *The New Hampshire and Vermont Journal: Or, The Farmer's Weekly Museum*, October 24, 1794; *Augusta Chronicle*, October 25, 1794; *Courier of New Hampshire*, October 25, 1794; *Eastern Herald*, October 27, 1794; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, October 27, 1794; *Georgia Gazette*, October 30, 1794.

⁶³⁹ *Gazette of the United States*, September 22, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, September 22, 1794; *General Advertiser*, September 22, 1794; *Philadelphia Gazette*, September 22, 1794; *American Minerva*, September 23, 1794; *Baltimore Daily Intelligencer*, September 24, 1794; *Daily Advertiser*, September 24, 1794; *Independent Gazetteer*, September 24, 1794; *Columbian Gazetteer*, September 25, 1794; *Weekly Museum*, September 27, 1794; *Boston Gazette*, September 29, 1794; *Connecticut Courant*, September 29, 1794; *Independent Chronicle*, September 29, 1794; *Rhode-Island Museum*, September 29, 1794; *Maryland Herald, and Eastern Shore Intelligencer*, September 30, 1794; *Morning Star*, September 30, 1794; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 30, 1794; *Oracle of the Day*, September 30, 1794; *Salem Gazette*, September 30, 1794; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy: Or, The Worcester Gazette*, October 1, 1794; *American Apollo*, October 2, 1794; *Connecticut Gazette*, October 2, 1794; *United States Chronicle*, October 2, 1794; *Medley or Newbedford Marine Journal*, October 3, 1794; *Eastern Herald*, October 6, 1794; *Mirrou*, October 6, 1794; *Potomak Guardian and Berkeley Advertiser*, October 6, 1794; *Columbian Informer or Cheshire Journal*, October 7, 1794; *Federal Spy*, October 7,

Following this campaign, the Western Confederacy began to fall apart and the war in the west began to wind down. In November 1794, the *Diary or Loudon's Register* gleefully informed readers that “Gen Wayne’s late victory, it further appears, has created great indignation in the minds of the Canadians, in consequence of the increased price of Indian commodities.”⁶⁴⁰ As the American press cheered the American victory in the west, some newspapers stepped up calls to follow up that success with a campaign against Canada; something that by 1794 was looking almost like an inevitability. Tensions were especially high with Great Britain, and Americans had never forgotten about Canada, a place from where, they argued, treachery and conspiracy emanated across the western frontiers.

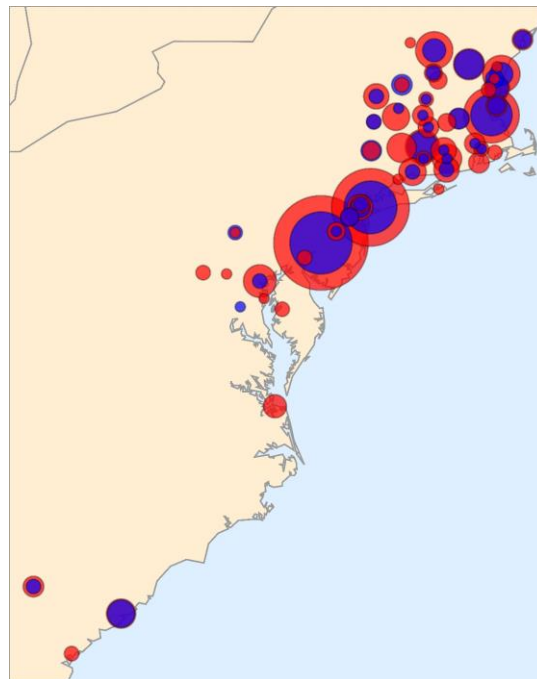


Figure 7: “Map of Explicit Positive (blue) and Negative (red) Portrayals of Canadians in the American Press, 1786-1794.” Image. 2022. Created using Wolfram Research, Inc., Mathematica, Version 12.1, Champaign, IL, (2019).

1794; *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, October 9, 1794; *Eagle*, October 13, 1794; *Augusta Chronicle*, October 18, 1794.

⁶⁴⁰ *The Diary or Loudon's Register*, November 6, 1794; *Aurora General Advertiser*, November 10, 1794; *Independent Chronicle*, November 21, 1794.

The American press was often giddy at the idea of wiping the British presence off the North American continent for good. Reprinting an article from a London paper, the *Philadelphia Gazette* read in 1794, “We are concerned to find, that the Congress attribute the attacks made upon their frontiers by the Indians, to the intrigues of the government of Quebec... Their militia is at present embodied, and there is every probability that an attack will be made before April, on Canada.”⁶⁴¹ Echoing arguments from throughout the Revolution, the *Gazette* emphasized the fact that the loyalties of the Canadians were far from certain, and that they were as likely to support the Americans as the British. The London paper continued, “The Canadians, in expectation of the threatened hostilities, are leaving the British settlements for the United States, and a war with America now seems inevitable, which must bring our misfortunes to a climax.”⁶⁴² This was not the only rumbling of war in 1794. There were significant tensions in the era, with Britain continuing to maintain control of the frontier forts and with both Britain and France looking to enforce American neutrality in their European conflict. There was a sense that those tensions would naturally come to a head over Canada, the nearest British possession, and one which seemed ripe for the plucking. It was a situation that Canadians seem to have noticed as well. Three months later, the *New Hampshire and Vermont Journal: Or, The Farmer's Weekly Museum* reported that “the solicitor General has been dispatched by the Governor, Lord Dorchester, to Montreal, for the purpose of putting in force the alien bill, which was lately passed at Quebec by the legislative assembly,” continuing that “all those who should refuse swearing allegiance to his Majesty King George, should either be imprisoned or leave his majesty’s province; in consequence of which, several hundreds were about to leave the place.”⁶⁴³ About a week later, the *Massachusetts Mercury* reprinted a Canadian address to Dorchester which proposed the establishment of a loyal organization within Quebec, and which read:

⁶⁴¹ *Philadelphia Gazette*, April 21, 1794; *New-York Daily Gazette*, April 25, 1794; *Albany Register*, April 28, 1794; *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, May 12, 1794.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*

⁶⁴³ *The New Hampshire and Vermont Journal: Or, The Farmer's Weekly Museum*, July 25, 1794.

His Majesty's loyal and faithful subjects in the city and district of Quebec, earnestly wishing to unite in an association for the express purpose of supporting the laws, constitution and government of the Province of Lower Canada, most humbly intreat your Excellency, to sanction their loyal intentions, and to receive their assurances, that they will unitedly and individually, at the risk of their fortunes and their lives, exert their utmost efforts, to suppress and totally extinguish that spirit of sedition which has pervaded certain circles in this district.⁶⁴⁴

As far as many American papers were concerned, this alleged loyalty to the crown was further evidence of the servile nature of Canadians. There remained a sense for many papers that Canadians were incapable of adopting the American identity as their inherent nature was not virtuous, but vicious. Their continuing support for the crown was just one more piece of evidence that Canadians were incapable of recognizing the benefits of the American form of government, like Americans were. And there seemed to be only one way to reconcile the differences. To most American newspapers, it appeared that both sides were preparing for war, and as the year dragged out, evidence of open conflicts along the border began to appear in the press, particularly between Canadians and the actual fourteenth American state, Vermont.

In August 1794, the *Connecticut Gazette* reprinted a piece from Vermont, which called Canadians "ignorant as hardly to be considered rational beings," surmising, "Our northern neighbours we do not esteem very highly; their arrogance, haughtiness and impudence, is such to those whom business calls into their Province, that I am positive no men ever would enter into a war with more cheerfulness and spirit than the Vermonters would against them, if the policy of the Union would admit of it and a call was given."⁶⁴⁵ Far starker than most distinctions drawn between Canadians and Americans in the American press, the accounts from Vermont clearly claimed that Vermonters considered Canadians to be an other. Canadians were almost subhuman in the way they were

⁶⁴⁴ *Massachusetts Mercury*, August 5, 1794.

⁶⁴⁵ *Connecticut Gazette*, August 28, 1794; *Philadelphia Gazette*, September 3, 1794; *General Advertiser*, September 4, 1794; *Guardian of Freedom*, September 4, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, September 6, 1794.

depicted. Lacking in all the qualities that made Americans, Canadians were ignorant and arrogant. Most Vermont papers called for their immediate destruction. In October, *Edwards's Baltimore Daily Advertiser* asserted that “The inhabitants of the western frontiers of this state [Vermont], are mostly ‘true bred Yankees’... and whatever alarm may be excited in the breasts of our brethren in New-England, from the late threats thrown out by the British in Canada, yet we can assure the public, that the inhabitants of these western counties, view with the utmost contempt, the puffing conduct of their Canadians neighbours.”⁶⁴⁶ In the *Advertiser*, the distinction was clear. Vermonters were “true bred Yankees,” exhibiting all the character traits that were quintessentially American. Their Canadian neighbours, however, were the antithesis of this, an other against which to define the character of “true bred Yankees.” The language used in the *Advertiser* was bold, painting Vermonters as the cradle of what it meant to be American. And in 1794, such language was perhaps necessary for convincing their fellow American states that they were a true part of the American identity at all. The Vermont Republic had made overtures to rejoin the province of Quebec during the Revolution, turning their allegiance fully to the United States only after the Revolutionary War ended in American victory. Vermont had only become a state in 1791, and prior to that point, Vermonters had been others, in many ways like the Canadians. Now that they were Americans, it was time to prove it. And so, the Vermonters were quick to state their loyalty to the union and contempt for the Canadians with whom they had previously sought to join. The account from the *Advertiser* continued, “Should they however, be foolish enough to continue their insults, it is to be expected, from the spirit of the people... that acts of violence will be committed, and perhaps blood be shed; and if this should be the case, it is not improbable, although our frontier citizens are entirely undisciplined, but that they will teach their old enemies to dance again, to the tune of the Battle of Bennington.”⁶⁴⁷ Though nothing new, the insults of Canadians were loud and intentional. Even newspapers that reacted with disbelief and urged caution were sure to get a dig in. The *Diary or Loudon's Register* argued of a rumoured skirmish between Canadians and

⁶⁴⁶ *Edwards's Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, October 3, 1794.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Vermonters, “A circumstance so improbable cannot surely sway the minds even of the most credulous. – There are not wanting, indeed, those who rejoice at opportunities to make insinuations unfavorable to the peaceful citizens of Vermont – to represent them as turbulent and headstrong, and anxious for a period to arrive when they can wreak their vengeance on the inoffensive Canadians.”⁶⁴⁸ Though the *Diary* portrayed the rumour as unfounded and surmised that “although it is well known that the citizens of Vermont, as well as those of every state in the Union, most cordially despise them, still I am convinced they have never taken the life of a British subject without sufficient provocation.” It still hedged, however, continuing, “Yet however improbable the truth of this report, there is notwithstanding a possibility that a transaction of the kind may have occurred; especially if the citizens of that province are as base and insulting in their conduct as their brethren at sea.”⁶⁴⁹ With Vermonters and Canadians at each other’s throats on the northern frontier and the British Canadians supplying the Western Confederacy on the western frontier, it seemed to most American newspapers that war was on the horizon. Canadians were no longer pseudo-republicans, waiting for their moment to throw off British tyranny, but hostile collaborators, bent on the destruction of liberty.

Though American portrayals of Canadians grew less extreme in the years following the Revolutionary War, they remained dismissive and othering. While American newspapers toned down their attacks on the Catholicism of French Canadians, often barely giving it passing notice, and though descriptions of Canadians fighting alongside the Western Confederacy were met with less racialization and bile, the American press stepped up its attacks on Canadian intelligence and character. Where Americans were skilled agriculturalists with vast and productive farms, Canadians were lazy serfs, unwilling to do the work required for improvement, satisfied with subsistence.⁶⁵⁰ Where Americans believed in free enterprise, Canadians were perfectly

⁶⁴⁸ *The Diary or Loudon's Register*, June 20, 1794

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁰ *New-Haven Gazette*, September 9, 1784.

willing to interfere with other nations' trade.⁶⁵¹ Where Americans were cultured and refined, Canadians were gruff and rude.⁶⁵² Where Americans prided themselves on their literacy and education, Canadians were satisfied in their illiteracy, untroubled by their small and religiously restrictive schools.⁶⁵³ Where Americans were reasoned and level-headed, Canadians were haughty and arrogant.⁶⁵⁴ Where Americans attempted to subdue what they viewed as an inferior race in western Indigenous nations, Canadians disguised themselves as Indigenous warriors to fight alongside them.⁶⁵⁵ In the late years of the Revolutionary War and the first years of the early republic, American opinion of Canada shifted, away from portraying Canadians as evil and toward portraying them as stupid, but the result was essentially the same. By portraying Canadians as ignorant and uncultured, American newspapers reinforced a sense of American superiority. Though Europeans were portraying Americans as coarse and uncouth, American papers reassured the American people that theirs was a civilized, sophisticated, and ascendant identity by defining it against its Canadian neighbour. Though the Canadians were just one of the many groups othered as a means of cementing American identity, it was an important one. Canadians were largely like Americans, settler colonists from European empires who had adapted to life in North America, but with enough key differences that they served as a useful counter example for establishing the American identity. Quintessentially, Americans were not Catholics like the French Canadians, nor were they

⁶⁵¹ *National Gazette*, December 8, 1791; *Connecticut Courant*, December 19, 1791; *New-Jersey Journal*, December 28, 1791; *Daily Advertiser*, January 26, 1792; *City Gazette*, February 7, 1792.

⁶⁵² *Independent Gazetteer*, February 16, 1787; *Carlisle Gazette*, March 7, 1787.

⁶⁵³ *Federal Gazette*, December 15, 1792; *Gazette of the United States*, December 15, 1792; *The Mail; or, Claypoole's Daily Advertiser*, December 17, 1792; *New Jersey State Gazette*, December 19, 1792; *The New-York Journal, & Patriotic Register*, December 22, 1792; *Potomak Guardian and Berkeley Advertiser*, December 24, 1792; *Connecticut Journal*, December 26, 1792; *Litchfield Monitor*, December 26, 1792; *Connecticut Gazette*, December 27, 1792; *Weekly Register*, January 1, 1793; *Western Star*, January 1, 1793; *Mirror*, January 7, 1793; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, January 7, 1793; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, January 7, 1793.

⁶⁵⁴ *Connecticut Gazette*, August 28, 1794; *Philadelphia Gazette*, September 3, 1794; *General Advertiser*, September 4, 1794; *Guardian of Freedom*, September 4, 1794; *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, September 6, 1794.

⁶⁵⁵ *Federal Gazette*, March 5, 1792; *National Gazette*, March 5, 1792; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 7, 1792; *The Freeman's Journal; or, The North-American Intelligencer*, March 7, 1792; *Maryland Journal*, March 13, 1792; *Morning Ray, or, Impartial Oracle*, March 13, 1792; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, March 20, 1792; *Albany Register*, March 26, 1792.

Anglican like the English Canadians. Americans did not intermix with Indigenous groups nor with the enslaved as the Canadians did. Of course, there were Catholic Americans and Anglican Americans. There were American frontiersmen who married into Indigenous nations and American slaveholders who assaulted their slaves, producing interracial children. Those were realities, however, not the ideal. What was important was the hegemonic model of what an ideal American was, and in terms of establishing that ideal, Canadians were incredibly useful. In Canadians, Americans found the foil against which to define themselves. Canadians seemed to be many things that Americans were not, and because of that, they were perfect exemplars of what an American was not. This served to both define the American identity, and to reinforce its value. In comparison with the purported Canadian identity, Americans were the cogent and learned equivalent of their European counterparts. Though contemporary Americans were not confident at that time that their identity was the superior of those European counterparts, they were at least confident that their identity was the superior or even the equal to the Canadian identity. In this way, portrayals of Canadian inferiority served to reinforce for Americans that theirs was an identity worthy of devotion, an identity worth defending, possibly from Canada itself.

The war with Canada that so many American newspapers had predicted in 1794 was to be delayed, however, as the following year Britain and the United States signed the Jay Treaty which resolved many of the problems that were festering between the two nations, particularly British occupation of the frontier American forts. The treaty, however, proved remarkably divisive as Federalists and Republicans began lining up in either support of or opposition to the legislation. Jeffrey L. Pasley has argued that during this era, the American press factionalized along similar lines as the American political establishment. He surmised that newspapers were vital to the success of political candidates, and essentially became the vehicle by which to organize political followers and espouse political thought. Because of this, he argued that the press became remarkably partisan, with subscriptions to certain newspapers often symbolically

associating a person with a particular political proto-party.⁶⁵⁶ Joanne B. Freeman has further examined the role of newspapers in the politics of the early republic, arguing that through the strategic employment of gossip, newspaper editorialization, and occasionally violent confrontation (often canings or duels), politicians actively manipulated their standing, as well as the standing of their allies and opponents. She argued that political socializing and gossip, newspaper and letter/pamphlet attacks, and in extreme cases the duel were used to defend or to shore up reputation, which was vital in the highly personal context of early American politics.⁶⁵⁷ Like opinion of the Jay Treaty, notions of Canada and Canadians were also split during this polarization of the American political system, and in the decade following the signing of the Jay Treaty, the theoretical ability of Canadians to assimilate and become Americans became one of many issues that divided the American press during the rise of the first party system.

⁶⁵⁶ Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers*, 11-12.

⁶⁵⁷ Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

Part 3: “Needy Lazy Ignorant Squatters,” 1794-1812

Chapter 5: “A Fine Fertile Country, Rich and Happy,” 1794-1805

Part Three of this dissertation explores the era between the signing of The Jay Treaty and the beginning of the War of 1812. In this period, portrayals of Canadians in the American press splintered and the unified image that had characterized depictions of Canadians in past generations largely disappeared. In its place emerged various competing images of Canadians, all built on the same understandings and stereotypes that had been evolving for decades but emphasizing different veins of positive and negative traits. Largely responsible for this splintering was the rise of the First Party System. The First Party System, which emerged in American politics around the time of The Jay Treaty, galvanized American public opinion around two poles. One, the Federalists, supported a strong central government with relatively little power resting in the hands of the states. The other, the Democratic-Republicans, supported a weak central government with most institutional powers falling to the individual states. Alongside such views of government, opinion of Canadians also polarized in the era. The Federalists, whose primary base lay in the northeastern states that bordered on Canada, largely took up the praise of their Canadian neighbours, and newspapers with Federalist tendencies often portrayed the Canadian character as one that reflected and resembled Americans' own self-identity. The Democratic-Republicans on the other hand, whose primary base lay in the southern and frontier states largely continued to criticize Canadians in general, with Republican-leaning newspapers often portraying the Canadian character as antithetical to the American identity. While these trends were not universal, they are evident throughout the American press, and understandably so. New Englanders had spent the years since the end of the Revolution cultivating trade relationships with the Canadians across the relatively permeable Canadian-American border, both English and French, intermarrying with them and sometimes transplanting to live in the Upper Canadian province. Their assessments of Canadians were, of course, far different from those cultivated by residents of the southern and frontier states. These states were pushing to the west, encountering Indigenous nations hostile to the expansion of the United States, as well as various French settler villages that had become “Canadian” following the French and Indian War.

As they often blamed Canadians, those along the St. Lawrence, those around the Great Lakes *and* those on the Louisiana frontier, for inciting surrounding Indigenous nations to war against the United States, southern and frontier Americans held a much more negative view of Canadians in general. As political discourse grew more and more partisan in the 1790s and onwards, the two sides took up what were in many ways their natural positions on Canada, with Federalists largely portraying Canadians as loyal and rational kin and with Democratic-Republicans largely portraying them as a racialized and dangerous other. What is perhaps surprising, then, is that opinion regarding whether or not Canada should be conquered and incorporated into the United States did not break down so nicely along party lines.

There was little consensus in either party on the question of whether Canada should be taken and added to the United States. In many ways, arguments regarding the conquest of Canada fractured around the turn of the nineteenth century, even within the two emerging parties themselves. Using positive portrayals, many Federalists argued that Canada should be taken to fulfill the wish of their kith and kin and create a fifteenth state, while many other Federalists argued against a bloody war with their friends and family residing in the border regions of Canada. Utilizing negative depictions, many Republicans contended that Canada should be taken to end the threat from the vicious and bloodthirsty group of mixed-race foreigners and British patsies that inhabited it, while many others argued that incorporating a population that was so un-American would undoubtedly infect and destroy the existing union of states. Though both parties largely confined themselves to positive or negative portrayals, the conclusions that they drew from these portrayals about incorporating Canada into the United States differed greatly. All the while, Canadians were caught in between two extremes. Some American newspapers portrayed them as savage, back-woods peasants unwilling to throw off their slavish devotion to arbitrary power, while others portrayed them as reasoned, liberty-loving friends who were Americans in all but official name. Some papers advocated a conquest of the Canadians to unite two peoples who were already so similar, while others argued that integrating the Canadians into the American public body would prove a cancer that would eventually infect the host. As had essentially always been the case, Canadians were what they needed to be to support the argument being made, and as such,

as the American political system polarized, the two parties that were vying for federal power differed in their use of Canadians.

For the first time around the turn of the nineteenth century, American-originating portrayals of the Canadian identity were not the only depictions reaching Americans through their newspapers. Canadians themselves began to have a voice in the American press. As more and more newspapers began to be published in Canada, particularly newspapers printed in English, the American press enjoyed growing access to seemingly hard evidence of Canadian public opinion, though many American newspapers perhaps rightly questioned the accuracy of opinion published in papers that faced significant degrees of censorship. For much of its early history, the Canadian press had essentially served as a mouthpiece for government, with papers heavily censored and editors relying on governors for their patronage. As such, there were legitimate questions as to how much of what was written in Canadian newspapers could be believed. Despite these concerns, as the Canadian press grew, it became increasingly possible to test the claims made by American newspapers against the opinion presented in Canadian newspapers, and increasingly difficult to argue that obvious discrepancies were merely a matter of press censorship. The rise of the Canadian press fundamentally changed the ways in which American newspapers portrayed Canadians. In addition to this change in the visibility of Canadian opinion, material conditions in Canada also changed quite drastically in the years before the War of 1812. An embargo pursued by the administration of Thomas Jefferson in 1807 led to a significant rise in the trade and economy of Canada by encouraging smuggling through the northern states and into Britain's Canadian provinces. Canada prospered mightily from the embargo, and this in turn fundamentally changed their opinions of joining the United States. By the time the War of 1812 broke out, the segment of the population that, it seemed, would welcome the Americans as liberators had dwindled away to almost nothing. From the beginning of the War of 1812 onwards, American depictions of Canadians would fundamentally change.

Following the war, there was little talk of a union between the regions, a situation that remains to this day. The outbreak of the War of 1812 marked the end of a period of significant change in American public opinion of Canada. From that point on, Canadian identity was no longer a theoretical premise in the American press, able to be shaped to

whatever purpose was called for, but rather it was a community with its own printed voice. As such, the Canadian identity proved much less efficient as a foil against which to define American identity. Canadians were no longer exactly what the American press needed them to be at any given moment, and as such, no longer served the purposes that they had in the eighteenth century. Though the American public mind would continue to use Canadians as an other, that other was no longer amorphous, and as such, was no longer ideal. Although no longer the ideal foil, Canadians remained an important other for American newspapers. The American press continued to utilize depictions of Canadians as a means of defining and reinforcing American identity throughout the era, with American newspapers pointedly deflecting negative European opinion of Americans onto the Canadians. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, European opinion of Americans was quite low. Americans were depicted as back-woods and rustic, dull and lazy, with a number of bad habits, like constantly spitting tobacco, no matter where they were. They were portrayed as pompous and arrogant, laughably believing themselves to be the equals of their European counterparts. All of these dispersions were simultaneously deflected by the American press onto Canadians. The exact accusations that Europeans made about the lack of American civility, American newspapers made about the lack of Canadian civility. In their use of tobacco, in their supposedly undeserved pride, in their laziness and stupidity, and in their hayseed, country lifestyle, the image that American newspapers presented to the American public regarding Canadians was a close reflection of the opinion of Americans that was circulating in Europe. Though European opinion stung many Americans, they could at least take pride that they were not as bad as the Canadians.

Chapter Five explores the era in which the 10-year Jay Treaty was in force. During that time, the Federalist and Democratic-Republican presses rapidly began to diverge from one another. Federalist leaning newspapers began to attack their political opponents, the Democratic-Republicans, while Republican leaning paper began to attack the Federalists. Increasingly, neither side was willing to search for common ground, and the press quickly polarized along with the First Party System. Highly influential in this process was the Jay Treaty itself. American opinion of the treaty was incredibly divided. Federalists tended to tout the treaty as a massive success, particularly as it went a great

way in normalizing relations with the British empire, with whom Federalists typically believed the United States needed to have as a close ally. Democratic-Republicans, meanwhile, tended to attack the treaty as a horrible failure, portraying it as the subjugation of the United States to their old master, the British. Republicans typically believed the way forward for American foreign relations lay in close ties with France, and so they recoiled from any sort of normalization with Britain. As the press polarized, so too did depictions of Canadians. In Federalist papers, they were typically portrayed positively, while Republican papers often maintained a negative view of their Canadian neighbours. In general, depictions of Canadians continued to grow less extreme in this period, though they remained based on the understandings and stereotypes that had been engrained by the American press for several decades. Canadians became dull, ignorant, and lazy in the pages of the American press. No longer bloodthirsty and conniving, Canadians were portrayed as languid and oblivious. Unlike Americans, Canadians were not focused on improving their lots or their land, but were satisfied to live in squalor. This image became even more engrained when the United States purchased the Louisiana territory in 1803. Seemingly because the province of Canada had been extended into the region following the end of the French and Indian War, the American press largely described the White, French inhabitants of the Louisiana territory as being Canadian, and as their view of these French settlers was remarkably low, the idea that Canadians were indolent and uneducated became further engrained in portrayals of Canada. As the threat from Canada seemed to diminish in the era of the Jay Treaty, with Britain relinquishing the western forts and increasing American immigration into Canada, portrayals of Canadians continued to transition away from the extremes that had characterized depictions during the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War. They remained, however, an important part of the process by which American newspaper editors defined the American identity. Americans were not like the peasant Canadians. Americans were hard-working and productive, the opposite of the lazy serfs that appeared in the press under the Canadian name. As had been the case for generations, Canadians remained a useful other, a valuable foil that was utilized repeatedly during the years of the Jay Treaty as a means of further refining boundaries of the American imagined community.

Though Canada became less of a potential threat in the era of the Jay Treaty, it continued to matter to Americans and to both the Federalist and Democratic-Republican parties. Opinion of the Jay Treaty was heavily dependent on political leaning, with Federalists strongly in favour, and Democratic-Republicans strongly against. As many aspects of the Jay Treaty related to Canada, Canadians remained prominently present and important in both Federalist and Democratic-Republican newspapers. Whatever political affiliation, American opinion of Canadians generally softened in the era of the Jay Treaty, but Canadians still remained an other, though a different kind of other. Canadians were no longer evil and bloodthirsty, but were still different. Portrayed as lazy and ignorant, Canadians continued to be used as a foil, one that could paint American superiority in broad strokes. Though opinion of Canada itself shifted quite dramatically, the usefulness of images of Canadians in the American press did not. The Canadian identity remained an identity that American newspapers used to define their own by contrast. Though its portrayal had evolved somewhat, Canada continued to matter to Americans in the decade of the Jay Treaty. Though they were no longer malevolent and malicious, they still were not anything like Americans.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw a dramatic split in the American press as the American political system divided itself into Federalist and Republican camps during the rise of the first party system in America. Jeffrey L. Pasley has argued that due to social mores that generally prevented politicians from actively campaigning for themselves, newspapers, and specifically newspaper editors, became the prime means of rounding up support for political candidates. As such, editors became de facto heads of early and developing political organizations which Pasley identified as proto-political parties, maintaining the organizations as politicians themselves came and went. Though newspaper editors essentially became the heads of political parties, Pasley further concluded that the editors themselves were never part of the elite. Because of their social position as artisans, these editors often took the brunt of the abuse from political

rivals in the elite.⁶⁵⁸ Many editors responded in kind, however, Joanne B. Freeman has argued that print and broadside attacks on opponents were staples of early American political culture in the fledgling days of the republic.⁶⁵⁹ Editors were skilled, and they often wielded an arsenal of salacious reporting, propaganda, fake news, and satire, the use of which grew more pronounced as the party system became engrained. The relatively universal world view that Charles E. Clark identified in the eighteenth century⁶⁶⁰ fractured in the early nineteenth century, producing two largely homogeneous spheres, each vying for ascendancy. Within these largely homogeneous spheres were further multiple local and regional variances. Trish Loughran has argued that these local and regional variants were far more important to the common American than any conception of national or party spheres.⁶⁶¹ Still, as Russ Castronovo has argued, ideas had a tendency to propagate in the American press.⁶⁶² The writings produced and printed in local and regional spheres throughout America tended to find a relatively large audience as they were often reprinted numerous times by papers across the country. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there were two emerging party presses looking to reprint anything that supported their own position. Those presses proved more than happy to amplify anything they found in the pages of like-minded newspapers if it had the potential to hurt the opposing party.

Despite this partisan political splintering, other factors were simultaneously strengthening the public sense of American identity and America's place in the world. One of these factors was the concept of citizenship. Denver Brunzman has argued that post-Revolutionary Americans began differentiating between subjects and citizens, asserting that citizens could be naturalized, and defining citizenship as consent as opposed to subjugation. For Brunzman, one of the central factors in this shift was British

⁶⁵⁸ Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers*, 11-17.

⁶⁵⁹ Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*, 66-85.

⁶⁶⁰ Clark, *The Public Prints*, 11.

⁶⁶¹ Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770–1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

⁶⁶² Russ Castronovo, *Propaganda 1776: Secrets, Leaks, and Revolutionary Communications in Early America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

impressment of American sailors. He argued that while relatively few American sailors were impressed into Britain's navy, the rise of the commercial press in this era made the impressment of American sailors into a nationwide issue. Brunsman argued that while impressment did not directly affect the majority of the American populace, newspapers and political propagandists and commentators turned the issue into one of national identity which influenced a shift in American notions of the proper relationship between the individual and state from one of subjecthood to one of citizenship.⁶⁶³ Douglas Bradburn also explored this conceptual shift from subjecthood to citizenship, arguing that the debates between Federalists and Republicans regarding the proper role of the centralized government and the proper power of the states along with the shifting popular definitions of citizen and subject culminated in the politics of the American Revolution. Bradburn further argued that this tension left aspects of the American political system and American conceptions of national unity unresolved until the American Civil War.⁶⁶⁴ As American newspapers began to shift definitions of what it meant to be an American toward notions of responsible citizenship and national unanimity, portrayals of Canadians often served as examples of the deficiencies of subjecthood. Canadians were othered as lazy and vain, servile to an oppressive power, and lacking the gumption to take on the full responsibilities of citizenship. As Americans came to think of themselves as active citizens of a free nation, they repeatedly emphasized that Canadians were not.

The Jay Treaty was signed in 1794 as an attempt to normalize relations between the United States and Great Britain. By the treaty, Britain agreed to surrender their western forts and both sides agreed to send key disputes regarding the payment of wartime debts being withheld by the United States (the ostensible reason why Britain had refused to relinquish the forts) to arbitration. The treaty normalized relations between Britain and the United States for at least ten years during the French revolutionary era, greatly angering France and helping to stoke bitter divides between the generally pro-French Jeffersonian Republicans who opposed the treaty and the generally pro-British

⁶⁶³ Denver Brunsman, "Subjects vs. Citizens," *Journal of the Early Republic* Vol 30 No 4, 2010, 557-586.

⁶⁶⁴ Douglas Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 18.

Hamiltonian Federalists who supported the treaty that had largely been designed by Alexander Hamilton. Press reception of the Jay Treaty depended largely on the political leaning of the newspaper or commentator that was examining it. To Federalist papers, it was an example of reasoned negotiation and level-headed compromise. To Republican papers, it was a betrayal of the Revolution and a public submission to British dominance.

One of parts of the treaty that received significant examination throughout the American press was Article Two, which read “His Majesty will withdraw all His Troops and Garrisons from all Posts and Places within the Boundary Lines assigned by the Treaty of Peace to the United States.”⁶⁶⁵ The long-awaited moment when Britain would remove its presence from America’s frontiers seemed to have finally arrived. Though this had been a goal of both Republicans and Federalists, the public reaction to Article Two often betrayed party loyalties. In August 1795, a contributor to the *New-York Gazette* defended the treaty, surmising in conclusion, that he had “gone through every objection to the second article, which is in any degree colourable, and I flatter myself have shewn not only that the acquisition made by it is of great and real value, but that it stands as well as a circumstance permitted, and is defensible in its details.”⁶⁶⁶ As far as Federalists were concerned, it was a treaty that deserved to be praised. The contributor, who signed Camillus, further asserted that “As an expedient of party, there is some merit in the artifice; but a sensible people will see that it is merely artifice. It is a false calculation, that the people of this country can ever be ultimately deceived.”⁶⁶⁷ By Camillus’s reckoning, the only objection regarding the treaty was that it made the Federalists look good, and this was unacceptable to Democratic-Republicans. As far as the author was

⁶⁶⁵ “Article Two,” The Jay Treaty, November 19, 1794.

⁶⁶⁶ *New-York Gazette*, August 22, 1795; *American Minerva*, August 22, 1795; *Daily Advertiser*, August 22, 1795; *Greenleaf’s New York Journal and Patriotic Register*, August 22, 1795; *Dunlap and Claypoole’s American Daily Advertiser*, August 24, 1795; *Gazette of the United States*, August 25, 1795; *Herald*, August 26, 1795; *Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser*, August 26, 1795; *Impartial Herald*, September 12, 1795; *North-Carolina Journal*, October 5, 1795; *Columbian Centinel*, January 30, 1796; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, February 6, 1796; *Andrews’s Western Star*, February 9, 1796; *Hampshire Gazette*, February 10, 1796; *Litchfield Monitor*, February 10, 1796; *Connecticut Journal*, February 11, 1796; *Hampshire Chronicle*, February 16, 1796; *Columbian Herald*, February 19, 1796; *American Mercury*, February 22, 1796; *Augusta Chronicle*, March 5, 1796

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

concerned, such arguments were transparent. Though the wording of the article was seemingly carefully crafted to not give offense to the British by asserting that their continued holding of the forts had been in violation of the Treaty of Paris, Camillus argued that the American people were intelligent enough to see the wording of the article for what it was. Supporters of the Jay Treaty were also quick to point to the fact that along with the British and American governments, the Canadian people also seemed well pleased by the treaty. In November of that year, the *Independent Gazetteer* reported that “The Canadians talk much of the pending treaty, wonder what the Americans can see in it to object to, but at any rate wish it may be ratified tho’ partially. They are very glad to hear of a settlement making here, and wish by all means to keep up a good understanding with it.”⁶⁶⁸ Little has been written in the historiography on the Canadian reception of the Jay Treaty, but as the treaty seemingly resolved many of the issues that were causing conflict between the regions (like the continued British presence in frontier forts and disputes regarding the border between Canada and the union’s newest state Vermont) it seems likely that the Canadian reaction would have been quite similar to that which the *Gazetteer* presented. As the treaty seemed to deal with those primary issues, and to deal with them in remarkably unique ways for the era (the Jay Treaty was one of the first instances of international arbitration), it made sense why the Canadians would “wonder what the American can see in it to object to.” Republican-leaning papers, however, found plenty to object to.

The primary grievance that Republicans had with Article Two was the tacit acceptance of the British occupation of the western forts. In July, *Greenleaf’s New York Journal and Patriotic Register* read:

Having stated in the preceding papers, the leading national points, which were supposed to make the objects of Mr. Jay’s negotiation; having shewn that the treaty leaves the greatest part of them untouched, and seals a release of indisputed rights, in order to procure in return a promise for the surrender of our own territory at a distant day, and a nugatory engagement for compensation to a few sufferers, whose cases may be peculiarly situated; while the rights of the nation,

⁶⁶⁸ *Independent Gazetteer*, November 28, 1795; *Jersey Chronicle*, December 5, 1795.

the great mass of the merchants and the whole body of seamen are shamefully abandoned.⁶⁶⁹

As far as *Greenleaf's* was concerned, the treaty did a disservice to the United States as it subtly implied that the British empire had the right to occupy the frontier forts. The contributor to *Greenleaf's* argued clearly that they did not, and the author shamed the Federalists for supporting such a horrendous concession. Four days later, the *Gazetteer* queried of Article Two of the treaty, "Does not this article contain a tacit confession, that Great Britain had a right to prevent our settlements within our own boundary line? Why was it not stipulated equally on the part of Great Britain, that she should be allowed to extend her settlements, at her discretion within the Canadian limits? She never would have stooped to such an insult."⁶⁷⁰ In the opinion of the *Gazetteer*, the United States were admitting defeat and resigning themselves to inferiority in their own backyard. It was something that, as far as Democratic-Republican newspapers were concerned, was a betrayal of what it meant to be American.

The free exchange of trade between the Canadas and the United States, along with stipulations granting American access to the western fur trade were often identified as key victories by Federalist-leaning newspapers, but they were ridiculed by Republican-leaning ones. In November 1796, the *Argus* surmised, "When the British treaty was under public discussion, the trade of Canada was strongly urged in its favor. Such the superficial reasoning of Chamber Politicians who seldom extend their ideas beyond the narrow limits of their scanty circumstances. Was the trade of six great nations to be sacrifices for the paulty [sic] profits of a few Canadian calfskins!"⁶⁷¹ Other papers agreed. The *American Intelligencer* noted "It is particularly worthy of calm remark on both sides of the Atlantic, that the exports of manufactures from Great-Britain to Canada in the year

⁶⁶⁹ *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register*, July 25, 1795; *Argus*, & *Greenleaf's New Daily Advertiser*, July 25, 1795; *Daily Advertiser*, July 29, 1795; *Courier*, August 1, 1795; *Gazette of the United States*, August 7, 1795; *Albany Register*, August 14, 1795; *Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser*, September 5, 1795.

⁶⁷⁰ *Independent Gazetteer*, July 29, 1795; *Aurora General Advertiser*, August 1, 1795.

⁶⁷¹ *Argus*. *Greenleaf's New Daily Advertiser*, November 29, 1796; *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register*, November 29, 1796; *Independent Chronicle*, December 12, 1796.

before mentioned (1791) was no more than 243,000 l. sterling, being less than one sixteenth part of our demand. In that small sum was included, of course, the supply of British manufactures for the Canadian Indian trade.”⁶⁷² Despite the feelings of many American printers, the economy of the Canadas was not as puny as was often claimed. Looking at Upper Canada, Douglas McCalla has summarized the growth of the province, “The newly arrived Loyalists took up lands along the upper St Lawrence and in the Niagara area in 1784-85, were sufficiently established by 1786 no longer to have to rely on government rations, and thereafter quite rapidly built an economy that was in a number of respects very successful.”⁶⁷³ One key indicator of the growing size of the Canadian economy was the rapid growth in the Canadian populations. McCalla estimated “the initial population of Loyalist settlers at about 6,000 by the fall of 1785... The most commonly met and reasonable figure for 1791 is 14,000... Militia returns suggest a population of 20,000 to 25,000 by 1794,” about one seventh the size of Lower Canada. Using wheat prices, McCalla further argued that the economy of Upper Canada rapidly transitioned to a successful, commercial wheat producing agricultural region, as he noted Lower Canada already was. This expanding economy was not reflected in the contemporary American press, however. The *Constitutional Telegraph* reassessed American trade with Canada in 1799, addressing the arguments of a Mr. Goodhue, one of the British representatives of the treaty, reading, “Mr. Goodhue says by the treaty we have got a perfectly free trade across the land and by means of the lakes with Canada, that we had not before, and that we would derive very great advantage from it, as we could supply its inhabitants with goods on better terms than the British or Canadian merchants could.” The address continued, however, “But I ask Mr. Goodhue, if this golden dream of his imagination has been realized? has the paltry trade afforded a supply to merchants trading to Canton? or has there been greater intercourse since than before that instrument came into operation?”⁶⁷⁴ Despite its growing size and importance, most

⁶⁷² *American Intelligencer*, August 30, 1796.

⁶⁷³ Douglas McCalla, “The ‘Loyalist’ Economy of Upper Canada, 1784-1806,” *Social History* Vol 16 No 32 (1983), 283.

⁶⁷⁴ *Constitutional Telegraph*, November 16, 1799.

Republican-leaning newspapers scoffed at the trade of Canada. As they had in the decade before the signing of the Jay Treaty, most American newspapers, both Republican and Federalists, largely discounted the Canadian economy as a trifle. Even as the Canadian economy expanded and enlarged, old prejudices against the Canadian people and their economy proved to have remarkable legs, lasting until the Embargo of 1807 stimulated the Canadian economy, as discussed below.

Similarly, American newspaper reports of the rebellious sentiments of the Canadian people did not disappear after the signing of the Jay Treaty, though their numbers did begin to dwindle. Often, the accounts that spoke of rebellion focused on the French Canadians in the lower province. In March of 1797, the *Eastern Herald* reported that “A letter from Boston, says, That information has been received from Quebec, that the French Canadians had been very troublesome, and that a regiment of British troops had been ordered across the river to quiet them.”⁶⁷⁵ The cause of this Canadian unrest, however, was not the same as it had been in the years immediately following the Revolution. Whereas in the decades preceding The Jay Treaty, the American press portrayed the United States as the nation to which the Canadians hoped to defect, in the late eighteenth century these portrayals shifted with France taking the place of primary instigator. In November 1796, the *Rutland Herald* informed readers, “We have various [sic] accounts of disturbances among the inhabitants of Canada, but we have not any accounts sufficiently accurate to lay before the public. The following are extracts from Gov. Prescott’s late proclamations, and they serve to show with certainty that the government of that province, are not without fears, respecting the public tranquility.”⁶⁷⁶ Prescott’s proclamation asserted that “diverse aliens and other evil disposed persons have lately manifested seditious and wicked attempts to alienate the affections of his majesty’s loyal subjects, by false representations of the cause and conduct of the persons at present exercising the supreme authority in France.”⁶⁷⁷ The proclamation argued that the French were attempting to foment rebellion in Lower Canada, an accusation that a decade before

⁶⁷⁵ *Eastern Herald*, March 30, 1797.

⁶⁷⁶ *Rutland Herald*, November 21, 1796.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

had been lobbed at the Americans. The address further surmised that there were “certain Frenchmen being alien enemys who are lurking and lie concealed in various parts of this province, acting in concert with persons in foreign dominions, with a view to forward the criminal purposes of such persons, enemies of the peace and happiness of the inhabitants of this province, and of all religion, government, and social order.”⁶⁷⁸ Obviously, Prescott considered these enemy aliens to be a threat, and because of that threat, the lieutenant governor ordered “all persons whosoever being subjects of France, who have arrived in this province since the first day of May, which was in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety four to depart this province, within the space of twenty days from the date hereof.”⁶⁷⁹ As far as the American press was concerned, where there was smoke, there was fire. The smoke of Prescott’s proclamation seemed to betray the flames of French Canadian rebellion that smoldered beneath it. Prescott seems to have felt that the French themselves were behind the unrest, and the American press generally agreed. As far as American newspapers were concerned, it seemed clear that the French intrigues were having the desired affect. The papers argued that the French Canadians, who had never truly given up their loyalty to France, were on the verge of establishing a French-allied Canadian republic. It was a thing the American press largely cheered.

American newspapers celebrated the idea of a Canadian republic for a number of reasons. For one it would have meant a blow to the British and a removal of the empire from North American shores. The press also celebrated the seeming rise in support for independence in Canada because it seemed to support the arguments that many newspapers had been making, that Canadians were tired of British tyranny and were on the brink of revolt. Americans had been trying to give the Canadians a push into rebellion for some time, and it seemed to many American newspapers that the new French republic would finally succeed at that task. In many ways, American newspapers subtly placed America alongside the French republic and British empire when they discussed the French intrigues amongst the Canadians or the British intrigues amongst Indigenous nations. Implicit in both discussions was the argument that the Canadians and Indigenous

⁶⁷⁸ *Rutland Herald*, November 21, 1796.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

peoples could not think for themselves and could not act with agency. Indigenous peoples were a relatively monolithic group in the American press, a group waiting on the frontiers like a coiled spring, ready at any time to be loosed by their old paymasters, the British. The sense was that Indigenous nations would act however the British directed them as they lacked the individuality to think on their own. Similarly, French Canadians were also a relatively monolithic group, still devoted to their old French culture, ready to act as the new French republic desired. They too largely seemed to lack the agency to think for themselves. Americans, on the other hand, had the individuality and the fortitude to seize their own destiny. Americans were not influenced by foreign intrigues like Indigenous peoples and the French Canadians were. And inherent in that idea was the understanding that America itself might also act as an influencer. If Canada was to become an independent republic made up largely of French Canadians who seemed to lack the individuality needed for decision making, the United States stood to have significant influence over that state. Whatever the outcome, it seemed to American newspapers that unrest in Canada was a positive thing for the United States, as in every crisis there was also opportunity.

The last few years of the eighteenth century saw significant French intrigue and seeming French Canadian discontent, which American papers revelled in. In June of 1798, the *Commercial Advertiser* of New York reported on an alleged disturbance in Three Rivers, Lower Canada, “About 10 o’clock of the evening of the 4th June, two British subjects (the sheriff of the district and a doctor) returning from dinner in celebration of his Majesty’s birth-day, at Arnold’s hotel, were insulted and knocked down in the street by two Canadians; who were soon assisted by many others,” continuing, “The English could muster only 4 or 5 – and notwithstanding the superior numbers of the Canadians, they could not get the better of the English. The cries of the disaffected Canadians were horrid – Enbas avec tout le sacré Anglois! – Tuer tout le sacré Anglois! Down with all the d-----’d English! Kill all the d-----‘d English!”⁶⁸⁰ No lives were lost

⁶⁸⁰ *Commercial Advertiser*, June 25, 1798; *Philadelphia Gazette*, June 27, 1798; *Spectator*, June 27, 1798; *Aurora General Advertiser*, June 28, 1798; *Telegraphe and Daily Advertiser*, June 30, 1798; *Litchfield Monitor*, July 4, 1798; *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, July 5, 1798; *Newburyport Herald*, July 6, 1798; *Herald of Liberty*, July 9, 1798; *Norwich Packet*, July 10, 1798; *Springer's Weekly Oracle*, July 14,

in this affray, but to Federalist newspapers it was further evidence that the French were inciting the Canadians to rebellion. In November 1796, the *Western Telegraphe* of Washington, Pennsylvania falsely reported that “the French, with seven hundred sail of the line and 5000 troops, had taken possession of the island of St. John’s in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. Our informant left Montreal on the 12th of October, on which day a body of 500 French Canadians came into Montreal in a state of insurrection.”⁶⁸¹ Though no such invasion had actually occurred, the *Telegraphe* continued, “While our informant lay at Kingston, he saw a gentleman who left Montreal two days later than he did, who asserted that on the day he left there, the French from the country, has assembled in much larger numbers than before, and that the whole cry was, ‘A la Guillotine.’”⁶⁸² There was indeed unrest amongst French Canadians regarding British rule at the time, and though the invasion of Montreal was untrue, the story reflected what was imagined to be happening in Lower Canada. Though the insurrection the *Telegraphe* mentioned was false, the circulation of reports in the American press seemed to predict imminent insurrection in Canada, and Federalist and Republican newspapers reacted quite differently to this supposed information. While Republican newspapers, which often praised France and supported closer relations with the republic, largely avoided the question of French interference in Canada, Federalist newspapers were quick to condemn French intrigue. And in 1797, news of a conspiracy centring on Revolutionary France and its intentions for Canada exploded through the American press.

Key to the conspiracy was an American from Rhode Island named David McLean. On June 6, 1797, the *Diary or Loudon's Register* published a letter from Canada

1798; *City Gazette*, July 18, 1798; *Green Mountain Patriot*, July 20, 1798; *Centinel Of Freedom*, July 31, 1798; *Columbian Museum & Savannah Advertiser*, August 3, 1798.

⁶⁸¹ *Western Telegraphe*, November 15, 1796; *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, November 18, 1796; *Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser*, November 18, 1796; *Federal Gazette & Balimore Daily Advertiser*, November 21, 1796; *Argus. Greenleaf's New Daily Advertiser*, November 22, 1796; *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register*, November 22, 1796; *New Jersey State Gazette*, November 22, 1796; *Centinel Of Freedom*, November 23, 1796; *Connecticut Journal*, November 23, 1796; *City Gazette*, December 1, 1796; *Norwich Packet*, December 1, 1796; *Columbian Herald*, December 2, 1796; *Middlesex Gazette*, December 2, 1796; *Weekly Oracle*, December 3, 1796; *Windham Herald*, December 3, 1796; *Newport Mercury*, December 6, 1796; *Stewart's Kentucky Herald*, December 6, 1796; *Columbian Museum & Savannah Advertiser*, December 9, 1796.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*

which read, “We have lately taken up a spy from your country in the pay of Mr. Adet: he is called General McLean, was born in Rhode Island, and has been several times in this province last summer to feel the pulse of the disaffected Canadians.”⁶⁸³ The letter continued, “This last visit, he was so daring as to aim at surprizing the garrison of Quebec whilst the change of quarters of the different regiments was taking place; but he reckoned without his host – the first man he opened his plan to at Quebec informed against him, and he is now in irons, and will shortly be tried.”⁶⁸⁴ Though seemingly found out rather quickly, the brazen scheme was all the more interesting to American newspapers as McLean was an American, though worries of causing offense to their southern neighbours does not seem to have factored into the Canadian reaction to the scheme. On July 1, the *Columbian Centinel* informed readers, “A gentleman from Canada mentions, that the people there have no doubt that the Court for the trial of High Treasons, which is to meet shortly at Quebec, will convict Mr. Adet’s spy (McLean) and that he will be executed. The Canadians universally detest Jacobinism.”⁶⁸⁵ More important for French Canadians than maintaining their relationship with the Americans was maintaining their relationship with the Crown. Any hint of support for the French Revolution had to be met swiftly. McLean was subsequently brought to trial where evidence was presented against him, including that he had a commission from Pierre-Auguste Adet, then a Revolutionary French minister in the United States, hidden in his shoe and that he had divulged a plan to raise and arm a force of Canadians, drug the watchmen at Montreal with laudanum, and overrun the city with pikes.⁶⁸⁶ The *Columbian Centinel*’s prediction proved accurate, as

⁶⁸³ *Diary or Loudon's Register*, June 6, 1797; *Gazette of the United States*, June 7, 1797; *Herald*, June 7, 1797; *Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser*, June 7, 1797; *Aurora General Advertiser*, June 8, 1797; *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, June 8, 1797; *Providence Gazette*, June 10, 1797; *Albany Register*, June 12, 1797; *American Intelligencer*, June 13, 1797; *Massachusetts Mercury*, June 13, 1797; *Connecticut Journal*, June 14, 1797; *Norwich Courier*, June 14, 1797; *Connecticut Gazette*, June 15, 1797; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, June 16, 1797; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, June 17, 1797; *Western Star*, June 19, 1797; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, June 20, 1797; *Hudson Gazette*, June 20, 1797; *Rising Sun*, June 20, 1797; *City Gazette*, June 24, 1797; *Medley or Newbedford Marine Journal*, June 30, 1797; *Columbian Museum & Savannah Advertiser*, July 11, 1797.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁵ *Columbian Centinel*, July 1, 1797.

⁶⁸⁶ *Minerva, & Mercantile Evening Advertiser*, August 15, 1797; *Porcupine's Gazette*, August 15, 1797; *Gazette of the United States*, August 17, 1797; *Salem Gazette*, August 18, 1797; *Amherst Village Messenger*, August 19, 1797; *Impartial Herald*, August 19, 1797; *Connecticut Courant*, August 21, 1797;

McLean was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to be drawn and quartered. McLean was subsequently hanged, and on August 25, *Spooner's Vermont Journal* carried a description of the execution. It read, "he hung 32 minutes, was then cut down, his head severed from his body by the common hangman, who held it up to the public as the head of a traitor, and small part of his bowels taken out and thrown into a fire for the purpose. The remainder of the sentence was not put in execution."⁶⁸⁷ Seemingly, enough of a statement had been made by the execution itself. Regarding that statement, the paper further reported, "It was said McLane [sic] would be rescued; but only a captain, lieutenant, 3 non-commissioned officers and 30 privates, attended the execution, to shew that government was not afraid of such an attempt."⁶⁸⁸ The trial and execution were meant to show the loyalty of the French Canadians to the British Crown. And in the end, no attempt was made to save McLean. Instead, Canadians gathered to watch the execution of a traitor who had been turned in immediately by loyal citizens. *Spooner's* recorded McLean's ominous last words as being, "You may think yourselves safe after I am out of the way, but you are much mistaken."⁶⁸⁹ Despite this prediction, however, French Canadians never rose up in an attempt to unite the region to Revolutionary France. Instead, they had done the opposite. As the *Diary* recorded, "the first man he opened his plan to at Quebec informed against him."⁶⁹⁰ Though American newspapers continued to question the loyalty of the Canadians, events like the arrest and trial of

Famer's Weekly Museum: Newhampshire and Vermont Journal, August 21, 1797; *Guardian or New Brunswick Advertiser*, August 22, 1797; *Medley or Newbedford Marine Journal*, August 25, 1797; *Middlesex Gazette*, August 25, 1797; *Federal Galaxy*, August 28, 1797; *Western Telegraphe*, September 5, 1797; *City Gazette*, September 5, 1797.

⁶⁸⁷ *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, August 25, 1797.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁰ *Diary or Loudon's Register*, June 6, 1797; *Gazette of the United States*, June 7, 1797; *Herald*, June 7, 1797; *Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser*, June 7, 1797; *Aurora General Advertiser*, June 8, 1797; *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, June 8, 1797; *Providence Gazette*, June 10, 1797; *Albany Register*, June 12, 1797; *American Intelligencer*, June 13, 1797; *Massachusetts Mercury*, June 13, 1797; *Connecticut Journal*, June 14, 1797; *Norwich Courier*, June 14, 1797; *Connecticut Gazette*, June 15, 1797; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, June 16, 1797; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, June 17, 1797; *Western Star*, June 19, 1797; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, June 20, 1797; *Hudson Gazette*, June 20, 1797; *Rising Sun*, June 20, 1797; *City Gazette*, June 24, 1797; *Medley or Newbedford Marine Journal*, June 30, 1797; *Columbian Museum & Savannah Advertiser*, July 11, 1797.

David McLean seemed to indicate that they were far more committed to the British Crown than most Democratic-Republicans were willing to accept. For many American newspapers, the focus had never really been on the French Canadians, but on the intrigues of the French republic. It was assumed that the Canadians, who were seen as lacking independent thought, would simply go along with whatever French plan was placed in front of them. Despite the fact that the plot centred on Canada, the Canadian people themselves were very rarely mentioned in American press references to the conspiracy. Federalist newspapers focused their attacks on the French republic and specifically on the American Republicans whom they alleged to be French sympathizers. Largely ignoring McLean's conspiracy, Republican papers focused their attacks on the Jay Treaty, contending that the Federalists had essentially surrendered and laid the groundwork for eventual American reabsorption into the British empire. Canadians were slowly being forgotten. As far as the American press was concerned, the Canadians were not active agents in the activities of North America, just as Indigenous peoples were no longer active agents. That was left to the United States, and its two parties who were increasingly finding themselves at odds with one another.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were an era of significant hostility between the Federalist and Democratic-Republican factions within the US government, and as Pasley has argued, much of this hostility played out in the public forum of the American press. Newspapers began to polarize, with editors serving in many ways as the heads of the political parties that were forming, maintaining their political loyalties as political leaders came and went.⁶⁹¹ Exactly where American newspapers fell within this polarizing system, however, was often quite vague. Generally, newspapers in the northern regions of the United States were largely pro-Federalists while newspapers in the southern and western regions were generally pro-Republican. In an era in which printers could face prosecution for the sentiment that appeared in their newspapers, many papers took relatively subtle stances, preferring to voice their support for whichever party was their choice by reprinting Federalist or Democratic-Republican articles that had

⁶⁹¹ Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers*, 15-17.

appeared in the unabashedly partisan papers. As the editors of those less-partisan papers had not printed the articles themselves, there seems to have been a certain degree of confidence that they were not falling befool of libel laws, particularly as they portrayed themselves as simply reprinting material that they expected would be of interest to their readers. They would but echo the voice from the primary party organs. Two such papers functioned essentially as mouthpieces of the parties: the *Gazette of the United States* and the *National Gazette*. Printed by John Fenno and supported by Federalists like Alexander Hamilton and Rufus King, the *Gazette of the United States* was strongly Federalist, serving in many ways as an organ of the party. Printed by Philip Freneau at the urging of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, the *National Gazette* was the Democratic-Republican response to the *Gazette of the United States*. These two papers often served as the vanguard of Federalist and Democratic-Republican sentiment, but they were not the only newspaper that wore their political allegiance on their sleeves. The *Philadelphia Aurora* of Benjamin Franklin Bach and William Duane was one such paper which strongly supported Thomas Jefferson and the Democratic-Republican party and vehemently denounced the Federalists, helping to get Jefferson elected in 1800. For the Federalists, William Cobbett printed *Porcupine's Gazette* and the *Political Register*, both of which levelled attacks at the Republicans. Like the *Gazette of the United States* and the *National Gazette*, some Federalist and Republican newspapers became primary rivals of one another, like the pro-Federalist *Columbian Centinel* and the pro-Republican *Independent Chronicle*. Alongside these strongly partisan newspapers, other less obviously aligned papers reprinted the articles and attacks that appeared in these larger and more polarized papers. And like almost every issue, the Federalist and Republican presses often disagreed vehemently in their opinion of Canadians.

Many of the same tactics that had been used to make Canadians the foil of Americans were quickly taken up in the partisan political attacks that filled the American press during the First Party System. As had been the case with portrayals of Canadians in the mid eighteenth century, newspaper contributors portrayed their political opponents as evil. The Federalist press often praised Britain subtly, comparing their conduct to what they defined as the treacherous ways of the French. In January 1801, the *Columbian Centinel* surmised, “we admit France to a free participation in our trade, and in any and

all the territories which we now or may hereafter possess: But France with all her boasted regard for free commerce, still adheres to the narrow and niggardly policy of excluding foreigners from her colonies.” But this was just one of the *Centinel*’s complaints, as it continued, “We are not permitted to go to the French West-India though that trade is worth more to us than all the other trade of France. It is the only French market for the produce of the northern States. – What think you of this Farmers?”⁶⁹² By comparison, the *Centinel* contended that “On the other hand Great-Britain offered us a limited trade to her colonies – and freely admits us to her Canadian possessions.”⁶⁹³ A February 1797 article which cautioned Americans to “respect yourselves, oppose foreign influence, support your [Federalist] government with your lives and fortunes, and drive faction beyond the ocean, to countries where it will be more likely to thrive,”⁶⁹⁴ appeared in the *Massachusetts Mercury* and compared Great Britain and France directly. Among those comparisons, the paper contended, “Great-Britain is our Mother Country; and although she has formerly conducted towards us like an unnatural parent; yet we inherit the dispositions, feelings, language, manners and religion of our Ancestors,” while “France, from the first settlement of this country, until of late years, was considered our natural enemy – our habits, characters, manners, language and religion are in all respects dissimilar to those of her people.”⁶⁹⁵ For most American newspapers, Canadians were a close reflection of the French, differing as they did from Americans in “habits, characters, manners, language and religion.” The *Mercury* further opined, “Great-Britain, having a claim to the jurisdiction of her Colonies, once made war upon us; in the progress of which, many cruelties and outrages were committed,” but argued further that “France, after having by solemn treaty relinquished all claims to jurisdiction, in a time of profound peace, instigated the Canadians and Savages to spread fire and desolation through our infant settlements; & eventually made a war upon us, that was distinguished by its

⁶⁹² *Columbian Centinel*, January 7, 1801; *Philadelphia Gazette*, January 20, 1801; *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, January 22, 1801; *Green Mountain Patriot*, January 22, 1801; *Windham Herald*, January 23, 1801; *Amherst Village Messenger*, January 24, 1801.

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁴ *Massachusetts Mercury*, February 14, 1797; *Independent Chronicle*, February 23, 1797.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

horrors and barbarities, as the histories, narrative, and sermons of that day abundantly prove.”⁶⁹⁶ Those were the Canadians as influenced by the French, however. Influenced by the British, the Canadians seemed to have changed. To Federalist papers, Canadians were a formerly barbarous threat who had become a useful enlightened link between the United States and Great Britain. In Republican papers, they were again vicious pawns of the great British evil.

Republican-leaning newspapers largely fell back on tropes of Canadians from earlier in the century. First Nations, French Canadians, and English Canadians were once more depicted as backwoods barbarians, menacing the American frontier. In August 1795, the *American Gazette and Norfolk and Portsmouth Weekly Advertiser* asserted that “The British interfered insidiously, and as they pleased managed the Indians against us. The consequences were, that the commissioners came home baffled, and the western army had to thrash the Indians, English, and Canadians, as every person knows.”⁶⁹⁷ The *Advertiser* made it clear that the Canadians were part of the enemy, and thus not a candidate to become Americans. The basis for their exclusion from the American identity was no longer based on their French culture or religion, however. Attitudes amongst Americans, particularly attitudes amongst Republicans, had shifted remarkably, particularly following France’s turn to republicanism. The *Advertiser* espoused its support of the French republic, calling the French Revolutionary Wars “the most unjust war the universe ever saw, except that by Milton of Lucifer against God; I mean the present combination of England and her satellites against the invincible French.”⁶⁹⁸ The problem American newspapers like the *Advertiser* had with the Canadians was not the fact that they were French, but the fact that they had become stooges of their British conquerors. Republican papers, particularly before news of the McLean conspiracy began to circulate, praised the French while demonizing Canadians as vicious British pawns. Canadians were once again a force on the frontier, particularly French Canadians who it

⁶⁹⁶ *Massachusetts Mercury*, February 14, 1797; *Independent Chronicle*, February 23, 1797.

⁶⁹⁷ *American Gazette and Norfolk and Portsmouth Weekly Advertiser*, August 28, 1795; *Greenleaf’s New York Journal and Patriotic Register*, September 5, 1795; *Argus, & Greenleaf’s New Daily Advertiser*, September 5, 1795.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

was believed still wielded significant influence amongst the western Indigenous nations. As they usually did in times of conflict, American newspapers turned back to the old stereotypes of Canadians as frontier brutes, with Republican papers leading the charge. In March 1795, *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register* told of a purported British plan to attack America, "Dorchester was to sound the tawny savages on the frontiers, and encourage them to sharpen the scalping knife and tomahawk, for business was soon expected! The repeated insults and wanton cruelties practiced by the Britons in the West-Indies, and on the high seas, to American citizens, fully indicated their revengeful and murderous intentions." The Canadian officials were still portrayed as controlling Indigenous nations and inciting them to violence. The paper concluded of Dorchester's efforts, "the Almighty Rule of Nations frustrated these perfidious designs against American liberty. – France was Successful – and the United States are still free."⁶⁹⁹ In the view of Republican papers, France had opposed British tyranny, a tyranny which they felt was also encroaching on the United States. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Republican newspapers revived Ogden's account of Canada, emphasizing his view that, once the province was populated, "Great Britain may always hold a Rod over The Heads of the American States, and Keep Them In Awe,"⁷⁰⁰ as evidence of British malfeasance. Republican papers contended that this was the viewpoint of an avowed enemy.

As they had from the Revolution onward, many Americans looked on Canada as a threat because it was in the hands of the British. And many American newspapers further surmised that this was exactly what the British empire wanted. In August of 1799, the *Aurora General Advertiser* contended that "This system of keeping a rod over the head of America is perfectly in the style of a master rather than a friend."⁷⁰¹ The British possession of Canada was a significant threat, but by the *Aurora's* estimation, it was not

⁶⁹⁹ *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register*, March 11, 1795.

⁷⁰⁰ *Aurora General Advertiser*, September 9, 1799.

⁷⁰¹ *Aurora General Advertiser*, August 31, 1799; *Argus*, September 3, 1799; *Times*; and *District of Columbia Daily Advertiser*, September 7, 1799; *Universal Gazette*, October 3, 1799; *City Gazette*, October 8, 1799; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy, Or Worcester Gazette*, October 30, 1799; *Federal Spy*, November 12, 1799; *Hampshire Gazette*, November 20, 1799; *Green Mountain Patriot*, November 21, 1799.

the only one. In September, the paper published a more full-throated attack on Great Britain and its intrigues, alleging that a British party had been formed within government. The *Aurora* argued, “We see then it is a solemn truth, fellow citizens, that, an arrangement to form A Party in America has been Long made by Great Britain. We see too that their own Government has openly, formally, and in an unqualified manner, declared and recorded that a British party has been long formed in America.”⁷⁰² The use of the term “party” in the article was meant to be derogatory. Though the Federalist and Democratic-Republican parties understood themselves as political coalitions, they shied away from referring to themselves as parties, reserving the term for their opponents. The term “party” was loaded in early America, implying disloyalty to the whole. In his farewell address in 1796, George Washington said that while political parties “may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.”⁷⁰³ Given the respect most Americans held for Washington, identifying oneself as a party was a politically dangerous move. And so, while they behaved as parties in almost every way, both the Federalists and Republicans bristled at accusations that they comprised a party. The *Aurora* continued, “‘Tis even so, and yet they affect to call us a French party! – Thus it ever is. – The worst offenders always clamour first at those they oppose, for the very offences they are at the moment engaged in perpetrating. Hence has arisen the shrewd old saying, ‘that the greatest Rogue, cries Rogue first;’”⁷⁰⁴ As Federalist papers accused Republicans of being secretly in league with republican France, Republican papers accused Federalists of being secretly in league with monarchical Britain. The *Federal Orrery* contended in 1795 that instead of banishing Britain from America, the Federalists had “put him to quarrelling with France. The truth is, that they cannot do without him, and so have bribed him, to stay and fight, by giving him all the Canadians,

⁷⁰² *Aurora General Advertiser*, September 9, 1799.

⁷⁰³ George Washington, “Farewell Address,” September 17, 1796.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

all the old Tories, nine-tenths of the Indians, and old traitor Arnold into the bargain.” As they had done to the British and to the Canadians, many Republican newspapers now began to associate their Federalist enemies with the racialized others they had previously used to demonize the British and the Canadians. The *Orrery* contined, “To crown all, they now make Washington both God and man, or godlike, and say that he was sent into the world on purpose to suffer the fatigues of an arduous and lengthy war, because the British, or rather brutish king, endeavored to enslave them.”⁷⁰⁵ The signing of the Jay Treaty only further enflamed anti-British sentiment in the Republican camp, and such sentiment often spilled over into portrayals of Canadians. Many Republican papers harkened back to portrayals of Canadians as servile frontier brutes, no longer enslaved to French Catholicism, but rather subjugated by British despotism.

Though American newspapers had largely abandoned attacks on Canadian Catholicism by the turn of the nineteenth century, they continued to emphasize what they perceived as a lack of genuine spirituality amongst Canadians. The *Salem Register* surmised, “The labours of the French missionaries in the interior of Canada were great, but from some cause they have been fruitless. According to McKenzie in most places all trace of their labours are lost.”⁷⁰⁶ Quoting McKenzie, the paper read, “By bearing the light of the Gospel, at once, to the distance of two thousand five hundred miles from the civilized part of their colonies, it was soon obscured by the cloud of ignorance that darkened the human mind in those distant regions.” This cloud of ignorance fit nicely with contemporary views of Canadians. As they were in their agriculture, Canadians were portrayed as being lazy and uneducated in their religion. Not all of Canada was considered to be under an equal “cloud of ignorance,” however. The areas along the St. Lawrence, which had a long European presence, were considered more civilized and religiously devout than the frontier, where many American newspapers felt that civilization had not yet reached. Those areas of Canada that did not have a long history of European colonization, areas like Upper Canada and the western frontier, were seen as

⁷⁰⁵ *Federal Orrery*, May 21, 1795; *Medley or Newbedford Marine Journal*, June 5, 1795.

⁷⁰⁶ *Salem Register*, April 16, 1804; *Philadelphia Evening Post*, April 27, 1804; *Charleston Courier*, May 11, 1804.

places largely devoid of religion. The *Register* continued of that region, “The whole of their rout I have often travelled, and the recollection of such a people as the missionaries having been there, was confined to a few superannuated Canadians, who had not left that country, since the cession to the English in 1763, and who particularly mentioned the death of some, and the distressing situation of them all.”⁷⁰⁷ This lack of religious devotion stood in clear contrast to Americans, who were perceived as devout and learned. By criticizing Canadians for their seeming lack of genuine religion, American newspapers stressed that Americans were religiously committed and fervent. And above that, Americans were genuine in their religion devotion. This differed greatly from prevailing opinions about religion in Canada. Even where religion seemed well established, some American newspapers questioned its authenticity. In an article titled, “Another Fracas, after prayers,” the *Albany Centinel* reported about an American gentleman attending church in Upper Canada, “As he was going into Church one Sunday, he saw two Canadians in dispute, & angry with each other. Divine service being about to commence, they went in and attended, to all appearance devoutly. Public solemnities being ended, they met upon the doorstep, and there, before the whole congregation, had a hearty Boxing-Match.”⁷⁰⁸ This exemplified American beliefs about Canadian religion. They went about the motions as they had been taught to, but they lacked a true commitment to their faith. Such a people could never hope to become Americans. As the Second Great Awakening dawned and religion persisted as an increasingly important part of the American identity, newspapers in the United States began to portray Canadians not as evil Catholics, but as ingenuine and irreligious. As with many aspects of the perceived Canadian character, this excluded them from joining the American identity, an identity believed to have genuine faith at its heart. During the era of The Jay Treaty, most of the American press concluded that there was no place within the American union for the Canadians. A few American papers, however, disagreed.

⁷⁰⁷ *Salem Register*, April 16, 1804; *Philadelphia Evening Post*, April 27, 1804; *Charleston Courier*, May 11, 1804.

⁷⁰⁸ *Albany Centinel*, April 16, 1805; *New-York Gazette*, April 20, 1805; *New Hampshire Sentinel*, May 4, 1805.

In the first years after the signing of the Jay Treaty, a few American papers continued to assert, as they had during the Revolution, that Canadians were merely Americans in waiting. On June 4, 1796, the *Independent Gazetteer* reported the arrival of two trading boats, informing readers, “The persons on board speak in the highest terms of the friendship manifested by the inhabitants of Canada, towards the citizens of the United States.”⁷⁰⁹ On the 28th of that same month, the *Salem Gazette* read, “We hear that the Canadians discover a very favourable disposition towards the settlements from our States in their neighbourhood. Allied by kindred, many of them desired to be united with us as a nation. They are happy to be allied by the peace between both nations.”⁷¹⁰ The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Canadian-American border region was indeed a region where cross-border friendship and kinship was common. Jane Errington has argued that Canadians, Upper Canadians in particular, felt as though they had deep ties, ties which had survived moments of tension surrounding the border.⁷¹¹ As Lower Canada was becoming increasingly incorporated in the British empire and marketplace,⁷¹² there was a view amongst Americans that the inhabitants of Upper Canada were drawing closer to them. Though it had been established in the Treaty of Paris in 1783 and surveyed as part of The Jay Treaty, the Canadian-American border remained relatively permeable, and as such, significant ties formed between the people living on the two sides of a border that was relatively unimportant to those living beside it. Alan Taylor has argued that inhabitants of this border region formed a unique regional identity was that largely cross-border, an identity that often held more sway in border regions than federal politics and political identities until the violence of the War of 1812 eventually sundered it.⁷¹³ It was often from these regions that calls for Canadian and American unity were the

⁷⁰⁹ *Independent Gazetteer*, June 4, 1796; *Boston Price-Current*, July 4, 1796; *Augusta Chronicle*, July 9, 1796.

⁷¹⁰ *Salem Gazette*, June 28, 1796; *New-Jersey Journal*, July 6, 1796; *Albany Gazette*, July 8, 1796; *Albany Register*, November 28, 1796.

⁷¹¹ Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987).

⁷¹² Nancy Christie, “Merchant and Plebeian Commercial Knowledge in Montreal and Quebec, 1760–1820,” *Early American Studies* Vol 13 No 4 (2015), 856.

⁷¹³ Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2011).

loudest. Some newspapers argued outright for the assimilation of Canadians who wished to join the United States. In May 1796, the *Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser* asserted, “There were not more than two or three thousand people chiefly French Canadians and their descendants at Detroit, and they would, no doubt, all wish to become citizens of the United States,” continuing, “They will find it their interest to become citizens, and will not remain aliens, Has it not been the general policy and practice with us to facilitate naturalization of foreigners, those people will soon wish to enjoy natural rights, which is so deeply impressed in the human breast.”⁷¹⁴ While such warm sentiment faded with time, it still appeared occasionally in the final years of the eighteenth century. In July 1798, the *Otsego Herald* surmised that “the Canadians are very generally well disposed towards the United States,” and contended, “the Canadians, and even the Tories, were united in the sentiment, that the cause of the United States is just; and that a disposition is evinced in the latter to purchase lands & remove into our Territory; declaring that they will, in that case, stedfastly [sic] support our Constitution.”⁷¹⁵ In some American newspapers, Canadians were portrayed as progressing, and those papers hoped that one day they would be so much improved, that they would be able to join and fully appreciate the United States.

Some American newspapers further portrayed the land of Canada as similarly improving around the turn of the nineteenth century. In rather sharp contrast to descriptions of the desolate and cold regions of the north that circulated in the American press in the mid-eighteenth century, in April 1798, the *Albany Chronicle* published a

⁷¹⁴ *Philadelphia Gazette & Universal Daily Advertiser*, May 4, 1796; *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, May 10, 1796; *Register of the Times*, November 25, 1796.

⁷¹⁵ *Otsego Herald*, July 19, 1798; *Commercial Advertiser*, July 26, 1798; *Carey's United States' Recorder*, July 28, 1798; *Spectator*, July 28, 1798; *Gazette of the United States*, July 30, 1798; *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, August 1, 1798; *Columbian Centinel*, August 1, 1798; *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, August 1, 1798; *Philadelphia Gazette*, August 1, 1798; *Telegraphe and Daily Advertiser*, August 2, 1798; *Times*; and *District of Columbia Daily Advertiser*, August 3, 1798; *Providence Gazette*, August 4, 1798; *Time Piece*, August 6, 1798; *Impartial Herald*, August 7, 1798; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 7, 1798; *Windham Herald*, August 9, 1798; *Salem Gazette*, August 10, 1798; *Green Mountain Patriot*, August 10, 1798; *Herald of the United States*, August 10, 1798; *Amherst Village Messenger*, August 11, 1798; *Federal Galaxy*, August 11, 1798; *Farmers' Register*, August 15, 1798; *Daily Advertiser*, August 16, 1798; *City Gazette*, August 17, 1798; *Evening Courier*, August 17, 1798; *Columbian Museum & Savannah Advertiser*, August 21, 1798; *Litchfield Monitor*, August 22, 1798; *Georgetown Gazette*, August 28, 1798; *Oriental Trumpet*, August 29, 1798.

description of Canada which began, “Travellers have always visited Canada with rapture. A fine fertile country, rich and happy, affords a thousand scenes for amusement. The fancy can scarcely imagine a more delightful region.”⁷¹⁶ This depiction was a far cry from the barren, frigid wilderness that typically comprised portrayals of the Canadian climate and geography. Like the Canadians, American press portrayals of Canada itself were also always changing. The *Chronicle* reported, “The noble river St. Laurence, passing through a champain [sic] territory, is adorned, on each side, with one continued chain of settlements – or rather, one village, for nearly four hundred miles. The cities of Quebec and Montreal, the parish churches, parish houses, and more compact clusters near them, furnish a great variety of edifices, worthy the attention of strangers.” These were not the homes of ignorant peasants, but homes built with skill and determination, the same skill and determination that was indicative of the American character. The paper continued in its description of Quebec, “the benevolent heart is charmed with a sight of that noble charity, the general hospital, an asylum for the sick and poor; supported, endowed, and attended, by pious, venerable females, - an institution exceeded by few in its noble acts of humanity.”⁷¹⁷ The humanity that was exemplified in the general hospital was perhaps reminiscent of the humanity that American soldiers had shown the Canadians’ women and children following the Conquest. In the description from the *Albany Chronicle*, Canada seemed a place that was very nearly like the United States, inhabited by a people that were very nearly like Americans. And the fact that the hospital owed its success to women was not lost on the *Chronicle*.

This article from the *Albany Chronicle* is one of the few contemporary articles that mention Canadian women in any detail, and as far as the paper was concerned, Canadian women were near facsimiles of the idealized American women, the republican mothers. The paper praised Canadian women for their literacy, considered by many in the era a characteristic of civilization. Female literacy was also a point of pride for Americans. By the paper’s reckoning, however, the same, unfortunately, could not be said for Canadian men. The *Chronicle* surmised, “While the young men are debarred in

⁷¹⁶ *Albany Chronicle*, April 9, 1798.

⁷¹⁷ *Ibid.*

some degree, for want of colleges and proper endowments for them, of the benefits of a liberal education – great care is taken by the females of the younger part of their sex. In the cities ample provision is made for every rank; for rich and poor. The nunneries are chiefly for education, or for hospitals,” concluding, “In large villages, female academies, or large schools, under the direction of their own sex, are erected. These public regulations are so contiguous to the inhabitants, so easy to be obtained, and the expence so small, that it may be said, that no country appears to be better prepared for making females wise and virtuous.”⁷¹⁸ Canadian women were portrayed as idealized American women; pious and benevolent, literate educators. As notions of republican motherhood became fundamental to conceptions of American identity, Canadian women were portrayed as similarly “wise and virtuous,” a good foundation on which to form a new republic.

The view of women presented in the *Chronicle* is quite similar to the view of women presented in the 1721 work *Persian Letters* by Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu. As Patricia B. Arbuckle has noted, “Montesquieu sees [an] important role for women as an example of virtue to the rest of society. Montesquieu considers public incontinence of women one of the greatest dangers to any government because it is an indication of a more general corruption of morals in the society.”⁷¹⁹ Montesquieu argued that a people’s level of civilization could be determined by the condition of their women, and as far as the *Chronicle* was concerned, a look at Canadian women indicated that Canada was a civilized place, or at least it was civilizing.

In terms of the land itself, the *Chronicle* praised American farmers for much of the improvement. The paper reported that “Settlements are rapidly making in the neighborhood of Vermont, by emigrants from the States. The enterprize, hardy industry, perseverance, and prolific habits of New-England men, will soon convert the territory South of the St. Laurence into English settlements.” By the paper’s estimation, Americans would continue to flow into Upper Canada until the region had an even more

⁷¹⁸ *Albany Chronicle*, April 9, 1798.

⁷¹⁹ Patricia B. Arbuckle, “Montesquieu’s Treatment of Women in his Works,” MA Thesis, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1974, 7.

distinctly American character. And then, seemingly, the natural union between the regions would happen. The *Chronicle* asserted that “If those provinces are to become part of the States, and liberty and independence flourish there, the numerous settlers who annually remove thither, will accomplish such an event more effectually than an army.”⁷²⁰ Though many American papers would disagree, the *Chronicle* argued that Canadians could be turned into Americans, particularly if the American transplants continued to improve the country by such great degrees. In the eyes of the *Chronicle*, Canada was a place that showed significant potential, its people likewise. Ultimately, the paper informed readers, “To obtain any just idea of the Canadas, we must journey through them. The politeness of every order is great; the respectful attention of the Indians and the peasants, exceeds that of countries and men who boast of their happier privileges,” concluding with the assurance that “To have made the tour of America, will soon be as important an object, as once for us to have made the tour of Europe.”⁷²¹ As more and more Americans emigrated into Canada, the American press assumed the character of the region would drift toward that of the American identity. British and Canadian papers made the opposite argument.

As far as British papers were concerned, it was the American transplants who were going to have their identities altered. In October of 1800, the *Bee* of New London, Connecticut, reported, “A British Niagara paper of the 8th ult. says that upwards of four hundred waggons, with families, have passed from the United States into that province in the space of little more than four weeks. The reasons for this emigration the Canadian editor details as follows.”⁷²² The paper then quoted the Canadian editor as contending that:

When illiberal restraints and menacing terrors breathe in the laws themselves, and the executors and expounders of these laws sit awful with the circumstance of transportation, prisons, and controled presses, the dreadful instruments of oppression in the hands of parties or usurpers, the unhappy citizen, dejected, turns his eyes to happier retreats, and sighs for plenty, security and peace; and these he

⁷²⁰ *Albany Chronicle*, April 9, 1798.

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*

⁷²² *Bee*, October 1, 1800.

sees near the pleasant regions of the Grand River, and the still more fertile banks of the charming Thames.⁷²³

The region that the Canadian editor was referring to was Upper Canada, an area now comprising southwestern Ontario, in the basins of the Grand River and Thames River, and the ways that the editor presented the United States was an almost a mirrored image of the ways that American papers presented Canada. As far as the Canadian editor was concerned, it was the U.S. that had oppressive laws, the U.S. that lacked a free press, and the U.S. that was behaving like an oppressor. Although they touted the many Americans transplanting to Canada, the Canadian editor was also concerned that their deficiencies might be transplanted along with the American settlers. The editor continued, “Your terrors and discouragements are articles of your own manufacture, and heaven grant they may be solely for home consumptions,” concluding of those “terrors and discouragements” that “Though they may run well across the river Styx, they will not cross the Niagara; our ferries have sufficient employ in transporting better cargoes.”⁷²⁴ Those cargoes were American citizens who had realized the advantage of the Canadian system. As American newspapers argued that patriotic Americans were immigrating into Canada and turning the province toward American-style republicanism, Canadian newspapers argued exactly the opposite, that it was in fact disaffected Americans that were emigrating into Canada, in turn strengthening the local community’s loyalty to the British government. As far as Canadian papers were concerned, Americans were not coming to Canada in hopes of improving it, but rather in hopes of finding the freedoms that they had been promised, but also denied, in the United States. Though some American newspapers like the *Bee* explored such Canadian sentiment, most did not. Portrayals of Canada in the American press were slow to change, and in the vast majority of American papers, including many that yet supported the conquest of Canada, Canadians remained ignorant and dull.

⁷²³ *Bee*, October 1, 1800.

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*

This seeming Canadian incompetency was often blamed on the state of education within French Canada. While the *Albany Chronicle* had praised the state of women's education in the province, it was far less complimentary about men's education. The paper surmised, "The society of Jesuits had erected and endowed large colleges for extending literature, but their estates were seized upon at the conquest – their colleges are converted to prisons, barracks, and courts of justice. Hence it is that learning has not made its desired progress in Canada."⁷²⁵ This was a common source of blame for Canadians' purported illiteracy in the late eighteenth century. The *Republican Star* contended that "The anglo-federalists ought to remember British clemency and love for literature, when they took the property of the Roman Catholics, at the conquest of Canada, which was employed in instructing youths in the varied branches of literature and liberal science; and gave it to the general who reduced the country to British domination, as his property in fee." Interestingly, this move by the British against the Roman Catholic clergy would likely have been applauded by pre-Revolutionary English Americans. Times had changed by the post-Revolutionary era, however, and now the confiscation of the clergy's libraries was painted as an atrocity that had stifled learning across Canada. And the *Star* further argued that this was intentional. The paper concluded that "literature has been checked in its progress in that province, lest knowledge should embolden them to assert their rights."⁷²⁶ Reporting on Chief Justice Woodward's travels to Canada, the *Salem Register* informed readers that in an address to the people of Canada, the justice, "Congratulates them on their privileges, and reminds the Canadians of the happy change in their condition... but directs the attention of the friends of that country to the necessity of Schools, and of the laws which might oblige the inhabitants to establish them."⁷²⁷ The condescension with which Woodward addressed the Canadians was indicative of the ways that American newspapers addressed Canadian education in general. These attacks cemented the idea that, in their learning, Canadians were nothing like Americans, and had a long way to go if they wanted to catch up. As literacy and

⁷²⁵ *Albany Chronicle*, April 9, 1798.

⁷²⁶ *Republican Star*, September 21, 1802.

⁷²⁷ *Salem Register*, November 25, 1805.

education were growing in importance as fundamental aspects of the American identity, American press portrayals of the lack of proper education in Canada served to reinforce education as integral to the American character. In so doing, it also wrote Canadians out of that American identity, portraying their lack of education as a clear disqualification.

Vanity and undeserved arrogance were also purported aspects of the Canadian identity which American newspapers cheerfully panned. In February of 1800, the *South-Carolina State Gazette, and Timothy's Daily Advertiser* printed an examination of cultural arrogance in general, arguing that "Upon the whole, vanity and self conceit are equally predominant in all nations. The Greenlander, who laps with his dog in the same platter, despises the invaders of his country, the Danes/ The Cossacks and calmucks profess the greatest contempt for their masters, the Russians," continuing, "The negroes too, though the most stupid among the inhabitants of the earth, are excessively vain. Ask the Carribee Indians who live at the mouth of the Oronoke, from what nation they have their origin; they answer, 'We only are men.' In short, there is hardly any nation under the sun, in which instances of pride vanity, and arrogance, do not occur."⁷²⁸ The paper continued by contending that "They all, more or less, resemble the Canadian, who thinks he compliments an European, when he says, 'He is a man as well as I.'"⁷²⁹ The example used for Canadian vanity was thinking themselves equals to Europe, though the *State Gazette* ultimately concluded that this was a characteristic of most of the groups that it considered inferior. In so doing, the *Gazette* associated Canadians with African and Indigenous communities, groups widely considered inferior, while being simultaneously prideful. In addition to reinforcing those associations, the article also served to deflect European accusations that Americans were one and the same. The attacks on African, Indigenous, Spanish, and Canadian pride closely reflected European views of Americans, both prior to and at the turn of the nineteenth century, representing a growing trend in the American press to transfer European critiques of American culture onto already "othered" groups like Africans, Indigenous peoples, and the Canadians. Another reference to Canadian vanity was printed in the *New-England Palladium* in 1804 and was

⁷²⁸ *South-Carolina State Gazette, and Timothy's Daily Advertiser*, February 26, 1800.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*

titled, “Ned Shuter – the Canadian.” The story read, “Ned was often very poor, and being still more negligent than poor, was careless about his dress. A friend overtaking him one day in the street said to him, ‘Why Ned! are you not ashamed to walk the streets with twenty holes in your stockings – why don’t you get them mended?’”⁷³⁰ The story continued, “No, my friend, said Ned, I am above it – and if you have the pride of a gentleman you will act like me, and walk with twenty holes rather than with one darn. How, how, replied the other, how the deuce do you make that out? Why, replied Ned, ‘a hole is the Accident of the day; but a darn is Premeditated Poverty.’”⁷³¹ This undeserved pompousness seemed to be an underlying aspect of the Canadian identity; proud but ignorant. As far as many American newspapers were concerned, this unearned pride was instrumental to the Canadian identity. In many ways, such portrayals were a deflection. Contemporary Europeans portrayed Americans in very similar ways to these portrayals of Canadians, and this stung many Americans deeply. When American newspapers portrayed their Canadian neighbours as ignorant yet boastful, they established that Americans were superior to them. There was a clear pecking order as far as American newspapers were concerned, and having been pecked repeatedly by the Europeans, Americans turned and pecked the Canadians. In 1802, the *Balance* referenced a section of Issac Weld’s 1799 book *Travels Through the States of North America, and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada*, which was titled “Nationality.” The excerpt read, “Weld, in his tour through Canada, represents the Canadians to be totally indisposed to any political connection with the United States,” continuing, “As one instance of their spirit of rivalry toward the States, he observes that the best expedient to quicken the motions of their public carriages, is to bestow praises, within the hearing of the drivers, upon the agility and swiftness of our stage-horses. The drivers, stung to the heart by such remarks will instantly lash their French horses, and drive them with the furious speed of a Jehu.”⁷³² Weld contended that Canadians were eager to prove their superiority to their American neighbours, an idea that most American newspaper ridiculed as nonsensical.

⁷³⁰ *New-England Palladium*, January 6, 1804.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*

⁷³² *Balance*, December 14, 1802; *Spectator*, December 22, 1802; *American Telegraphe*, January 19, 1803.

Again, the American press largely deflected accusations that contemporary Europeans were making about American desires to prove themselves the betters of Europe. Instead, Americans were stung and passed the insult down the line to Canadians. In such a context, the fact that the Canadians were then trying to portray themselves as America's equals or superiors was laughable. As far as most American papers were concerned, Canadians were the ones who were inferior, and American newspaper articles gleefully expounded on that theme.

The people of Canada were often portrayed as rustic peasants with little use for the more refined aspects of life. Part of this centred on American notions that Canadians were poor, and as such, were unable to afford those finer things. This sense that the poor were also unrefined is a conception that continues to hold sway to this day, though in the early nineteenth century, the connection between poverty and gracelessness was even more ingrained. In reality, these prejudices were unfounded. Nancy Christie has argued that "French Canadian inhabitants were steadily incorporated into British trading and consumption networks. This was not simply an urban phenomenon; by 1800 a large proportion of rural inhabitants actively consumed imported manufactured goods."⁷³³ Unlike the view in most American papers, French Canadians were largely incorporated into the British trade empire by the early nineteenth century, seeking out and purchasing refined trade goods just as Americans did south of the border. Still, as far as most American newspapers were concerned, Canadians were poor peasants, unconcerned with the world's finer things and, unlike Americans, content to indulge their baser urges. On December 14, 1802, the *Balance* newspaper of Hudson, New York, published an excerpt from Weld's *Travels*, which was titled "A Curious Use of the Tobacco-Pipe." The article read, "The native Canadians are perpetual smokers: and they apply the tobacco-pipe to the singular use of measuring distances," continuing, "when a traveller enquires the distance to an inn or to any particular town, the answerer or informant, instead of mentioning the number of miles, says, 'it is so many pipes.' By which is meant, that one

⁷³³ Christie, "Merchant and Plebeian Commercial Knowledge in Montreal and Quebec," 856.

might smoke the given number of pipes, while the distance is travelling.”⁷³⁴ Weld concluded that a pipe was “reckoned for about three quarters of an English mile.”⁷³⁵ Between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, descriptions of Canadians in the American press were not accompanied by images, but there were visual depictions of Canadians that circulated in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century America, primarily from travel narratives. Numerous men traveled through Canada, recording their observations and occasionally sketching the Canadians they came into contact with.⁷³⁶ These drawings and engravings would have been the only visual image of Canadians that many Americans ever saw, and as such would have been quite important in terms of engraining a pictorial image of their Canadian neighbours for the American populace, particularly those that lived away from the northern or western frontier. As images from eighteenth and early nineteenth century travel narratives show, the association between Canadians and tobacco smoking was strongly entrenched, and many of the illustrations of Canadians from those narratives feature a pipe (Figures 8 to 11). Like written newspaper portrayals, these visual images portrayed Canadians as rustic and simple, very similarly to the ways in which American newspaper contributors were depicting Canadians. It was an image the American press readily amplified.

⁷³⁴ *Balance*, December 14, 1802; *Commercial Advertiser*, December 18, 1802; *Mercantile Advertiser*, December 18, 1802; *Evening Post*, December 21, 1802; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, December 21, 1802; *Spectator*, December 22, 1802; *New-York Herald*, December 22, 1802; *Genius of Liberty*, December 31, 1802; *Maryland Herald and Hager's-Town Weekly Advertiser*, January 12, 1803; *American Telegraphe*, January 19, 1803.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁶ Claude-Charles Le Roy de la Potherie, *Histoire de L'Amerique Septentrionale* (Paris: Nyon fils, 1722); Pehr Kalm, *Travels into North America* (London: T Lowndes, 1773); Isaac Weld, *Travels Through the States of North America and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada* (London: John Stockdale, 1807); George Heriot, *Travels through the Canadas* (London: Richard Phillips, 1807); John Lambert, *Travels Through Canada, and the United States of North America* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1816).



Figure 8: Claude-Charles Le Roy de la Potherie, *Canadiens en Raquette allant en guerre sur la neige*, 1722, in *Histoire de L'Amerique Septentrionale* (Paris: Nyon fils, 1722), 51.

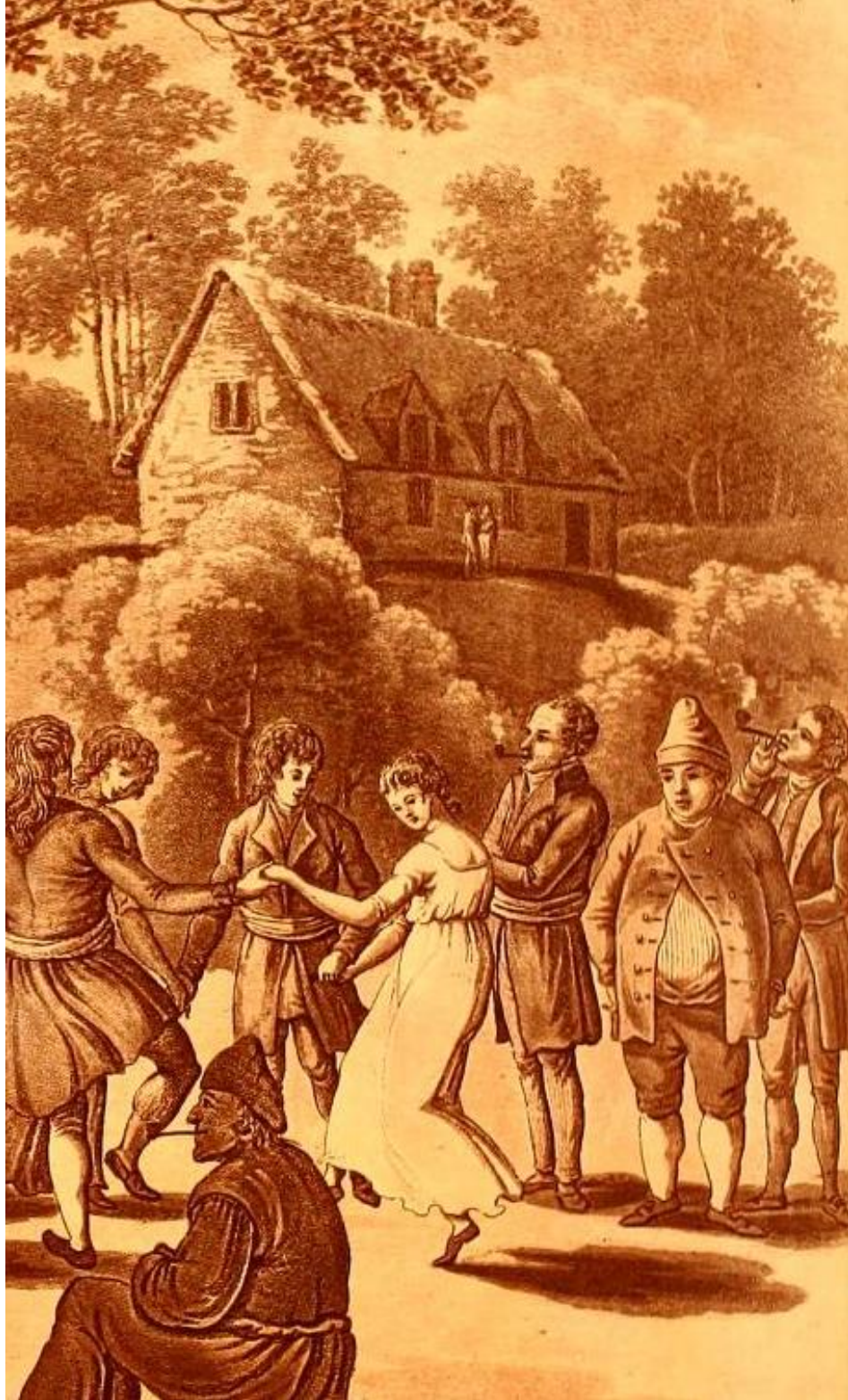
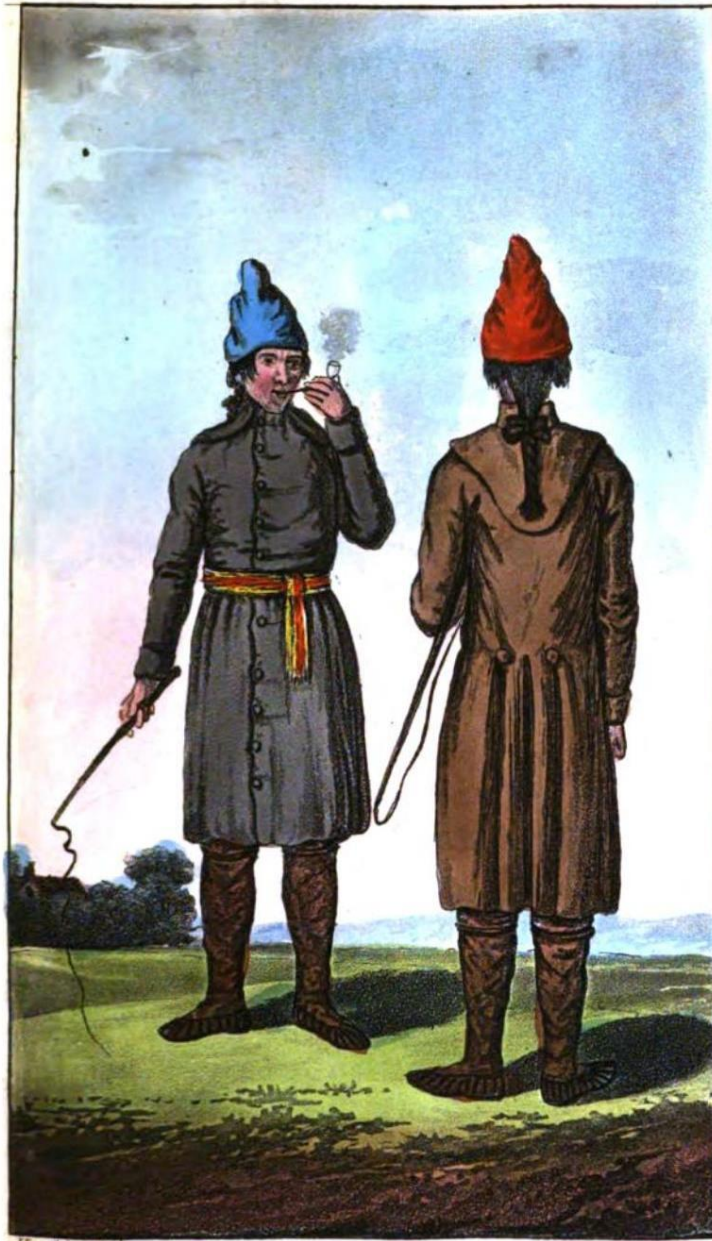


Figure 9: Detail from George Heriot, *La Danse Ronde, Circular Dance of the Canadians*, 1807, in *Travels through the Canadas* (London: Richard Phillips, 1807).



Lambert del.

French Habitans or Countrymen.

Figure 10: John Lambert, *French Habitans [sic] or Countrymen*, in *Travels Through Canada, and the United States of North America* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1816).



Habitans in their Summer dress

Figure 11: John Lambert, *Habitans [sic] in their Summer dress*, in *Travels Through Canada, and the United States of North America* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1816).

This image of near constant use of tobacco also reflected European opinion regarding the ubiquity of American tobacco use, though Europeans often criticized chewing tobacco rather than smoked tobacco. The American habit of chewing tobacco was one which quite upset European sensibilities. An account by English traveler Adam Hodgson of his journey through America makes particular mention of tobacco use, and particularly “the almost universal [habit] of spitting, without regard to time, place, or circumstance.” Hodgson wrote that the habit was so common amongst politicians in the Capitol, that by “their diluted tobacco,” they “had relieved themselves pretty well from the dazzling brightness of the brilliant [carpet] colours under their feet!”⁷³⁷ Hodgson’s accounts of American tobacco use were not the only ways in which his account reflected American depictions of Canadians, as he was also careful to comment on American pride. In this, he did not attack the elite Americans he accused of spitting their tobacco on the fancy carpets, but rather common Americans, and particularly the American press itself. He wrote, “With regard to the *vanity* which is charged upon them: this foible is admitted by all their sensible men, who are degusted [sic] with the extravagant pretensions maintained in inflated language in their public prints.” Hodgson continued, “I have heard some of them jocosely say, that they expect their countrymen will soon begin to assert that they are not only the most powerful and the most learned, but the oldest nation in the world.”⁷³⁸ Adam Hodgson’s depictions of Americans were reflected remarkably well in the American portrayals of Canadians. His accusations of American incivility and vanity were nearly identical to the image of Canadians that appeared in American newspapers around the turn of the century, and many American newspapers were staunchly focused on contradicting that image. Such papers were keen to redirect that criticism of uncouth tobacco use to Canadians, to make them look even more rustic, and to deflect the European insult and so elevate the image of Americans. And Canadians were an ideal group to paint as the truly uncivilized group as this was something that early nineteenth century American newspapers has already been doing for years. Though

⁷³⁷ Adam Hodgson, *Remarks during a Journey through North American in the Years 1819, 1820, and 1821, in a Series of Letters*, New York: Samuel Whiting (1823), 91.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

this image of Canadians was not particularly flattering, however, it was far better than it had been in mid-century.

American press depictions of Canadians shifted as the situation on the ground shifted. As the Canadian people began to look less and less like a threat, and in some cases began to look something like an ally, American newspapers portrayals evolved. No longer blood-thirsty frontier barbarians, Canadians were often depicted as simple peasants, good-natured if uneducated and a bit backward. An article from *Philadelphia Minerva* titled “Taste,” contended that “The force of custom, or fancy, and of casual associations, is very great both upon the external and internal taste. An Eskimaux can regale himself with a draught of whale-oil, and a Canadian can feast upon a dog. A Kamtschatchadale lives upon putrid fish, and is sometimes reduced to eat the bark of trees.”⁷³⁹ As the point of the article focused on the idea that tastes are developed and change, both through life and across cultures, it subtly painted Canadians as a cultural other. While they might resemble Americans in many ways, the Canadians were a different people, often more like the Inuit than like Americans in the American mind. Whether it be marking distance by tobacco pipes or eating dogs, in the American press at the turn of the nineteenth century, Canadians were not yet up to the cultural standards of being included in the American identity. They were not evil anymore, just primitive and rustic. As Americans were rushing headlong into refinement, development, and advancement, Canadians were satisfied with the old ways. As Americans were focused on the future, Canadians were stuck in the past. This understanding of Canadians served American newspapers well. In an era when Americans were asserting their identity and equality with the national identities of Europe, the othering of Canadians shifted European criticisms of America onto the Canadians. As part of this process, American press depictions moved away from portrayals of corrupt Catholicism and bloody frontier violence toward an image of simple, backward folk, uninterested in improving themselves (as Americans supposedly were). Canadians were becoming unimportant.

⁷³⁹ *Philadelphia Minerva*, December 24, 1796.

An event that had significant ramifications for this shift in American portrayals of Canadians came in 1803 as the Republican administration of Thomas Jefferson, who had been elected president in 1800, completed the Louisiana Purchase with France, incorporating vast swathes of the western frontier into the United States. Following the French and Indian War, almost all of the area around the Great Lakes north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River had been incorporated into the province of Quebec, making the area nominally Canadian. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the white population of this region, an area comprising the modern states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin, were largely considered to be Canadians, and American newspapers immediately began to debate whether a people who they perceived as poor, lazy peasants could be beneficially added to the American population. While most papers were careful to remain open to the possibility that the Canadians could be improved, most were not optimistic. Quoting from the official presidential description of the west, the *National Intelligencer* read in November of 1803, “The settlements about the Illinois were first made by the Canadians and their inhabitants still resemble them in their aversion to labor, and love of a wandering life.”⁷⁴⁰ This stood

⁷⁴⁰ *National Intelligencer*, November 16, 1803; *Alexandria Daily Advertiser*, November 19, 1803; *American*, and *Baltimore Gazette*, November 19, 1803; *Telegraphe and Daily Advertiser*, November 19, 1803; *Gazette of the United States*, November 21, 1803; *Alexandria Expositor*, November 21, 1803; *Aurora General Advertiser*, November 21, 1803; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, November 21, 1803; *American Citizen*, November 22, 1803; *Commercial Advertiser*, November 22, 1803; *Daily Advertiser*, November 22, 1803; *Evening Post*, November 22, 1803; *Morning Chronicle*, November 22, 1803; *Spectator*, November 23, 1803; *Kline's Carlisle Weekly Gazette*, November 23, 1803; *Maryland Herald and Hager's-Town Weekly Advertiser*, November 23, 1803; *Morning Chronicle*, November 23, 1803; *New-York Herald*, November 23, 1803; *Republican Watch-Tower*, November 23, 1803; *Virginia Argus*, November 23, 1803; *Chronicle Express*, November 24, 1803; *New-York Herald*, November 26, 1803; *Virginia Gazette*, and *General Advertiser*, November 26, 1803; *Republican Star*, November 29, 1803; *Centinel Of Freedom*, November 29, 1803; *Connecticut Herald*, November 29, 1803; *New-England Palladium*, November 29, 1803; *New-Jersey Journal*, November 29, 1803; *Connecticut Courant*, November 30, 1803; *Gazetteer*, November 30, 1803; *National Aegis*, November 30, 1803; *New-England Repertory*, November 30, 1803; *Albany Gazette*, December 1, 1803; *Albany Centinel*, December 2, 1803; *Columbian Courier*, December 2, 1803; *New-England Palladium*, December 2, 1803; *Republican Advocate*, December 2, 1803; *Sun*, December 3, 1803; *New-England Repertory*, December 3, 1803; *Oracle of Dauphin*, December 3, 1803; *Scioto Gazette*, December 3, 1803; *Boston Commercial Gazette*, December 5, 1803; *North-Carolina Minerva*, December 5, 1803; *Connecticut Centinel*, December 6, 1803; *Bee*, December 6, 1803; *Connecticut Herald*, December 6, 1803; *New-Jersey Journal*, December 6, 1803; *Newburyport Herald*, December 6, 1803; *Vermont Gazette*, December 6, 1803; *National Aegis*, December 7, 1803; *Columbian Centinel*, December 7, 1803; *Columbian Museum*, December 7, 1803; *Connecticut Courant*, December 7, 1803; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy, or Worcester Gazette*, December 7, 1803; *American Mercury*, December 8, 1803; *Connecticut Journal*, December 8, 1803; *Vermont Centinel*,

in stark contrast to understandings of the American identity, which was largely based around hard work on sedentary farms. The Canadians seemed poor candidates to join that identity as everything about their character seemed to clash with American understandings of themselves. The same paper contended in March of 1804 of the territory that “The grass and wheat are astonishingly luxuriant; and nature requires to be but aided to produce in abundance all the necessaries of life: yet, the people are poor beyond conception; and no description could give an adequate idea of their servile and degraded situation.”⁷⁴¹ Though the land had potential, the lazy Canadians were squandering it, just as Indigenous peoples were supposedly doing. Again, this stood in stark contrast to Americans, who were perceived as using their labour to make regions that generally lacked potential productive. That the Canadians could be blessed with so much potential and yet be utilizing it so little seemed to disqualify them from the American identity. Unlike Americans, Canadians were stuck in the past. The *Intelligencer* continued, “Art here has done but little, and even less than that little which nature had left her to do; for the Canadian settlers are very indolent; of course, very poor, and consequently, very wretched. Perhaps, on a barren soil, necessity would have been an incitement to industry, the natural, or rather, the legitimate parent of affluence.”⁷⁴² In a continuation of the article three days later, the paper contended, “Some of the people are

December 8, 1803; *Visitor*, December 8, 1803; *Windham Herald*, December 8, 1803; *Columbian Courier*, December 9, 1803; *Newburyport Herald*, December 9, 1803; *Jenks' Portland Gazette*, December 10, 1803; *Merrimack Gazette*, December 10, 1803; *New Hampshire Sentinel*, December 10, 1803; *Newport Mercury*, December 10, 1803; *Political Observatory*, December 10, 1803; *Sun*, December 10, 1803; *Greenfield Gazette*, December 12, 1803; *Reporter*, December 12, 1803; *Farmers' Museum, or Literary Gazette*, December 13, 1803; *Balance*, December 13, 1803; *Bee*, December 13, 1803; *Farmers' Register*, December 13, 1803; *Federal Spy*, December 13, 1803; *Herald of the United States*, December 13, 1803; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, December 13, 1803; *Hampshire Gazette*, December 14, 1803; *Middlebury Mercury*, December 14, 1803; *Otsego Herald*, December 15, 1803; *Dartmouth Gazette*, December 16, 1803; *Portsmouth Oracle*, December 17, 1803; *Merrimack Gazette*, December 17, 1803; *New Hampshire Sentinel*, December 17, 1803; *Newport Mercury*, December 17, 1803; *Political Observatory*, December 17, 1803; *Vermont Mercury*, December 19, 1803; *Greenfield Gazette*, December 19, 1803; *Eastern Repository*, December 20, 1803; *Green Mountain Patriot*, December 20, 1803; *Oracle Post*, December 20, 1803; *Connecticut Gazette*, December 21, 1803; *Courier of New Hampshire*, December 21, 1803; *Norwich Courier*, December 21, 1803; *Vermont Centinel*, December 22, 1803; *Dartmouth Gazette*, December 23, 1803; *Palladium*, December 24, 1803; *Pittsfield Sun*, December 26, 1803; *Tennessee Gazette*, January 4, 1804.

⁷⁴¹ *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*, March 23, 1804.

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*

agreeable situated; but in general, they are poor in the extreme, owing to that indolence and want of skill in agriculture, which so conspicuously mark the Canadian character in this country.”⁷⁴³ As far as the *Intelligencer* was concerned, the shortcomings of the Canadians were inherent. This reflected American depictions of the poor in general, portrayals that painted their poverty as being their own fault, the result of their laziness and unintelligence. Canadians not only would not change, but it seemed likely that they *could* not change. Most American newspapers were confident that the United States did not want to add such people to the American constellation. Some papers, however, stressed the Canadian ability to improve. Referencing a village in the territory in 1805, the *Augusta Chronicle* reported, “This town consists of about 300 houses, built in general after the French mode, the inhabitants chiefly French, (say Canadians) who have heretofore but a few among them been left in a servile state, however since the adoption of the American government, begin to taste a little of the sweets of liberty, they are a well disposed set of people.”⁷⁴⁴ By the paper’s reckoning, the example set by Americans, with whom the Canadians would soon be coming into increasing contact, would serve as the spark that was needed to begin the process of improvement. With a lot of work and the guidance of the United States, it seemed that these western Canadians could one day become fully assimilated Americans. Opinions like that of the *Chronicle*, however, were rare, and most American papers ridiculed Canadians in the area around the Great Lakes as poor and stupid. And when Jefferson purchased Louisiana, a region that many Americans felt was populated by a French population very similar to and with very close ties with the French population in the Great Lakes region and in Canada, the question of whether or not it would be valuable to incorporate the Louisianian population grew louder.

As far as many American newspapers were concerned, the French in Louisiana were not to be trusted. In September 1804, *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy, or Worcester Gazette* reported that “The Committee of the Louisianians, who drafted the Memorial to

⁷⁴³ *National Intelligencer*, March 26, 1804.

⁷⁴⁴ *Augusta Chronicle*, October 5, 1805; *Aurora General Advertiser*, October 23, 1805; *True American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, October 24, 1805; *Cumberland Register*, November 12, 1805; *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*, December 11, 1805.

Congress, lately published, have caused to be printed the Address of Congress to the Canadians in 1774.” That address, focused on the tyranny of ruling power and the necessity of throwing off the chains of oppression through revolution, now reeked of treason to the new ruling class. No longer directed at a British king an ocean away, the address now seemed to be directed at the government of the United States. And the address seemed to be resonating. The *Spy* continued that the Louisianians had “offered it to their fellow citizens ‘for them to consider what relation there is between the present situation of the inhabitants of Louisiana, and that of the people of Canada at the time when they were reminded of their rights and privileges.’”⁷⁴⁵ When directed against the British in 1774, the Congress’s address had been considered patriotic in the American press, but thirty years later on the western frontier, it was largely viewed as seditious. Rather than a call to stand up for collective rights, the address now read as a call to throw off government. And particularly given the relatively small number of American settlers in the Louisiana territory, many American newspapers believed that throwing off the government might not be all that difficult. The month after the article in the *Spy*, the *Haverhill Observer* published a letter which asserted that “Insurgency is as well organized here as it ever was in Pennsylvania, or Massachusetts. Our Jacobin Club is in constant session; and their resolutions assume all the officiality of Imperial decrees. Mr. President Bore, and Mr. Secretary Robelot, sign and attest all their proceedings,” further purporting that “They have just published, in French, a copy of the ‘Address of Congress to the inhabitants of Canada,’ passed in 1774; and remark, that Louisiana is now what Canada was then.”⁷⁴⁶ Though the analogy is somewhat stretched given that there was no existing rebellion for the Louisianians to join, the arguments made against the tyranny of the powerful seemed to find fertile ground in the American west. While many American newspapers celebrated the acquisition of Louisiana, most were wary of the newly minted Americans that roamed the interior.

⁷⁴⁵ *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy, or Worcester Gazette*, September 26, 1804; *Columbian Courier*, September 28, 1804; *Newport Mercury*, September 29, 1804; *Reporter*, September 29, 1804; *Greenfield Gazette*, October 1, 1804; *Middlebury Mercury*, October 3, 1804; *Norwich Courier*, October 3, 1804; *Dartmouth Gazette*, October 5, 1804; *Visitor*, October 11, 1804; *Windham Herald*, October 11, 1804.

⁷⁴⁶ *Haverhill Observer*, October 2, 1804; *Portsmouth Oracle*, October 6, 1804.

This wariness was a manifestation of its era. Though the Jay Treaty had stabilized relations between them for a while, there remained significant conflicts between Canada and the United States. One such tension was the border, which American newspapers complained the British were not respecting. The Canadian-American border at the time was something of a peculiar thing. Theoretically it was unambiguous, laid out in the Treaty of Paris and confirmed by surveyors from both sides. In reality, however, the border was relatively vague, with few markers and next to no border security. As Alan Taylor has argued, inhabitants from both sides of these border regions often felt greater kinship with one another than with the other inhabitants of their respective nations, whether they be southern Republicans or French Canadians.⁷⁴⁷ Despite such kinship, the British and American governments seemed to have had a much more concrete understanding of the border, and they rankled significantly at what they viewed as violations of that border. In December of 1800, the *Albany Register* reported that “A sergeant Cole, belonging to the Canadian volunteers, and a party, with pass-ports from Capt. Mc Lean, came to the American side, in disguise, in pursuit of deserters; they endeavoured to trepan [perforate the skull of] a Serj. Maj. Knowland, in the U.S. service, but were unsuccessful.” The mention of passports here is interesting as civilian passports were rare in the Americas, as they were in contemporary Europe.⁷⁴⁸ It seems likely that the passports mentioned by the *Register* were military passports of some kind, though their legitimacy was subtly in question in articles like the one from the *Register* which reported that the passport holders also came in disguise. The *Albany Register* further contended of the incident that “In returning to their boat, in the evening, they broke open the door of a Frenchman, of considerable property and respectability; he resisted and struck the serjeant with an axe, which bruised his head very much, but they dragged the Frenchman to their canoe, where he broke from them – they pursued and ran him through

⁷⁴⁷ Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*.

⁷⁴⁸ Andreas Fahrmeir, “Governments and Forgers: Passports in Nineteenth-Century Europe,” in Jane Caplan and John Torpey, eds., *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 219.

with their side arms.”⁷⁴⁹ This was not the end of the potentially explosive incident, however. The report continued, “he again strove to leave them, but they quieted him by a blow with a paddle, on his head, and rowed over the British side: the man died in a few hours. The Americans have demanded the perpetrators – what will be done, I don’t know.”⁷⁵⁰ Such violations of the border by the armies of both sides threatened the tranquility of the border regions, where Canadians and American traded with one another and happily intermarried. And such physical incursions were not the only strain caused along the line.

Another source of tension at the border was cross-border newspaper circulation. American newspapers had long argued that Canada needed a free press, modeled on the free press of the United States. In some ways, such a press already existed in Canada by the turn of the nineteenth century, as there were a handful of printers, often American transplants, who were publishing newspapers that largely eschewed being government organs. There remained, however, significant persecution of printers who stepped out of line, and many of Canada’s early printers found themselves in prison or in exile in the United States. While printing newspapers that offended Canadian officials was understandably a risky activity in Canada, there was nothing to stop such offences from being printed in the United States and then transported into Canada. Many American newspaper editors seemed to think that their papers could thereby fill the free press vacuum that had developed in Canada. Following the Revolution, the large and ever-growing English-speaking population of Canada seemed a perfect market for American newspapers, and they began to pour across the border. However, Canadians themselves,

⁷⁴⁹ *Albany Register*, December 5, 1800; *American Citizen*, January 7, 1801; *Republican Watch-Tower*, January 10, 1801; *Times*; and *District of Columbia Daily Advertiser*, January 10, 1801; *Centinel Of Freedom*, January 13, 1801; *Mirror of the Times*, and *General Advertiser*, January 14, 1801; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy, or Worcester Gazette*, January 14, 1801; *Genius of Liberty*, January 15, 1801; *Newburyport Herald*, January 20, 1801; *Weekly Wanderer*, January 31, 1801; *Independent Gazetteer*, February 3, 1801; *Stewart's Kentucky Herald*, February 3, 1801; *Norwich Courier*, February 11, 1801; *Republican Gazette*, February 12, 1801; *Litchfield Monitor*, February 18, 1801; *New Hampshire Sentinel*, October 17, 1801; *United States Chronicle*, October 22, 1801; *Gazette of the United States*, October 26, 1801; *Western Spy and Hamilton Gazette*, November 14, 1801; *Maryland Herald, and Eastern Shore Intelligencer*, November 17, 1801.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

and particularly Canadian officials, were not convinced that the American-style press would be a good thing for Canada.

There was a fear that the press would spread American-style politics and divisions in its wake, and so many papers were actively restricted. In 1801, the *American Citizen* reported, “We have several subscribers in Canada. But it appears that Sir Robert Milnes, the Governor, whose business it is to blindfold the Canadians, and to ride upon their backs, has been graciously pleased to stop its circulation in that unfortunate province.” This assessment conformed to the contemporary American understanding of the Canadian press, that it was a mouthpiece of government and nothing more. In many ways, it was a fair assessment, given the significant censorship of Canadian newspapers. The *Citizen* continued of the attempts to stop its circulation in Canada, “This may be a necessary precaution if we measure the necessity by the designs of the English government to perpetuate the piteous vassalage of the Province and to rive faster its chains. It is the business of kings and their minions to keep mankind in perpetual subjection to their will. And to be successful in the glorious enterprize, it is only necessary to make and to keep them ignorant.”⁷⁵¹ By the turn of the nineteenth century, the free press had become a foundational part of the American identity, and in the opinion of most Americans, it was one of the primary ways in which freedom and liberty were maintained. A people without a free press were a people kept in darkness, and this was the argument regarding the Canadians. Again, Canadians served as a useful foil, against whose uninformed ignorance stood contemplative American competency. In the opinion of the *Citizen*, this was the result of the free press, and the paper desperately wished to share the gift (not merely to enlighten the poor Canadians, but also to boost circulation). The *Citizen* surmised, “The light of science like the effulgent rays of the sun, dissipates that ignorance which alone upholds despotism; and when once it penetrates the recesses of the mind, down go the magic and magicians together!” The only thing seeming to stand in the way between Canadians and the type of enlightenment that Americans had gained through their press was the Governor General of Canada. The paper asserted of

⁷⁵¹ *American Citizen*, September 5, 1801; *Aurora General Advertiser*, September 8, 1801.

the governor, “Sir Robert Milnes knows this as well as any other man. He knows that the press in the United States previous to the revolution, and the patriotic eloquence of the clergy were the most powerful engines in bringing about that glorious event. He knows that films drop from the eyes of mankind as the light of reason enters the mind. That despotism crumbles into dust as the mind become enlightened.”⁷⁵² And the paper argued that Milnes had reason to worry, given the shining example of freedom and enlightenment that was easily seen to the Canadian south. The *Citizen* argued that Canadians would soon be clamouring for a free press once they came to a full appreciation of its benefits by watching their American neighbours closely. The paper contended, “The poor Canadians... live contiguous to a commonwealth whose sentiments into Canada are inadmissible, because contagious. Sir Robert, and the king, his master, have neither forgotten nor forgiven us. They dread the ‘terrible’ example we have set the world and are afraid that the Canadian will follow it.”⁷⁵³ Though most American papers had returned to using Canadians as a foil against which to define American identity, some American newspapers, like the *Citizen*, continued to portray Canadians as Americans in waiting, needing only to be shown the way by the American example. Other papers, however, were no longer so quick to believe that Canadians even wanted to join the states. In 1803, the *Albany Register* reported on several fires which had destroyed a number of important buildings in Montreal, informing readers that “By a gentleman from thence, we are informed, that the Yankies (as the citizens of the United States are indiscriminately termed by the Canadians) are suspected of having been instrumental in producing these ruinous conflagrations; and that the prejudices of the populace, on this head, are so highly wrought up, that every Yankey there is in constant fear of being insulted as he walks the streets.”⁷⁵⁴ In this depiction, Canadians were not seen as ignorantly oppressed by the British, but actively prejudiced toward Americans. As the nineteenth century dawned, the image of Canadians as Americans in waiting began to

⁷⁵² *American Citizen*, September 5, 1801; *Aurora General Advertiser*, September 8, 1801.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁴ *Albany Register*, August 30, 1803; *Pittsfield Sun*, September 5, 1803.

fade from the American press, replaced by portrayals of dull oafs, happily devoted to British tyranny and content in their lack of liberty.

Somewhat similarly, portrayals of Indigenous peoples as vicious and savage began to fade from the press at the turn of the nineteenth century, replaced by images of primitivism and helplessness. As Indigenous strength was scattered in the aftermath of the Northwest Indian War, American newspapers began to approach Indigenous peoples with less fear and more feelings of superiority. White Americans had won a number of key victories against Indigenous armies in the late eighteenth century, and the feelings of superiority that these victories instilled contributed greatly to the shift in American portrayals of Indigenous communities. As happened with depictions of Canadians, depictions of Indigenous peoples softened as it seemed to Americans that they posed less and less of a threat. And as had also happened with portrayals of Canadian society, American newspapers began to argue that it was in fact contact with and the example of the United States that was improving Indigenous societies. In December of 1802, the *Salem Gazette* printed an article titled “An Indian’s Notions of Civilization,” which told of “Kesketomak, of the Onondaga nation,” who “recommended a life of peace and the cultivation of land; that marks should be set up on the boundaries of the territory; and that the introduction of spirituous liquors should be prohibited.”⁷⁵⁵ Kesketomak reminded “the Assembly of a prophecy of Kooreyhoosta (an ancient chief of one of the Canadian nations) that the sowers of grain would extinguish the races of hunters, unless the latter also would determine to cultivate the earth,” and argued of the “Pecod, Natick, Narraganset and other nations,” that “They are replaced by the habitations of the whites, whose ploughs now turn up the ground which contains their bones.”⁷⁵⁶ This would have been an argument familiar to American readers. The widely held views of American settlers were voiced by Kesketomak, while a different, and presumably less “enlightened” Indigenous person voiced the opposition. The report continued, however, that “No sooner had Kesketomak concluded than Koohasen, a young warrior of the Oneida nation, fiercely arose, with his tomahawk in his hand” and argued:

⁷⁵⁵ *Salem Gazette*, December 7, 1802; *Eastern Herald & Maine Gazette*, December 27, 1802.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

We were hunters and warriors before the arrival of the whites, and we lived well without stirring the earth about like women. Why cannot we continue so now? It is the cowardly or the idle only who cannot find game. Can a man be brave, resolute and free from care, when he has cattle, and land sown with grain? No. He will be too fond of life to dare to risk it. If war should happen, can he divide himself? How can he manage at the same time the tomahawk and plough? Those who cultivate the [illegible] pass too much time on their bearskins, with their women. In living like the whites, we should cease to be that which we are, the children of our God, who has made us hunters and warriors. We should think and act like them; like them become liars, cheats, dependents, fastened to the soil, chained by laws, governed by papers and by writing filled with falsehood.⁷⁵⁷

The *Salem Gazette* makes no explicit judgement on the arguments of Kesketomak and Koohasen, though it both touts the evolution of Indigenous communities toward sedentary agriculture and at the same time paints an almost yearning picture of a doomed, primitive way of life that was disappearing. Despite the subtle praise offered to characters like Kesketomak, who saw the writing on the wall and sought to adapt to European American ways, most American newspapers portrayed Indigenous peoples as unable to become responsible Americans. An article from one year later in the *Palladium* read, “The British government, has equally with our own, provided the most wise and humane regulations to prevent the savage tribes [illegible] with liquor, and to render the presents made to them, really and permanently beneficial,” concluding, however, that everything had been “converted into whiskey, before they left the Canadian territory.”⁷⁵⁸ In portrayals like these, Indigenous communities were unwilling or unable to behave within American standards, and as such were viewed as an other. In many ways, these depictions reflected depictions of Canadians, who were similarly portrayed as unwilling or unable to give up their primitive ways. Though they were no longer painted as vicious and merciless, First Nations were now depicted by American newspapers as unable to make the step to full civilization, unable to control their baser urges and desires. They

⁷⁵⁷ *Salem Gazette*, December 7, 1802; *Eastern Herald & Maine Gazette*, December 27, 1802.

⁷⁵⁸ *Palladium*, December 3, 1803.

remained othered by the American press, portrayed as an outgroup and often used in attempts to define American racial identity as superior by contrast.

Though they often defined them indiscriminately as one relatively monolithic group, particularly after the conquest of Quebec, the American press had a long history of differentiating between Indigenous groups in Canada and the United States, or more precisely, between Indigenous groups allied with French Canada and the Indigenous groups allied with English America. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a group of Black North Americans was also identified specifically as being Canadian. In November of 1800, the *Hampshire Gazette* reported that “The particulars are received in Lond. of the death of the Rev. Mr. P. Greig, the Missionary to Africa,” informing readers that “Seven men of the Foulah nation came to pay their respects to Mr. Greig on the 31st January. He received them with the greatest kindness, and with a view of conciliating them, amused them with the sight of various European articles,” and continued that “He allowed three of them to sleep in his house, when these wretches, filled with the insatiable desire of getting possession of the things they had seen, inhumanly murdered Mr. Greig in the night, and carried off the articles.”⁷⁵⁹ The *Gazette* then asserted that “The Foulahs were pursued by the people of Canada, most of the property recovered, and four of the ruffians brought to Free Port in chains.”⁷⁶⁰ These “people of Canada” were Black Loyalists who had fled slavery and joined the British during the Revolution, retreated to Canada in the aftermath of that conflict, and then migrated again to Sierra Leone, becoming a cultural group known as the Nova Scotia Settlers. In 1802, the *New-York Gazette* reported on “a sudden and unprovoked attack on the settlement to have been made by some neighboring natives,” in which “a body of Timmanys (the subjects of King Fuama and King Tom) made a furious and unexpected assault on the fort.”⁷⁶¹ Several of the fort’s defenders were killed, among them a Mr. Crankapone. The *Gazette* concluded, “The conduct of Mr. Crankapone, a Nova Scotia black, who also fell, was noticed in

⁷⁵⁹ *Hampshire Gazette*, November 26, 1800.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶¹ *New-York Gazette*, April 3, 1802; *Gazette of the United States*, April 5, 1802; *Philadelphia Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, April 5, 1802; *Times; and District of Columbia Daily Advertiser*, April 9, 1802; *Salem Register*, April 15, 1802.

terms of high praise.”⁷⁶² Even after they had settled in Sierra Leone, the Nova Scotia Settlers were defined by American newspapers as being Canadian. This was interesting as, while the use of “Canadian” was likely more a reference to their previous place of residence rather than to their cultural identity, American newspapers seem to have been much more wary of referring to enslaved people in the United States as being Americans. As the American press ruminated on just what to call themselves, they systematically wrote free Black and enslaved Americans out of their definitions. Portrayals of Canada as a racial mosaic encompassing numerous races contrasted with conceptions of White American identity and reinforced the notion that Americans were the more developed and advanced of the two cultural groups. Canada was, in fact, not as much of a cultural mosaic as many American newspapers suggested, with a population largely consisting of European immigrants with a few isolated pockets of Black Loyalists and former slaves and an ever shrinking system of reservations inhabited by Indigenous peoples with no citizenship. Still, in the American public mind, Canada was a land of French, English, African, and Indigenous inhabitants, a racial and cultural amalgam that many American newspapers shrunk from in disgust. By their reckoning, proper Americans were White, while Canadians often were not.

The question of what to call these White citizens of the United States was revisited several times in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and while most newspapers concluded that the term “American” served just fine, a few other options were bandied about. In October 1800, the *Mercantile Advertiser* surmised, “The appellation of United States is merely descriptive of our national confederacy, and cannot attach to the individual citizens who are the subjects of this Federal Government.”⁷⁶³ The paper further asserted, “Besides, the term American is of indefinite extent, and indiscriminately includes all the native inhabitants of this immense continent, from Patagonia to Baffin’s Bay; and from the Caribbean Archipelago in the Atlantic, to the

⁷⁶² *New-York Gazette*, April 3, 1802; *Gazette of the United States*, April 5, 1802; *Philadelphia Gazette & Daily Advertiser*, April 5, 1802; *Times*; and *District of Columbia Daily Advertiser*, April 9, 1802; *Salem Register*, April 15, 1802.

⁷⁶³ *Mercantile Advertiser*, October 13, 1800; *Telescope*, October 16, 1800; *Georgetown Gazette*, November 15, 1800; *Cabinet*, December 9, 1800.

shores of California, on the North Pacific ocean,” continuing, “The [illegible] and Creole of Cuba, or Barbadoes; the tawney savage of the Oronoque, as well as his fiercer brother of Lake Superior, are all Americans, as truly as the wealthy native of Maryland, or the sober citizen of Philadelphia. At least, so are they considered on the continent of Europe.”⁷⁶⁴ The desire to distance the citizens of the United States from the other inhabitants of the Americas was both very much in keeping with early republic understandings of the U.S. as a White country and yet also conflicted with views of many American founders. In his farewell address, George Washington had told the people, “The name of American... belongs to you in your national capacity.”⁷⁶⁵ Still, as far as many American newspapers were concerned, that name was far too nondescript, and liable to cause proper, White Americans to be confused with the racialized inhabitants of other American regions. The author of the piece continued, “To illustrate this position a little farther, permit me to detail a short conversation. I was once asked by a gentleman at Paris, what countryman I was? I answered, that I was an American. ‘Born in Mexico, perhaps, Sir?’ No; I am not a Mexican. ‘You are perhaps from Canada?’ No; for then I should have declared myself a Canadian.”⁷⁶⁶ This lack of clear distinction was unacceptable to the contributor. The indignity of being mistaken for a Mexican or a Canadian, even if just for a moment, was intolerable. The solution in the eyes of this author was “Columbia.” They argued, “It has been a prevailing sentiment for ages that great injustice was done to the intrepid talents of that immortal navigator, Columbus in permitting an inferior adventurer to deprive him of the honor of giving name as he had birth to half the globe.” As far as the author was concerned, Americans should have nothing but the best, and Amerigo Vespucci was nothing compared to Christopher Columbus. The author concluded it was time to rectify the situation, writing, “With a view of rendering a partial retribution to the memory of the illustrious discoverer of the western world; in some decree to vindicate public gratitude, as well as to assign a name

⁷⁶⁴ *Mercantile Advertiser*, October 13, 1800; *Telescope*, October 16, 1800; *Georgetown Gazette*, November 15, 1800; *Cabinet*, December 9, 1800.

⁷⁶⁵ George Washington, “Farewell Address,” September 19, 1796.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

to the new nation which our revolutionary war had created, reiterated private attempts were made to denominate the extensive country which composes the dominions of the United States, Columbia.”⁷⁶⁷ In 1802, the *Balance* agreed, reading, “We call ourselves Americans, which is but a general name of the continent, that does in no wise distinguish the inhabitants of the United States from countless millions of other people, differing in their government, manners, languages, and even in the colours of their skins.” The paper continued, “These are all known by the common appellation of Americans. It is a general denomination, that does not distinguish our nation from Canadians, from Spanish-Americans, or even from Mexicans and Patagonians.”⁷⁶⁸ The *Balance* proposed the same solution as the *Advertiser*, surmising, “There is a remedy, which might be applied, without either pains or expence. If the whole district of the United States might be named Columbia; and if its inhabitants might be called Columbians; it would nominally distinguish the country and the nation from the rest of America.”⁷⁶⁹ Though the push for a name change was never strong, the arguments made by papers like the *Advertiser* and the *Balance* revealed the American desire to define themselves as unique, as different from the other communities that surrounded them.

Stung by being mistaken for Canadians or Mexicans, other newspaper contributors also argued that a more precise term was needed. While Columbia was seemingly the most popular potential replacement, it was not alone. Another name that was proposed was “Fredon.” In 1803, a contributor to the *Poulson's American Daily*

⁷⁶⁷ George Washington, “Farewell Address,” September 19, 1796.

⁷⁶⁸ *Balance*, December 21, 1802; *Alexandria Daily Advertiser*, January 6, 1803; *Evening Post*, January 18, 1803.

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid.* The *Balance* further argued that Federalist was the proper term for the American government, reading, “The name of Republican is as general and indefinite as that of American. Britain was called a republic, when under the despotism of Cromwell. France is still denominated a republic. Here are clusters of republics in Europe, which are the offspring of the French revolution. There all differ from each other, in their manner and in their forms of government; and they differ still more from the manners and government of the United States. – Therefore the name of republican does not distinguish our nation from the nations of Europe, whose governments are as different from ours, as their people are locally distant. It is a general denomination, that is in no measure descriptive of the peculiar kind of republican government under which we live. The name of Federalist, in its application to the republican inhabitants of the United States, is definite and appropriate, and should never be lost; because it expresses a peculiar trait in our government, which distinguishes us from the republicans of Europe. A man cannot be a true federalist, unless he be a real republican; but men may be republicans, who are antifederalists or opposers of our form of government.”

Advertiser responded to an article which had proposed this as the new name for the United States a few weeks before. The contributor disagreed, arguing that “America” and “American” were more than sufficient, surmising that “the word America is sometimes used to denote all the land, consisting either of Islands or continents, that lies in the Western hemisphere. Our nation, however, being the only independent community in this hemisphere, the word is most frequently appropriated to the territory which belongs to us,” continuing, “Those provinces which are dependant on European nations, are distinguished by the prefix of English, Dutch or Spanish-America, whereas our country is denominated simply America, and we, Americans.”⁷⁷⁰ The contributor argued that “The awkward phrase, “United Statesmen” is never used. When I speak of my countrymen whom I have met at Paris or Berlin or Batavia, I never dream of calling them United States-men. I simply say they are Americans, American Merchants, Sailors or Travelers, and nobody can possibly mistake me,” further asserting that “If I speak of aboriginal Americans I call them Indians; a Canadian, a West Indian, a Creole, French, Spanish or Dutch, sufficiently designate the other people of the Western hemisphere. If there be any thing vague or awkward in these appellations, let it be their business to provide a remedy. As to us, we claim the dignity of being called Americans, and nobody denies our claim.”⁷⁷¹ In contrast to the argument that the term American was too vague as it encompassed other racial and cultural groups that American newspapers felt were properly excluded from American identity, the contributor to *Poulson’s* argued that claiming the term American for themselves was the right of the people of the United States; the only true Americans. Though it was never stated explicitly, all of these arguments over the proper term for Americans implicitly understood that the “American” that they were trying to find a new name for was White. By arguing that a new name was needed to differentiate Americans from Canadians, Mexicans, West Indians, Creoles, and Indigenous peoples, American newspapers were arguing that Americans were not like these other groups. True Americans were White, and as far as many Americans were

⁷⁷⁰ *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser*, August 16, 1803.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*

concerned, of English origin. And as they always had been, Canadians were mentioned amongst the “others” as an example of what Americans decidedly were not.

By the late eighteenth century, American hopes that Canada would soon join the United States began to fade, and with them positive depictions of their northern neighbours. American newspapers shifted back to othering the people of Canada, not as vicious and subhuman as they had during the French and Indian War, but as lazy and ignorant. Where Americans were hard-working and innovative, Canadians were slothful and stuck in the ways of their ancestors.⁷⁷² Where Americans were educated and well-read, Canadian men were illiterate and uninformed.⁷⁷³ Where Americans understood their place in the community of nations, Canadians were pretentious and far too big for their britches.⁷⁷⁴ Where Americans were largely considered to encompass only free White men (and perhaps their wives and children) in the American public mind, Canadians were composed of Indigenous peoples and Black Americans, as well.⁷⁷⁵ Where Americans opposed arbitrary rule, Canadians were content to live under tyranny.⁷⁷⁶ Still, despite

⁷⁷² *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*, March 23, 1804.

⁷⁷³ *Albany Chronicle*, April 9, 1798.

⁷⁷⁴ *New-England Palladium*, January 6, 1804.

⁷⁷⁵ *Hampshire Gazette*, November 26, 1800.

⁷⁷⁶ *National Intelligencer*, November 16, 1803; *Alexandria Daily Advertiser*, November 19, 1803; *American*, and *Baltimore Gazette*, November 19, 1803; *Telegraphe and Daily Advertiser*, November 19, 1803; *Gazette of the United States*, November 21, 1803; *Alexandria Expositor*, November 21, 1803; *Aurora General Advertiser*, November 21, 1803; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, November 21, 1803; *American Citizen*, November 22, 1803; *Commercial Advertiser*, November 22, 1803; *Daily Advertiser*, November 22, 1803; *Evening Post*, November 22, 1803; *Morning Chronicle*, November 22, 1803; *Spectator*, November 23, 1803; *Kline's Carlisle Weekly Gazette*, November 23, 1803; *Maryland Herald and Hager's-Town Weekly Advertiser*, November 23, 1803; *Morning Chronicle*, November 23, 1803; *New-York Herald*, November 23, 1803; *Republican Watch-Tower*, November 23, 1803; *Virginia Argus*, November 23, 1803; *Chronicle Express*, November 24, 1803; *New-York Herald*, November 26, 1803; *Virginia Gazette*, and *General Advertiser*, November 26, 1803; *Republican Star*, November 29, 1803; *Centinel Of Freedom*, November 29, 1803; *Connecticut Herald*, November 29, 1803; *New-England Palladium*, November 29, 1803; *New-Jersey Journal*, November 29, 1803; *Connecticut Courant*, November 30, 1803; *Gazetteer*, November 30, 1803; *National Aegis*, November 30, 1803; *New-England Repertory*, November 30, 1803; *Albany Gazette*, December 1, 1803; *Albany Centinel*, December 2, 1803; *Columbian Courier*, December 2, 1803; *New-England Palladium*, December 2, 1803; *Republican Advocate*, December 2, 1803; *Sun*, December 3, 1803; *New-England Repertory*, December 3, 1803; *Oracle of Dauphin*, December 3, 1803; *Scioto Gazette*, December 3, 1803; *Boston Commercial Gazette*, December 5, 1803; *North-Carolina Minerva*, December 5, 1803; *Connecticut Centinel*, December 6, 1803; *Bee*, December 6, 1803; *Connecticut Herald*, December 6, 1803; *New-Jersey Journal*, December 6, 1803; *Newburyport Herald*, December 6, 1803; *Vermont Gazette*, December 6, 1803; *National Aegis*, December 7, 1803; *Columbian Centinel*, December 7, 1803; *Columbian Museum*, December 7, 1803; *Connecticut*

these negative comparisons, a few aspects of the positive portrayals of Canadians from the Revolutionary era lived on into the nineteenth century. A few American papers portrayed Canadians as yearning to seize the liberty and freedom they saw in America.⁷⁷⁷ Like American women, Canadian women were portrayed as literate and responsible republican mothers.⁷⁷⁸ In combination, these positive and negative depictions of Canadians helped to define American identity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As Americans debated what they should call themselves, they all agreed that a term was needed lest they be mistaken for Canadians. As the nineteenth century dawned, Americans were more convinced than they had ever been before that theirs was a unique nation with its own people and its own identity. Part of establishing that identity was defining it against the Canadian identity, and after an era of good feeling during and immediately following the American Revolution, the American press returned to othering Canadians, not as a bloodthirsty, inhuman frontier threat, but as a dull and languid peasantry, mindlessly letting the tyrants of Europe lead them around by the nose.

Opinion of Canada was not as universal as it had been in the mid and late eighteenth century. As the press divided itself into Federalist and Republican camps, opinion of Canadians split. Particularly as tensions with Great Britain increased during

Courant, December 7, 1803; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy, or Worcester Gazette*, December 7, 1803; *American Mercury*, December 8, 1803; *Connecticut Journal*, December 8, 1803; *Vermont Centinel*, December 8, 1803; *Visitor*, December 8, 1803; *Windham Herald*, December 8, 1803; *Columbian Courier*, December 9, 1803; *Newburyport Herald*, December 9, 1803; *Jenks' Portland Gazette*, December 10, 1803; *Merrimack Gazette*, December 10, 1803; *New Hampshire Sentinel*, December 10, 1803; *Newport Mercury*, December 10, 1803; *Political Observatory*, December 10, 1803; *Sun*, December 10, 1803; *Greenfield Gazette*, December 12, 1803; *Reporter*, December 12, 1803; *Farmers' Museum, or Literary Gazette*, December 13, 1803; *Balance*, December 13, 1803; *Bee*, December 13, 1803; *Farmers' Register*, December 13, 1803; *Federal Spy*, December 13, 1803; *Herald of the United States*, December 13, 1803; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, December 13, 1803; *Hampshire Gazette*, December 14, 1803; *Middlebury Mercury*, December 14, 1803; *Otsego Herald*, December 15, 1803; *Dartmouth Gazette*, December 16, 1803; *Portsmouth Oracle*, December 17, 1803; *Merrimack Gazette*, December 17, 1803; *New Hampshire Sentinel*, December 17, 1803; *Newport Mercury*, December 17, 1803; *Political Observatory*, December 17, 1803; *Vermont Mercury*, December 19, 1803; *Greenfield Gazette*, December 19, 1803; *Eastern Repository*, December 20, 1803; *Green Mountain Patriot*, December 20, 1803; *Oracle Post*, December 20, 1803; *Connecticut Gazette*, December 21, 1803; *Courier of New Hampshire*, December 21, 1803; *Norwich Courier*, December 21, 1803; *Vermont Centinel*, December 22, 1803; *Dartmouth Gazette*, December 23, 1803; *Palladium*, December 24, 1803; *Pittsfield Sun*, December 26, 1803; *Tennessee Gazette*, January 4, 1804.

⁷⁷⁷ *American Citizen*, September 5, 1801; *Aurora General Advertiser*, September 8, 1801.

⁷⁷⁸ *Albany Chronicle*, April 9, 1798.

the Jefferson administration and as regional political differences within the United States began to become more pronounced, Federalist and Republican newspapers began to split, and this included in their depictions of Canada. The early nineteenth century was a time of significant change for the United States. Westward expansion was occurring at an unprecedented pace and signs of industrialization were beginning to appear in eastern American cities. Many historians have argued, however, that rather than optimism, this rapid change and expansion produced a general unease within the American population. Thomas R. Hietala has argued that anxieties regarding approaching industrialization produced a deification of agriculture and traditional values. He opined that the remedy to this angst was expansion and new territory was acquired with the express intent of reproducing the deified rural American image that was comfortable.⁷⁷⁹ Paul E. Johnson has similarly argued that a sense that expansion and industrialization had produced a breakdown in religion produced the revivals that spread across the United States in the early nineteenth century.⁷⁸⁰ For these historians, Americans responded to the rapid changes that engulfed America in the early nineteenth century by turning to expansion (and with it, conceptions of Manifest Destiny), rural and agricultural life, and religious revivalism. Though these changes were a few years off at the dawn of the nineteenth century, aspects of them were already appearing in the American press as the ten-year Jay Treaty drew to a close in 1805. And this expansionist American sentiment would have a significant influence on portrayals of Canada and of Canadians in the American press.

⁷⁷⁹ Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985).

⁷⁸⁰ Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York, Hill and Wang, 1978).

Part 3: “Needy Lazy Ignorant Squatters,” 1794-1812

Chapter 6: “Men Bred Up in the Habits of Slaves,” 1805-1812

Canadians and Americans who lived along the Canadian-American border, particularly those living on the border between New York and Upper Canada, had a long history of cross border interaction by the turn of the nineteenth century. There was so much intermingling that for many, the distinction between Canadian and American in those border regions began to blur. As Jane Errington and Alan Taylor have argued, the border region had a unique identity that was cross-border in nature, with significant cultural and familial interconnection between the populations on both sides.⁷⁸¹ The ties, both commercial and familial, that existed between the people of English Canada and the people of New England, where Federalism found its bastion, were particularly troubling to Republicans. Alan Taylor has argued that the borderland between Canada and the United States was not fully defined by national identity before the War of 1812. He argued that the American Revolution sundered the American population politically, but left the cultural ties between the populations intact. As Americans began emigrating to Canada in the years following the war, those ties only deepened. Taylor further argued that it took the War of 1812 (a civil war for the American and Indigenous populations), and the border atrocities committed by both sides during that conflict, to finally sunder the region culturally. After the war, Taylor argued that both regions turned inward, away from one another and toward their own unique identities.⁷⁸² Until 1812, however, there were significant, close networks of both business and kinship that straddled the international border, further reinforcing in the minds of Republicans the links between Federalist New England and British Canada. The early nineteenth century was a time of significant political fracturing in the United States as the First Party System divided the nation’s political scene. And while the arguments concerning the centralization of power identified by Douglas Bradburn remained central to the debate between Federalists and

⁷⁸¹ Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada*; Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*.

⁷⁸² Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*.

Republicans,⁷⁸³ as the Napoleonic Wars raged in Europe, American politicians increasingly accused one another of actively working for either France or Britain. Given the territorial proximity of New England and the Middle Colonies to the Canadas, along with their traditional association of the Federalists with Britain, Republican newspapers often concluded that Federalists and Canadians were one and the same. Likewise, because of the traditional association of the Republicans with revolutionary France, many Federalist newspapers concluded that the Republicans sought Canada in order to return it to Napoleon as a means of currying favour. As conflict with Britain seemed to grow more and more likely in the first decade of the nineteenth century, papers on both sides of the political divide often reverted back to the portrayals of Canada that had been common in years past. Canadians were again, as they often had been, either murderous, slavish enemies, or enlightened, liberty-loving fellows, depending on one's political affiliation.

Historical understandings of the First Party System have been shifting in recent years. Numerous historians have sought to complicate the story of the rise of parties, exploring it not as a linear process, but as a series of ebbs and flows, with developments being uneven and haphazard. In particular, a collection by Daniel Peart and Adam I. P. Smith has sought to push back against Whiggish conceptions of the First Party System, seeking to explore the complexities of American politics in the era outside of the frame of parties.⁷⁸⁴ The authors that contribute to this collection, however, do not address Canada in any meaningful way, nor have other historians of early American politics. Seminal works in the historiography of the First Party System,⁷⁸⁵ as well as newer works,⁷⁸⁶ have addressed Canada incredibly rarely, if at all. Those that do mention Canada have not explored the influence that conceptions of Canadians had on the political divides that

⁷⁸³ Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution*.

⁷⁸⁴ Daniel Peart and Adam I. P. Smith, eds. *Practicing Democracy: Popular Politics in the United States from the Constitution to the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015).

⁷⁸⁵ William Nisbet Chambers, *The First Party System: Federalists and Democratic-Republicans* (New York: Wiley, 1972); Paul Goodman, *The Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967).

⁷⁸⁶ Jeffrey S. Selinger, *Embracing Dissent: Political Violence and Party Development in the United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Peart and Smith, eds., *Practicing Democracy*.

were developing within the United States government.⁷⁸⁷ Although perhaps not a primary concern in comparison to international relations with Britain and France, understandings of Canada mattered a great deal to both Federalists and Democratic-Republicans. As was typical, the two parties generally had wildly different views of Canada, and they often sparred over the topic in Congress and in American newspapers. Following the end of the Jay Treaty, conceptions of Canadians remained important to Americans, but politics and war would soon fundamentally change the usefulness of portrayals of those Canadians, and the place of such depictions in the American press would change as well. As many historians have noted, the War of 1812 marked a break in the relationship between Canada and the United States, and between Canadians and Americans living along the border.⁷⁸⁸ The war also marked a break in the ways that the image of Canadians was utilized in the American press, a moment where the Canadian foil began to lose its shine. Though Canadians remained an other, they were no longer as useful an other as they had been in decades past.

Chapter Six explores the era between the end of the Jay Treaty and the outbreak of the War of 1812. This was a period of significant change for American press portrayals of Canadians, change that would ultimately make the Canadian identity far less attractive as a foil against which to define the American identity. Though there remained significant speculation from American newspapers that the Canadians were on the verge of a revolution in the early nineteenth century, many American papers began to conclude that the idea of incorporating Canada into the United States had in fact been a foolish one. As the War of 1812 loomed, Canadians largely remained an other, excluded from the American imagined community on account of their apparently foreign culture and their seemingly racialized heritage. In addition to these character flaws, American newspapers also turned significant attention to the descendants of the Loyalists in the run up to the war. These English Canadians were portrayed as a duplicitous and vengeful group, raised

⁷⁸⁷ Eric Nellis, *The Long Road to Change: America's Revolution, 1750-1820* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2007).

⁷⁸⁸ Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada*; Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*, Lennox, *North of America*.

by their parents to hate the United States. Alongside the French Canadians, whom American newspapers were still largely portraying as lazy dullards, the Loyalists were used by American papers to reinforce the perceived superiority of the American identity. In this way, Canadians remained an important part of defining Americans. Other factors generally made Canadians less attractive as a foil for the American identity. For one, the economic situation of Canada shifted drastically during this period. Due to the effects of the American Embargo of 1807, the Canadian economy exploded and American newspapers across the country began to comment on the growing prosperity of the Canadians. To Americans, it seemed that this prosperity had put an end to Canadian desires to join the United States. Arguments about whether it would benefit the U.S. if Canadians joined their union began to fade from the pages of the American press. Even more detrimental to the use of Canadians as a foil for defining Americans was the rise of the Canadian press. American newspapers had, for a very long time, been able to use Canadians to define the American identity because Canadians could be whatever newspaper editors needed them to be. They could be molded into whatever shape best fit the argument. As the Canadian press was incredibly small for much of the era between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, there was very little hard evidence circulating about how the Canadians themselves felt. Because of this, American newspapers could represent Canadians in whatever way worked best for their purposes. In the early 1800s, however, the Canadian press began to grow quite significantly, and the existence of first-hand Canadian opinion meant that Canadians could no longer be used in such a pliable manner. Subsequently, the usefulness of Canadians as a foil against which to define the American character began to decline. This decline was a slow process, however, and for much of the era between the end of the Jay Treaty and the War of 1812, Canadians continued to play an important role in the efforts of American newspaper editors to cement exactly what it meant to be an American.

Despite the importance of Canada to both the Federalist and Democratic-Republican parties, Canada and Canadians have featured very little in the historiography of the First Party System. Despite this dearth of study, Canada mattered to both parties, though their views on Canada differed quite markedly. Federalist newspapers generally held positive views of Canada, and they argued both that Canada should be taken and that

Canada should be left alone based on these positive views. Those Federalist papers that supported a union between the Canadas and the United States argued that the Canadians were just like Americans and that they sought to join the United States, being prevented only by British force of arms. Those Federalists that were opposed to taking Canada argued that Canada should not be invaded as those Canadian neighbours were Americans peaceful friends and kin. Unlike Federalists, Democratic Republican newspapers generally held negative views of Canada, but they also argued both for and against taking the region. Those Republican papers that were for taking Canada argued that it was a hornet's nest that needed to be destroyed for the safety of the frontier states. Those Republicans that were opposed to taking Canada argued that integrating the racially and socially inferior Canadians into the American body politic would rot the American system from within. Though they differed greatly, both parties utilized conceptions of Canadians repeatedly, and newspapers on both sides of the political divide portrayed Canadians prominently. Whatever their opinion and whatever their party affiliation or preference, Canada mattered to Americans during the rise of the First Party System, and although the War of 1812 would change this dynamic, conceptions of Canadians played a notable if underexplored role in the rise of American political parties.

One of the things that seemed most irritating to contributors to American newspapers about their Canadian neighbours throughout the splintering of opinion regarding Canada was the fact that Canadians just did not seem to know their place. The American press had long resented that many Canadians seemed to view themselves as the equals of their American neighbours, and as tensions grew in the years following the end of the Jay Treaty, their attacks on Canadian self-importance grew sharper. Following talk of war in 1807, the *Public Advertiser* extolled readers, "We must teach these haughty Canadians inside the walls of Quebec, that we know how to resent their insults and the perfidy of their masters."⁷⁸⁹ Two weeks later, the *Farmers' Cabinet* surmised that "The newspapers of Canada bluster about the power of the British navy, and her fixed intention

⁷⁸⁹ *Public Advertiser*, August 8, 1807; *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*, August 24, 1807.

to enforce her pretensions against neutrals – and all that,” continuing, “If the Canadian writers have common sense, they cannot but be sensible that a war with Britain would be as dangerous to herself as to us, and that though she may essentially injure our commerce, she will by that very mean be hastening her own destruction.” Many American newspapers were flabbergasted that Canadians could even dream that they could win in a confrontation with the United States. As far as those papers were concerned, it was all just Canadian hot air. The *Cabinet* concluded, “If Britain then will still pursue her haughty, domineering pretensions and conduct towards us, war must ensue; and the Canadian blusterers will, in such an event, soon find their country in the power of our forces.”⁷⁹⁰ The War of 1812 has been called the second American war of independence, and in 1807, many American newspapers were already spoiling for the fight. As part of preparing for that presumed second war of independence, many papers began posturing against the British empire, with the nearest target the relatively weakly defended provinces of Canada. Though the *Cabinet* mentioned Britain, the focus was not on the British, but on Canada, and the position many American newspapers took was that of a bully, a strong nation attempting to coerce a weak one. The day after the article in the *Cabinet*, the *National Aegis* concurred, reading, “The time will soon come, unless satisfaction for our wrongs is very speedily given us, when we shall convince the insignificant and ignorant slaves of Canada that their crowing is but a prelude to their destruction and that the militia of nearly any one State in the Union, weak and imbecile as they represent it is strong enough to conquer them and bring them to our terms.”⁷⁹¹ The image of Canadians portrayed in the *Cabinet* and the *Aegis* was not the image of prideful but lazy Canadians that had come into focus following the Revolution. These Canadians were actively threatening. Where a few years earlier, American papers were portraying Canadians as arrogant but harmless, when the Jay Treaty ended in 1805, many American newspapers began to portray them as loudmouthed *and* belligerent. They were

⁷⁹⁰ *Farmers' Cabinet*, August 25, 1807; *Newburyport Herald*, August 28, 1807; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, August 31, 1807; *Albany Register*, September 1, 1807; *Essex Register*, September 3, 1807; *Staunton Eagle*, October 16, 1807.

⁷⁹¹ *National Aegis*, August 26, 1807; *Republican Spy*, September 1, 1807; *Independent Chronicle*, September 24, 1807.

no longer simply annoying, but annoying and dangerous, and instrumental to this shift in American press portrayals was the rise of the Canadian press.

Throughout the eighteenth century, there were remarkably few newspapers in Canada. Of the few that existed, most were published by Americans and were actively repressed by the Canadian government, particularly after the Revolution.⁷⁹² Around the turn of the nineteenth century, however, the number of Canadian newspapers grew exponentially as influential Canadians began to take up printing as part of the expanding Canadian public sphere.⁷⁹³ And as had been the case in the United States, these papers both helped shape the Canadian identity and also reflected an identity already in the making. A process that had happened many years prior in the U.S. was now happening in Canada. Many of the early Canadian printers were new arrivals from abroad. John Bushell, the printer of Canada's first newspaper, the *Halifax Gazette*, in 1752, was an American from Boston. Anthony Henry, who took over the *Halifax Gazette* from Bushell was a German who had previously been known as Anton Heinrich. William Brown and Thomas Gilmore, who published the first bilingual newspaper in Canada (and the oldest currently operating newspaper in the North America), the *Quebec Gazette*, were Americans from Philadelphia. Fleury Mesplet, who published Canada's first entirely French newspaper, was from France. Of the eighteenth century Canadian printers, only Louis Roy, who started the *Upper Canada Gazette* in 1793 was Canadian born. This began to change in the early nineteenth century, as prominent politicians began to print newspapers as a means of eliciting public support. Though many faced reprisals for their publishing, like Lower Canadian political figure Pierre Bédard, whom Governor James Craig imprisoned for publishing criticisms of the government, the Canadian press began to flourish and a public sphere developed in Canada, in many ways modelled off of the public print sphere that existed to the south. Like the American partisan press, Canadian newspapers often served to further political agendas, and as papers proved increasingly useful to politicians, the number of Canadian prints began to quickly rise. This growth in

⁷⁹² Douglas Fetherling, *The Rise of the Canadian Newspaper* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1949).

⁷⁹³ Chris Raible, *The Power of the Press: The Story of Early Canadian Printers and Publishers* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company LTD, 2007).

the number of Canadian newspapers was also due to the fact that the English Canadian population expanded to the point that circulating newspapers could turn a profit. The result was a growing Canadian population that wanted newspapers, and the number of Canadian papers grew quickly. Whereas in generations before, the only news that seemed to come out of Canada was official proclamations and the occasional letter, around the turn of the nineteenth century, reprints of articles from Canadian newspapers begin to fill the press. The seeming Canadian dark age came to an end as newspapers began to flourish.

The availability of Canadian newspapers fundamentally changed the ways in which American newspapers portrayed Canadians as there was remarkably less guess work in determining Canadian sentiment towards the United States with a flourishing Canadian press. There did remain questions as to whether the newspapers represented the actual sentiments of the Canadian people or whether they were the mouthpieces of government propaganda, but as Canadian papers began to circulate in the United States and as articles from them were reprinted in American newspapers, the traditional understandings of Canadian character and loyalty that permeated the American press began to be challenged by Canadian newspapers, and generally the Canadian printers refused to pull punches. In August of 1807, the *Republican Crisis* surmised that “The British Canadian prints continue their reflections, with no small degrees of acrimony and insult, against the American nation and character.”⁷⁹⁴ Such portrayals served to put the image of Canadians as Americans in waiting to rest. Far from a group of people that idealized the United States, Canadians were fast being depicted as a group that snidely ridiculed the United States. The following month, the *New Hampshire Sentinel* asserted, “The Canada papers, particularly those at Montreal & Quebec... are very lavish in their impudent epithets of ‘might mob,’ ‘mob government,’ &c. – ridicule our ‘Presidential bulls and town-meeting resolutions,’ and appear to feel perfectly safe as to the effect of any attack which may be made on their provinces.”⁷⁹⁵ The idea that Canadians respected and envied American institutions was dead. In November of 1811, the *Star* decried the

⁷⁹⁴ *Republican Crisis*, August 18, 1807.

⁷⁹⁵ *New Hampshire Sentinel*, September 5, 1807.

“barbarous, taunting and contemptuous effusions against our national character”⁷⁹⁶ that were appearing in the Canadian press. In February of 1812, the *New-York Herald* noted that, “Whether our enemies, the Canadians can manage the bayonet, pike and gun as well as our ‘ragamuffin’ army that is to be, is yet to be determined: But in the wordy war now carrying on, they seem to be very little inferior to our bravest spouters.”⁷⁹⁷ Such accounts from Canada began to convince American newspaper editors that the shared vision of a potential union between the regions was over. The Canadian press was beginning to have the numbers as well. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, there were dozens of newspapers in Upper and Lower Canada, and that number would grow substantially over the coming years. The Canadian press had found its voice, and many American newspapers did not like what they heard.

Many of those American papers quickly questioned whether the voice from the Canadian press was in fact the voice from the Canadian people. In 1808, the *Farmers' Cabinet* asserted that, “notwithstanding the boasted liberty of the press in the British constitution, the privileges of which the duped Canadians are led to think they enjoy, the press there is as much under the control of Governor Craig, as that of Paris is under the Emperor Napoleon.”⁷⁹⁸ The example that most appeared as evidence of the lack of free Canadian press was that of Joseph Willcocks. In September of 1807, the *American Citizen* informed readers that “A Mr. Wilcocks, an Irishman by birth, has established a free press in Canada, a new thing in that part of his Majesty’s dominions. What will be the consequence I know not, but it is certain that the Canadian government will attempt to crush both him and his press.”⁷⁹⁹ The result, apparently, was repression, and by January the following year, it appeared to American papers that repression was in full swing. That month, the *American Citizen* published another article that asserted that “Two informations were sometime since filed, ex officio, by the attorney-general of Upper Canada, against Mr. Willcocks, editor of the *Upper Canada Guardian*, for alledged libels

⁷⁹⁶ *Star*, November 29, 1811.

⁷⁹⁷ *New-York Herald*, February 12, 1812.

⁷⁹⁸ *Farmers' Cabinet*, February 9, 1808; *Democrat*, February 10, 1808; *Boston Courier*, February 11, 1808; *Watchman*, February 12, 1808.

⁷⁹⁹ *American Citizen*, September 8, 1807; *Republican Watch-Tower*, September 11, 1807.

published in that paper against the lieutenant governor of the province.” The paper continued, however, “It appears by the subjoined address, copied from the Guardian of the 25th ult. that the Upper Canadians have, in defiance of the frowns and prosecutions of the government, elected Mr. Willcocks a member of the Canadian Parliament.”⁸⁰⁰ His place in the assembly, however, was not enough to keep Willcocks out of prison, and October of 1811, the *Columbian* published an article titled “Canadian Liberty of the Press,” which read, “It appears by the following account, that Mr. Willcocks, editor of the Guardian, although the term of his imprisonment, to which he was condemned (while a member of the Canadian parliament) for an implied libel, has scarcely expired, the hands of the government are again upon him, and in all probability will do its work more effectually this time.”⁸⁰¹ Many American newspapers placed no stock in the freedom of the Canadian press, though many of those papers had similar doubts about whether certain newspapers in the United States could be trusted any better.

The political war that was brewing between Democratic-Republicans and Federalists within the American government was fought publicly through the nation’s numerous newspapers, many of which took sides in the early nineteenth century, and as far as Republican papers were concerned, Federalist prints were not to be trusted, and vice versa. This partisanship seeped into nearly every argument within the early American government, but as the difference between the parties largely hinged on relations with Britain, opinion of Canadians, as part of the British empire, also split along party lines. In 1806, the *Republican Farmer* asserted that during the Adams administrations, “the federal presses teemed with praises of Britain, British magnanimity and British justice,” further surmising that the Federalists “with all their attachments to the interests of a foreign government [the British], talk at the corner of the streets and in Insurance offices, of their patriotism, and honor, and love of country. This was pure

⁸⁰⁰ *American Citizen*, January 18, 1808; *Republican Watch-Tower*, January 19, 1808; *Democratic Press*, January 20, 1808; *True American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, January 20, 1808; *Charleston Courier*, February 2, 1808; *Savannah Republican*, February 6, 1808.

⁸⁰¹ *Columbian*, October 19, 1811; *American & Commercial Daily Advertiser*, October 23, 1811; *Democratic Press*, October 26, 1811; *Alexandria Herald*, October 28, 1811; *Commonwealth*, November 4, 1811; *Carolina Gazette*, November 16, 1811; *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, November 19, 1811.

federalist.”⁸⁰² Federalists were, in the eyes of the Republicans, saying one thing and doing another when it came to the British. The paper alleged that while they spoke of their loyalty to the United States, the Federalists were working to undermine the U.S. through their British fealty. The duplicitousness that the Federalists were allegedly exhibiting enraged the Republicans. And the connections that the regions with Federalist sympathies had with Canada was also seen as a cause for Republican concern.

The links between the Federalist bastion of New England and the British provinces of Canada seemed so intertwined that many Republican papers began to question the ultimate loyalties of the Federalists. In 1814, the Federalist Party would hold a series of meetings known as the Hartford Convention, which addressed grievances held by the party, but which was also erroneously said to have supported the secession of the northern states and their pledging of allegiance to Great Britain. The fact that broad swaths of the American population could believe the rumour of Federalist treason reflected the long association that the Federalists had with Britain and with Canada, and the deep-seated anxiety this caused for Republicans. Reaction to the Hartford convention was part of a longer historical process. The fears that inflated the Hartford Convention to treason were planted in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A key Republican attack on their Federalist rivals centred on Federalist disloyalty, and Canadians were often portrayed as intimately involved. In 1807, the *Ontario Messenger* of Canandaigua, New York asserted that “Some of the federalists appear very intimate with the Canadians, on the frontiers of this state, and seem willing to violate the law for the sake of obliging their good friends, and helping themselves to a little cash.”⁸⁰³ As far as the *Messenger* was concerned, the Federalists were behaving very much like Canadians, a group barred from a place in the American identity, subtly questioning the Federalists’ own place within that identity. By 1809, there were fears that New England might secede from the union. The *Columbian Detector* surmised that “The public are under some anxiety, lest the three branches of the Massachusetts States Government should be so far British as to measure off a Goreing slice of the Union for his majesty, to

⁸⁰² *Republican Farmer*, June 25, 1806.

⁸⁰³ *Ontario Messenger*, June 14, 1807.

be attached to his Canadian possessions.”⁸⁰⁴ Papers like the *Detector* were direct, and explicitly accused the Federalists of treason. It was an argument that was echoed throughout the Democratic-Republican press. In 1809, the *Rutland Herald* meanwhile printed the resolutions of a town meeting in Vermont, one of which was “That we view with deep concern the growing opposition, to wise, necessary and wholesome laws; and a design to separate the eastern states from the union, and join them to the Canadian Provinces of Great Britain, and thereby form an anglo-federal monarchy.”⁸⁰⁵ It spoke to the relative fragility of the early United States that the idea that states were thinking about seceding from the union circulated so widely and was seemingly taken so seriously. The unity that had seemed to be foundational to so much of the Revolutionary American identity was at risk as factions had seemed to develop within the early republic. There were fears that it would very soon all fall apart. And as far as the Republicans were concerned, it was the Federalists who had betrayed American unity. For Republican papers, it seemed that the Federalists were aligning themselves with the British and with the Canadians, and as far as they were concerned, this was treason.

Federalist newspapers, however, viewed the situation rather differently. Quoting the article from the *Ontario Messenger* which had accused the Federalists of “obliging their good friends, and helping themselves to a little cash,”⁸⁰⁶ the *Columbian Gazette* questioned “Are there no means to detect such villainy? Can honest, honest federalists wish them success in their attempts to enfeeble the energies of government, at a time when every soul should be united? We cannot entertain so absurd, so mortifying an idea.”⁸⁰⁷ As far as the *Gazette* was concerned, Federalists were good Americans and good Americans would not act against their country. The implication in the *Gazette* was that the accusations were false, and created for political reasons. By asking, “Are there no means to detect such villainy?” the *Gazette* subtly answered its own question. Of course

⁸⁰⁴ *Columbian Detector*, April 14, 1809.

⁸⁰⁵ *Rutland Herald*, April 1, 1809.

⁸⁰⁶ *Ontario Messenger*, June 14, 1807.

⁸⁰⁷ *Columbian Gazette*, June 28, 1808; *Democrat*, June 29, 1808; *American & Commercial Daily Advertiser*, July 5, 1808; *City Gazette*, July 16, 1808; *Commonwealth*, July 20, 1808; *Carolina Gazette*, July 22, 1808.

there were means to detect such villainy, and because no villainy had been credibly detected by those means, it stood to reason that such villainy did not exist. Many papers argued that in fact the reverse was true. Referencing accusations that the Federalist party was complicit in the breaking embargo laws along the Canadian line, discussed below, the *Balance* contended “In Vermont, the federalists, ever the friends of law and order, avoid every attempt to evade the embargo. They have petitioned and remonstrated; but they will take no violent nor illegal steps.” The paper then continued, “The democrats, on the contrary, are in open opposition to the laws. It is a fact, which we state, without fear of contradiction, that the men who owned the batteau Black snake, and who lately killed the soldiers at Onion river, were neither federalists nor Canadians – but pure, genuine, Jeffersonian democrats!”⁸⁰⁸ The battle lines were drawn and Federalist and Democratic-Republicans were at each other’s throats, accusing the other of behaviour that would doom the new United States.

As far as Federalists were concerned, the behaviour in question revolved around the apparent connections between the Democratic-Republican party and Napoleonic France. There was much talk in the early nineteenth century of Napoleon Bonaparte’s desire to see the Canadas returned to French rule. In 1811, the *Mercantile Advertiser* informed readers that “The Paris Moniteur of February 26, 1811, says, ‘the inhabitants of Canada, who have been separated from France for a century, are still as much French, as the inhabitants of the banks of the Loire.’”⁸⁰⁹ As far as American newspapers were concerned, this meant that French Canadians must want to reunite with the French empire. That same year, the *Evening Post* surmised that “the French Canadians have long sighed to be again received into the bosom of the grand nation.”⁸¹⁰ By the *Post*’s reckoning, French Canadians had felt disconnected from their ancestors for too long.

⁸⁰⁸ *Balance*, August 30, 1808

⁸⁰⁹ *Mercantile Advertiser*, April 11, 1811; *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, April 15, 1811; *Federal Republican*, April 15, 1811; *American Watchman*, April 20, 1811; *Charleston Courier*, April 20, 1811; *Enquirer*, April 26, 1811

⁸¹⁰ *Evening Post*, June 29, 1811; *Political and Commercial Register*, June 29, 1811; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, July 1, 1811; *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, July 2, 1811; *Herald of Liberty*, July 2, 1811; *Dartmouth Gazette*, July 3, 1811; *New-York Herald*, July 6, 1811; *Virginia Patriot*, July 9, 1811; *Albany Register*, July 12, 1811; *Portsmouth Oracle*, July 20, 1811; *Hagerstown Gazette*, August 6, 1811.

Alongside such contentions, there was an underlying belief that it wouldn't take much to push the French Canadians to revolt. Occasional attempts had even been made to disaffect them. In 1807, the *Vermont Precursor* quoted the *Quebec Mercury* as informing Canadian readers that a paper has been circulated in French Canada "containing severe invectives against the English, and having a tendency to alienate the affections of his Majesty's good subjects, the Canadians, from their compatriots the English. That from its tenor and tendency, particularly the signature at the bottom, they had every reason to believe that it was sent amongst them for evil purposes, by the present government of France."⁸¹¹ It seemed that France was trying to push Canadians over the edge and into revolt. And as far as many Federalist papers were concerned, the Republicans were complicit in these attempts. The associations between the Democratic-Republicans and the French were many, and it seemed to make perfect sense to Federalists that the Republicans would be in league with the old French enemy. In 1810, the *Commercial Advertiser* attacked France and its links to the United States. The paper surmised, "There is no doubt, that Bonaparte has long since placed his paternal affections upon this Continent. – His first attempt will be upon the Northern and Southern parts of North America. If successful in these he probably calculates that a single effort will sweep the U. States beneath his control." As far as the *Commercial Advertiser* was concerned, the French objectives did not stop at Canada, but at the whole of North America. It was something the *Advertiser* cautioned against. It continued, "Preparatory to this event, he has had Emisaries scattered over the Continent for years. French Intrigue, we have strong reason to believe, has been inefficient and too successful operation in this country, in this State and in this city." The implication was that the French had received some kind of assistance in their schemes, and it seemed obvious to the paper who the most likely suspects were. Still, the paper tried to remain civil. The *Advertiser* asserted, "We do not insinuate that the great body of democrats are knowingly governed by French Influence. We believe that a great proportion of that party are honest men, and have been aiming only at the public welfare; while others, not less ardent, have been laboring for no other

⁸¹¹ *Vermont Precursor*, February 23, 1807.

object than their own private benefit,” continuing that despite this “there are men amongst us, who have been, and still are, exerting every faculty to render this country subservient to the views of Bonaparte – nay, to drag this country insensibly into the arms of the Conqueror of Europe – we have not the shadow of a doubt.”⁸¹² The U.S. forming closer ties with France was something that most Federalists recoiled from, but it was also something that they feared. Samuel McKee, the House Representative from Kentucky, put it succinctly when he stated in 1809 that “A war with England would throw us into the embraces of France.”⁸¹³ That outcome, however, was not something that all Americans feared. In 1808, the *Balance* printed a satirical verse that read, “Bonney, to rouse the Yankees, says, If they’ll declare ‘gainst Britain, He’ll ‘guarantee the Canadas – “If they’ll but fight and get’em.”⁸¹⁴ While the verse was an attack on the seeming links between the Republicans and Bonaparte, the outcome it presented was not one that all Americans were opposed to. In 1812, the *Commercial Advertiser* asserted of an attack on Canada, “Perhaps the reader may wish to know what we are to receive in return for their expense of life and treasure. Certainly we are not going to plunder the Canadians. The answer is clear, and there is but one answer. We shall gain the pleasure of humbling Great-Britain so that she shall be compelled to make peace with France on such terms as

⁸¹² *Commercial Advertiser*, April 27, 1810; *Evening Post*, April 28, 1810; *New-York Gazette*, April 28, 1810; *Philadelphia Gazette*, April 30, 1810; *Connecticut Herald*, May 1, 1810; *Democratic Press*, May 1, 1810; *True American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, May 1, 1810; *Connecticut Gazette*, May 2, 1810; *Alexandria Daily Gazette, Commercial & Political*, May 3, 1810; *Connecticut Journal*, May 3, 1810; *Federal Republican*, May 3, 1810; *Federal Republican & Commercial Gazette*, May 3, 1810; *Newburyport Herald*, May 4, 1810; *Northern Whig*, May 4, 1810; *Rhode-Island American*, May 4, 1810; *Virginia Patriot*, May 4, 1810; *Boston Patriot*, May 5, 1810; *Providence Gazette*, May 5, 1810; *Suffolk Gazette*, May 5, 1810; *Connecticut Mirror*, May 7, 1810; *American Advocate*, May 8, 1810; *Enquirer*, May 8, 1810; *Fredonian*, May 8, 1810; *Greenfield Gazette*, May 8, 1810; *Republican Star*, May 8, 1810; *Salem Gazette*, May 8, 1810; *Hornet*, May 9, 1810; *National Aegis*, May 9, 1810; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy, or Worcester Gazette*, May 9, 1810; *City Gazette*, May 10, 1810; *Weekly Eastern Argus*, May 10, 1810; *Farmer's Repository*, May 11, 1810; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, May 11, 1810; *Pennsylvania Correspondent, and Farmers' Advertiser*, May 14, 1810; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, May 14, 1810; *Herald of Liberty*, May 15, 1810; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, May 15, 1810; *Vermont Courier*, May 16, 1810; *Federal Republican & Commercial Gazette*, May 17, 1810; *Sun*, May 19, 1810; *True American*, May 19, 1810; *Louisiana State Gazette*, May 26, 1810; *Supporter*, May 26, 1810; *Vermont Republican*, May 28, 1810; *Mississippian*, June 4, 1810.

⁸¹³ *Federal Gazette*, January 29, 1810; *Independent Chronicle*, February 5, 1810; *Rhode-Island American*, February 6, 1810; *Rhode-Island Republican*, February 7, 1810; *Merrimack Intelligencer*, February 10, 1810.

⁸¹⁴ *Balance*, February 9, 1808.

Bonaparte shall dictate.”⁸¹⁵ As far as the *Commercial Advertiser* was concerned, France and the United States were natural allies, and it was time to start acting like it. The envisioned alliance between the United States and Napoleonic France was one that the Federalist press decried vehemently.

Whether Federalist or Democratic-Republican, American newspapers almost universally interpreted international events, like the Napoleonic Wars, in local American contexts. As far as American depictions of Canadians went, most of the articles that appeared in the American press that referenced Canadian feeling toward Napoleon portrayed them as fervently opposed. In 1809, the *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette* queried as to what would happen should France prove victorious over the British and come for America, concluding that “The inhabitants of Canada would not so soon forget their antipathy to France, as to submit without a struggle. On whatever part of this Continent he should land, its inhabitants would make but one common cause.”⁸¹⁶ Here the *Gazette* used the idea of the “common cause” in its more traditional sense, as the common cause of Protestantism against Catholicism. Canadians, the paper argued, would be joining the Protestant cause. Exactly why French Catholic Canadians would do that was not addressed. In 1806, the *Political Observatory* had printed an account that lent weight to the assertion that Canadian opinion had turned against France. The *Observatory* read, “A general illumination took place on the night of the 1-th inst. In consequence of the late brilliant victory obtained by lord viscount Nelson, over the combined fleet. The glow of patriotism pervaded every breast, and loyalty demanded a victim; it was accordingly determined, that that should be nothing less than the Imperial Napoleon.” The account continued, however, that “as the real Bonaparte was unfortunately at too great distance, and in pursuit of our good allies, the Austrians, it was sapiently resolved, that his effigy would do for the present: it was therefore affixed to a pole, triumphantly conducted to a pile of wood, the flame applied.”⁸¹⁷ As the war between Britain and its

⁸¹⁵ *Commercial Advertiser*, January 22, 1812; *Spectator*, January 25, 1812.

⁸¹⁶ *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, December 26, 1809.

⁸¹⁷ *Political Observatory*, February 21, 1806; *Green Mountain Patriot*, March 11, 1806. The paper continued of the wood that the Canadians were trying to light that, “tough as the arm of the hero Marengo,

allies versus France and its allies continued to rage in Europe and leak into North America, it seemed that the Canadians, despite their long ties to France, could not be counted on as friends of their French kin. Both push and pull factors influenced Canadian opinion. Many French Canadians were pushed away from the increasingly authoritarian system that was developing in France. Many more French Canadians were also pulled toward Britain, particularly as British policies favourable to Lower Canada were passed. And in 1807, the administration of Thomas Jefferson would pass an act that would further cement Canadian affections for the British system, both French and English, and further alienate them from both France and the United States: the Embargo Act of 1807.

In the opinion of most American newspapers, papers on both sides of the political divide, the most important thing that had ever happened to the Canadian economy happened in December of 1807 when President Thomas Jefferson signed the Embargo Act. The act was a measure of economic warfare theoretically directed at both France and England (though it primarily targeted the British), but in practice, it resulted in the decimation of the American economy, the drastic expansion of smuggling along the Canadian border, and an explosion in the economic value of the Canadas. At first, the Embargo only targeted trade coming through America's seaports, leaving overland trade with Canada one of the only means of getting products to international markets. On February 3, 1808, the *Dartmouth Gazette* printed an article titled "A New Market," which began, "We are informed, that in the upper parts of New-Hampshire, Vermont, and New-York, the inhabitants, deprived of all vent for their production, in our own seaports, are taking a northern direction to Montreal." The *Gazette* continued, "The expense of transport is greater to the most considerable part, than that of going to the eastern markets; but produce, it is said, commands a good price, with the prospect of its rising still higher." The article concluded, "As the prices of the articles of exportation from the Northern States, depend principally on the West India markets, and as these must be greatly raised, while the present system of destroying commerce is pursued by our

and green as the understandings of those who had prepared it, the pole resisted the flames, and he, who had already escaped a scorching at Jemappe and Lodi, was not to be destroyed by a Canadian bonfire."

government, a few of our suffering farmers will be shielded in a measure from the general distress by having a ready vent for their produce in the Canadian ports.”⁸¹⁸ This market proved short lived, however, at least in a legal sense. On March 18 of that year, the *Evening Post* printed an article titled “Embargo again,” which informed readers that “At length the supplement to a supplement to the Embargo act is passed, so as to stop the farmers at the westward and northward from selling their produce to the Canadians.”⁸¹⁹ The supplement to the Act banned overland trade as well, making the trade networks that had developed in response to the initial Embargo Act illegal. Trade between the northern states and Canada did not cease, however, and instead continued apace following the supplement. And so, the Act was toughened once again, authorizing authorities to seize any load they thought *might* be headed for Canada. In January the following year, the *Concord Gazette* reported that the Embargo had been reinforced again in an effort to crack down on the smugglers passing back and forth across the line. It read, “The new Embargo Act which authorizes the Collectors to seize all carts, waggons, sleighs or other carriages, apparently on their way to the territory of a foreign nation, will come too late to prevent the Vermonters from finding a good market for their Pork, Butter, and other produce – the fine sleighing is improved by them to good advantage in visiting their Canadian neighbors.”⁸²⁰ There was profit to be made in trading with Canada, and many northern newspapers began to declare that, by the Embargo, northern farmers would be reduced to smuggling to feed their families. Indeed, many Americans in the northern states, particularly in Vermont, quickly began decrying the Embargo in the press and defying it on the border.

⁸¹⁸ *Dartmouth Gazette*, February 3, 1808; *Connecticut Courant*, February 10, 1808; *Middlesex Gazette*, February 11, 1808; *Freeman's Friend*, February 13, 1808; *New-England Palladium*, February 16, 1808; *Connecticut Gazette*, February 17, 1808; *Political Atlas*, February 20, 1808; *Portsmouth Oracle*, February 20, 1808; *Providence Gazette*, February 20, 1808; *Gazette*, February 22, 1808; *Newburyport Herald*, February 23, 1808; *Salem Gazette*, February 23, 1808; *New-Bedford Mercury*, February 26, 1808; *Pennsylvania Correspondent, and Farmers' Advertiser*, March 1, 1808; *Gazette of Maine Hancock Advertiser*, March 3, 1808.

⁸¹⁹ *Evening Post*, March 18, 1808; *New-York Herald*, March 19, 1808; *Salem Gazette*, March 25, 1808; *Lansingburgh Gazette*, March 29, 1808; *Gazette of Maine Hancock Advertiser*, April 14, 1808.

⁸²⁰ *Concord Gazette*, January 17, 1809

Northern farmers, most of whom relied on open ports to find a market for their surplus produce, usually in the West Indies, immediately felt the effects of the additions to the Embargo, and just as quickly began voicing their concern. In April 1808, the *Boston Commercial Gazette* informed its readers that “Since the enacting (says a Newhampshire paper) of the Supplementary Embargo Law, which prohibits the exportation of produce from the United States, by land as well as by sea, the upper parts of this State, Vermont, and New-York are struck with an almost universal sentiment of disgust and horror at the measure.” By the *Gazette*’s reckoning, the embargo was going to have a much more detrimental effect on the farmers of the United States than it would on the British or the French. Papers like the *Commercial Gazette* portrayed the Canadian trade as necessary for the farmers’ survival. It continued, “In the quarter of the country above named, the value of produce, principally ashes, were it not for the late deadly stroke to our commerce, might be estimated, on a moderate calculation, at nearly a million dollars. This might have been easily transported to the Canadian markets and sold for ready cash.”⁸²¹ This ripe Canadian market was a particularly tempting prospect to northerners who found the embargo unjust, and in many ways unprecedented. Though there had been economic boycotts before, famously during the Revolution, the Embargo was different. It not only banned importation, but also banned exportation, closing off American farmers from the international market. This hurt both America’s farmers and America’s merchants, as American ships had no ability to legitimately carry on business with foreign ports and as America’s surplus produce began to build up in barns and rot. All this while the overland route to Canada lay temptingly to the north, making Federalist newspapers chafe all the more at an embargo that they portrayed as meaninglessly oppressive and tyrannical. The *Federal Republican & Commercial Gazette* opined in September of 1808 that “Another circumstance which sufficiently evinces the true nature and intention of this oppressive law, is the subsequent restriction upon intercourse by land. Certainly neither the French decrees, nor British Orders in Council, could interfere

⁸²¹ *Boston Commercial Gazette*, April 18, 1808; *Repertory*, April 19, 1808; *Political and Commercial Register*, April 20, 1808; *Intelligencer*, April 21, 1808; *North American and Mercantile Daily Advertiser*, April 22, 1808; *Gazette*, April 25, 1808.

with the trade pursued between the people of Vermont and the Canadians, or between the people of Georgia and those of Florida.”⁸²² By the early nineteenth century, the border region was largely understood, particularly by those who lived there, to be a region where the actual border meant very little in terms of marketplace and kinship. As far as many papers were concerned, the embargo left many in those border regions with no option but to defy the laws. In August 1808, *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy, or Worcester Gazette* warned of the potential consequences of the Embargo, asserting of northern farmers that “Imperious necessity, which, like hunger, will break through stone walls, impelled them to seek for a market for these productions in Canada (where they could be readily exchanged for silver and gold) and to evade the law, by every secret, but peaceable contrivance.” It was an option many Americans began to take. The *Spy* continued, “Doubting the constitutionality of the measure, and convinced of its oppressive tendency, they could see neither the moral nor political evil in this evasion.”⁸²³ This sentiment grew stronger as the Embargo dragged on and American farmers found themselves more and more desperate. Many such Americans soon began to take the northern route to Canada with their goods and produce in tow.

Across the northern states, but particularly in Vermont, farmers and merchants began to openly defy the embargo en masse. Vermonters, many of whom had, a mere decade before, called loudly for the destruction of their Canadian neighbours, now stood willing to defy their own government to carry on trade with those very neighbours. In January 1809, the *Concord Gazette* argued that “the cultivators of the soil are deprived of the fruits of their labors and the merchants of their commercial gains, by the present embargo. This forced state of things, cannot be of long continuance.” The obvious solution was smuggling. The paper continued, “Already have the Vermontese set the constituted authorities at defiance, and persist in carrying on their trade with the Canadians across lake Champlain, while the northern states manifest strong symptoms of

⁸²² *Federal Republican & Commercial Gazette*, September 7, 1808.

⁸²³ *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy, or Worcester Gazette*, August 3, 1808.

discontent.”⁸²⁴ And as authorities sought to prevent the passage of goods across the border, violence began to break out. The *Columbian Centinel* wrote of such conflict as early as 1808, surmising that “The petty warfare which is carried on in Vermont and on the Canadian frontier, in the execution, a la mode de Bonaparte, of the Embargo laws, occasions much agitation in those parts. A few boats &c. have been captured; but they bear a very small proportion to those which have escaped.” By the *Centinel*’s tally significant trade was being carried out across the Canadian border, and though it was illegal, it was justified. The *Centinel* further surmised that “When the Executors of the laws are freemen, and not mercenaries, and feel a conviction that those laws are unjust and unnecessary, it is not a difficult matter to lull their vigilance; and tempt them to wink at evasions, which they know cannot injure their country, but which afford relief to many of their fellow-citizens.” The *Centinel* argued that because the Embargo was so unjust, the patriotic thing to do was to defy it and to carry on trade with the Canadians. Those Canadians, though often relatively faceless when mentioned in attacks on the Embargo, were yet portrayed as friends to the American farmer and merchant, assisting them in the trade they felt was their right. Indeed, the Embargo was a seemingly strange piece of legislation from a Democratic Republican party that vocally supported a weak central government with the majority of power falling to the states. On the surface, it seemed a piece of legislation that would be much more the product of a Federalist administration, with a strong central government overseeing federal economic policy. Instead, it was the Democratic-Republicans who had ostensibly usurped the economic powers that should

⁸²⁴ *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*, January 2, 1809; *Enquirer*, January 5, 1809; *Evening Post*, January 9, 1809; *Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger*, January 9, 1809; *Commercial Advertiser*, January 10, 1809; *Essex Register*, January 11, 1809; *Spectator*, January 11, 1809; *Independent Chronicle*, January 12, 1809; *Monitor*, January 12, 1809; *American Citizen*, January 13, 1809; *Democrat*, January 14, 1809; *Statesman*, January 16, 1809; *Republican Watch-Tower*, January 17, 1809; *Norwich Courier*, January 18, 1809; *Connecticut Journal*, January 19, 1809; *Star*, January 19, 1809; *Pittsfield Sun*, January 21, 1809; *Savannah Republican*, January 21, 1809; *Alexandria Daily Gazette Commercial & Political*, January 23, 1809; *Centinel Of Freedom*, January 24, 1809; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, January 24, 1809; *Norfolk Repository*, January 26, 1809; *Newbern Herald*, February 2, 1809; *Frankfort Argus*, February 25, 1809; *Washington Federalist*, February 28, 1809; *Virginia Argus*, March 7, 1809; *Statesman*, March 9, 1809; *Democrat*, March 15, 1809; *Boston Courier*, March 16, 1809; *Kline's Carlisle Weekly Gazette*, March 31, 1809; *Enquirer*, March 31, 1809; *Columbian Detector*, April 4, 1809; *Rhode-Island Republican*, April 12, 1809; *Pennsylvania Herald, and Easton Intelligencer*, April 19, 1809; *Essex Register*, April 26, 1809.

have been the prerogative of the states, opening the Republicans up to vicious accusations of hypocrisy. As far as many citizens in the northern states were concerned, trade with Canada was a right that had been refused them, and as they had in the Revolution, they met the restrictions with increasing defiance.

Throughout 1808 and 1809, the northern American press was filled with accounts of parties large and small, armed and unarmed, in wagons and in sleighs, that were daily passing back and forth over the Canadian line, laden with produce and potash. In April, the *New-Bedford Mercury* asserted that “It is said they go in companies of from twenty to thirty, with a determination not to yield to any officers who may attempt to check their progress.”⁸²⁵ This resolve produced bloodshed. In May, the *Newburyport Herald* reported, “We hear that serious disturbances have arisen in one of the towns on the line, between Vermont and Canada; a gentleman from Montpelier asserts that a Vermonter attempted to pass the line with his waggon load of produce, was stopped, a fracas ensued in which one American and five Canadians were killed.”⁸²⁶ As the border had been relatively permeable prior to the Embargo, contributing greatly to the cross-border regional identity that had formed between inhabitants on the two sides of the border, the line proved significantly more important to the Republican administration than it did to the inhabitants of the northern states. The same month as the article from the *Herald*, the *Hampshire Federalist* reported that “We learn from Lake Champlain that several schooners bound from Vermont to Detroit, have been fired at from government vessels, and one man killed. The Vermonters seem to be determined to carry on their traffick with the Canadians, at all hazards.”⁸²⁷ The violence alone was enough to worry many American officials, but the seeming impunity by which much of it was carried out was particularly concerning. In July, *Spooner’s Vermont Journal* informed readers, “We learn by a gentleman from Lake Ontario, that a person there in the employ of the Customs house Officer, was lately shot dead, when on the watch of those attempting to run property into the Province. – The coroner’s inquest was accidental death. A solemn omen

⁸²⁵ *New-Bedford Mercury*, April 22, 1808.

⁸²⁶ *Newburyport Herald*, May 13, 1808; *Repertory*, June 7, 1808.

⁸²⁷ *Hampshire Federalist*, May 19, 1808; *Political Atlas*, May 21, 1808.

for American Custom house attendants.”⁸²⁸ As defiance continued on the frontiers, however, the government began to reinforce the borderlands, and because of this, numerous cargoes that had been on their way to Canada were stopped before the border, resulting in a collection of contraband goods accumulating at the Canadian line.

Those goods did not always remain confiscated, however. In June of 1808, the *Trenton Federalist* printed a piece titled “Embargo in Vermont,” which read, “Government have found it necessary to call out part of the militia in Vermont, for the purpose of enforcing the Embargo Laws, and preventing the people selling their lumber, provision and potash to the Canadians.” The situation somewhat echoed the Revolution, when a strong, central government enforced trade restrictions through military force sometimes to the detriment of the people. Many Federalist papers argued that the Embargo was a reflection of the tyranny that had sparked the Revolution. And now, as then, many argued that the patriotic thing to do was to resist the unjust laws. Even after contraband had been captured, it was not a sure bet that it would not eventually make its way into the Canadian market. The *Federalist* further reported that “on Sunday evening captain Hopkins’ company took a batteau, which was rapidly floating to market with 25 barrels of potash, on Monday evening Lieut. Wittemore with five men boarded and took an other batteau loaded with potash bound the same way.” The article concluded that “170 barrels potash, 100 barrels of pork, and a sloop with 200 chests of tea were several days since taken, and now remain in the hands of government.”⁸²⁹ Such a collection of goods gathered together so close to the border proved irresistible to Canadian raiders. That same month, the *Columbian Centinel* reported that “a very large and valuable Raft, which had been seized by Government (upon the Lake) and a guard of 12 men placed upon it, was attacked about one o’clock at night, by a party of 150 men, ‘from Canada,’ and carried in,” further opining, “The shore of the Lake, near the line, is crowded with ashes and pork, which the Canadians threaten to take by force. I think it highly probable

⁸²⁸ *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, July 4, 1808; *Watchman*, July 8, 1808; *Rutland Herald*, July 9, 1808.

⁸²⁹ *Trenton Federalist*, June 20, 1808.

they will attempt it.”⁸³⁰ Even confiscation was not enough to prevent goods from reaching Canada, and as the smuggling grew more common and better known throughout the United States, Democratic-Republican newspapers began to loudly denounce the lawbreaking.

As far as many Republican papers were concerned, the smugglers were not patriots, but traitors. In August 1808, the *American Mercury* informed readers, “We hear from Alburgh, that an armed force of 90 men in disguise have taken the last raft of Lake Champlain, (owned by a democrat,) and rowed it over the lines. It is said there was little opposition: no lives lost.” Again, the incident might have recalled the Revolution, when disguised patriots slipped aboard British ships and dumped their cargo into the harbour, though drawing attention to this connection was likely not the *Mercury*’s intention, given its clear Democratic-Republican leanings. The paper further speculated, “This armed force of 9 men was raised by a junction of federalists and Canadians, a whole communion of villains, opposing by force the operation of a law, designed to protect commerce from ruin, our seamen from impressment, and our country from a desolating war.” The *Mercury* explicitly linked Federalists and the Canadian identity. The message was clear: Federalists were like Canadians who were unlike proper Americans. By implication, Federalists were not proper Americans and so should be excluded from the identity that the Republicans were increasingly defining as the American identity. Federalists seemed to be working to promote tyranny, and was there anything more Canadian than that? Though few papers would be willing to do so within the year, in August 1808, the *Mercury* defended the Embargo as necessary. And the paper despised those who would openly break the law. The *Mercury* lamented, “a raft which had been seized by government, attacked by a party of 150 men from Canada and carried off – The shore of the lake crowded with ashes and pork, which the Canadians threaten to take by force!

⁸³⁰ *Columbian Centinel*, June 22, 1808; *Boston Commercial Gazette*, June 23, 1808; *Newburyport Herald*, June 24, 1808; *Repertory*, June 24, 1808; *Salem Gazette*, June 24, 1808; *Newport Mercury*, June 25, 1808; *Columbian Phenix*, June 25, 1808; *Portsmouth Oracle*, June 25, 1808; *Evening Post*, June 27, 1808; *Greenfield Gazette*, June 27, 1808; *New-York Gazette & General Advertiser*, June 27, 1808; *Connecticut Herald*, June 28, 1808; *New-York Herald*, June 29, 1808; *Gazette of Maine Hancock Advertiser*, June 30, 1808; *Windham Herald*, June 30, 1808; *New-Bedford Mercury*, July 1, 1808; *North American and Mercantile Daily Advertiser*, July 1, 1808; *Litchfield Gazette*, July 6, 1808; *Virginia Gazette, and General Advertiser*, July 8, 1808; *Columbian Museum*, July 12, 1808.

Would to God that the Canadians on the British side would by force or some other way take from our side, all the Canadians, who are glorying in the violation of our most necessary laws!”⁸³¹ Where Federalist papers saw friendly Canadians, happy to assist their American friends in access to international markets, Republicans saw dastardly Canadians doing everything in their power to undermine American policy. Canadians were not merely keeping to themselves and living in their ignorant ways, but they were actively meddling in American affairs, something Republican papers denounced with fervour. And occasionally, Canadians did more than simply provide a willing market. In February 1809, the *Democratic Press* reported, “A most violent outrage has just been committed upon our national character. – Eighty barrels of ashes were lately seized by Masacy, at port Putnam, and receipted by R.M. Esselstine, on account of government. On the 31st ult. about fifty Canadian Tories, with twenty eight sleighs, came over from Kingston [Upper Canada] and by force of arms broke into the store.” Republican newspapers roundly condemned the attacks from Canada. For such papers, this incident was just further evidence of the duplicitousness of Canadians. The early nineteenth century image of meddling Canadians, actively supporting America’s internal Federalist enemies, was quite similar to the mid-eighteenth century image of meddling Canadians, actively supporting America’s external Indigenous enemies. As far as Republican newspapers were concerned, Canadians had hardly changed since the French and Indian War, and their participation in the evasion of the Embargo Act was evidence. Still, the brunt of their assaults from the Democratic-Republican press landed squarely on the Embargo evaders in America and the Federalists who, as far as Republicans were concerned, were encouraging them to commit treason.

Rather than target the embargo itself as the cause of the United States’ economic woes, most Democratic-Republican papers turned their attention to the evaders of that embargo, who they pilloried as treacherous and abhorrent. The *Democrat* called them “felons of the meanest cast – men who... are prostrating the interests and dignity of their country at the feet of petty Canadian Merchants.”⁸³² The *Albany Register* called them “a

⁸³¹ *American Mercury*, August 11, 1808.

⁸³² *Democrat*, February 4, 1809.

few worthless, and mercenary characters,” and continued, “How long will such vile practices be suffered with impunity? How long will the honour of our state, and of our country be thus tarnished”⁸³³ In June 1808, the *Democrat* laid the blame for the illegal trade squarely at the feet of the Loyalists. Americans had never forgiven the Loyalists for their role in the Revolution, and they were often portrayed as being much like their French Canadian countrymen; vengeful and violent. As far as many Republican newspapers were concerned, they had been waiting for generations take their revenge on the United States. The Embargo provided the perfect opportunity. In assisting American farmers and merchants to evade the Embargo, Loyalists could undermine the American system. It seemed that Loyalists and their seed had been biding their time for more than 20 years, waiting for the moment that they could seek their revenge on the Americans that had broken with them in 1776. As far as the American press was concerned, the danger posed by such Loyalist descendants was real and present. In an article called “The Tories in Motion,” the *Democrat* surmised that “After having, in possession of facts, been silent for several weeks – after hoping, nay, almost believing, that the spirit of federalism could not be so abandoned to the most distant idea of patriotism as to act in open violation of the constituted laws of the country, and endeavor to mar the energies of the government, we are constrained to notice the vile attempts.” As far as the *Democrat* was concerned, the actions of the Canadian Loyalists were reprehensible and needed to be denounced loudly by all parts of the American press. The paper continued, “Indeed, our silence on the subject was indulged by a hope that the federal press might at least give some hints of the affair, and thereby avoid us the disagreeable necessity of believing that their printer wishes success to such detestable conduct.” The target was ostensibly the Federalists, amongst whose supporters could be found most of the Embargo evaders, though the *Democrat* did not come out and say it directly. The article was at least superficially careful not to single out either party. It read, “We do not wish to make party reflections, or put too much confidence in the sincerity of federalism. – Should any man, professing friendship to the administration, be found in supplying the enemy with

⁸³³ *Albany Register*, August 9, 1808; *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, August 9, 1808; *Evening Post*, August 12, 1808; *New-York Herald*, August 17, 1808; *Litchfield Gazette*, August 24, 1808.

provisions – he is a wretch as vile and base as double treachery can make him.” Again, the Federalists were not attacked directly, but the implication was difficult to miss. The paper continued, “While the law of the land is disregarded and violated, the hands of honest industry may labor to feed an unrelenting adversary. The wretch, who aid the minions of a despot, at whose command our ships were plundered, and our citizens murdered, is a Traitor and a Villain, and as such, should be spurned from a society of Freemen.”⁸³⁴ While the *Democrat* never called out the Federalists directly as the group supporting the continuing trade with Canada, the implication was clear. As far as the *Democrat* was concerned, the Federalists had betrayed their own countrymen. For the *Democrat* and most Republican papers, the Federalists had degraded themselves below even the Canadians, and they reacted with scorn. As far as the Democratic-Republican press was concerned, the Loyalists were working to undermine the Embargo because of their long-held grudge against the United States, but the Federalists were working to undermine the Embargo purely for profit. They were betraying their country for the bottom line, a thing that even Loyalists and French Canadians were not stooping to do. As Canadians had been used, alongside Black and Indigenous peoples, as foils with which to other the British during the Revolution, Canadians were now being used to tarnish the Federalists by association. The seeming weaknesses in the Canadian character were thus associated with the Federalist party. Not only did the Federalists support Canada and its rulers, the British empire, but they were in many ways quite like them, or as many American papers were concerned, even worse.

One thing both parties could agree on was that the embargo was enriching Canada. In July 1808, *Thomas’s Massachusetts Spy, or Worcester Gazette* warned readers that “The river St. Lawrence is now open, and the Canadians will make themselves rich by supplying their sister colonies in the Westindies with flour, not only with that made from wheat of their own raising, but with that made from the abundance of wheat they have drawn from the States of Vermont, Newyork and Pennsylvania,” further asserting that “There is no doubt that more than half the surplus wheat of the

⁸³⁴ *Democrat*, June 22, 1808; *Boston Courier*, June 23, 1808.

wheat raising States of Newyork and Vermont has gone into Canada, with a share from that part of Ohio and Pennsylvania, lying on lake Erie; a country as proper as any in the world for raising wheat.”⁸³⁵ In August, the *Farmers’ Cabinet* concurred, reading, “Immense quantities of produce have been shipped from the port of Quebec within the last two months. It was expected that upwards of one hundred and fifty vessels, which had entered the St. Lawrence, would be dispatched with full cargoes. The Canadian merchants palm themselves upon the idea that the Canadas will soon be a powerful commercial rival to the States.”⁸³⁶ As the months dragged on, the American press repeatedly lamented the growing Canadian prosperity. And this rising prosperity was no illusion. As McCalla noted, the economy of Upper Canada had rapidly become commercially oriented, as Lower Canada already was.⁸³⁷ This strong commercial economy and Canada’s links to the international market meant that the provinces grew increasingly wealthy as American trade passed through their hands. In October 1808, the *Alexandria Daily Gazette* argued, “It is well known that the inhabitants of Canada and Nova Scotia are growing rich on the trade rightfully attached to these U. States.”⁸³⁸ In November that same year, the *Troy Gazette* asserted, “we see our neighbours, the inhabitants of Canada actually becoming rich in a single season.”⁸³⁹ It was a pattern that continued for years. In March 1810, the *Gazette* reported, “it appears that the province is now in a state to defray all the expenses of the government.’ This they have never before been able to do.”⁸⁴⁰ In July of that year, the *American Watchmen* reprinted an article from the *Canadian Courant* which argued that “It is an undeniable fact, that the trade and

⁸³⁵ *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy, or Worcester Gazette*, July 6, 1808; *Berkshire Reporter*, July 16, 1808; *Middlebury Mercury*, July 20, 1808; *New-England Palladium*, July 26, 1808; *Dartmouth Gazette*, July 27, 1808; *Litchfield Gazette*, July 27, 1808; *Vermont Courier*, August 8, 1808; *American Citizen*, August 11, 1808; *Republican Watch-Tower*, August 12, 1808; *Independent American*, October 11, 1808.

⁸³⁶ *Farmers' Cabinet*, August 2, 1808; *True American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, September 12, 1808; *New-York Herald*, September 14, 1808; *Repertory*, September 16, 1808; *Olive Branch*, September 17, 1808; *Washington Federalist*, September 17, 1808; *Hampshire Federalist*, September 22, 1808.

⁸³⁷ McCalla, “The ‘Loyalist’ Economy of Upper Canada.”

⁸³⁸ *Alexandria Daily Gazette, Commercial & Political*, October 5, 1808; *Columbian Centinel*, October 8, 1808; *Philadelphia Gazette*, October 13, 1808; *Edenton Gazette*, October 20, 1808.

⁸³⁹ *Troy Gazette*, November 1, 1808.

⁸⁴⁰ *Gazette*, March 12, 1810.

commerce of these provinces have increased as rapidly within two years, as ever they did in any part of the United States, in the same time and proportion of population.”⁸⁴¹ For one of the first times in its history, the American press looked on Canada with jealousy, though it was a jealousy often mixed with disdain, as the wealth the Canadians were accumulating many authors felt was rightly American.

In November 1808, the *Monitor* printed an explanation of how the Canadians were becoming rich through the embargo which laid out the various steps in the process. The article began, “The British ministry also became acquainted about this time with the unexpected and unexampled prosperity of their colonies of Canada and Nova Scotia: it was perceived that one year of an American embargo, was worth to them twenty years of peace or war under any other circumstances.” The *Monitor* asserted that “the usual order of things was reversed, and that in lieu of the American merchants making estates from the use of British merchandize and British capital, that the Canadian merchants were making fortunes of from 10 to 30 or 40,000 pounds sterling a year from the use of American merchandise and American capital.” Referencing the goods that had been smuggled across the line into Canada, the article opined, “this merchandise, for want of competition, the Canadians merchant bought at a very reasonable rate, sent it to his correspondents in England, and drew exchange against the shipments; the bills for which exchange he sold to the merchants of the United States for specie transported by wagon loads at noon day from the banks of the United States over the borders into Canada.” The piece concluded, “and thus was the Canadian merchant enabled, with the assistance only of a good credit, to carry on an immensely extended and beneficial commerce without the necessary employment of his part of a single cent of his own capital.”⁸⁴² By serving as middlemen in a trade that had long established roots well prior to the enacting of the Embargo, the Canadians were able to syphon off capital as produce and specie passed through their hands. As far as many American papers were concerned, the Canadians were parasites, sucking the life blood of American trade while contributing nothing to the

⁸⁴¹ *American Watchman*, July 7, 1810; *Connecticut Herald*, July 24, 1810.

⁸⁴² *Monitor*, November 29, 1808; *Columbian Centinel*, December 7, 1808; *Charleston Courier*, December 10, 1808; *New-Bedford Mercury*, December 16, 1808; *Freeman's Friend*, December 17, 1808; *Reporter*, December 22, 1808; *Washington Federalist*, December 29, 1808; *Vermont Centinel*, December 30, 1808.

overall health of the system. Because of the Embargo, those parasites continued to fatten themselves on the American trade that had been forced northward. It was a situation that numerous American newspapers of both political stripes decried the President for allowing.

Thomas Jefferson faced significant criticism for the Embargo, with anger only growing as he attempted to close the land loophole with the supplement to the Embargo and reinforce the border to prevent smuggling. In August 1808, *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* asserted that "It was impossible for our great experimental philosopher, fertile in projects as he is, to have devised a measure more directly calculated to surrender the benefits of our commerce, and the profits of our agriculture, into the hands of others. He considers the English as our enemies, and in order to avenge himself of them, will throw all our trade into their hands," continuing, "The Canadians have already availed themselves of our folly. They are now carrying on commerce to an amount unknown to them before the Embargo, and making provident arrangements for its further extension."⁸⁴³ That same month, the *Hampshire Gazette* informed readers that "The people of Canada are so strongly impressed with the benefits they are daily deriving from the Embargo, that they do not attempt to conceal their exultation," asserting that "The next toast after 'the King,' which is constantly giving at the tables of the first merchants in Quebeck and Montreal, is 'Jefferson and the Embargo' – or 'Thomas Jefferson, and all our other good friends in the U. States!'" Just in case the point had been missed, the paper continued, "In this toast, our illustrious President, and his group of counsellors, cannot fail to see the most cutting sarcasm, upon their project of starvations, which thus returns to 'plague the inventors,' and impoverish our own country, while it enriches the very people it was intended to destroy."⁸⁴⁴ For most Federalist newspapers and for many Republican ones, the increasing prosperity of the Canadians was the fault of the President and his policies, and some felt that it could be country's ruin. In 1811, the *Connecticut Courant* queried:

⁸⁴³ *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, August 10, 1808; *Gazette*, August 29, 1808.

⁸⁴⁴ *Hampshire Gazette*, August 17, 1808.

While the province of Canada, is thus in an unexampled progress of prosperity; while riches are pouring in upon that people, in such vast abundance, that their chief magistrate is seriously alarmed for the moral consequences of this sudden and astonishing influx of wealth. While this is the estate of things in the neighboring province of Canada, which is a limb of the British empire, how is it in the United States?

The paper answered, “Aske the merchants, who have been undone and beggared by arbitrary restrictions on trade, to subserve the views of the Emperor of France... Ask the mechanics, who are thrown out of employment, and, by hundreds, are wandering away into Canada, in quest of the necessaries of life.” This was but another way that the Embargo was strengthening Canada, as hundreds of industrious Americans transplanted to the province, bringing their labour and ingenuity to the task of improving the Canadian land and the Canadian people. The paper continued, “In this manner the sun of our prosperity is setting; and at the same time our Canadian neighbors, availing themselves of our folly, and seizing the boon which we have thrown into their hands, are rising in wealth and strength, with such rapidity, that their prudent old governor seems to fear that the body politic will become too plethoric.”⁸⁴⁵ The Embargo had been a massive advantage to Canada, one which Canadians themselves were portrayed as being much in favour. Summing up the Embargo in 1811, the *Alexandria Daily Gazette* argued, “The embargo (to please France and spite England) hurt none but ourselves; it made the Canadians fortunes, who began to sing out like little Frank, ‘Oh that the embargo ought last forever!’”⁸⁴⁶ This material wealth was changing Canadians. There now seemed to be little desire to join themselves to the United States, for why would there be? Canadians were now making money hand over fist from American folly. The times had changed greatly. In the space of a few years, Jefferson’s Embargo had made the Canadians rich, and in so doing, the American press argued it had fundamentally changed the relationship between Canadians and Americans. No longer could American newspapers argue that the material conditions of Canadians would contribute to their desire to join the prosperous

⁸⁴⁵ *Connecticut Courant*, May 29, 1811; *Political and Commercial Register*, June 1, 1811; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, June 3, 1811; *Orange County Patriot; or, The Spirit of Seventy-Six*, June 4, 1811; *Natchez Gazette and Mississippi General Advertiser*, August 1, 1811.

⁸⁴⁶ *Alexandria daily gazette, commercial & political*, October 31, 1811.

United States, as the Embargo had made them just as prosperous, if not more so. Along with the political advantages gained in 1791 through the Constitutional Act, this new material wealth made it seem somewhat far-fetched that the Canadians would want to attach themselves to the United States, whose ostensible political and economic ineptitude had contributed greatly to Canada's political and economic advances.

In the early years of the Embargo, however, many American newspapers continued to argue emphatically that Canadians hated the British government and were just waiting on support from the U.S. to launch a revolution. This was one of the few issues that cut across party lines. There were Republican papers as well as Federalist papers that portrayed the Canadians as ripe for revolution, as there were papers from both sides that disagreed. The Republican papers that argued Canadians were on the brink of rebellion often framed the idea of revolution as something that would hurt the British. The Federalist papers supporting revolution on the other hand argued that the Canadians were so like Americans that they sought revolution to model themselves off their southern neighbours. As had happened before the American Revolution and as had happened occasionally in the years following when tensions with the British were high, in 1807 and 1808, many American papers revived their arguments that the Canadas were ripe for revolution, though rather than arguing that this revolution should end in union with the United States as had been the traditional argument, many American newspapers in these years leaned more in favour of Canadian independence. Republicans were wary of accepting Canadians into the American fold, given their multi-racial make-up and seeming lack of civility, while Federalists were cautious of appearing as an occupying force, holding their Canadian neighbours in subjugation. In July 1807, the *Enquirer* printed an article titled "Canada Revolutionized," which made such an argument. The paper asserted, "Canada is chiefly inhabited by French and French descendants, who no doubt will gladly shake off the British government. This is the time for revolution and emancipation. Let them make the declaration, and they will find a general solicitude in their favor through this country." It continued, "If war takes place between G. Britain and the United States, our northern brethren would at once march and drive every man attached to the British cause, into the ocean. Even if this should not take place, the

Canadians may surely at this time obtain their independency.”⁸⁴⁷ In February 1808, the *Washington Expositor* similarly argued that “Proper steps have, we believe, been taken to quiet this disposition among our fellow-citizens, whilst on the other hand, the better informed of the Canadians are looking forward to a war with the United States as a means by which they may be enabled to secure liberty and independence.”⁸⁴⁸ Some American newspapers continued to portray the Canadas as American states in waiting, like the *Ontario Messenger* of New York, which informed readers in 1807, “We are well persuaded that the mass of inhabitants and the Indians in the Canadas are strongly inclined to peace; in case of war and martial law, were the U. States to send a sufficient force to crush the government party, that three-fourths of the inhabitants would accept of our protection.”⁸⁴⁹ Generally, before the Embargo, American papers largely looked to Canadian independence rather than assimilation as they had in generations previous. With Republicans unwilling to accept Canadians into the American polity and with Federalists unwilling to act against the wishes of their Canadian neighbours, both Republican and Federalist newspapers shifted their arguments to promote Canadian independence. An independent Canada would be less of a threat to both parties, and so it was adopted nearly wholesale within the American press. In the years before the Embargo, most American newspapers agreed with the *Albany Register* that “A majority of the Canadians are ripe for a dissolution of their connexion with George the 3d.”⁸⁵⁰ And at the same time, most of those papers also agreed that the time for union between the regions had passed. Interestingly, most newspapers on both sides of the political spectrum argued for a free and independent Canada. And for one of the first times, it was not simply the newspapers of the United States that were making that argument.

As a public print culture developed in Canada, expanding rapidly around the turn of the nineteenth century, Canadian newspapers began to contradict the general

⁸⁴⁷ *Enquirer*, July 24, 1807; *Western Budget*, August 8, 1807; *Miller's Weekly Messenger*, August 20, 1807.

⁸⁴⁸ *Washington Expositor*, February 13, 1808.

⁸⁴⁹ *Ontario Messenger*, December 8, 1807.

⁸⁵⁰ *Albany Register*, August 14, 1807; *Otsego Herald*, August 20, 1807; *Farmers' Register*, August 25, 1807; *North Star*, September 5, 1807.

depictions of Canadian sentiment that was circulating in the American press. As the perceived mouthpieces of government, however, they were often dismissed out of hand. Indeed, though the expansion in the number of circulating papers had made direct control over their content by officials more difficult, much of the Canadian press remained beholden to government. In September 1807, the *Republican Crisis* opined, “The blustering of the Canadian prints are to be but little regarded. They speak not the sentiments of the Canadian people.”⁸⁵¹ As far as the American press was concerned, the sentiments that could be found in the pages of the Canadian press were not to be trusted. One month earlier, the *Dartmouth Gazette* informed readers, “That the Canadians are so warmly attached to their government and opposed to the States represented, is contrary to the report of every credible traveler, who has had opportunity to become acquainted with their manners and customs.”⁸⁵² By the Gazette’s estimation, actual Canadian sentiment was the opposite of what could be found in Canadian papers. If the Canadian press argued that the Canadians were opposed to joining the Americans, many American papers concluded that the Canadians were in fact clamouring to join with them. Two months after that printing, the *Dartmouth Gazette* printed another piece which attacked the accounts of the Canadian prints. In October 1807, the paper reported on an attempt to turn out the Canadian militia in Quebec, arguing of the Canadians, “Some said they would not step out without the rest; and some made bold to say, they would not take up arms against the Americans, but would join them when they chose. – Forty who said they would join the Americans, were committed to prison, and their trial will be to-morrow.” As had been the case during the Revolution, Canadians were seemingly choosing prison over taking up arms against their American brethren. The paper was quick to note that the conduct of the Canadians stood in stark contrast to the ways in which the Canadian press was presenting Canadian sentiment. The paper continued:

The above extract furnishes a very good comment on the communications, which have lately appeared in the Canadian papers, on the subject of their military force. These papers have, for some time past, been continually boasting of the patriotism

⁸⁵¹ *Republican Crisis*, September 8, 1807; *Greenfield Gazette*, September 21, 1807.

⁸⁵² *Dartmouth Gazette*, August 26, 1807.

and loyalty, which are unanimously displayed by the Canadians, and of their rooted aversion to the Americans. Surely they ought now to begin to ‘sing another song.’⁸⁵³

As far as most American newspapers were concerned, Canadian newspapers were little better than official statements, and along with the haughtiness and arrogance the American press felt these neighbouring newspapers were showing, American papers also argued that the Canadian prints were simply misrepresenting the state of affairs. As far as the American press was concerned, the Canadian press was the heeled mouthpiece of the Canadian government.

The American press believed that the actual sentiment of the Canadian people stood in stark contrast to the view that was presented in the Canadian press. And Canadian newspapers touted Canadians’ loyalty, leading many American newspapers to conclude that Canada was on the brink of rebellion. In December 1808, the *North Star* printed an article which summed up the opinions of most contemporary American newspapers. The piece opined, “We can state with confidence, that, except their newspapers, which are published under the eye of the provincial government, and which teem with hostility against the United States, for the double purpose of blinding the Canadians and meriting the favor of his majesty, George the third, on the question of war.” By the *North Star*’s account, the Canadian newspapers were just another way for the Canadian government to keep the people in darkness. The paper presumed that this was a failing effort. The *North Star* continued, “there is a unanimity among the Canadians against Britain as great as that among the people of the United States at the commencement of the revolution.” The paper asserted, “The Canadians feel a pride in the American name, and are waiting the favorable crisis for exchanging their appellation of subjects – a softer name of servitude which they brook indignantly – for that of independent free-men, an honor to which they are not insensible.” In the *North Star*, Canadians looked very much like Americans, and there was a clear implication that Canadians also wanted to be Americans. Like Americans had before them, Canadians

⁸⁵³ *Dartmouth Gazette*, October 7, 1807; *Freeman's Friend*, October 17, 1807.

seemed to be able to look past the attempts of the British government to fix the chains of tyranny and were now fully awake to the goals of the oppressive British crown. Union between Canada and the United States seemed inevitable to the *North Star*. Like the other American papers theorizing on a conquest of Canada, the *North Star* further surmised, “We predict on sources of information to be relied on, and we call out readers to remember in the event of war, which may God avert, that the conquest of Canada will be the fruit of her own efforts, and will not require the aid of a single man or cent on the part of the United States.” Canadians were becoming like Americans, and as Americans had before them, they were going to be self-reliant. The article concluded, “The Canadians already cease to regard with confidence the effusions of their Gazettes on the approaching rupture. Their gaols are filled and running over with subjects arrested for disaffection to orders for arraying them in a warlike posture against America, and republican papers circulate to a considerable extent in both provinces.”⁸⁵⁴ Canadians were once again Americans in waiting, once again a people for whom a place was reserved within the American imagined community. As 1807 drew to a close, the American press was almost unanimous in its opinion that the people of Canada wished to throw off the British government and either declare independence or join with the United States. As the years of Embargo dragged on, however, this opinion began to splinter.

While there remained a continuous undercurrent of arguments that Canada was ripe for revolution, as news spread of how much the Canadians had benefitted economically from the Embargo, more and more newspapers began arguing that the time had passed and that the Canadians now had no desire for a union with their southern neighbours. The first wave of this argument came in 1809, when the *Repertory* published two articles in September and October, arguing that the American press, and particularly the *Independent Chronicle*, was misrepresenting the situation. The *Repertory* asserted, “Many of our readers have doubtless remarked in several of our New England papers,

⁸⁵⁴ *North Star*, December 21, 1807; *Democrat*, December 30, 1807; *Boston Courier*, December 31, 1807; *Democratic Press*, January 2, 1808; *Independent Chronicle*, January 4, 1808; *True American*, January 4, 1808; *Weekly Eastern Argus*, January 7, 1808; *Essex Register*, January 9, 1808; *Republican Spy*, January 13, 1808; *True Republican*, January 13, 1808; *L'Oracle and Daily Advertiser*, January 20, 1808; *American Mercury*, January 21, 1808; *Suffolk Gazette*, January 25, 1808; *Pennsylvania Correspondent, and Farmers' Advertiser*, January 26, 1808; *City Gazette*, February 4, 1808; *Frankfort Argus*, February 10, 1808.

particularly in the *Chronicle*, insinuations that the Canadians were dissatisfied with their government, desirous to be under the protection of the United States, and ready to embrace the earliest opportunity to attain that object. – This, we know to be false, from good authority.” Rather than the Canadian newspapers, the *Repertory* argued that it was in fact many American papers that could not be trusted. It continued of the *Chronicle*, “how could its editors venture to vilify gratuitously, a neighbouring people ‘by willfully, maliciously and falsely’ representing the Canadians as enemies to their government, and bearing already the blossoms of general discontent, waiting only for the sunshine of opportunity to ripen into open revolt?” By the paper’s reckoning, this was not at all the case. Rather, it seemed that the Canadians had no desire to make themselves over into Americans. The *Repertory* assured readers that “From unimpeachable sources of information it is well known that the Canadian people are perfectly satisfied with the government under which they live, that they know too well how to appreciate the blessings of the British constitutions, to be willing to barter their advantages and happiness for an other.” As far as the *Repertory* was concerned, the Canadian Peasant had no desire to remove his final coats and become an American. The paper further argued:

The Canadians are unwilling to share the benefits of a Constitution the value of which a happy experience has taught them duly to appreciate, with people differing so widely from them in every particular, and by whose habits, manners, customs, and morals, they fear it might be endangered. Unambitious and satisfied, they strive to maintain their simplicity and innocence, a state of happiness hitherto insured to them by wholesome laws impartially executed:” and the ghastly approaches of a malignant fever are more welcome to them than the prospect of a close association with their neighbours!!!! Every man who pretends to the least knowledge of the Canadian character, must feel that at the same time they wish for peace, they reprobate the idea of any nearer connexion with the United States.

These were not Americans in waiting. These were a people who, it seemed, would rather die than become Americans. The *Repertory* concluded by challenging those behind the *Chronicle*, “If the Editors still have doubts, let them repair to Canada and avow themselves the authors of such base and insidious calumny upon the loyalty and fidelity of the people, and the marks they would inevitably receive of Canadian approbation

would leave no further room for speculation.”⁸⁵⁵ By the *Repertory*’s account, Canadians were solidly in support of their government, and the paper concluded that the time when there might have been a union between the regions had passed. While this opinion was not shared very widely in 1809, by 1811, more and more papers had come to see things the way the *Repertory* did. This was a remarkably quick shift in opinion, one which was precipitated by both the expanding Canadian press and changing American views of the nature of Canadians. As conflict began to brew in the early nineteenth century, many American newspapers began to argue that not only did Canadians have little desire to join the American union, but they would actually fight and die to prevent it.

By the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the War of 1812, the argument that the Canadians no longer wished to take up arms in favour of the Americans had gained significant ground. In September 1811, the *Connecticut Courant* theorized of a war with Britain, “First, we will take Canada. Be it so. It is however more easily said than done. The Canadians are a bold and hardy race of men, and probably love their government and their country as well as we love ours, and would defend it as bravely.”⁸⁵⁶ This was quite a departure from the traditional portrayals of Canadian military prowess. Typically, Canadians were depicted as cowardly and untrustworthy in the field, the opposites of what Americans were considered to be. The *Courant*, however, argued that the Canadians were “a bold and hardy race of men.” The *American & Commercial Daily Advertiser* agreed, surmising, “The Canadians too would resist an invasion of their terra firma. He had seen a statement that Canada could command sixty thousand able bodies, well disciplined militia.”⁸⁵⁷ The day that Canadians were ready to fight alongside Americans seemed to have passed as far as most of the American press was concerned. In January of 1812, a Congressman made a speech in which he argued that he, “did not

⁸⁵⁵ *Repertory*, September 26, 1809; *Independent Chronicle*, September 28, 1809; *Independent American*, October 5, 1809.

⁸⁵⁶ *Connecticut Courant*, September 18, 1811; *Political and Commercial Register*, September 21, 1811; *Evening Post*, September 26, 1811; *Hampshire Federalist*, September 26, 1811; *Virginia Patriot*, September 27, 1811; *New-York Herald*, September 28, 1811; *True American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, September 30, 1811; *Orange County Patriot; or, The Spirit of Seventy-Six*, October 1, 1811; *Cooperstown Federalist*, October 5, 1811; *Sun*, October 8, 1811.

⁸⁵⁷ *American & Commercial Daily Advertiser*, January 1, 1812; *Long-Island Star*, January 8, 1812; *Commercial Advertiser*, January 9, 1812.

believe, with some others, that the Canadians will flock to [the American] standard. Who are they? Many of them went from these states, and because they liken the country, or Government, better than the one they left. You cannot expect any thing from them. You must reason respecting men as they are, not upon the virtues of men.”⁸⁵⁸ For most of the American press, the Canadians no longer seemed potential allies, but potential enemies should it come to blows between the United States and Canada. In April of that year, the *Hampshire Gazette* surmised, “Fellow Citizens, the conquest of Canada is not so easy a matter; the Canadians are well pleased with their form of Government, and will fight in its defence.”⁸⁵⁹ This was the crux of the matter; Canadians no longer had any desire to become Americans. They were happy with their form of government and they were happy with their material conditions. For papers like the *Hampshire Gazette*, Canadians were no longer Americans in waiting. And as the conflict grew nearer in 1812, more than words pointed to a growing rift between the regions. On May 9, 1812, around a month before the outbreak of the war, the *Public Advertiser* informed its readers, “The sentiments of the Canadians are shewn, by the fact that three young men having fired upon a centinel on our side. The young men have been bound over by the magistrates in Canada.”⁸⁶⁰ The reasons for this seeming shift in Canadian opinion appeared to be many, but most of the American press agreed with the sentiment put forward by the *New-England Palladium* when it argued, “The advantages the Canadians have enjoyed from the restrictions on our commerce, have probably rendered them less disposed to come under our government than perhaps they formerly were.”⁸⁶¹ The window in which Canadians might have joined the American union seemed to have closed. As far as most American newspapers were concerned, the Canadians had reaped such benefit from the embargo that they were set for the future. Why would a people living in economic

⁸⁵⁸ *Spectator*, January 11, 1812; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, January 20, 1812; *Cooperstown Federalist*, January 25, 1812; *Dartmouth Gazette*, February 25, 1812.

⁸⁵⁹ *Hampshire Gazette*, April 1, 1812.

⁸⁶⁰ *Public Advertiser*, May 9, 1812; *Alexandria Herald*, May 11, 1812; *Enquirer*, May 12, 1812; *Independent Chronicle*, May 14, 1812; *Augusta Chronicle*, May 22, 1812; *Green-Mountain Farmer*, May 25, 1812; *Western Star*, May 30, 1812.

⁸⁶¹ *New-England Palladium*, January 24, 1812; *Newburyport Herald*, January 28, 1812.

prosperity voluntarily join a nation whose thick-headed economic policy had produced that prosperity at its own expense?

Despite these expanding arguments, however, the notion that Canadians sought to throw off their government and pledge allegiance to the United States proved incredibly hard to shake. Americans remained so utterly confident in the superiority of their republic and its political culture that they could hardly fathom that Canadians wouldn't want join them. Even as fiery accounts from Canadian newspapers contradicted their depictions point blank, many American newspapers, both Federalist and Republican, continued to argue that Canada was on the verge of revolution. In 1809, as the *Repertory* argued that the Canadian print representations of Canadian sentiment were false, most American newspapers concluded precisely the opposite. The majority of the American press believed that the Canadian press was not a free press, but rather a government organ. The persecution of printers who went against the authorities, many of whom were in exile in the United States, seemed evidence enough that the press of Canada was not free, but rather was beholden to the government. Though their own party press was full of squabbles and slanders, most American papers felt that their system was far superior to what they portrayed as a rigidly censored Canadian press, and belief in this free press had become foundational to the American imagined community. One quality emphasized as necessary for a democratic nation in Congress's address to the Canadians during the Revolution, the free press was central to American identity. It was a blessing that many American papers argued was denied to the Canadians. And if there was no free press in Canada, it stood to reason that the sentiments presented in that unfree press were not to be trusted. Most American papers argued that in reality Canadian newspapers did not speak for the Canadian people. Because the papers were filled with accounts of Canadian loyalty and willingness to defend their homes, a significant portion of the American press concluded that Canada was in fact on the brink of rebellion.

Once again, Canadians appeared in the American press as Americans in waiting. As far as most American newspapers were concerned, the Canadians might rise up at any time. In August of that year, the *American Watchman* asserted that many of the American emigrants living in Canada were preparing to leave the country, fearing war. The papers further surmised that "Others, less fearful, were determined to remain in Canada, and in

case of hostilities, to take up arms in favor of the Americans! It is a fact that nearly half of the inhabitants of Canada are friendly to the United States, and only wait a favorable opportunity to tear asunder the shackles of English tyranny.”⁸⁶² Though it had never materialized in the Revolution, the *Watchman* predicted that this time, Canadians would flock to the American cause. In January 1810, the *Federal Republican* summarized the Congressional speech of Joseph Desha as, “He proposed to take Canada and Nova-Scotia, and this, he said we could do without standing armies; indeed, if we should only hold out the idea to the British colonists, that we meant to relieve them from their chains, they would almost take themselves! At least they would rally by thousands round our standard.”⁸⁶³ Though it seems the confidence was unwarranted, most American newspapers were confident that Canada was ripe for revolution. Later that year, the *Rhode-Island Republican* asserted that “His majesty’s liege subjects seem about to ‘kick up a dust’ in the province of Canada. Many persons, accused of treasonable practice, have been arrested. ‘How wonderful is man!’ – While many in the United States devoutly pray and ardently labour to bring us a second time to colonial subjection – the people of Canada, fully blessed with a legal government, seem disposed to shake it off.”⁸⁶⁴ The *Republican* took clear aim at the Federalists. By the paper’s account, while the Canadian people were preparing themselves to valiantly throw off the British chains, the Federalists were shiftily working to rejoin the British empire as a colony. In this case, the Canadian populace was portrayed as more representative of the American identity than even the Federalists. These were a people that the American press contended the U.S. should welcome with open arms when the time came. Even newspapers that were opposed to war with Canada were confident in the rebellious spirit of the Canadians. In August 1810, the *New-York Journal* argued “If at war with England, we might gain Canada a few years before it naturally falls in with our government, and to which ninety nine out of every

⁸⁶² *American Watchman*, August 30, 1809; *Democratic Press*, September 1, 1809; *Connecticut Gazette*, September 6, 1809; *Political Barometer*, September 6, 1809; *Long-Island Star*, September 7, 1809; *Otsego Herald*, September 9, 1809; *City Gazette*, September 11, 1809; *Farmers’ Register*, September 12, 1809; *Carolina Gazette*, September 15, 1809; *Farmer’s Repository*, September 15, 1809.

⁸⁶³ *Federal Republican*, January 23, 1810; *Federal Republican & Commercial Gazette*, January 26, 1810.

⁸⁶⁴ *Rhode-Island Republican*, May 2, 1810.

hundred of the people of Canada are more attached than to the government of England; to take Canada now, would be to take a loss.” The paper continued, “Canada, when our population reaches the sixth census, or before, will naturally take place, as well as Florida, under the wings of the American Eagle.”⁸⁶⁵ As had been the case before the American Revolution, most of the American press was confident that revolt was near at hand. In reality, this does not appear to have been the case. Canada had entered an era of economic prosperity in which common Canadians enjoyed significant political power. Despite these facts, however, the idea that Canada was on the verge of rebellion refused to die.

As tensions grew in 1811 and 1812, American newspapers continued to argue that Canadians were prepared to rise up, but unlike arguments from the early Embargo years, these assertions no longer called explicitly for Canadian independence, leaning back toward calls for union. Relatively quickly, portrayals of Canadians as Americans in waiting resurged. In November 1811, the *American & Commercial Daily Advertiser* informed readers that “A gentleman who lately passed through this place from Fort Niagara, informs that the Canadians generally entertain the idea that war will be the result of the long, dubious and unsatisfactory negotiations of the U. States and G. Britain. He thinks that about one half of the people in British America, are attached to the U. States government, and would willingly adopt it for their own.”⁸⁶⁶ In the account from the *Daily Advertiser*, Canadians, like Americans, were capable of grasping the benefit of American government. Though the British had tried to distract the Canadians with the Canada Act, they had seen through it and recognized the British government for the tyrant that it was. This seemed a qualification to join the American fold. This political acumen seemed to qualify Canadians to join the American fold. Many called for the United States to make a union possible. The same month as the article from the *Daily Advertiser*, an article appeared in the *Albany Register* which argued that with their flotillas, the United States

⁸⁶⁵ *New-York Journal*, August 18, 1810; *Public Advertiser*, August 18, 1810; *Weekly Aurora*, August 21, 1810; *Reporter*, September 8, 1810.

⁸⁶⁶ *American & Commercial Daily Advertiser*, November 29, 1811.

“could break the chains of the Canadians.”⁸⁶⁷ It was, after all, as the *Columbian* put it in December, “a consummation devoutly wished by their owners; and a great proportion of the Canadian inhabitants.”⁸⁶⁸ Canadians were portrayed as recognizing Americans as brothers. Like Americans, they were ready to leave the empire and join a republic. To most American papers, it seemed like the Canadians were practically begging to be invaded. In April 1812, the *Centinel Of Freedom* asserted that “The Canadians are necessarily better disposed to America than to England,”⁸⁶⁹ while the *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette* concluded, “we have no doubt that four-fifths, perhaps nine-tenths of the people of Canada would willingly shake off the yoke of a base and perfidious government, and join in participating in the inestimable privileges of our free, republican government.”⁸⁷⁰ As war drew nearer, and even as arguments that Canadians were not actually in the American camp began to circulate, much of the American press continued to reaffirm the disloyalty of the Canadians to the British, and the loyalty of those same Canadians to their American neighbours. It was time for America to show the same bravery that Canadians allegedly displayed. The *Long-Island Star* opined, “With respect to the expulsion of the British from Canada, the faint hearted and disaffected cry out, “there is a lion in the way.” A courageous effort would make this supposed lion as gentle as a lamb. The Canadians themselves will muzzle him – March to Canada – tender them freedom and the hands of fellowship, and you will find it so.”⁸⁷¹ Once the deed had been done, most newspapers asserted their willingness to accept the Canadians with open arms. As the *Virginia Patriot* asserted of the Canadians about three weeks before the outbreak of war, “if we could grant them the blessings of republicanism, especially under

⁸⁶⁷ *Albany Register*, November 1, 1811; *American Watchman*, November 13, 1811; *Kline's Weekly Carlisle Gazette*, November 15, 1811; *Commonwealth*, November 18, 1811; *North Star*, November 22, 1811; *Weekly Aurora*, November 26, 1811.

⁸⁶⁸ *Columbian*, December 23, 1811; *Liberty Hall*, January 8, 1812; *Chenango Weekly Advertiser*, January 23, 1812.

⁸⁶⁹ *Centinel Of Freedom*, April 28, 1812.

⁸⁷⁰ *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, April 21, 1812; *Yankee*, April 24, 1812; *National Aegis*, April 29, 1812; *Weekly Eastern Argus*, April 30, 1812; *Pittsfield Sun*, May 2, 1812; *Enquirer*, May 5, 1812; *Independent Chronicle*, May 7, 1812; *Palladium of Liberty*, May 7, 1812; *Farmer's Repository*, May 8, 1812.

⁸⁷¹ *Long-Island Star*, December 25, 1811.

such blessed Presidents as Jefferson and Madison, the joy it would afford the people of these U. States would be equal to that effected by drinking one bottle of Madeira wine each.”⁸⁷² Canadians were again portrayed as able to become Americans, and papers like the *Patriot* contended that they were more than welcome to do so. For such papers, this would be the culmination of a process of assimilating the Canadians that had begun following the French and Indian War. The Canadian Peasant was seemingly removing his final coats, and most American papers welcomed the idea that they would soon be free of their Canadian ways, firmly in the American fold. It was no longer argued that Canada should form an independent nation, but rather that it should take its natural place under the type of government that it truly desired.

Despite the seeming longing of the Canadians to join the American union there remained those in the United States who continued to question their suitability for joining the union. Intelligence and sophistication were two areas that American newspapers often found lacking in Canadians. While there was occasional praise for Canadian genius,⁸⁷³ more often than not, Canadians were depicted as uncultured rural bumpkins. Several anecdotes of Canadian customs began to circulate which continued the trend of portraying the Canadian’s rustic habits. In 1812, a story from the *Evening Post* informed readers that “A few days ago, a Canadian on his return from market stopped at an Auberge to refresh himself, where he got a little intoxicated – lighted his pipe – got into his Berline, and continued his journey.” The story continued, “As is usual, he had some hay in his voiture, on which he laid himself and fell asleep; when, from his pipe, the hay took fire. The inhabitants, astonished at the moving flame, stopped the horse, and saved the poor man’s life, who had his clothes burnt and one of his arms much scorched.”⁸⁷⁴ Such were Canadians, a simple sort of people living their country lives in a country way. While depictions like these did not portray Canadian people in an especially positive light, the Canadians that feature in them, while dim-witted, are not the vicious, sub-

⁸⁷² *Virginia Patriot*, May 29, 1812.

⁸⁷³ *Washingtonian*, January 21, 1811; *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six*, February 2, 1811.

⁸⁷⁴ *Evening Post*, February 26, 1812; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, February 29, 1812; *New-England Palladium*, March 6, 1812; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, March 23, 1812.

human Canadians that appeared in the press some sixty years before. The threat posed by Canada had diminished greatly, and as such, so had the hostility in American depictions. Though the U.S. was on the brink of war with its northern neighbour, Canada did not appear as dangerous a threat as it had in past. The American army had broken the strength of many of the Indigenous confederacies in the west, making Canadian support of these groups inconsequential, particularly following the Jay Treaty and the removal of British forts in the west. In that time, portrayals of Canadians had begun to centre on images of simple farmers, content with living their simple lives, hardly thinking about improving anything. Though the image was no longer one of obscene violence, these Canadians were yet nothing like Americans. Americans improved things, to make the world better with their labour and ingenuity. Because of the seeming discrepancy between these two images, the question of whether the rustic Canadian peasants could be beneficially grafted onto the American union was one that arrested American newspapers on both sides of the party divide.

As far as many Democratic-Republican papers were concerned, Canadians could not be grafted onto the American polity. In March 1806, the *Alexandria Daily Advertiser* printed a Congressional speech by John Randolph, in which the Congressman asserted that if the U.S. captured Canada, “Then sir we shall catch a Tartar. – I confess however I have no desire to see the Senators and Representatives of the Canadian French, or the tories and refugees of Nova Scotia, sitting on this floor or that of the other house. To see them becoming members of the union and participating equally in our political rights.”⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷⁵ *Alexandria Daily Advertiser*, March 19, 1806; *Political and Commercial Register*, March 19, 1806; *Telegraphe and Daily Advertiser*, March 19, 1806; *United States' Gazette*, March 19, 1806; *Washington Federalist*, March 19, 1806; *Commercial Advertiser*, March 20, 1806; *Evening Post*, March 20, 1806; *True American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, March 20, 1806; *Enquirer*, March 21, 1806; *Spectator*, March 22, 1806; *New-York Gazette & General Advertiser*, March 25, 1806; *Boston Commercial Gazette*, March 27, 1806; *Aurora General Advertiser*, March 28, 1806; *Republican Advocate*, March 28, 1806; *Mirror of the Times, and General Advertiser*, March 29, 1806; *Newport Mercury*, March 29, 1806; *Hampshire Federalist*, April 1, 1806; *Repertory*, April 1, 1806; *Republican Star*, April 1, 1806; *Farmers' Cabinet*, April 1, 1806; *Connecticut Courant*, April 2, 1806; *Connecticut Gazette*, April 2, 1806; *Augusta Herald*, April 3, 1806; *Connecticut Journal*, April 3, 1806; *Salem Gazette*, April 3, 1806; *Dartmouth Gazette*, April 4, 1806; *Middlesex Gazette*, April 4, 1806; *Farmer's Museum*, April 4, 1806; *Portsmouth Oracle*, April 5, 1806; *Reporter*, April 5, 1806; *Rutland Herald*, April 5, 1806; *Sun*, April 5, 1806; *Hampshire Gazette*, April 9, 1806; *Litchfield Monitor*, April 9, 1806; *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy, or Worcester Gazette*, April 9, 1806; *Weekly Messenger*, April 10, 1806; *Gazette*, April 14, 1806; *Greenfield Gazette*, April 14, 1806; *Freeman's Friend*, April 16, 1806; *Middlebury Mercury*, April 16, 1806; *Vermont Centinel*, April 16, 1806;

Randolph argued explicitly that Canadians were not like Americans. These were not Americans in waiting, but the antithesis of what it meant to be American. The thought of seeing uncultured, servile Canadians in the heart of the American government disgusted Randolph. It was a refrain that was echoed repeatedly in the years preceding the war, sometimes in almost so many words. In 1809, the *Federal Gazette* summarized a speech of John McKee to Congress, in which he argued that “He did not see the policy of conquering Canada; he had no wish to see Canadian Tories and Nova Scotia Refugees sitting on that floor.”⁸⁷⁶ Many other American newspapers agreed with Randolph and McKee. In July 1807, the *National Aegis* contended, “To hold a conquered people in subordination to the Republic tends to familiarize the free citizen with slavery. To extend suddenly, to men bred up in the habits of slaves, all the privileges of freemen, will prove the bane of liberty. We very much doubt the worthiness of Canadian and tory refuges to tread the courts of the sacred temple of freedom.”⁸⁷⁷ As far as the *Aegis* was concerned, bringing the Canadas into the American union would be a cancer that would threaten the whole body. The Canadians, both French and English, were portrayed as being unable to fully appreciate, and thus unable to participate in, the benefits of the American government. More than the Canadians not being ready, the paper worried about the effect that their presence might have on the American body politic. Though the metaphor of slavery was well-worn by the early nineteenth century, it continued to carry weight, as evidenced by the piece in the *Aegis*. As the institution of slavery held sway throughout the southern states, the focus was not on the institution itself, but on the nature of the enslaved. That nature stood in stark contrast to the American identity, and it would have been obvious to readers that the Canadians were inherently ineligible to participate in the preservation of liberty. Canadians were also subtly associated with racialized groups,

Northern Post, April 17, 1806; *Pittsfield Sun*, April 21, 1806; *Green Mountain Patriot*, April 22, 1806; *Haverhill Museum*, April 22, 1806; *Gazette of Maine Hancock Advertiser*, April 24, 1806; *Weekly Wanderer*, April 28, 1806; *Kentucky Gazette*, May 3, 1806; *Republican Spy*, May 6, 1806; *American Mercury*, May 8, 1806.

⁸⁷⁶ *Federal Gazette*, January 29, 1810; *Independent Chronicle*, February 5, 1810; *Rhode-Island American*, February 6, 1810; *Rhode-Island Republican*, February 7, 1810; *Merrimack Intelligencer*, February 10, 1810.

⁸⁷⁷ *National Aegis*, July 22, 1807.

particularly Black Americans in such references, and their inability to grasp and cling to liberty was portrayed similarly to the way the American press depicted the inferiority of racialized groups in general. As both had a long history of being associated with racialized groups, the argument was that French Canadians and American Loyalists would rot the United States from within due to their seeming lack of White individualism. In March 1812, the *Tickler* agreed with the unsuitability of the Canadians for American republican institutions, but still supported taking the country, arguing that the conquest would “also increase our republican comforts, by causing the creation of new offices, which would all have to be filled by us: for you know it would not well suit to put Canadians in them, as they have so long been used to monarchy, and would require some time to fit them for the republican discipline.”⁸⁷⁸ Canadians were not like Americans, and were not growing more like Americans quickly. As far as many American newspapers were concerned, Canadians writ large were not capable of becoming Americans, and as evidence, they returned to notions of Canadians as dull, lazy, and in some cases, treacherous.

Many of the portrayals of Canadians in the years before the War of 1812 were heavily influenced by the notions of Canadians that had been evolving for some sixty years since the conquest of Canada during the French and Indian War, with editors picking and choosing aspects that best fit with the depictions they were trying to present. In many ways, the image of Canadians that was presented in the American press in the decade before the War of 1812 began was a combination of various iterations of understandings of Canadians, often melding depictions of dull, wild peasants with treacherous, bloodthirsty killers to present Canadians as both savage and stupid. In a description of Vincennes, Indiana in 1812, the *Hampshire Federalist* asserted that “A kind of non-descript mongrel French Canadians form a portion of the residents of their town, and are the meanest part of creation I have ever seen, and for capacity far below the savages.”⁸⁷⁹ These Canadians looked nothing like Americans. In fact, as far as the

⁸⁷⁸ *Tickler*, March 18, 1812.

⁸⁷⁹ *Hampshire Federalist*, January 23, 1812; *New-Bedford Mercury*, January 24, 1812; *Spooner's Vermont Journal*, February 17, 1812; *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, March 17, 1812.

Federalist was concerned, they did not even resemble Indigenous peoples, groups the American press routinely disparaged as uncivilized. Unlike Americans, the Canadians at Vincennes seemed to show little mental capacity. Other papers also fixated on Canadian intellect. In 1810, the *Weekly Aurora* surmised, “In the neighboring British provinces of Canada, few, perhaps not one in 500, can read or write. Above one half of their legislature is said to be equally enlightened.” Even the Canadian elites, even the men charged with the functioning of government, could barely read or write. How could such a people ever sit on the floor of the American House? They lacked even the capability of understanding it. The *Aurora*, like many papers before it, blamed education in Canada, continuing, “when a whole community should receive a similar education, that the same habits, the same manner of thinking, nay, that the same prejudices should pervade the whole, the Canadians have had no education, but they have habits, steady habits, in which no alteration has taken place for half a century.”⁸⁸⁰ This was a clear reference to what was perceived as the Canadian identity. The Canadians had developed ideas that had become rooted in their group consciousness. The Canadian imagined community had produced a definable character in the provinces, and papers like the *Aurora* contended that it was a character that stood in stark contrast to the American character.

As tensions built in the early nineteenth century, violent stereotypes began to appear more regularly in American press depictions of their Canadian neighbours. Increasingly, as the War of 1812 drew nearer, depictions of Canadians in the American press returned to not only dull, but also threatening. In 1807, the *Middlebury Mercury* printed a warning which read, “Caution!!! Numbers of the Canadians have of late visited this part of Vermont, for the sake of employment. Some of them have appeared to be very industrious, sober and honest. Others have appeared to be intemperate and dishonest.” Like the American press in general, it was these “intemperate and dishonest” Canadians the the paper would focus on. The *Mercury* continued, “Two of these persons, lately stole from a gentlemen in this village, property to a very considerable amount, and from

⁸⁸⁰ *Weekly Aurora*, August 14, 1810; *New-York Journal*, August 15, 1810; *Old Colony Gazette*, August 24, 1810; *Rutland Herald*, September 5, 1810; *Public Advertiser*, September 13, 1810; *New-York Journal*, September 15, 1810; *Missouri Gazette and Public Advertiser*, September 20, 1810; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 25, 1810.

another a less quantity... It is hoped that all persons will beware of them – that the towns in Vermont will be cautious how they permit this class of people to become inhabitants.”⁸⁸¹ It was clear to the *Mercury* that Canadians and Americans were unlike in almost every way. Canadians seemed to exhibit none of the character traits that made good Americans, and as such, the paper cautioned Americans to keep their distance, lest they regret it. The message in many American papers was clear: Canadians were a growing threat and something had to be done about it. In February 1812, the *Green-Mountain Farmer* called Canada “a hornet’s nest that ought to be broken up by the United States.”⁸⁸² As during the Embargo, when Canadians were compared to parasites, the allusion to insects is interesting, as is the shift in portrayals. Rather than syphoning off blood like parasites, hornets are known as aggressive and violent, prone to enraged outbursts at the drop of a hat. Canadians were once again beginning to be viewed as a threat, a hornet’s nest of potential chaos. And as with hornets, the solution appeared to be simple. The following month, the *Alexandria Herald* opined, “If England refuses us justice, the public voice decides for rooting up the Canadian Wasp’s Nest.”⁸⁸³ Like a shed with a wasp nest in the eaves, for the place to be made useful again, the nest had to go. Canada was dangerous, and unlike during the French and Indian War, the danger was not posed merely by French Canadians.

During the run up to the War of 1812, the American press also took anxious aim at the Anglo-Americans who had remained loyal to the British in the Revolution and who had evacuated to Canada following the victory of the revolutionaries, the United Empire Loyalists. Always distrusted by their one-time American neighbours, as tensions mounted, many American newspapers began to argue that the Loyalists and their descendants had simply been biding their time in Canada, waiting for a moment to seek bloody vengeance. In many ways, the Loyalists and their descendants were viewed as a people stuck in time, a multi-generational phenomenon where the young had been raised

⁸⁸¹ *Middlebury Mercury*, July 8, 1807

⁸⁸² *Green-Mountain Farmer*, February 24, 1812; *Bee*, March 17, 1812.

⁸⁸³ *Alexandria Herald*, March 27, 1812; *Columbian*, March 27, 1812; *Enquirer*, March 27, 1812; *American Mercury*, April 1, 1812; *American Watchman*, April 1, 1812; *Reporter*, April 7, 1812; *Liberty Hall*, April 8, 1812.

on the values of their Loyalist parents. And like the Loyalists of old, the American press portrayed these Loyalist descendants as villains. On May 18 1812, the *Public Advertiser* published one of the most scathing indictments of the Loyalists under the title of “Spirit of Canada.” “The Canadians,” the *Advertiser* surmised, “impelled by the gangrened malice of the ancient refugees, are organizing the young tories, the offspring of their hatred to our revolution. Armed and disciplined in the school of their fathers, they have already burnished up their muskets and pointed their bayonets for our reception.” As far as the *Advertiser* was concerned, for the descendants of the Loyalists, the Revolution had never actually ended. They had simply watched and waited, always ready for their chance to take vengeance on their former home. The paper continued, “They have declared, that they are ready to meet us in the battle, and seal their animosity in our blood. – They are willing to risk every thing dear to their peace in defence of their gracious sovereign, and defend the country which he gave them with their lives! This is the spirit of Canada.” Though few of these English Canadians had actually fought in the Revolution, it seemed to the *Advertiser* that they had grown up with it in their blood. Memory of the Loyalists did have a significant impact on the formation of an English Canadian identity in Upper Canada, but the blind rage that American papers implied animated the Canadians seems likely to have been quite overblown. Nonetheless, the descendants of the Loyalists served a very similar purpose as their parents had. Americans were noble and straightforward, not conniving and vengeful. As French Canadians had been in past generations, the Loyalists and their descendants became an important other that could be utilized to reinforce internal group identity.

The hatred that the press argued had motivated the Loyalists of the Revolution was now motivating their descendants. The *Advertiser* further asserted, “Here is their resolution – they have identified their ancient animosity with a generous support of their kingly government. We say it is to be applauded! But, how severely, how justly we could retort their wanton and unprovoked declamatory harangues.” These descendants were portrayed very similarly to the ways the Loyalists had been depicted during the Revolution; as duplicitous and bloodthirsty. Now as then, this clearly excluded them from the American identity. American newspapers felt they could sense the fury building in Canada. The Loyalists and their descendants were portrayed as angry and as calling for

blood, but the *Advertiser* argued that there was nothing to worry about. Rather, the paper concluded that should they ever attack, the Canadians would quickly fall as easy prey to American guns... and that any slaughter would be justified. The paper contended, “What could we not say in justification of our measures in opposition to their loyalty? We could say, that the impositions and outrages of England have been advocated more warmly, by the American tories, than by the English themselves. It was exactly so during the revolutionary contest.” Like the Loyalists of the Revolution, the English Canadians were underhanded and shady. The English Canadians were portrayed, as the Loyalists had been during the Revolution, as being louder voices for tyranny than even the tyrant. More so even than the French Canadians of the French and Indian War, the English Canadians of the early nineteenth century were viewed as villains, the polar opposite of the American identity. They had betrayed their fellows and become the pit-bull of the British government, barking up the crown’s objectives as if they were their own. As far as the contributor to the *Advertiser* was concerned, such arrogance would not end well for the Canadians. The article ended with another warning: “And, as they have now no secure retreat, in the event of an excursion into Canada, they should endeavor to secure the esteem of a generous enemy in advance. It is not by insult and bravadoes that the warriors of the United States are to be intimidated. Canada should remember the present state of Great Britain – The horrors of starvation are upon her.”⁸⁸⁴ The *Advertiser*, like many American newspapers, concluded that the bluster from Canada could be ended at any time the United States chose, a fact they warned the descendants of the Loyalists to bear in mind. While the American press was unsure of the sentiment among French Canadians and while they were confident of the support of recent American emigrants in Canada, American newspapers were very wary of the perceived perfidy of the Loyalists. As far as many papers were concerned, these new Canadians were as bad as, if not worse than, the old Canadians.

One of the primary attacks leveled by American newspapers against both the French Canadians and the Loyalists was once again their association with North

⁸⁸⁴ *Public Advertiser*, May 18, 1812.

America's Indigenous nations. Before the War of 1812, accusations that French Canadians and Loyalists alike were supporting Indigenous nations and inciting them to violence against the American settlers, particularly on the western frontier, filled the American press. The Loyalists in particular faced significant attack within the press regarding their associations with Indigenous communities. In 1809, the *Farmers' Register* printed an article titled "Quite Natural," which queried, "As the Tories of the revolution aided the Canadians and Indians, against the friends of American Independence: why is to be wondered at, that the Tories of this day espouse the cause of Britain? – Misanthropy is the common essence of Toryism, tyranny, cruelty and despotism. During the Revolution, the Tories employed the tomahawk and scalping-knife. They would do so again, if they could."⁸⁸⁵ These Loyalists were portrayed as inhuman. They were also seen as the enablers of the French Canadians and Indigenous peoples, groups the *Register* largely conflated with one another as "Canadians and Indians." The historical associations between French Canadians, Loyalists, and Indigenous nations was again re-dredged in the early nineteenth century as tensions between Britain and the United States grew. Referring back to the Revolution, in a defence of Governor George Clinton, the *Public Advertiser* opined that he had "defended his county at Fort Stanwix, against a savage and ferocious foe, composed of Indians, Canadians, and Tories."⁸⁸⁶ In this reference, the Loyalists were conflated with French Canadians and Indigenous peoples, in many ways forming yet another unholy triumvirate. In May 1812, the *American & Commercial Daily Advertiser* informed readers, "Report says the combined Canadians and Indians headed and led on by Tories threatened a descent on our frontiers in that quarter."⁸⁸⁷ The Loyalists were once again race traitors, White North Americans who were betraying their fellow Whites to lead a racialized army in frontier massacre. The very idea that such a people could be added to the United States was utterly unacceptable. Alongside the Loyalists, French Canadians were also pilloried as allies and

⁸⁸⁵ *Farmers' Register*, May 30, 1809.

⁸⁸⁶ *Public Advertiser*, April 24, 1811.

⁸⁸⁷ *American & Commercial Daily Advertiser*, May 19, 1812

inciters of Indigenous populations. And as far as the American press was concerned, their associations ran far deeper.

Like newspapers of the previous generation, most American newspapers in the prelude of 1812 considered many French Canadians to be half French and half Indigenous. In 1807 the *Repertory* surmised that “The town of Detroit had once about eighty mud houses occupied by about four hundred half savage, half Canadian inhabitants,” further asserting of other Canadians in the region, “in the whole territory, Detroit included, were fifteen or eighteen hundred needy lazy ignorant squatters, reckoning women and children.”⁸⁸⁸ These were not Americans, but the type of Canadians that the American press was increasingly using as a foil. In 1806, the *National Intelligencer* informed readers, “We are sorry to observe when the American comes into contact with the aboriginai, if he is not considered an enemy, he is at least regarded as a character with whom they are to struggle, and if in no other, certainly in a pecuniary view,” continuing, “But the Canadian, allied by blood, by long established intercourse, by a countless reciprocity of services, their native claims have long, as to time, been extinguished, and their honor and good faith having been repeatedly pledged as their brother, and with him they are disposed to make a common cause.”⁸⁸⁹ The notion that Canadians were half Indigenous had faded during the Revolution but then reappeared. The implication was that Canadians had a special connection with Indigenous nations and that they could incite them to violence at any time. Built on the American belief that Indigenous peoples lacked the ability to think for themselves, American newspapers speculated that they were being controlled by Canadians. Those Canadians, after all, had numerous connections with Indigenous nations. The American press was terrified that these connections would be used to turn various nations against the United States, and many American newspapers were soon arguing that it was already happening. In 1808, the *Enquirer* contended, “That it was the policy and practice of the Canadian traders, to disaffect the Indians towards the government and the Citizens of U. States – to cover their extortion and monopoly, they represent that through the superior affection of their British

⁸⁸⁸ *Repertory*, March 20, 1807.

⁸⁸⁹ *National Intelligencer*, January 1, 1806; *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, January 3, 1806.

father, for his red children the traders were enabled to sell their goods to them at lower prices.”⁸⁹⁰ In the opinion of the American press, Canadians were up to their old tricks, using their influence over Indigenous nations to wreak havoc on their American neighbours.

More so than the Loyalists, French Canadians were portrayed as having the ear of the North American Indigenous nations. Three years after the article in the *Intelligencer*, the *Missouri Gazette and Public Advertiser* concurred, reading, “From Prairie du Chien we learn that emissaries from Canada have, and are now very busy tampering with the Indians.” The paper asserted the Canadians had told Indigenous nations that “their American Father was poor, and was supplied with such goods as they sometimes received through him, from their English Father, who always remembered their wants and necessities. That the Americans were daily cheating them out of their lands, and if they did not immediately attack and drive them away they would not have a resting place on the earth.” As American newspapers in the mid-eighteenth century had, papers in the early nineteenth portrayed the Canadians as duplicitous and villainous. This was the opposite of the perceived American identity, honest and noble. Unlike Americans, French Canadians were willing to lie and incite in the pursuit of their nefarious goals. The *Advertiser* further asserted that “One of these fellows cried, sobbed and shed tears as he spoke (in council) of the conduct of the Americans. He strenuously advised them to go to Canada, where they would be amply provided with clothing, arms and ammunition, and be placed in a situation which would enable them to destroy the Americans.” As far as the American press was concerned, the old links between Canada and the Indigenous nations of North America had never been severed, and Canadians ostensibly continued to incite their Indigenous allies to violence across the frontier. Such actions seemed to prove to American newspapers that French Canadians would never remove their final coats and become Americans. They were far too debased for that. The paper concluded, “We sincerely hope that the governors of these Territories will be circumspect in giving licenses to these cut throats in the shape of traders: and we promise that we shall from

⁸⁹⁰ *Enquirer*, November 4, 1808; *City Gazette*, November 12, 1808.

time to time, procure the names of those Canadians who are in the habit of corrupting the Indians, so that if they should be caught within the settlements, they may be made examples of.”⁸⁹¹ As had been the case in the eighteenth century, as war drew near in 1811, most American newspapers assumed that shady Canadian forces were using their historical and genetic connections to incite Indigenous populations to violence against the United States. It was an accusation that carried significant historical weight, given the long associations Canadians had with Indigenous peoples in the American public mind. Canadian encouragement of Indigenous nations to the British cause was something the American press largely accepted as simple fact.

In many ways, Canadians were portrayed as the middle men, the enablers who facilitated the relationship between the British empire and the Indigenous nations of North America. In December 1811, the *Weekly Aurora* opined, “It has already been said that our Indian neighbours have been instigated to acts of hostility by their ‘dear friends the British.’ From the British commander at fort Malden we have been told that, the Prophet has received arms, provision and ammunition.” Once again, accusations that the Canadians were race traitors, transforming themselves into Indigenous peoples to commit frontier atrocities reverberated through the press. The *Aurora* continued, “The spilling of American blood has unfolded the purpose for which the hatchet has been thus unburied. We well recollect that after St. Clair’s defeat, it was said, upon good authority, that Canadian militia were found among the killed, disguised as Indians.”⁸⁹² As had been the case during the Northwest Indian War, the American press largely concluded that this outrage excluded Canadians from the American identity. There was little question amongst American papers as to whether the Canadians and Indigenous peoples were in league. On May 16, 1812, the *Reporter* surmised that “The Winebagoes now assembled at the mouth of Rock river’ say, that every boat passing up and down will be examined for Americans, that their paper shall denominate their country. Americans they will tomahawk or burn – the French attached to the American government, shall have the

⁸⁹¹ *Missouri Gazette and Public Advertiser*, August 15, 1811; *Reporter*, August 31, 1811; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, September 6, 1811; *Public Advertiser*, September 10, 1811; *Liberty Hall*, September 11, 1811; *National Intelligencer*, September 12, 1811; *Philadelphia Gazette*, September 14, 1811.

⁸⁹² *Weekly Aurora*, December 4, 1811; *Pittsfield Sun*, December 14, 1811.

same fate; but the English and Canadian French shall be protected, and shall have exclusive trade.”⁸⁹³ That same day, the *Western Star* reported on the killings of two traders, one American, the other Canadian. The *Star* informed readers that the American, “received two balls through his body, nine stabs with a knife in his breast, and one in his hip, his throat was cut from ear to ear, his nose and lips were both taken off in one piece, and his head bore the marks of the tomahawk and scalping knife.” The paper continued, “The other man had not been long here and I do not know his name... but he was a Canadian Frenchman, and I believe the Indians spared him a little on that account, for they only shot him through the neck and scalped him.”⁸⁹⁴ By the reckoning of most American newspapers, Canadians were the evil paymasters that allowed the dastardly relationship between the British and Indigenous nations to happen. As such, they deserved a greater portion of hatred than the British and Indigenous. As the British relationship with Indigenous nations terrified the Americans, the Canadians, as the glue that seemed to keep it all together, were particularly reviled. Like the Canadians, the Loyalists were also seen as an important link between Indigenous soldiers and the British crown, given the extensive cooperation between Loyalist militias and Indigenous armies during the Revolution. Canada was portrayed as a region where the British could use their Canadian stooges, both French and English, to rile up Indigenous peoples to rain down destruction on America’s frontiers. It was a thought that terrified Americans.

Like French Canadians, the British presence in Canada was highly reviled throughout the American press in the years before the war. In July 1807, the *Alexandria Daily Advertiser* surmised, “So long as Canada remains subject to British authority, the North Western tribes of Indians will be retained in British pay. These tribes alone, on a moderate calculation, may be estimated at 15 or 20 000. This force, from the Indian mode

⁸⁹³ *Reporter*, May 16, 1812; *Liberty Hall*, May 20, 1812; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, May 22, 1812; *Western Star*, May 23, 1812; *Commonwealth*, May 26, 1812; *Alexandria Daily Gazette, Commercial & Political*, May 28, 1812; *Enquirer*, June 2, 1812; *Long-Island Star*, June 10, 1812; *Native American*, June 17, 1812.

⁸⁹⁴ *Western Star*, May 16, 1812; *Columbian*, May 27, 1812; *Courier*, May 27, 1812; *Missouri Gazette and Public Advertiser*, May 30, 1812; *True American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, June 1, 1812; *Albany Register*, June 2, 1812; *Bennington News-Letter*, June 10, 1812; *Commercial Advertiser*, June 10, 1812; *Northern Post*, June 11, 1812; *Charleston Courier*, June 12, 1812; *Otsego Herald*, June 13, 1812; *Spectator*, June 13, 1812.

of war, may be extremely injurious to the western settlements”⁸⁹⁵ As had always been the case for colonial Americans, Indigenous peoples were portrayed as a particularly potent threat. Two months later, the *Columbian Centinel* similarly asserted, “Accounts from the westward repeat the alarms of an expected Indian war; and that Brandt has engaged them, in case of war with the United States, to join the Canadians. A Quebec paper says, the whole of the Indian tribes have offered their services.”⁸⁹⁶ They were assertions that only grew louder as war drew closer. In 1808, the *Spectator* informed readers that “We have again to record the alarming, and we fear, deep rooted traces of British influence, among our neighboring Indians.”⁸⁹⁷ There was little surprise from American newspapers, but significant indignation. In 1811, the *Savannah Republican* asked, “who desires to divide the states, who has formerly, and would again, if a Canadian war took place, let loose the savage blood-hounds of destruction upon our innocent inhabitants of the frontiers,”⁸⁹⁸ answering that it had been the British. With no regard for ethics, the British were portrayed as conjuring up destruction on the American frontiers. In 1812, the *Essex Register* referenced the “sharpening the tomahawk and scalping knife, for the purpose of butchering our women and children.”⁸⁹⁹ The British were willing to stoop however low they needed to go. As Indigenous peoples were not portrayed as having agency, they were often seen as a pawn in the British schemes. Indigenous peoples’ nature was depicted as inherently violent and vicious, and as far as most American newspapers were concerned, the British were harnessing that violent nature and directing it at the United States.

British duplicitousness went even deeper. As far as the American press was concerned, hostile Indigenous nations were not only being incited by the British, but also

⁸⁹⁵ *Alexandria Daily Advertiser*, July 17, 1807; *Democratic Press*, July 22, 1807; *New-England Palladium*, July 24, 1807; *Charleston Courier*, July 25, 1807; *Concord Gazette*, August 11, 1807.

⁸⁹⁶ *Columbian Centinel*, September 30, 1807; *Salem Gazette*, October 2, 1807; *New-Bedford Mercury*, October 2, 1807; *Freeman's Friend*, October 3, 1807; *Newport Mercury*, October 3, 1807; *Portsmouth Oracle*, October 3, 1807; *Sun*, October 3, 1807; *Green Mountain Palladium*, October 5, 1807; *Farmers' Cabinet*, October 6, 1807; *Hampshire Federalist*, October 8, 1807.

⁸⁹⁷ *Spectator*, June 11, 1808; *Palladium of Liberty*, June 13, 1808.

⁸⁹⁸ *Savannah Republican*, September 19, 1811.

⁸⁹⁹ *Essex Register*, June 13, 1812.

supplied by them. In February 1812, the *National Intelligencer* argued, “Since the battle of Tippecanoe, large numbers of savages who have visited the British fort at Amherstburg, eighteen miles below this place, have been there liberally supplied with arms and munitions of war.” Though the western frontier forts had been relinquished, the British continued with their schemes of supplying Indigenous nations in the west, only now they were facilitating it through Canada. The paper continued, “It is a fact, sir, that Col. Grant, of the British army, who lately commanded at Amherstburg, did acknowledge (when he was remonstrated with by Governor Hull, in 1807, on the inhuman policy of calling in savages to interfere in the disputes of civilized nations) that the object of himself and the British agents was to engage and retain the savages in their service in the event of war.” Again, Indigenous peoples were not portrayed as rational beings, waging war for their own reasons, but as mindless pawns of the British empire. It was something Americans would never dream of doing (despite the alliances they had with nations like the Oneida). The paper further opined of Grant that “he alledged as a justification of such conduct, that our government would send the Kentuckians into Canada!” before railing, “Gallant Kentuckians, what think ye, of a British colonel, putting you upon a footing with the murderous Savage?”⁹⁰⁰ In many ways, the *Intelligencer* othered the citizens of Kentucky, but they did so from the inside. The Kentuckians were accepted members of the American community, and as such, were understood to be exemplary of what it meant to be American while still having rustic characteristics about which other Americans might chuckle. Canadians on the other hand were othered as a hostile outside entity. And not only outside, but because of their perceived close connections to Indigenous groups, also racialized and dangerous. In May of that year, the *Public Advertiser* reported that “The most alarming facts are, that Indians are constantly seen going into and returning from the British fort George, that councils are holding continually, to which the Indians within our lines are invited and are received presents from British officers, and that a

⁹⁰⁰ *National Intelligencer*, February 29, 1812; *Columbian*, March 5, 1812; *Virginia Argus*, March 5, 1812; *Enquirer*, March 6, 1812; *Republican Star*, March 10, 1812; *Weekly Aurora*, March 10, 1812; *American Mercury*, March 11, 1812; *Long-Island Star*, March 11, 1812; *North Star*, March 14, 1812; *Farmers' Register*, March 17, 1812; *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, March 17, 1812; *Native American*, March 18, 1812; *Cabinet*, March 25, 1812; *Weekly Eastern Argus*, March 26, 1812.

war-dance was last week held at the British fort.”⁹⁰¹ Such reports terrified American newspapers, and most used deep-rooted associations between Indigenous peoples and frontier massacres to paint the British and the Canadians as the source of the evil. As English settlers had when they first arrived, American newspapers in the early nineteenth century utilized portrayals of Indigenous peoples to cement internal, White group identity. Papers also resurrected stories like the scalping of Jane McCrae and the massacre at Fort William Henry to further reinforce the idea that savagery was in the nature of Indigenous peoples, and also of the Canadians. As far as many papers were concerned, this was evidence that the Canadians had decided to turn their back on their White brethren and throw in with non-White enemies.

Associations with racialized groups were used extensively to paint Canadians as being outside the American identity. American newspapers associated Canadians with enslaved Americans, particularly after February of 1812 when rumours began to circulate that the Canadians were debating offering freedom to southern slaves in exchange for taking up arms against the United States. On February first, the *Evening Post* contended:

Our Patriots who have been so fond of exciting the Canadians to rebellion, and Governor Wright’s men, who were for granting bounties to British sailors for mutinying, murdering their officers, and bringing their men of war into our ports, will also find that they have been anticipated in this kind of honourable warfare, as the Canadians talk of laying similar temptations before the Southern slaves to revolt against their masters.⁹⁰²

This fear seems to have been somewhat irrational, given the fact that neither Canada nor the British had any ability to implement such a plan to free enslaved Black Americans in the south. Still, the idea had traction within the American press. On the eighth, the *Columbian Phenix* quoted a Canadian paper as reading, “the whole Northern Division of the United States seem to have an inclination in our favor. No wonder – they are our

⁹⁰¹ *Public Advertiser*, May 9, 1812; *Alexandria Herald*, May 11, 1812; *Enquirer*, May 12, 1812; *Independent Chronicle*, May 14, 1812; *Augusta Chronicle*, May 22, 1812; *Green-Mountain Farmer*, May 25, 1812; *Western Star*, May 30, 1812.

⁹⁰² *Evening Post*, February 1, 1812; *True American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, February 4, 1812; *New-York Herald*, February 5, 1812; *Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger*, February 14, 1812.

neighbors, and from frequent intercourse have plenty of opportunities to envy the happiness that we enjoy, under the broad and beautiful banners of Great Britain.” The Canadian paper continued, “The Middle Division of the Union will, I suppose, be of the strongest side. As to the Southern Division, we shall send a dozen of our best West-India black regiments in order to hold palavers, and to organize their sable brethren in that quarter.”⁹⁰³ This was a fear that was incredibly deep seated in the American south. In a region with an enormous enslaved Black population, the idea that Canadians might incite that population to revolt was frightening and provocative, even if unlikely. As Canada had begun the process of ending the practice of slavery in the provinces in 1791, it was seen as a place with a growing free Black population that could be utilized against the United States. And while the actual threat posed by such Canadian schemes seems quite minimal, the American press largely took it seriously. On the fourteenth, the *Philadelphia Gazette* succinctly stated, “The Canadians threaten the proclamation of freedom to the slaves of the Southern States. Perhaps it would be prudent for some of the southern war hawks coolly to consider how far it may be practicable for them to execute such a threat.”⁹⁰⁴ The paper warned the War Hawks that the Canadian plan could be put in action, and that they themselves had the most to lose. The most famous of the War Hawks were Henry Clay of Kentucky and John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, representative of southern and western desire to conquer Canada and remove Britain from the continent. Those were also the regions, however, where the Canadian threat to free the slaves caused the most anxiety. It seems that the Canadian threat to free the slaves in the American South was more of a vague threat, meant to spread general fear, rather than a specific threat, particularly given Canada’s obvious inability to carry the plan into action. The few pieces that mentioned this Canadian threat, however, caused a major stir in the American press. Already anxious over their potentially precarious position, surrounded as they were by large enslaved populations, many Americans in the South took the threat seriously.

⁹⁰³ *Columbian Phenix*, February 8, 1812.

⁹⁰⁴ *Philadelphia Gazette*, February 14, 1812.

The plan to offer freedom to slaves in the American south was portrayed as a threat to the American union, both physically and ideologically. Among the hottest of the War Hawks with regard to Canada was another southerner, John Randolph of Virginia. Randolph's view of Canada and the fears that the rumours of Canadian desires to free the slaves inspired were a reflection of anxieties over the potentially dangerous situation the southern states found themselves in. They also reflected a fear of granting rights and citizenship to Black people, as Canada seemed willing to do. In November 1811, the *Evening Post* summarized a speech by Randolph, reading, "Our population and our dollars were quitting us for Louisiana, and we are mingling black, white and copper coloured on the broad basis of equality; tories, democrats, Indians and French, however discordant their principles: attentive to the breed of sheep, and indifferent to the breed of our men." Randolph made a clear distinction between proper, White Americans, and the racial mosaic that made up the rest of the continent. Not only different in mannerisms, as Randolph saw it, Americans were different inherently. The paper continued of Randolph that "He never wished to see a member of the House or Senate from Orleans, nor hear broken English, French or Indian on that floor."⁹⁰⁵ The Canadians and Indigenous peoples were explicitly excluded from Randolph's definitions of the American identity, and he was far from alone. In January of that year, the *Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger* had asserted, "A gentleman, in the course of the debate, remarked that as a very large proportion of the people of those territories were persons of colour, it might happen that a man of colour may be elected a representative in congress, he therefore wished representations confined to the free white males." This was a fear for many in the American government. The idea that racialized men might one day take a seat in the heart of the American government was extremely disconcerting to many. And it was an event that seemed to get closer every day. The paper continued, "In this he was over-ruled, and his apprehensions will in a few years, no doubt be realized. This mania for the extension of our territory and union, will introduce a motley set into our councils. Creoles and Canadians must make admirable legislators; but as they never can be a majority, we are

⁹⁰⁵ *Evening Post*, November 22, 1811; *Connecticut Herald*, November 26, 1811; *Hampshire Federalist*, November 28, 1811; *Windham Herald*, November 29, 1811; *Watchman*, December 12, 1811.

told the mischief cannot be great.” Canadians were inferior to Americans, and their inclusion in the American political structure would rot it from the inside. The *Publick Ledger* warned that though it was said that because Canadians could never realistically form a majority in the Congress there was no risk to their inclusion in the union, this was not the case. The paper then cautioned, “Time will develop the ruinous consequences of this system, which instead of strengthening, and consolidating the union, will we fear produce very opposite effects.”⁹⁰⁶ The work of associating Canadians with Black and Indigenous communities that had begun at least as early as 1754 continued apace in the years before 1812. Once again, Canadians were associated with racialized others, used as a foil against which to define the American identity as exclusively White.

This racialization of Canadians shows the fragility of the early American identity and its concerns regarding its own Whiteness. Newspaper portrayals of Canadians as racial others reflected popular fears that matched politicians' fears about the likely breakdown of the republic if it was stretched to incorporate racialized others. Canadians were not portrayed as Americans in waiting, but as an example of what Americans were not. Canada was in many ways a kind of reverse mirror. Despite the numerous similarities that some newspapers noted, it ultimately depicted what America was not. Taken as a whole, American portrayals of Canadians in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century press depict those Canadians as outsiders, as a people whose inherent identity was different from the American identity. This was particularly useful to American newspapers who explored the idea of what an American was. As part of defining that American identity, papers turned to examples, and Canadians proved an incredibly useful example. While superficially, Canadians might look a lot like Americans, the American press contended that in fact they were not, and conceptions of race were a major part of their argument. Canadians were presumed to be united to Black and Indigenous communities, sometimes politically and militarily, and sometimes through kinship. In both cases, the portrayals of the racially ambiguous Canadians stood in stark contrast to portrayals of Americans as citizens of a fundamentally White nation.

⁹⁰⁶ *Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger*, January 16, 1811.

In reality, White Canadians were generally committed to ideas of racial hierarchy and White supremacy, but in American papers they were often depicted as interwoven with racialized groups. American portrayals of Canadians as associated with Indigenous peoples and with Black Americans proved remarkably consistent in the mid to late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. Canadians continually served the same role, as an example of what happened when White North Americans intermixed with racialized North Americans. It was an example that American newspaper editors used to reinforce Whiteness as integral to the American identity.

Canadians were presented as racially ambiguous by many contributors to most turn-of-the-century American newspapers. By the early nineteenth century, there was a general consensus amongst American newspapers that Canadians were White. Largely gone were the arguments that what made a Canadian (as opposed to a French settler) was Indigenous heritage, but Canadians were still repeatedly associated with Indigenous peoples and Black Americans in ways that depicted Canadians as less White than Americans. Race itself was an ambiguous and evolving thing in the early nineteenth century. Many historians have explored the hardening of racial lines in the early republic. John Wood Sweet has argued that race became binary in the North (having already become binary in the South, as Morgan argued, with the rise of slavery⁹⁰⁷) in the post-Revolutionary War era as Northerners sought to portray the North as a White region devoid of racialized influence.⁹⁰⁸ This encouraged the development of a hard colour line between White and racialized Americans, and in this context, difference which had previously served to divide, such as the perceived differences between White Canadians and White Americans, began to have less meaning. The colour line, on the other hand, came to take precedence. Elise Lemire has explored the ways that nineteenth century racial prohibitions on interracial desire helped produce ideas about miscegenation as a means of dealing with the obvious inconsistencies in contemporary ideas about race and

⁹⁰⁷ Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 4.

⁹⁰⁸ John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

racial groups.⁹⁰⁹ These proscriptions of racial separation in reproduction served to further engrain a hard racial line between White Americans and racialized Americans. While works such as Sweet's and Lemire's focus on racial boundaries within nineteenth century conceptions of race, they do not address groups that would have been seen as straddling those vague racial boundaries. As a group that had quite recently been defined as racialized and that continued to be linked to racialized groups in the American press, Canadians straddled ambiguous racial barriers in a number of ways. They mattered to early nineteenth century Americans as an example that had the potential to refine understandings of racial boundaries in the North American context. Canadians were White, but they seemed less White than Americans. It was an idea that was repeatedly reinforced in the pages of the American press.

Despite the many attacks on Canadian nature and character that filled the American press there were those American newspapers that came to the defence of their Canadian neighbours. Some sought to take an even-keeled approach. In 1808, the *North Star* speculated of the Canadians, "While they prudently submit to a system of restraint imposed on them by immemorial usage and a despotic government, as a temporary calamity, they incur the imputation from superficial observers of being a pusillanimous people, fitted for slavery." The paper continued, "The Canadians have for this reason lately been insulted by some article originated in the southern papers threatening an invasion and conquest of Canada. This language has been held on the floor of Congress by the celebrated John Randolph. It is time to vindicate the principles of the American government and the character of the Canadians from reflections so injurious."⁹¹⁰ There was a clear divide growing between north and south in regards to Canada, and northern papers argued that the views presented in southern prints and by southerners in Congress were largely to blame for the faltering pronouncements of friendship from Canada. Who would want to unite themselves to a group of people who consistently called them "a pusillanimous people, fitted for slavery"? In April 1811, the *Balance* offered another

⁹⁰⁹ Elise Lemire, *"Miscegenation": Making Race in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

⁹¹⁰ *North Star*, January 4, 1808.

reason as why Canadians had been painted as so unindustrious, arguing that the Canadians were not focusing on improvement because they believed that the United States was on the verge of invading and destroying any improvements that they had achieved. Why build when it was just going to be torn down? The *Balance* surmised, “There may be another reason given for the want [lack] of spirit and enterprize in the Canadians – if spirit and enterprize they want: The war speeches of Mesdames S-, and S-, and N-, in Congress, and other old ladies and unfledged gentlemen in the state legislatures, perhaps have palsied the efforts of the Canadian peasantry.” Again, the politicians mentioned were likely southerners since War Hawks tended to be from the South or the frontier, and their arguments were portrayed as endangering Canadian sentiment towards the U.S. The Canadians, the *Balance* argued, were already waiting for the attack the south had promised, and this, it argued in turn, was behind the palsy. The paper continued, “for who would build an house, to have it burned by an enemy? Who would sow wheat, with the expectation of having his grain and his head reaped with the same sickle? No wonder the poor dogs should lose their spirit.”⁹¹¹ By the *Balance*’s reckoning, the blusterings of the south had hurt the U.S. Canadian friendship. Six months later, the *Commercial Advertiser* similarly defended the Canadian populace by turning the attack back on the American administration, though its account of Canada was far more positive than the *Balance*’s. The *Advertiser* contended that it had been said “that the inhabitants of Canada wait only for an invitation to join us and throw off their allegiance to the present government,” continuing, “There was a time, no doubt, when the people of Canada would have gladly joined the United States, and had a war broken out at that time, it is probable that an army from this country would have met with no opposition, except at the fortress of Quebec. The time we allude to was the time when the United States were respected as a nation.” The paper concluded that there had in fact been a time when the Canadians would have joined happily to the American cause. It further concluded, however, that “Things are now materially changed.” The *Advertiser* asserted, “Then the trade of Canada was depressed – the inhabitants looked on our prosperity with

⁹¹¹ *Balance*, April 9, 1811.

longing eyes, and would undoubtedly, have gladly shared with us.” But this time had passed away. The paper queried, “but have they the same feelings toward us now? While our commerce has sunk almost to nothing, theirs has increased an hundred fold: - ours is still diminishing while theirs is still increasing in an astonishing degree. – Can it then be supposed that they will wish not to join us?”⁹¹² Articles like these complicated the portrayals of Canadians as ignorant, backwoods peasants. Instead, they were acting rationally due to the changing conditions on the ground, conditions that had been changed due to the Embargo and through impassioned pro-war speeches from the South. And though they often portrayed Canadians as a single group in the early nineteenth century, the line between English Canadian and French Canadian had not blurred fully by the outbreak of war in 1812.

American newspapers in the years before the War of 1812 began to draw clear distinctions between English Canadians and French Canadians. In 1809, the *Democratic Press* argued, “The Canadians are moreover, a mixed people, speaking two languages – part are native France Canadians, part British and Irish, and considerable numbers are immigrants from the United States,” continuing, “Altho’ on the whole a people possessed of information and of too much spirit to brook the idea of perpetual control, they appear as yet in some measure unacquainted with each other – their views are not united nor their powers consolidated.” As far as the *Democratic Press* was concerned, French and English Canadians had not yet come to an understanding of their shared Canadian identity. The paper further asserted, “The business of government has been to cherish little jealousies among its subjects – the French against the British, and of both against the Yankees. Time and events favorable to freedom are rapidly dispersing the mists of darkness raised by the government for the people to grope in – these are fast discovering each others views and the designs of their rulers.”⁹¹³ Indeed, the demographics of Canada

⁹¹² *Commercial Advertiser*, October 21, 1811; *Spectator*, October 23, 1811; *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, October 24, 1811; *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, October 24, 1811; *Cooperstown Federalist*, November 9, 1811.

⁹¹³ *Democratic Press*, October 16, 1809; *American Watchman*, October 18, 1809; *Delaware Gazette*, October 21, 1809; *Republican Star*, October 31, 1809; *Hornet*, November 1, 1809; *American Mercury*, November 9, 1809; *Reporter*, November 18, 1809.

had seemingly changed quite drastically. The *Natchez Gazette and Mississippi General Advertiser* surmised that “From information that we can perfectly rely on, we have been assured that the population in Canada, Nova-Scotia, and New-Brunswick, has been considerably more than doubled in less than twenty years,” continuing, “Not a population, as Bonaparte lately said in reference to the inhabitants of Canada, as good Frenchmen as if they had been born on the banks of the Seine, but a population speaking the English tongue, and truly English in their feelings.”⁹¹⁴ The definition of Canadian was shifting in the early nineteenth century. The rapidly increasing English Canadian population meant that “Canadian” was no longer a term used primarily to denote the French inhabitants of the region. This was both an opportunity and a hindrance to the othering of Canadians by American newspapers. On one hand, the population of Loyalists that inhabited Upper Canada were a clear target against which to define American identity as those Loyalists and allegedly their descendants were also Revolutionary traitors. Indeed, many newspapers defined the English Canadian population as primarily Loyalist. The *American Watchman* opined, “The great increase of the population and trade of Canada has arisen from the emigration of the “loyal” inhabitants of the United States to that province. Upper Canada is chiefly peopled by New Englanders.”⁹¹⁵ On the other hand, not all of the English Canadians were Loyalists. Many had transplanted to the provinces following the end of the war. According to the *Democratic Press*, “At the peace of 1783, Canadians came into our country as permanent citizens and Americans passed over to settle in the two Canadas.”⁹¹⁶ The presence of these English Canadians significantly complicated the use of portrayals of “Canadians” to define American identity. Such Canadians were essentially identical to the American identity that American newspapers were trying to define and reinforce. Alongside the rise of the independent Canadian press, the changing demographics of Canada significantly impeded its usefulness as a foil for American identity. By 1812, Canada was a far more

⁹¹⁴ *Natchez Gazette and Mississippi General Advertiser*, March 5, 1812.

⁹¹⁵ *American Watchman*, March 6, 1811.

⁹¹⁶ *Democratic Press*, October 16, 1809; *American Watchman*, October 18, 1809; *Delaware Gazette*, October 21, 1809; *Republican Star*, October 31, 1809; *Hornet*, November 1, 1809; *American Mercury*, November 9, 1809; *Reporter*, November 18, 1809.

diverse place than it had been throughout the eighteenth century, and this made Canadians in general a less attractive option to use as foil for the American identity.

Exactly what diversity meant in the Canadian context was open for debate. French Canadians remained a somewhat racialized other, though understandings of them in the American press had shifted from part-Indigenous Catholic slaves to dim-witted European peasantry. Yet there remained a sense that the French were quite different from their English Canadian counterparts. For some American newspapers, this diversity was viewed as a strength, while to others, it was seen as a weakness. Sometimes, these diverging views would appear in the very same paper. Emphasizing it as a weakness, the *Essex Register* contended in 1808, “Between the Canadian and the Mercury, two newspapers in Canada, there has been a long dispute which discovers some jealousies between the French and English inhabitants of those English colonies,” continuing that the situation “appears in the state it was among us before our revolution, a matter to be thought upon and to acted upon at some future day.”⁹¹⁷ This was tempered six months later when the *Register* printed an article that surmised, “In New-England and the English possessions is an opulence less ostensible than real. The English planter enriches himself by avoiding all needless expence,” continuing, “The French Canadian enjoys all he has, and appears to have what he has not. The first labours for posterity, but the last does not think of it, but leaves posterity to his own wants, and to all his labour.” The *Register* concluded, “It is to be wished that English prudence and French neglect might form in Canada a character equally distant from both extremes.”⁹¹⁸ The belief that the French and English inhabitants of Canada would beneficially influence one another was a view shared by many American newspapers, but not all. Many, as has been noted, found nothing positive or redeeming in the Canadian character. Often such opinion had regional influences. American newspapers in the South that had very little contact with Canadians were far more likely to portray them negatively. Similarly, American newspapers in the West also tended to take a very negative view of Canadians, particularly as they often blamed Canadians for inciting Indigenous nations to frontier violence. But like southern

⁹¹⁷ *Essex Register*, October 26, 1808.

⁹¹⁸ *Essex Register*, March 11, 1809.

Americans, the American settlers in the west had relatively little contact with Canadians, except for the French settlers in Louisiana who had momentarily become “Canadian” following the Quebec Act. The majority of positive depictions of Canadians largely came from the northern states, states that bordered on Canada and that thus had much deeper connections with the Canadians. To northern newspapers, Canadians were often Americans in waiting. For some northern papers, the Canadian character was not something to be scoffed at, but in fact, something to be praised. And very occasionally, to be emulated.

Often, the praises of the Canadian character echoed ideas about American identity and character. In this way, Canadians again became a mirror, reflecting the better parts of the perceived American imagined community back at itself. In 1808, the *Commonwealth* argued, “But, whatever maxims of morality may sway bosoms of others, ingratitude and unjust political persecutions constitute no ingredients of the Canadian character.”⁹¹⁹ Like Americans, Canadians did not suffer from those vices and immorality. Their character was akin to the Americans. In January 1812, the *Reporter* printed an account of Richard Johnson’s speech in Congress, reading, “I have no doubt but the Canadian French are as good citizens as the Canadian English or the refugee Tories of the revolution; nor have I any doubt but a great majority of that vast community are sound in their morals and in their politics, and would make worthy members of the U. States.” Such arguments resembled early Revolutionary opinion far more than they reflected the opinion that had circulated in the years since. As far as Johnson was concerned, Canadians could become Americans. He continued, “Now, sir, these people are more enlightened, they have a great American population among them, and they have correct ideas of liberty and independence, and only want an opportunity to throw off the yoke of their task masters.” These were Americans in waiting, kin who yearned to be reunited. He further contended, “Let us not think so mean of the human character and the human mind. We are in pursuit of happiness, and we place a great value upon liberty as the means of happiness. What, then, let me ask, what has changed the character of those people, that they are to be

⁹¹⁹ *Commonwealth*, February 17, 1808.

despised?” Johnson continued, “What new order of things have disqualified them from the enjoyment of liberty? Has any malediction of Heaven doomed them to perpetual vassalage? Or will the gentleman from Virginia pretend to more wisdom and more patriotism than the constellation of patriots who conducted this infant republic through the revolution.”⁹²⁰ As they had been in the Revolution, Canadians were portrayed as having the same innate qualities that animated Americans.

Other papers heaped similar praise. The same month as the article from the *Reporter*, the *National Intelligencer* reported on a speech to Congress by John Adams Harper. The speech read in part, “We are on the frontiers, neighbors to the Canadians, and kindred to a portion of them. From our connexions and vicinity we know them; we respect and revere their virtues; their fondness for tranquility; their love of industry and the rural arts; and their veneration for the principles of civil liberty.” Once again, these were Americans in all but name. And importantly, it seemed that they hoped to adopt that name. Harper continued, “Sir, doubtless these people wish the blessings of a free government – I mean one altogether free, for in their present condition they enjoy no inconsiderable portion of liberty.” The answer was seemingly union with the United States, a prospect that had been debated for generations. Harper took the side of intervention. As far as Harper and newspapers like the *Intelligencer* were concerned, it was the duty of the United States to step in where they envisioned that they could do a better job than Britain. Americans largely believed that they would be kinder to the Canadians than the British had been. As far as many newspapers were concerned, Britain was a bad parent, one who had driven away the United States with its smothering and was about to do the same to Canada. As far as politicians like John Adams Harper was concerned, the United States should welcome their younger sibling with open arms. Harper further asserted:

Still as their population consist principally of hardy yeomanry, from the eight eastern states, who have emigrated thither, who carried with them the principles in which they were nurtured and educated, and to which in active life they, while

⁹²⁰ *Reporter*, January 11, 1812; *Rhode-Island Republican*, January 15, 1812; *Pittsfield Sun*, January 18, 1812.

with us, were accustomed, they must revere the principles of our revolution and government – they must sigh for an affiliation with the great American family – they must at least in their hearts hail that day, which separates them from a foreign monarch, and unites them by holy and unchangeable bonds, with a nation destined to rule a continent by equal laws, flowing from the free will of a generous and independent people.

He concluded, “Sir, I hold these people in high estimation; if some of their fathers sinned, I would not visit the iniquity on the children – to them I would extend the affection of a brother, and even the follies of the father I would cover with the mantle of oblivion.”⁹²¹

Unlike most American newspapers during the Revolution, a few papers in the years before the war in 1812 concluded that Canadians would be worthy of inclusion in the American constellation. The Canadian population was seemingly exhibiting the type of character that reflected the American character, the superior character. Unlike the Revolution, however, many American newspapers in the prelude to the War of 1812 began to question whether all Americans were themselves living up to that same standard.

In 1806, the *New Hampshire Sentinel* lamented to the United States at large, “Ah! my poor countrymen, how are thou debased below the Canadians, Creoles, Dutchmen, Frenchmen, Spanish men, and Red men of Louisiana.”⁹²² While their usefulness was diminishing, portrayals of Canadians continued to contribute to American efforts at defining their national character in the early nineteenth century. Though Canadians were not the only group that Americans used to define their identity against, as North American, European-heritage settlers, Canadians were one of the closest facsimiles that Americans had. Though Canadians were but one of the groups used by the *Sentinel* to shame Americans, their inclusion on the list, and particularly at the front of the list, speaks to the continuing importance of Canadians as a foil against which to define American identity. The *Weekly Aurora* has a similar assessment in 1810, reading:

⁹²¹ *National Intelligencer*, January 18, 1812; *Pennsylvania Correspondent, and Farmers' Advertiser*, February 3, 1812; *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, February 4, 1812; *Weekly Eastern Argus*, February 6, 1812; *Farmers' Cabinet*, February 24, 1812.

⁹²² *New Hampshire Sentinel*, May 17, 1806; *Hampshire Gazette*, May 21, 1806.

The effect of the early habits of life on society in general, in the United States, is felt in powerful degree even at this late day; a seven years war, and nearly five times as many of peace and sovereign independence, has not been able to fix a national character, to warm the hearts of thousands, with the amor patriae, nor to emancipate our minds or destroy the effects of early education which taught us as colonists the habits of abject submission, and made blind obedience a duty.⁹²³

The *Aurora* lamented that American identity was still not fixed. The paper argued that many Americans were continuing to behave as they had learned to while under the thumb of a colonial power, as the Canadians yet were. By the *Aurora*'s reckoning, it was a national shame. For one of the first times in its history, Canada began to be used to denigrate the American identity rather than affirm it. Many papers used Canadian opinion as an example of how far the United States had slipped from its place of international pride. In February 1812, the *City Gazette* asserted, "Our enemy seeing that we have no ready means of resistance or invasion, treat us with contempt – even the Canadians despise us."⁹²⁴ The implication was that Canadians were less than Americans. The *Gazette* asserted that "even the Canadians despise us," arguing clearly that though Canadians were beneath Americans, even they look on the United States with contempt in the contemporary era. Canadians were not portrayed as inherently better than Americans, rather Americans were portrayed as having lowered themselves so far they had sunk below those Canadians. The following month, the *Enquirer* reported, "We have been in a passion ever since the attack upon the Chesapeake, and have continued to talk big, and rail and bluster & threaten – yet we have frightened nobody – no, not even the Canadians – for even they laugh at us."⁹²⁵ As far as the American press was concerned, this was a grave state of affairs. To have the Canadians, whom American newspapers had denigrated as backward, lazy, and servile, now laughing at the purported shortcomings of Americans was considered a travesty. Many of the very accusations that American

⁹²³ *Weekly Aurora*, August 14, 1810; *New-York Journal*, August 15, 1810; *Old Colony Gazette*, August 24, 1810; *Rutland Herald*, September 5, 1810; *Public Advertiser*, September 13, 1810; *New-York Journal*, September 15, 1810; *Missouri Gazette and Public Advertiser*, September 20, 1810; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, September 25, 1810.

⁹²⁴ *City Gazette*, February 18, 1812.

⁹²⁵ *Enquirer*, March 3, 1812; *Reporter*, March 31, 1812.

newspapers had leveled at Canadians, such as accusations of their blustering and undeserved pride, were now aimed toward Americans themselves. Canadians served as a useful shorthand for incivility, and so were once again useful as a comparison for Americans, though not as an example that made Americans look good, but rather as one designed to shame. As had often been the case, the American press used Canadians to speak to the nature of Americans. Often, the comparisons were used to criticize, but other times, they were used to praise.

As far as most newspapers were concerned, Americans were the reason that Canada had improved so much since the British conquest from France in 1763, though as far as most were concerned, Canadians themselves were remarkably unappreciative. On May 17, 1811, the *Columbian* informed its readers, “We observe in the Montreal papers, complaints that strangers, emigrants from the United States, are monopolizing or obtaining the trade and mechanical business of the country. This jealousy might be expected, and the cause of it is obvious. The enterprize and assiduity of emigrants from New-England is characteristic of that people, and will mark their habits wherever they go.” The paper continued of those American emigrants, “It is natural to none more than them, to open avenues to enterprize, to pursue lucrative and beneficial speculations, and to explore and employ the riches of the country. And the Canadians must acknowledge the usefulness and value of mechanical and commercial exertions to the community, let them proceed from whatever class of citizens they may.”⁹²⁶ By the reckoning of the *Columbian*, Canada was becoming more like the United States, and the reason was Americans, though the *Columbian* and other American papers were reticent to believe that Canadians recognized or appreciated the benefits they were supposedly accruing. There were, in essence, four main types of Canadians that appeared in the American press in the early nineteenth century: dull French Canadians, dastardly Britons, vengeful Loyalists, and prosperous, recently arrived Americans. Only the last group did American newspapers hold in any sort of esteem. As far as the American press was concerned, these were the Canadians who were dragging the provinces, kicking and screaming into

⁹²⁶ *Columbian*, May 17, 1811; *Savannah Republican*, June 6, 1811.

the future. They were the citizens by whose example Canada might finally be pulled from its dark age. In many ways, these ideas were built on the notion of American exceptionalism. Americans were tasked with civilizing the remote parts of North America. seen as going into remote parts of North America, bringing civility, industry, and prosperity with them. Over time, their efforts were seen as bringing Canadians largely into the American identity. In the early nineteenth century, it seemed as though American expatriates were bringing American civilization to the Canadians, however slowly the process was going. Some papers, however, argued that there was a much more direct and expedient way to bring about the evolution of Canadians into Americans.

Many of the arguments that called for an American invasion of the Canadas pointed to the rapid improvement of the Canadians that would follow it as a key justification for a conquest. In 1808, the *North Star* speculated that following a conquest of Canada, “Great emigrations of settlers from the United States on confiscated lands would instantly take place. These would carry with them much other property, besides the purchase money for the confiscated lands. These would thus populate and enrich that country in a considerable degree.”⁹²⁷ These benefits seemingly remained, in the eyes of the American press, a mystery to most Canadians. In February of 1812, a contributor to the *Plattsburgh Republican* opined:

I find by long observation of, and conversation with the inhabitants of Canada and the frontiers of the States of New-York and Vermont, that they are impressed with an idea, without the remotest notion that it is not founded in truth, that no advantage would result to the people of Canada, in point of freedom, property or commerce, nor any to the frontiers of these two States or to the United States, in point of strength, property and commerce, should Canada become a state or states of the United States.

The contributor denied these claims categorically, emphatically arguing that indeed “vast advantage would redound to the inhabitants of Canada, in point of liberty and independence.”⁹²⁸ In the prelude to the War of 1812, the American press touted the

⁹²⁷ *North Star*, January 4, 1808.

⁹²⁸ *Plattsburgh Republican*, February 28, 1812.

American population in Canada as the best of the Canadians. Those Americans living in Canada exhibited the enterprise and industry that defined true Americans. Unfortunately, as far as many American newspapers were concerned, these few Americans were not enough to outweigh the dull French peasants or the villainous Loyalist refugees. In the end, Canadians were never quite Americans. They were close enough for comparison, but despite claims of kinship from Americans in the northern states and whispers of Canadian revolution, when it came down to it, they were ultimately a different people, useful as a foil, but unworthy of definitive inclusion. There were French Canadians amongst their number, traitorous Loyalists, runaway slaves, as well as allied Indigenous from numerous nations. Canada was in many ways a cultural mosaic, and it was a mosaic that made a monolithic portrayal of Canadians difficult. By the time conflict erupted in the War of 1812, the othering of Canadians in the American press, at least in regard to the form it had taken since the mid-eighteenth century, had largely run its course. From 1812 on, Canadians remained an “other,” but not one which the American press utilized in the same ways it had prior to that point. From the end of the War of 1812 on, the idea of uniting Canada to the United States faded quickly away, and with it many of the debates which had influenced the portrayals of Canadians that had filled the press in the late eighteenth century. By the end of the war, the American press had largely concluded that the Canadian Peasant would never actually strip off the final few coats which differentiated them from their superior American neighbours.

In the early nineteenth century, American public opinion of Canadians splintered in ways that it had not before. As the Federalist and Republican parties vied for control of the American government and argued over the benefits of attacking Canada, portrayals of Canadians began to diverge from one another. In many Democratic-Republican papers, all Canadians, English and French alike, were ignorant and bloodthirsty monsters. In most Federalist prints, both French and English Canadians were portrayed as enlightened and sharp. Despite these general trends, however, American papers on both sides of the political divide presented remarkably varied definitions of Canadians. Sometimes the French Canadians were lazy, ignorant peasants, while the English Canadians were industrious and forward-thinking citizens. At other times, the English Canadians were the

duplicitous, violent descendants of traitors, while the French Canadians were liberty-loving, yet oppressed victims of tyranny. Throughout the era between the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, there had been a sense that the influence of the United States, and particularly the influence of Americans who had transplanted to the province in the postwar era, could improve the Canadians. These beliefs began to fade by the War of 1812. Most American newspapers agreed that the American emigrants in Canada were the cream of the Canadian crop, but few believed they as yet held enough sway in the provinces to meaningfully influence the Canadian character. Throughout this splintering of American opinion, the general trend remained the same. American newspapers either othered Canadians as a means of defining proper American identity, or praised aspects of the Canadian character thought to reflect that proper American identity. Canadians were what they needed to be, whatever the argument and whatever the definition of American.

The War of 1812, the vicious fighting that accompanied it, and the spirited defense of the Canadas by its varied mass of citizens (often portrayed in Canadian lore as being led by patriotic citizen militias) largely put to rest American arguments that Canada should be incorporated into the United States. As Alan Taylor argued, the war drew the international boundary between the Canadas and the United States far more clearly in the minds of both Americans and Canadians than had been the case previously.⁹²⁹ To the north were Canadians and to the south were Americans, and from 1812 onward, it largely seemed to people on both sides of the border that that was the way it should be. Canadians then had the beginnings of a free press. They had economic prosperity in terms unimaginable before the Embargo. They had a system of government which was, by most appearances, directly calculated to their desires. Because of all these factors, most American newspapers began to conclude that Canadians no longer even wanted to be Americans (assuming they ever had). They were certainly not Americans in waiting. From the War of 1812 onwards, it seemed as though the Canadian Peasant was gathering up his coats and putting them back on. While Canadians continued to serve the purpose of a convenient group on which to deflect European dispersion of American identity, they

⁹²⁹ Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*.

were no longer one of the primary groups against which American defined themselves. In the generations that followed, most Americans would forget that there had even been a time when Canadians had served an important role in defining exactly what an American was and what an American was not.

Conclusion

“The Canadians Feel a Pride in the American Name”

Four days after the War of 1812 was declared, on June 22, 1812, the Canadian Peasant was performed at a circus in Alexandria, Virginia.⁹³⁰ During the years that the War of 1812 was fought (June 18, 1812 – February 18, 1815), the Canadian Peasant was advertised at least 33 times, though the bulk of these advertisements came in 1812 and 1813.⁹³¹ The act was only advertised twice in 1814,⁹³² and only once in 1815 before the peace treaty was signed.⁹³³ Following the end of the war in February, it took until October before it was performed again.⁹³⁴ From there, it went on to see some of its highest popularity, being advertised at least 142 more times across the United States.⁹³⁵

⁹³⁰ *Alexandria Daily Gazette*, June 22, 1812.

⁹³¹ *Alexandria Daily Gazette*, June 22, 1812; *Columbian*, July 29, 1812; *New-York Gazette & General Advertiser*, July 29, 1812; *Public Advertiser*, September 21, 1812; *Public Advertiser*, September 22, 1812; *City Gazette*, November 14, 1812; *City Gazette*, November 17, 1812; *City Gazette*, November 18, 1812; *City Gazette*, November 30, 1812; *Times*, November 30, 1812; *City Gazette*, December 1, 1812; *City Gazette*, December 14, 1812; *City Gazette*, December 15, 1812; *City Gazette*, January 4, 1813; *City Gazette*, January 12, 1813; *City Gazette*, February 1, 1813; *Charleston Courier*, February 8, 1813; *City Gazette*, February 8, 1813; *City Gazette*, March 2, 1813; *Charleston Courier*, April 10, 1813; *Columbian*, July 31, 1813; *Statesman*, July 31, 1813; *Statesman*, August 2, 1813; *Columbian*, August 9, 1813; *Evening Post*, August 9, 1813; *Columbian*, August 12, 1813; *Evening Post*, August 12, 1813; *Democratic Press*, September 25, 1813; *Democratic Press*, October 8, 1813; *American & Commercial Daily Advertiser*, December 7, 1813.

⁹³² *Baltimore Patriot & Evening Advertiser*, February 19, 1814; *Baltimore Patriot & Evening Advertiser*, February 21, 1814.

⁹³³ *City Gazette*, January 3, 1815.

⁹³⁴ *Boston Daily Advertiser*, October 25, 1815.

⁹³⁵ *Boston Commercial Gazette*, October 26, 1815; *Repertory*, October 28, 1815; *Repertory*, October 31, 1815; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, November 7, 1815; *Boston Commercial Gazette*, November 9, 1815; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, November 24, 1815; *Repertory*, December 2, 1815; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, December 13, 1815; *Repertory*, December 14, 1815; *Repertory*, December 23, 1815; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, January 10, 1816; *Repertory*, January 11, 1816; *New-England Palladium & Commercial Advertiser*, February 2, 1816; *Boston Commercial Gazette*, February 15, 1816; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, February 16, 1816; *New-England Palladium & Commercial Advertiser*, February 16, 1816; *Democratic Press*, August 15, 1816; *Philadelphia Gazette*, August 15, 1816; *Democratic Press*, August 16, 1816; *Philadelphia Gazette*, August 16, 1816; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, August 16, 1816; *Philadelphia Gazette*, September 17, 1816; *Philadelphia Gazette*, September 18, 1816; *Philadelphia Gazette*, June 30, 1817; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, June 30, 1817; *Philadelphia Gazette*, July 8, 1817; *Philadelphia Gazette*, July 9, 1817; *Philadelphia Gazette*, October 9, 1817; *Aurora*, October 13, 1817; *Philadelphia Gazette*, October 13, 1817; *Philadelphia Gazette*, October 14, 1817; *Philadelphia*

While the act still seemed to draw audiences with its surreal transformation from Canadian to American, by the end of the War of 1812, the question of whether such a metamorphosis was possible in reality had ceased to carry much weight. Most American newspapers at 1812 had concluded that the two groups were just too different. The qualities described as quintessentially Canadian, or American, both revealed and helped to create popular typologies, widely recognized by American readers, although they were

Gazette, October 18, 1817; *Baltimore Patriot & Mercantile Advertiser*, December 24, 1817; *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, December 27, 1817; *Baltimore Patriot & Mercantile Advertiser*, December 27, 1817; *Baltimore Patriot & Mercantile Advertiser*, January 28, 1818; *Alexandria Herald*, February 20, 1818; *Alexandria Herald*, March 2, 1818; *Aurora General Advertiser*, April 22, 1818; *Aurora*, April 24, 1818; *Philadelphia Gazette*, April 25, 1818; *Aurora General Advertiser*, June 4, 1818; *Philadelphia Gazette*, June 4, 1818; *Aurora*, June 5, 1818; *Aurora General Advertiser*, June 12, 1818; *Aurora General Advertiser*, June 13, 1818; *Aurora*, June 15, 1818; *Columbian*, June 29, 1818; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, June 29, 1818; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, July 1, 1818; *Columbian*, July 2, 1818; *National Advocate*, July 2, 1818; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, July 2, 1818; *Columbian*, July 3, 1818; *National Advocate*, July 3, 1818; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, July 3, 1818; *National Advocate*, July 4, 1818; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, July 4, 1818; *Boston Patriot and Daily Chronicle*, August 7, 1818; *National Advocate*, August 7, 1818; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, August 7, 1818; *Columbian*, August 10, 1818; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, August 10, 1818; *Evening Post*, August 20, 1818; *National Advocate*, August 20, 1818; *Columbian*, August 28, 1818; *Evening Post*, August 28, 1818; *Evening Post*, September 2, 1818; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, September 2, 1818; *National Advocate*, September 9, 1818; *Columbian*, September 18, 1818; *Columbian*, September 21, 1818; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, September 21, 1818; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, September 26, 1818; *Columbian*, October 2, 1818; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, October 2, 1818; *National Advocate*, October 3, 1818; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, October 3, 1818; *Albany Argus*, October 6, 1818; *Lancaster Journal*, October 14, 1818; *Aurora*, November 4, 1818; *Franklin Gazette*, November 4, 1818; *Aurora General Advertiser*, December 21, 1818; *Franklin Gazette*, December 21, 1818; *Philadelphia Gazette*, December 21, 1818; *Philadelphia Gazette*, January 25, 1819; *Aurora*, February 22, 1819; *Philadelphia Gazette*, February 22, 1819; *Columbian*, May 24, 1819; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, May 24, 1819; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, May 31, 1819; *Columbian*, June 4, 1819; *Columbian*, June 22, 1819; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, June 24, 1819; *Columbian*, July 2, 1819; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, July 2, 1819; *Columbian*, July 12, 1819; *Columbian*, July 20, 1819; *Mercantile Advertiser*, July 20, 1819; *New-York Daily Advertiser*, July 20, 1819; *Columbian*, August 5, 1819; *Boston Commercial Gazette*, August 26, 1819; *Boston Patriot & Daily Mercantile Advertiser*, September 2, 1819; *Boston Daily Advertiser*, September 3, 1819; *Louisiana State Gazette*, January 5, 1822; *Boston Commercial Gazette*, May 2, 1825; *Evening Post*, August 1, 1825; *Louisiana Advertiser*, March 12, 1827; *Daily Chronicle*, November 4, 1828; *Daily Chronicle*, November 5, 1828; *Southern Patriot*, January 27, 1829; *Charleston Courier*, February 9, 1829; *City Gazette*, February 9, 1829; *Albion, or, British, Colonial, and Foreign Weekly Gazette*, February 19, 1831; *Daily Chronicle*, June 4, 1832; *Daily Chronicle*, June 5, 1832; *Daily Chronicle*, June 7, 1832; *Daily Chronicle*, June 9, 1832; *Daily Chronicle*, June 11, 1832; *Daily Chronicle*, June 18, 1832; *Daily Chronicle*, December 9, 1833; *Daily Chronicle*, December 11, 1833; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 17, 1834; *Daily Pennsylvanian*, January 21, 1835; *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, June 17, 1836; *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, April 6, 1837; *Herald*, October 30, 1837; *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, January 21, 1839; *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, January 22, 1839; *Evening Post*, January 6, 1840; *Herald*, January 6, 1840; *New York Herald*, January 6, 1840; *New York Herald*, January 7, 1840; *Herald*, February 27, 1840; *New York Herald*, February 28, 1840; *Herald*, March 6, 1840; *New York Herald*, March 10, 1840; *New York Herald*, March 11, 1840; *Herald*, March 12, 1840; *Boston Daily Mail*, August 8, 1843; *Boston Daily Mail*, August 15, 1843.

based on both positive and negative stereotypes. Where Americans were innovative and industrious, Canadians were banal and indolent. Where Americans refused to live without a free press, Canadians were happy reading the mouthpieces of government. Where Americans were law abiding and just, Canadians were liars and criminals. Where Americans patriotically stood tall for freedom, Canadians tremblingly submitted to tyranny. Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the American press utilized portrayals of Canadians to cement what they viewed as the proper American identity for their readers. By depicting alleged Canadian vices as the opposite of Americans, American newspapers reinforced virtue as key to the American identity. By defining Canadians, American newspapers were effectively defining Americans by contrast. Americans were what Canadians were not. Though the American historiography has rarely recognized it, ideas about the Canadian identity had a major impact on American ideas about what made an American.

Canada mattered. As a foil against which to define the American identity, as an example that reflected the American identity back on Americans, Canada mattered. Understandings of Canada and of Canadians had a significant impact on the formation of American identity, and this dissertation has explored the role that the early American press played in cementing those understandings of Canadians. In the two decades preceding the American Revolution, Canadians largely served as a foil against which to define everything that Americans were not. In the two decades following the American Revolution, depictions of Canadians moved closer to the American identity, before relapsing collectively back into a foil. In the two decades that followed the signing of the Jay Treaty, Canadians were both a foil and a reflection. Throughout this process, definitions of the Canadian identity were significant to definitions of the American identity. References to Canadians abounded in American newspapers, and most played on stereotypes that further reinforced ideas about what made an American. Canadians were the enemy when Canada was held by the French in French-Indian War. In the American Revolution, Canadians represented an opportunity to attack the British enemy and to spread liberty across the continent. In both those conflicts, Canada and the colonial powers that ruled it (France, Britain) posed potential existential threats to the Americans, and as such, occupied American newspaper contributors and editors throughout those

eras. Definitions of Canadians were also part of the contest over federal power in the First Party system and the squabbles between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, American understandings of Canadians changed dramatically, but the utility of these understandings in defining American identity remained largely consistent. By 1812, however, this utility was beginning to diminish, and soon, Canadians became the afterthought in American popular culture that they largely remain today.

The War of 1812 contributed significantly to the final American rejection of union with their Canadian neighbours. The spirited defense put up by the Canadians alongside British troops and the lack of support for the American army that materialized amongst the Canadian population eventually convinced the American press that the era of potential union had passed. While the *North Star* had claimed in 1807 that “The Canadians feel a pride in the American name,”⁹³⁶ the war had changed American opinion. As Alan Taylor argued, the violence of the border fighting during the war turned both sides away from one another.⁹³⁷ Taylor argued that the war had fundamentally altered the ways in which Canadians and Americans viewed one another, and moving forward from the war, both Canada and the United States changed in clear ways. Canada turned away from the United States and focused on its place within the British empire. In the United States, the collapse of the Federalist Party dramatically altered the political situation in the country. From the War of 1812 onwards, the place that Canadians occupied within the American public mind had changed. The question of “will they, won’t they” that had animated the American press regarding the possibility of Canada joining the U.S. was largely put to rest in the war, and as such, the role that Canada played as foil for the American press diminished. By the time the guns went silent in 1815, the American press

⁹³⁶ *North Star*, December 21, 1807; *Democrat*, December 30, 1807; *Boston Courier*, December 31, 1807; *Democratic Press*, January 2, 1808; *Independent Chronicle*, January 4, 1808; *True American*, January 4, 1808; *Weekly Eastern Argus*, January 7, 1808; *Essex Register*, January 9, 1808; *Republican Spy*, January 13, 1808; *True Republican*, January 13, 1808; *L’Oracle and Daily Advertiser*, January 20, 1808; *American Mercury*, January 21, 1808; *Suffolk Gazette*, January 25, 1808; *Pennsylvania Correspondent, and Farmers’ Advertiser*, January 26, 1808; *City Gazette*, February 4, 1808; *Frankfort Argus*, February 10, 1808.

⁹³⁷ Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*.

had largely concluded that Canadians did not deserve the dignity of being called Americans, and that in reality they probably never had.

American public opinion of Canadians had evolved dramatically in the sixty odd years between the beginning of French and Indian War in 1754 and the beginning of the War of 1812. Though American newspapers generally portrayed their Canadian neighbours as conniving and vicious in both of those conflicts, during the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783) the American press largely turned to praising the Canadian people. After racializing French Canadians as interbred with First Nations people and demonizing them for what was portrayed as a slavish devotion to Catholicism during the French and Indian War, American newspapers began to shift their portrayals. As American public opinion turned against Great Britain following legislation termed by Americans as the Intolerable Acts, including the Quebec Act of 1774, the American press began to portray French Canadians as similarly oppressed fellows who likewise yearned to throw off the British yoke. In a remarkably short amount of time, American newspapers abandoned portrayals of Canadians as half-Indigenous, bloodthirsty Catholics, and instead portrayed them as reasoned and brave, European-heritage lovers of liberty to entice the Canadian people to join the American union. Canada never did join the United States, of course, and in the decades following the Revolution, American opinion began to revert to more traditional portrayals of Canadians.

Though their portrayals still largely ignored Canadian Catholicism, American newspapers began to depict French Canadians as lazy and stupid, uninterested in bettering themselves and unworthy of inclusion in the American fold. English Canadians were portrayed as mindlessly loyal to the British crown, inciting Indigenous peoples to frontier violence and bitterly doing everything else in their feeble power to hurt their former neighbours. The American press denounced Canadians, both French and English, as fighting and living alongside Indigenous nations in the American west and in Louisiana, ridiculed Canadian farmers as among the worst and most ignorant in the world, and criticized the Canadian people as placid and docile despite living under a political structure that was both arbitrary and oppressive. As conflict with Great Britain increased in the early nineteenth century and the newly expanding Canadian press entered

the public sphere, American newspapers returned to portrayals of Canadians as conniving and vicious. Though the overt religious and racial denunciations that had characterized portrayals during the French and Indian War were relatively rare, the American press emphasized what they viewed as the haughtiness and undeserved pride of the backwoods Canadians. As the War of 1812 was fought, Canadians were once again portrayed as sniveling and ignorant peasants, blindly following arbitrary power because they lacked fortitude. American opinion of Canada saw a remarkable evolution in the late eighteenth century. From vicious backwoods brutes to enlightened fellows to sycophantic pawns, Canadians were many things to American newspapers around the turn of the nineteenth century. The one thing they never quite were, however, was fully American.

During the French and Indian War, Anglo American newspapers castigated French Canadians as murderous Catholics, fretting that unseen Catholic plots were being hatched in Canada against the English colonies. Increasing the trepidations Anglo Americans felt toward French Canadians was the relatively close relationship they seemed to have with the First Nations. Many newspapers defined Canadians as being the descendants of First Nations and French unions, contending that they retained the worst aspects of both groups. As they often did with Indigenous peoples, Anglo American newspapers in the mid-eighteenth century also portrayed French Canadians as a bloodthirsty, subhuman other. Such depictions were the product of a long history of English Americans fears of the French Catholic threat, but when the war ended, the threat was ostensibly gone and, though anti-Canadian sentiment died hard, English Americans slowly began to view French Canadians as fellow subjects.

Instrumental in this shift of opinion was the British tightening of colonial control in America in the late eighteenth century. As tensions flared over British rule of its new North American land claims, the American press portrayed the Canadian people as equally dismayed over the Quebec Act. As they had during the French and Indian War, American newspapers saw hidden threats from arbitrary power everywhere, though instead of French Catholic France the threat they now saw lay increasingly with Anglican Great Britain. When America began its revolution, the Continental Congress wrote several letters praising the people of Canada and encouraging them to join the rebellion and American newspapers began portraying the people of Canada as fellow strugglers for

liberty. When the United States invaded Canada early in the Revolution, most American papers predicted that the Canadian people would rise up alongside their American liberators, emphasizing the large numbers of Canadians who seemed to be flocking to the American cause. The attempted invasion of Canada failed, and in the following years, American public opinion began to revert back to that of the pre-Revolutionary days as many newspapers seemed to feel betrayed that Canadians had not put more effort into throwing off their perceived British shackles. Many began to argue that Canadians simply were not advanced enough to appreciate the value of American liberty. As far as the American press was concerned, Canadians were too inherently lazy and stupid to be trusted with the full responsibilities of American citizenship.

Despite the relatively congenial relations between the United States and Great Britain that existed during the years of The Jay Treaty (1795-1805), American opinion of Canadians continued to slip. Canadian participation in frontier Indigenous war parties was emphasized by newspapers across the country. Many papers also began to portray Canadians as prideful, arrogant hayseeds, far too big for their britches. The Canadian militia was ridiculed, as were the Canadian inhabitants of Louisiana, whom American newspapers worried were unsuitable for inclusion within the American union. As Canadian newspapers expanded in the early nineteenth century and began to join the discussion in the public sphere, tensions between Canadian and American newspapers began to rise, and portrayals of Canadians as haughty and prideful became further engrained. Though there were still some newspapers that praised their Canadian neighbours and supported union with them, as the War of 1812 began, in most American newspapers Canadians were once again portrayed as vicious and sneaky pawns of the crown. As far as most of the American press concerned, Canadians had thrown away their chance at liberty. For most American newspapers during the War of 1812, Canadians were once again ignorant and coarse slaves of arbitrary power, too cowardly to take firm hold of liberty and too stupid to realize its value.

One thing that changed remarkably quickly was American portrayals of French Canadian Catholicism. Before and during the French and Indian War, French Canadians were portrayed as vicious and evil, and their Catholicism was one of the primary things that American newspapers fixated on, with the vast majority of portrayals being negative

(Figure 12). As the Catholic Church was essentially viewed as being in the grip of the antichrist, in the English American public mind, French Canadians were the minions of the devil, and Americans attacked them in the press as bloodthirsty and conniving. When English American opinion toward the British empire began to sour in the aftermath of the war, the depictions of French Canadian Catholicism that appeared in the American press changed dramatically. By 1774, with the implementation of the Quebec Act, American public opinion of Canadians shifted. As American officials tried to convince Canadians to join the other American colonies in revolution, American newspapers began to drop their attacks on French Canadian Catholicism. The Continental Congress even went so far as to send letters to the Canadians, pledging a continued toleration of Catholicism in the new United States. Though those letters could also be quite condescending and threatening, they represented a dramatic departure from the way that Canadian Catholicism had been depicted. No longer were Canadians Catholic pawns, rather they were honest Americans who happened to be Catholic. As Francis D. Cogliano has argued, Americans generally abandoned their attacks on Catholicism when the French empire entered the Revolutionary War as an American ally.⁹³⁸ Well before the French Alliance of 1778, American public opinion of Catholicism in the Canadian context had already shifted. As part of American efforts to attract Quebec to the Revolutionary cause, American officials and newspapers generally did away with their overt attacks on Catholicism, with such attacks fading from the American press almost entirely by 1776 (Figure 13). When the French empire then joined the war on America's side, Americans were already used to forgoing attacks on Catholicism, as they had already effectively done so in their depictions of Canadians. Though attacks on Canadian Catholicism would return every so often to American newspapers, in general, the American press abandoned its criticism of French Canadians' Catholicism in the years before the Revolution. Following the Revolution, Americans continued to define religious pluralism as being at the root of American identity, and their depictions of Canadian Catholicism reflects this trend. Remarkably quickly, in the early 1770s, American newspapers largely removed

⁹³⁸ Cogliano, *No King, No Popery*, 71-99.

their attacks on French Canadian Catholicism, and by and large they never returned. This shift happened more quickly and earlier than has been recognized in the historiography.

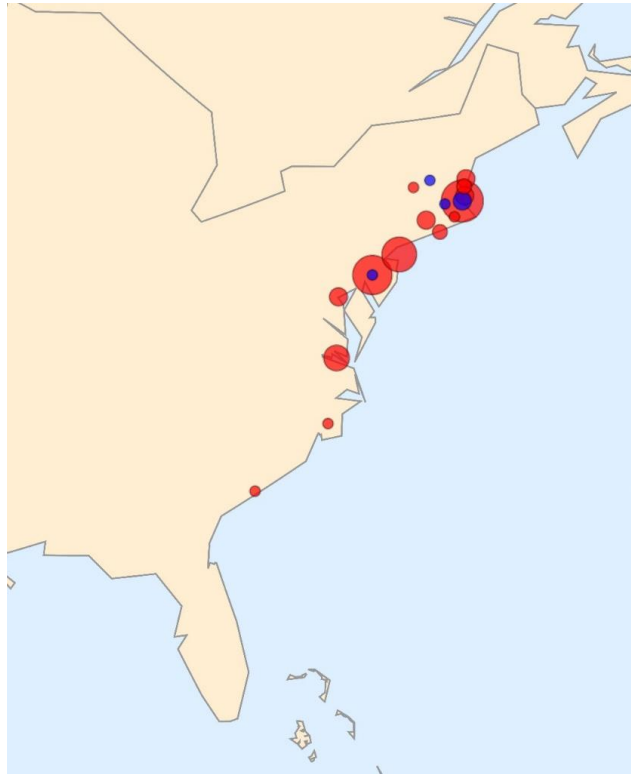


Figure 12: “Map of Positive (blue) and Negative (red) Portrayals of Canadian Catholicism in the American Press, 1750-1812.” Image. 2022. Created using Wolfram Research, Inc., Mathematica, Version 12.1, Champaign, IL, (2019).

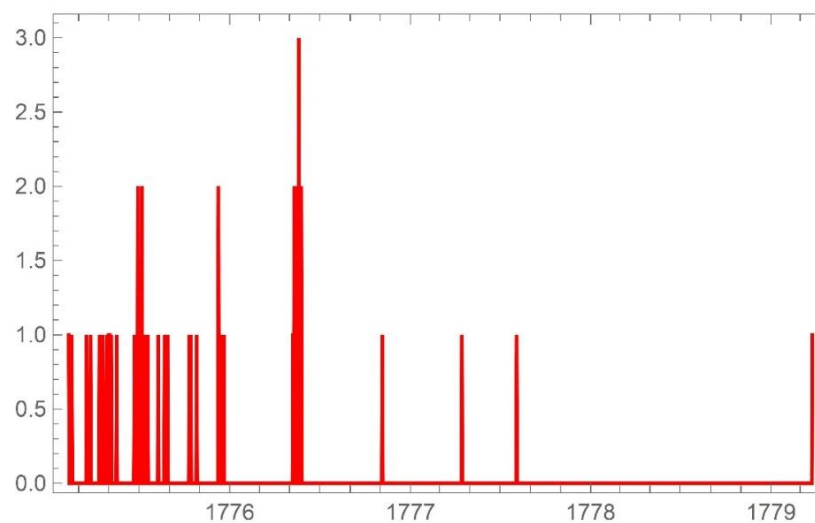


Figure 13: “Chart of Negative Portrayals of Canadians in the American Press, 1775-1779.” Image. 2022. Created using Wolfram Research, Inc., Mathematica, Version 12.1, Champaign, IL, (2019).

Another situation that changed in the period between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812 was American understandings of class in the Canadian context. In the mid-eighteenth century, Canadians were continually referred to as “peasants.” The feudal system of land tenure in Quebec made more Americans view Canadians as little better than medieval serfs. There was a sense in American newspapers that Canadians had no desire to better themselves or their material lives. Though the fur trade was viewed as yielding significant profit, Canadians in general were viewed as a peasantry that lacked most of the ingenuity that was indicative of English Americans. They were viewed as poor farmers, and what was worse, it seemed they had no desire for improvement. Portrayals of Canadian squalor faded during the Revolution, as most negative portrayals of Canadians did, but in the decades following that idea resurged. That all changed with the Embargo of 1807, when Canadians began to get rich working as smugglers and middlemen for farmers who needed to get their crops and produce to the international market. In a very short period, the bulk of Canadians were suddenly understood to be prosperous. This economic prosperity did little to temper American understandings of Canadians as rustic and backward, however. Around the turn of the century, Canadians were portrayed as lazy and dull. They were seen as especially poor farmers and as illiterate, unintelligent simpletons. Though the Embargo had produced economic prosperity in Canada, it had not brought culture with it. As far as American newspapers were concerned, Americans were the opposite of the Canadian example. Where Canadians were lazy, Americans were diligent. Where Canadians were apathetic, Americans were go-getters. The work ethic that defined Americans seemed to be conspicuously lacking in Canadians, and in French Canadians in particular. Most American papers actually praised their former enemies, the Loyalists, for the influence they were having on the French Canadians. Canadians were so tarnished in the American public mind by the turn of the nineteenth century that it was believed that even the worst, most traitorous Americans could have a positive impact on the dull and ignorant

Canadians. By the time the War of 1812 began, American newspapers had largely ceased to call Canadians peasants (except in ads for the Canadian Peasant). The idea that Canadians possessed the innate nature of peasants was retained in the American press however. Though their economic fortunes had improved dramatically, the American press still portrayed Canadians as essentially serfs, unable to envision a better tomorrow without the help of their betters, the Americans.

Something that changed noticeably was American views of Canadian women. Though women were mentioned rarely, they did experience a bit of a shift in how they were presented in the American press. During the French and Indian war and in the years after, Canadian women were background characters, wives and mothers who needed to be protected. They often lacked agency and existed in press depictions largely to serve the role of being kidnapped or murdered. As American understandings of Canadians in general began to shift between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, however, women began to appear as more than wives and mothers. Canadian women were often praised for their literacy and their morality, unlike Canadian men. At the time, many believed the true mark of civilization was the condition of its women, and in the Canadian context, it seemed that Canada had the potential of becoming American in this respect. Canadian women were portrayed as literate and ethical, qualities that their menfolk often were not understood as being. In depictions within the American press, Canadian women seemed to form the spear tip of change in Canada. There was a sense that they would act on their men and make them better, perhaps make them so much better they would become like Americans. This was significant, as at the time, Canadian masculinity was largely ridiculed in the American press. Canadian men were portrayed as poor farmers, the trait that made the measure of a man in many Americans' opinion. Canadian men were also depicted as especially poor soldiers, weak and cowardly in the face of the enemy. This stood in stark contrast to American men, who had stood up to the world's most powerful empire and won their freedom. Claims of Canadian cowardice advanced the argument in many American newspapers that Canadians had no place within the American union. They also served to reinforce that Americans were, by their nature, brave and strong, the opposite of the cowardly Canadians in every way.

Another association that changed very little in American portrayals of Canadians between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812 was their relationship with Indigenous groups. Because of the many alliances that French Canada had with Indigenous nations in the region and intermarriage between French Canadians and Indigenous peoples, in the years prior to the French and Indian War, Americans came to view Canadians as a mixed race people. The war and the close alliances between the French Canadians and Indigenous nations during the war reinforced the idea in the American mind that the two groups were intermixed. Americans already had a view of Indigenous peoples as untrustworthy and bloodthirsty, and for many American newspapers during the war, Canadians proved themselves to be even worse. By inciting Indigenous nations to frontier violence, in the American public mind, French Canadians had betrayed their fellow Whites, making them race traitors. They were White, or at least somewhat White European settlers who had gone native and turned on their fellow White settlers. Between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, this was an image that Canadians would never truly escape. As Robert G. Parkinson has argued, American officials and newspapers intentionally associated the British with their Black and Indigenous allies as a means of painting them as an other in the American public mind.⁹³⁹ In many ways, however, this tactic was learned by English Americans during the French and Indian War when they used similar associations to brand their French Canadian enemies as racialized, or at least racially questionable. In addition, it was not only associations with Black and Indigenous North Americans that the American press utilized to debase the British, but also Canadians. As a people that seemed to occupy an ambiguous place within the racial hierarchies that were developing in North America, Canadians themselves were often seen as being non-White, and were subsequently often used alongside Black and Indigenous communities as a means of tarnishing the British by association. Though such associations largely faded during the American Revolution when the American press was trying diligently to convince Canadians that their American neighbours were friends, they resurged soon after the Revolutionary War, and remained

⁹³⁹ Parkinson, *The Common Cause*, 20-21.

an important part of the way that Americans understood the Canadian identity. Not only were such portrayals effective at othering Canadians as an outgroup to strengthen internal group identity for the residents of American states, but they also served to define the American identity as a White identity. American newspapers used Canadians and their seeming connection to Indigenous peoples (and eventually to formerly enslaved Americans) as a means of reinforcing what an American was. Unlike Canadians, Americans supposedly did not intermingle with Indigenous communities, nor did they ally themselves with Black Americans. Canadians were mixed race and Americans were not. Even after the American Revolution and the arrival of large numbers of English Americans in Canada, Americans maintained a sense that Canadians were associating extensively with racialized others. The Loyalists seemed to have deep connections with the Indigenous nations that they had been allied to during the war. Some members of those nations had also evacuated to Canada with the Loyalists, and so their connection with one another in the American public mind was quickly established. When the tensions that would eventually erupt into the War of 1812 began to build, American newspapers returned to full-throated condemnations of Canadian racial mixing. Canadians were again portrayed as an allegedly mixed race who, Indigenous heritage or not, wielded significant influence over Indigenous peoples. Taken together, American press portrayals of Canadian race and ethnicity were incredibly negative, across both space (Figure 14) and time (Figure 15). Unlike their negative portrayals of Catholicism, which generally disappeared during the Revolution, negative racial depictions of Canadians continued to appear in the American press throughout the post-Revolutionary era. It was a view of Canadians that served the American press well, in that it by contrast emphasized White American racial unity, and so it remained a mainstay of American portrayals of Canadians until at least the War of 1812.

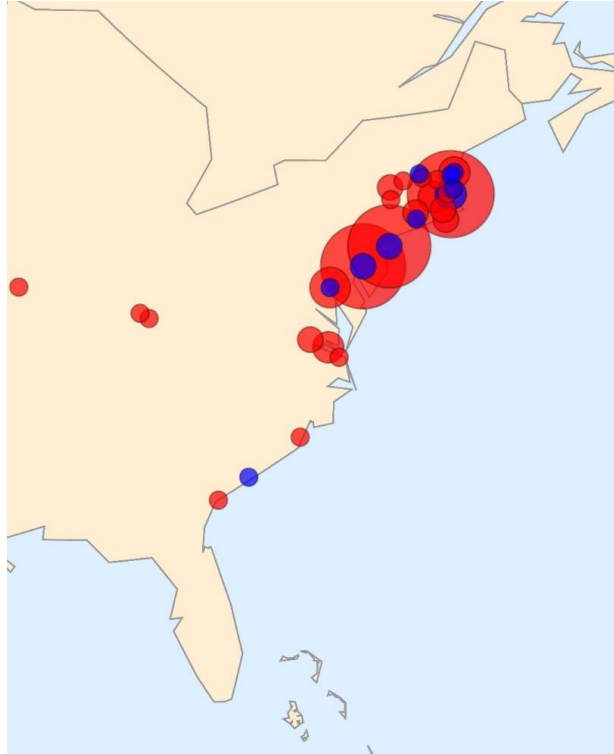


Figure 14: “Map of Positive (blue) and Negative (red) Portrayals of Canadian Race and Ethnicity in the American Press, 1750-1812.” Image. 2022. Created using Wolfram Research, Inc., Mathematica, Version 12.1, Champaign, IL, (2019).

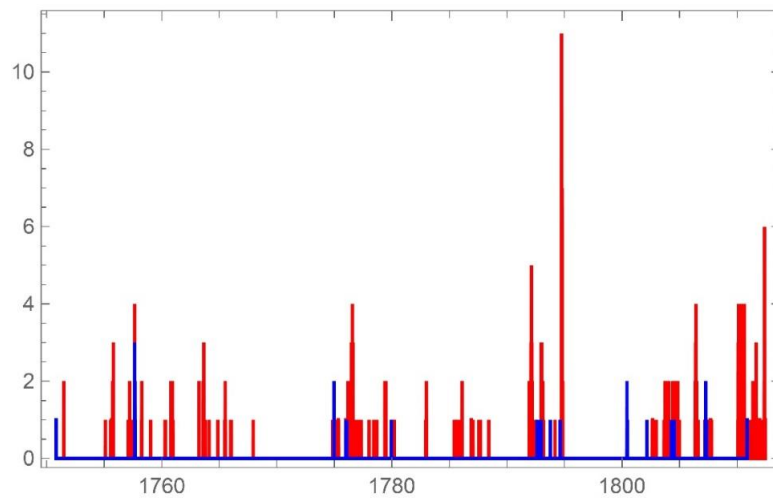


Figure 15: “Chart of Positive (blue) and Negative (red) Portrayals of Canadians in the American Press, 1750-1812.” Image. 2022. Created using Wolfram Research, Inc., Mathematica, Version 12.1, Champaign, IL, (2019).

Throughout the entire era between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, Canadians were used as a mirror to reflect American identity back at Americans. Sometimes, Canadians functioned as a regular mirror, reflecting back the values and character traits that American newspaper editors felt were fundamentally American. Most of the time, however, Canadians served as what might be called a reverse mirror, showing Americans the opposite of what the editors thought made an American. When American newspapers praised aspects of the Canadian identity, they were reinforcing for American readers that those aspects were also important parts of the American identity. When American papers ridiculed and criticized purported traits of the Canadian identity, they cemented for American readers that those aspects had no place in the American identity. In general, the number of negative comparisons vastly outnumbered the positive (Figure 16). Though there were spikes in positive portrayals of Canadians in the American press, particularly during the Revolutionary War, these were anomalies to the general and remarkably persistent trend. American newspapers made much greater use of Canadians as a foil than as a mirror. Though there were various moments when American newspaper editors seemed to believe that Canadians were worthy of becoming Americans, read in total, American portrayals of Canadians between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812 reveal that Canadians were othered far more than they were not. When it came to using comparisons with Canadians to define the American identity, American newspaper editors clearly preferred negative comparisons, and such comparisons served two functions. They helped define the emerging American national identity, and they also served to provide the new American nation with an outgroup that could be utilized to enhance internal group identity. Depictions of Canadians showed Americans how similar they were to one another, and how different they were from people who in reality were quite similar. As far as the American press was concerned, the Canadians differed where it counted, however, and their portrayals of Canadians served to reinforce those differences in the American public mind.

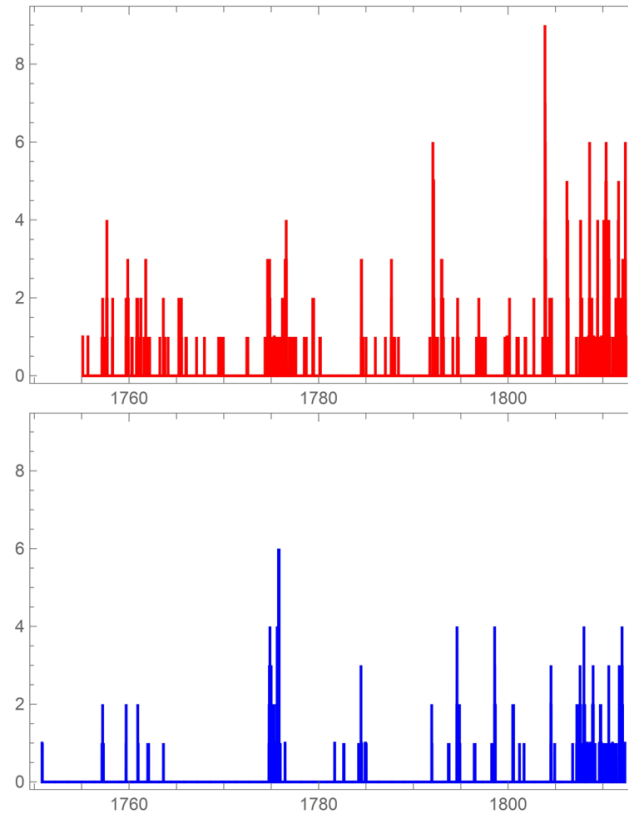


Figure 16: “Charts of Explicit Positive (blue) and Negative (red) Portrayals of Canadians in the American Press, 1750-1812.” Image. 2022. Created using Wolfram Research, Inc., Mathematica, Version 12.1, Champaign, IL, (2019).

Portrayals of Canadians occupy an interesting place in the pantheon of ways that Americans went about developing and cementing their national identity in the eras before and after the Revolutionary War. Depictions of Canadians were highly significant comparisons that American newspapers used to define their own identity. Canadians were clearly not the only group “othered” in the American press, but they mattered because of their integral connections to major wars and struggles of this era and because they were used in intersectional ways to depict the othering of Catholic, French, and Indigenous peoples. Such negative portrayals of Canadians were all the more significant because of who the Canadians were. Despite frequent negative depictions, there were similarities between Canadians and Americans in newspaper accounts. Like Americans, Canadians, both French and English, were generally White European transplants, or at least their parent or grandparents were. Like Americans, Canadians had been forced to make a

living on the fringes of an empire. As far as American newspapers were concerned, Americans were more like Canadians than they were like Indigenous peoples. At least during the Revolution and for many years after it, Americans were also portrayed as more like Canadians than like the British. Following the Revolution, many of the English Canadians living in Canada had literally been American residents mere years prior. Indeed, Canadians were very much like Americans, and as such, they proved remarkably useful in finetuning the American national identity. Through depictions of Indigenous communities, Americans were quite sure that there was no room for Indigenous peoples within the American identity. Through depiction of Canadians, however, Americans also established that those that were intermixed with Indigenous peoples were also outside the American identity. As European Americans, French and English Canadians were the closest thing to kin that Americans had. And yet, they were different, and the ways in which they were depicted as being different helped Americans come to grips with their own identity. In many ways, Americans defined what they were when they established what they were not. Between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, American newspapers firmly established and articulated a clear sense of Americans identity, using Canadian identity as a series of malleable, intersectional arguments to delineate what various “others” were outsiders to American identity assertions and conventions.

Most of the research within the American historiography has largely ignored Canada and Canadians, though this is beginning to change. As Lennox has argued, the role that Canada played in the American history is beginning to be explored in greater detail by numerous historians within the field. Alan Taylor in particular has written extensively on continentalism and the Canadian-American borderlands.⁹⁴⁰ His approach has helped bring Canada more into the discussion of American history. Lawrence B.A. Hatter has similarly explored the borderlands between Canada and the United States, arguing that Americans in those border regions had difficulty distinguishing themselves from Canadians.⁹⁴¹ This dissertation has explored understandings of Canadians beyond

⁹⁴⁰ Taylor, *American Revolutions; American Republics; The Divided Ground; The Civil War of 1812*.

⁹⁴¹ Hatter, *Citizens of Convenience*.

these border regions. Like Alan Taylor's studies on continentalism, this research has sought to complicate the story of the development of American identity by weaving in the influence of Canada. Portrayals of Canadians appeared across the English American colonies, and while those depictions began to diverge during the First Party System, for much of the era between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, portrayals of Canada were remarkably consistent, largely shifting from negative to positive and back to negative en masse, without significant regional difference. Jordan E. Taylor has argued that the conflicts of the First Party System were the result of divergent ideas of truth within the American press which reinforced partisanship for the Federalist and Democratic-Republican parties.⁹⁴² While this divergence can be seen within American print depictions of Canadians in the early nineteenth century, for the latter half of the eighteenth century, portrayals of Canadians in American newspapers remained incredibly constant. Throughout that time, understandings of Canadians remained remarkably important to the ways that Americans were defining their own developing national identity and especially to the ways in which they were presenting that identity in American newspapers.

Historians like Alan Taylor have recognized that understandings of Canada were especially important to Americans during wartimes. Canada was thought to pose an existential threat to the British colonial settlements in America when it was New France and was occupied by French Catholics and Indigenous peoples. It posed another threat in the American Revolution when it was occupied by Britain, due to fear of the Quebec Act and anxiety that it would be used as a place from which the British could launch offensive actions on the rebelling colonies. It was not merely during wartimes that Canada mattered to Americans, however. Though it mattered perhaps with more intensity during wartime, when interaction with or opinions of Canada helped to demonize the enemies, Canada mattered through the entire late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The story of the development of American identity is far more complex and nuanced than has been widely recognized. American understandings of themselves were

⁹⁴² Taylor, *Misinformation Nation*, 181-210.

incredibly multifaceted. Americans did not exclusively define their colonial and national identity with respect to Britons and to the British empire. Some scholars have focused their research on anglicization,⁹⁴³ while others have focused on Americanization⁹⁴⁴ as a central theme in late-eighteenth century British-American relations. Britain has been explored as the model of emulation,⁹⁴⁵ and then as a model to reject.⁹⁴⁶ In these many studies, the focus has been primarily on American-British relations to the general exclusion of other influences. This has sparked explorations into those other, more nuanced influences. Parkinson focused on Indigenous peoples and African slaves to show American fear of these internal “others” was central to the American Revolution,⁹⁴⁷ but still, much of the concentration remained on the British. This dissertation has sought to add Canada and Canadians to the discussion. Americans defined themselves vis-a-vis Canadians in many different and interesting ways. This dissertation has sought to add Canada and Canadians to the discussion, because newspaper evidence reveals that Americans defined themselves vis-a-vis Canadians in different, interesting ways. This includes an intersectional argument, encompassing ideas of race, religion, and nationality, that is more complicated than anglicization vs Americanization, or racial fears and anxieties, or international relations and rivalries. This dissertation adds a continental perspective to the consideration of American identity, a concept that has been considered mostly as either a domestic issue, or as an external foreign relations issue concerning whether America was the proper ally or enemy of Britain or France. Instead, this dissertation has sought to explore the interplay of local, regional, continental and international factors in American understandings of Canadians. Canada mattered in this period, and the exploration of the ways that Canadians were depicted in American

⁹⁴³ Murrin, “A Roof Without Walls.”; Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness*; Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution*, 167-172.

⁹⁴⁴ Butler, *Becoming America*; Lawrence H. Gipson, *The Coming of the Revolution, 1763-1775* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954).

⁹⁴⁵ McConville, *The King's Three Faces*.

⁹⁴⁶ Yokota, *Unbecoming British*.

⁹⁴⁷ Parkinson, *The Common Cause*, 20-21.

newspapers allows for the construction of a more complicated, nuanced, multi-faceted, and inclusive understanding of the development of American national identity.

When it was first performed in 1809, the “Canadian Peasant” represented generations of evolution in American thinking about their Canadian neighbours. The metamorphosis that formed the core of the performance was a concept that occupied American newspapers across the English American colonies and raised the question, could Canadians become Americans? The answer to this question had changed drastically through time. During the French and Indian War, the answer was generally an emphatic no. At the time, English Americans could hardly think of another group that differed from them so severely. By the Revolutionary War, however, they could think of such a group: the British. Remarkably quickly, American opinion of Canadians shifted, and the metamorphosis of the Canadian Peasant became possible, if not nearly complete. This idea faded in the years following the war, but it persisted as an echo. In the early years of the new American republic, as political polarization began to become engrained in the American system, American opinion of Canadians splintered. Some felt that the Canadian Peasant was only a few coats away from becoming a fellow American, while others argued that the Canadian Peasant was actually wearing more coats than ever before. Throughout these evolutions, Canadians remained an important example, or more often counter-example, against which to define the American identity. In this, the popular concept or the alleged typology of the Canadian was just as important, or maybe more important than the actual Canadians themselves. The stereotype of the Canadian was spread far and wide through newspapers that often reprinted stories and their editors were not typically as concerned with accuracy, but rather the persuasive power of the narrative. In the press, Canadians could be depicted however the author needed them to be, and for an America that was just cementing its national identity and imagined community, such a malleable foil proved remarkably valuable.

By 1815, this American national identity was no longer fledgling, no longer defined against the British identity it had left in Europe or the Indigenous identities it had found in North America. The emerging American identity was more self-confident, less likely to define itself against others. In such a climate, as the nineteenth century

progressed, defining the American identity against the Canadian identity lost its power. Rather than a special example of what American identity was or was not, Canadians became just one of the many identities that was definitively not American. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, the Canadian identity was not merely one among many, but a vital aspect of how Americans came to view themselves. The fact that, in the eyes of most American newspapers, particularly during peace time, Canadians were unable to bring themselves up to the level needed for inclusion in the American union spoke to the special place that union had in the annals of history. American identity tapped into moments that asserted how special America was, or emphasized its collective identity. Canadian identity allegedly did not. For some time, American newspapers speculated that Canadians might one day join that imagined community, but by the time the War of 1812 broke out, such speculations had largely been put to rest. Though the *North Star* had argued strenuously that “The Canadians feel a pride in the American name,”⁹⁴⁸ and while this argument echoed across the country’s newspapers in 1807, by 1812, most papers had concluded that Canadians, in fact, felt no such pride. As far as the American press was concerned, Canadians were far too lazy and servile to earn that American name. Instead, they would remain clumsy hayseeds, never able to remove those last coats and join the American troupe. Throughout the period between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, Canadians served as a foil for American newspaper editors as they went about, both consciously and unconsciously, engraining a sense of the American identity. Americans were many things at many times. They were brave, they were hard-working, they were honest, and they were reasoned. But what they definitively were not was Canadian.

On March 4, 1812, about four months before the War of 1812 began, the American magazine *Tickler* published a short paragraph titled “Successful method of

⁹⁴⁸ *North Star*, December 21, 1807; *Democrat*, December 30, 1807; *Boston Courier*, December 31, 1807; *Democratic Press*, January 2, 1808; *Independent Chronicle*, January 4, 1808; *True American*, January 4, 1808; *Weekly Eastern Argus*, January 7, 1808; *Essex Register*, January 9, 1808; *Republican Spy*, January 13, 1808; *True Republican*, January 13, 1808; *L'Oracle and Daily Advertiser*, January 20, 1808; *American Mercury*, January 21, 1808; *Suffolk Gazette*, January 25, 1808; *Pennsylvania Correspondent, and Farmers' Advertiser*, January 26, 1808; *City Gazette*, February 4, 1808; *Frankfort Argus*, February 10, 1808.

foraging; a lesson for the terrapin standing army.” The piece began, “While the American army under the gallant and lamented Montgomery, lay in the neighbourhood of Quebec, a Yankee soldier practised the following ingenious method of stealing poultry from the Canadian lines.” The paper asserted that, “Having affixed a very small fish-hook to a bit of thin, but strong twine, and placed a grain of Indian corn on the hook, he was accustomed to go into the barn yards with one end of the string fastened to the heel of his boot, when throwing down his baited hook, he would walk away with his prey following at his heels.” The *Tickler* further surmised that:

On one occasion, when he had thus hooked a large turkey cock, which was running after him with its wings flapping violently, its mouth wide open, and extended towards the heel of the soldier, who exhibited every appearance of terror, a Canadian, who observed the whole scene, without discovering the trick, cried out, “See de dam coward Yankee; he run from de turkey cock!”⁹⁴⁹

More humorous than most of the depictions of Canadians that appeared in the American press through this era, this short article presented Canadians and Americans in a number of significant ways. The American was bright and ingenious, concocting an elaborate plan and having the wherewithal to act his way into a free meal. The Canadian on the other hand was dim-witted and easily fooled, deriding American intelligence and courage in broken English as his lunch walked away before his very eyes. This portrayal was largely congruent with other depictions of Canadians from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century American press, and it served a similar purpose. The article from the *Tickler* worked to cement the idea that Americans were brave and intelligent, that the American identity and character was superior. In many ways, the Canadian was a prop, there to reinforce the intelligence of the American. This was a role that portrayals of Canadians had been performing for generations. The Canadians that generally inhabited the American press were a people that stood in stark contrast to Americans, and that was often intentional. Against the Canadian foil, American newspapers defined the American

⁹⁴⁹ *Tickler*, March 4, 1812; *Satirist*, March 14, 1812.

imagined community. And in general, they defined it as everything that Canadians seemingly were not.

Canada mattered to Americans. It mattered when Americans largely abandoned their anti-Catholicism to entice Canadians into the American fold following the Quebec Act in 1774. It mattered when Americans demonized Canadians by associating them with their Indigenous allies during the French and Indian War and used them to racialize the British during the Revolution. It mattered when Federalists and Democratic-Republicans wove Canadians into their existing political conflicts. The abandonment of anti-Catholicism foreshadowed the ways in which Americans turned away from overt anti-Catholicism following the French alliance in 1778. The ways in which English Americans associated the Canadians with racialized groups foreshadowed the ways in which they would eventually associate the British military with racialized groups during the American Revolution. Throughout the era between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812, Canadians served as the ideal foil against which to define the American identity. Canadians were not an afterthought to Americans in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Rather, they were a group that contemporary Americans repeatedly looked on to help define themselves. Images of Canadians were significant in the development of various aspects of American identity. As historians have recently noted, the formation of American identity was an incredibly complex process that requires an expanded approach to explore. Americans did not always define themselves against the British identity. They did not always define themselves against the Indigenous nations that surrounded them. Sometimes, they defined themselves against their Canadian neighbours, neighbours who in many ways were seen as a blend of those groups and who often proved a perfect foil. In many cases, the British were too like Americans to serve as an effective foil. Similarly, the Indigenous were often too different to use to refine the American identity. Canadians occupied a sweet spot between these two groups, different enough, but not too different, and so was consistently useful in the popular articulation of American identity throughout the American press.

As Mike Myers once joked, twenty-first century Canadians are often “the essence of not being.”⁹⁵⁰ In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, it was not Canadians that calculated themselves using the “mathematic of not being,”⁹⁵¹ but rather Americans. Where modern Canadians are often seen as defining their identity against the neighbouring American identity, Americans between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812 often similarly defined themselves against what they considered the Canadian identity. Using Canadians in this way, American newspapers reinforced what made an American at a formative period in the development of American national identity. Canadians were not a postscript or an addendum to Americans in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Rather, they were an important point of comparison for American newspapers. For Americans, part of knowing what they were was knowing what they were not, and one of the things that they were decidedly not was Canadian.

On August 8, 1843, the *Boston Daily Mail* printed what seems to be the last advertisement for a performance of the Canadian Peasant that appeared in the American press.⁹⁵² By that time, Canada was well on its way to becoming an afterthought for most Americans. When the first such advertisement appeared in 1809, however, this was far from the case. For the more than five decades that preceded that 1809 advertisement, Canada mattered to Americans. Canada was an important foil, an important “other” against which to define the American imagined community. Though Canadians were sometimes used as a positive example in American newspapers, one which reflected the American identity back at Americans, most of the time, Canadians served as a negative example, one which reinforced for Americans that theirs was the superior identity. As such, Canadians remained outside of the American identity throughout the era. By the outbreak of the War of 1812, most American newspapers had concluded that Canadians

⁹⁵⁰ Pike, *Canadian Cinemas since the 1980s*, 17.

⁹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵² *Boston Daily Mail*, August 8, 1843; August 15, 1843.

could never transform themselves into Americans. That sort of metamorphosis was best left to the travelling circuses and the skilled horsemen that could actually see it through.

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Honours and Awards: Province of Ontario Graduate Scholarship
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Ivie Cornish Memorial Scholarship
2019

United Empire Loyalist Association of Canada Scholarship
2019-2021

Eleta Britton Graduate Scholarship in History
2021

Related Work Experience Teaching Assistant
The University of Western Ontario
2017-2022

Sessional Lecturer
University College, University of Toronto
2021

Sessional Lecturer
The University of Western Ontario
2021

Sessional Lecturer
University of Toronto Mississauga
2021

Sessional Lecturer
Wilfrid Laurier University
2021-2022

Sessional Lecturer
Huron University
2022

Sessional Lecturer
Brescia University College
2022-2023

Assistant Professor (UC Fellow in Early American History)
University of Toronto
2023-Present

Publications:

“Society at Auction: Coffee-House Culture in Occupied New York,” *Journal of the American Revolution* (blog), November 10, 2016.

“‘Tories Then and Tories Now’: Loyalists in the American Press, 1812-1918,” *Loyalist Gazette* Vol 57 No 2 (magazine), November 2019.

“Fake News of the Surrender of Quebec: A Video Contribution,” *Journal of the American Revolution* (blog), April 8, 2021.

“‘True Canadian’: Advertising Canadian Branded Products in the Early American Press, 1760-1810” *Canadian Review of American Studies* (Forthcoming).