

The End of Imperial Town Planning in Upper Canada

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Article abstract

In the years following the War of 1812 imperial officials, for reasons of strategic and domestic concern, founded a series of towns along the route from Kingston to the Ottawa River. Three of the "military settlements", Perth, Richmond and Lanark, reflected aspects of an earlier town planning tradition in Upper Canada and enjoyed a limited success as the nuclei for a certain type of society. A fourth town, By town, was founded with less planning but quickly became the major urban centre in the Ottawa Valley. Conflicting aims of the military planners and the towns civilians made By town's experience very different from the other three towns.

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Abstract

In the years following the War of 1812 imperial officials, for reasons of strategic and domestic concern, founded a series of towns along the route from Kingston to the Ottawa River. Three of the "military settlements", Perth, Richmond and Lanark, reflected aspects of an earlier town planning tradition in Upper Canada and enjoyed a limited success as the nuclei for a certain type of society. A fourth town, Bytown, was founded with less planning but quickly became the major urban centre in the Ottawa Valley. Conflicting aims of the military planners and the town's civilians made Bytown's experience very different from the other three towns.

Résumé

Après la guerre de 1812, pour des raisons stratégiques aussi bien que pour développer la colonie, les fonctionnaires de l'Empire construisirent des villes le long de la route reliant Kingston et la rivière des Outaouais. Trois de ces «établissements militaires», Perth, Richmond et Lanark, inspirés d'une tradition urbanistique représentative due Haut-Canada plus ancien, n'eurent qu'un succès relatif, à défaut de posséder les caractéristiques qui auraient permis l'éclosion d'un certain type de société. Une quatrième ville, Bytown, ne fit pas l'objet d'une planification comparable mais devint rapidement le principal centre urbain de la vallée de l'Outaouais. Le manque de convergence entre l'urbanisme militaire et les attentes de civils donna à son histoire un cours très différent de celui qui marqua les trois autres.

In the decade immediately following the War of 1812 the imperial government, for reasons of strategic policy, introduced a plan to assist and direct prospective settlers into unoccupied townships in eastern Upper Canada. The goal was to establish a loyal population in a strategically important area, a "country already too much inhabited by Aliens from the United States".¹ As an added benefit, the government could use the plan to pay off war-time obligations and to respond to social problems at home. An integral part of the settlement scheme in the Bathurst District was the creation of three planned towns or "military settlements" laid out under military guidance around which a socially engineered society could coalesce.² When a fourth town, Bytown, established with far less thought or planning, emerged as the dominant urban centre in the Valley and a key to the defense of the Rideau Canal, imperial officials attempted, with limited success, to tighten their control there.

The use of government funds and military expertise to create instant towns throughout the empire had a long tradition by 1815.³ By the middle of the previous century guidelines had been issued outlining the general principles governing the establishment of townships not unlike what Lord Dorchester would articulate for Upper Canada in the early 1790s and a series of planned towns from Savannah to Halifax reflected the importance given to creating urban centres as part of a successful colonial establishment.⁴ Such towns acted as the vanguard of imperial expansion and control, centres that reinforced British culture and facilitated further settlement.⁵

In Upper Canada by the 1790s a number of towns had been created. Some, such as York (as laid out) and Kingston, had followed a simple grid plan while others, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Johnston and Cornwall for example, were laid out in a much more formal Georgian pattern with public land reserved symmetrically throughout the grid.⁶ These towns would reflect the changing primacy

from military to commercial concerns within imperial policy just as the exact spatial models were constantly evolving.⁷

The imperial government's desire to plant towns in Upper Canada was reflected in the actions of both John Graves Simcoe and Lord Dorchester. Both had been active town planners who believed in the intrinsic need for urban centres and who envisioned an organic relationship between a town and the surrounding township. Simcoe believed that a rapid concentration of population, of obedient and loyal citizens was possible only through the action of the military in opening lines of transportation and establishing a network of urban centres much like the old Roman military colony.⁸ Town life not only facilitated settlement but also reinforced patterns of discipline and obedience.⁹

Three years before Simcoe's arrival Lord Dorchester drafted a set of instructions for the introduction into Upper Canada of an elaborately structured, standardized urban form, following a Georgian pattern which would be imposed on the landscape with little concern for topography.¹⁰ Cornwall would demonstrate just how far actual implementation could vary from the model.¹¹ In 1790 Lord Dorchester projected a series of towns and townships based on his model for the Ottawa Valley running from Hawkesbury to Gloucester.¹² A year later another plan had been drafted for the township of Marlborough and Oxford with a modified town plot where the two townships joined.¹³

Little came of these plans before the War of 1812 and the land in much of the Ottawa Valley remained unoccupied. In the absence of government action the imperial officials hoped that a series of schemes organized around "leader and associate" groups would populate the region. Considerable land had been granted along the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers this way and the general failure of "leaders" to do much more than speculate reduced the available land for later settlers.¹⁴ Only in Hull Township under Philemon Wright

and, to a lesser degree, in the Grenville area under Archibald McMillan were sizable numbers of people placed on the land and neither "leader" was very concerned about town growth. Wright, in fact, may have seriously restricted Hull's growth through his tight control of land and his apparent disinterest in attracting a range of artisans and entrepreneurs to his town site.

Events had altered dramatically by 1815. The war had demonstrated the vulnerability of Upper Canada and the need for a more secure line of communication from Montreal to Kingston than that offered by the St. Lawrence. At the same time there were large numbers of demobilized soldiers to reward with land and post-war conditions in Britain made emigration look like a feasible means to ameliorate domestic problems. As early as September 1814 Lord Bathurst informed Sir George Prevost of the government's intention to settle officers and men of the Meuron and de Watteville regiments plus British emigrants on strategically important areas of Upper Canada and to avoid "a thin and scattered population" in such areas.¹⁵ There had been discussions by 1815 of improving communication via the Rideau water system but initially the goal of the imperial government was the opening of "a grand military road" from Kingston to the Ottawa by way of a series of new settlements to be established.¹⁶ As late as September 1820 Lord Dalhousie believed that constructing a water route was "premature".¹⁷ Communications, in the early years, must be by land and that meant opening up the region and bringing in large numbers of settlers.

The result was the creation of three military settlements — Perth in 1816, Richmond in 1818, and Lanark in 1820 — as nuclei in the larger settlement scheme in which imperial considerations outweighed economic concerns. The first priority was to combine military and civilian elements in the new towns in order to establish "a loyal and war-like population on the banks of the Rideau and

Ottawa".¹⁸ Function rather than form was the first priority assigned to the town and each was to act as a supply depot for the surrounding townships. These settlements would be under the direct control of the Settling Branch of the Military Department of the provincial government. The land was "for the purpose of location placed at the disposal of the Commander of the Forces" but the colonists would be under civil jurisdiction.¹⁹ A military superintendent, secretary, and clerks were appointed to oversee the task of locating both military and civilian settlers. Most of the cost of the early settlement — the transportation of emigrants, rations and implements for all, payment for ministers and school teachers — came out of the military chest. Not surprisingly the societies of Perth and Richmond were dominated initially by half-pay officers. The demobilized soldiers turned-settlers, the British Ordnance Department's continued control of both land and largesse, plus the large numbers of justices of the peace drawn from the half-pay officers all reinforced the military authority in the new settlements. At the same time civilians of suitable social positions or occupations were also encouraged to help ensure the proper social leadership. Clergymen and teachers with the proper credentials would be paid a government salary.

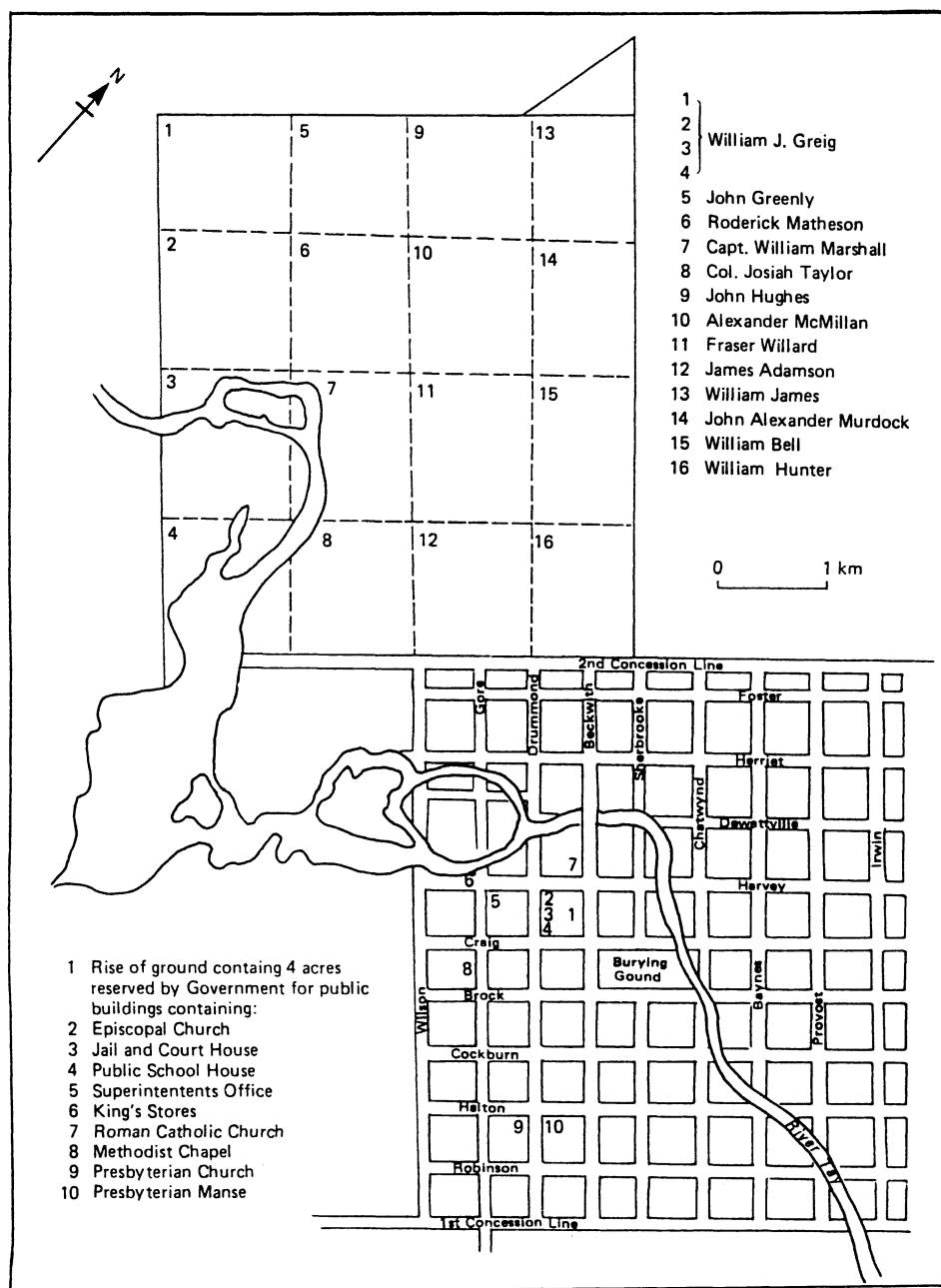
A luxury possessed at least in theory by the planners of the three towns was the freedom to layout the townsite in any form they wished before any land was allocated. It allowed them to implement, with little impediment, contemporary attitudes reflecting town planning and, particularly, the roles for these towns. As a result the towns had similar spatial arrangements. Each town was laid out in the familiar grid pattern with broad streets cutting the town into blocks of four or six building lots of one acre each. Unlike most other government planned towns, these grids were imposed across small rivers which cut through each town diagonally.²⁰ Location on a river was designed to facilitate communication between the town and the

surrounding region but in all cases the rivers impeded growth in part of the townsite. In a departure from the 1789 regulations, no towns had a zone of land set aside for military purposes, although government reserves within the townsites were located on or close to the rivers. The military importance of the towns lay in the martial character of the colonists which they would attract rather than in any envisioned fortifications. Land for public purposes was allocated on the basis of topography and need rather than spatial symmetry. Each town had adjacent to it park lots which were set aside for the correct social élite.²¹ In the case of Perth and Lanark, twenty-five acre park lots were located in a block on one side of the townsite.²² Richmond, planned on a more grandiose scale and envisioned as the future metropolis of the Ottawa Valley, was ringed by ten acre rectangular town lots. The total area laid out was approximately two and a half square miles. Almost 120 park lots were laid out. Either it was believed that Richmond's future growth would support a large élite or the scale represented a more egalitarian impulse. The former is more probable.

Despite optimistic claims in the first decade all three towns fell short of their planners' expectations. Perth fared the best (or more accurately, the least worse). The pressure to get people on the land forced the surveying to be done quickly. Perhaps as a result the town plan was simple and the park lots were laid out in one large block. The actual layout of the townsite incorporated the topography (Map A). Major public buildings were clustered on a rise of land on the west side of town and close to the King's Stores and wharf on the Tay River. The planners of Perth reserved no land for fortifications, but rather sought strategic security by the nature of the settlers which they encouraged. Any "gentle man, or tradesman, or mechanic" could obtain a town lot on which he had to construct a home.²³ It was a policy which was, in the short run, successful. By the fall of 1817 discharged soldiers and their families outnumbered civilian emigrants by two to

Map A

PERTH TOWN AND PARK LOTS IN 1824



one.²⁴ The military presence was further reinforced by the large number of half-pay officers who occupied local government offices. They included numerous magistrates and members of boards of education, the first sheriff, the first registrar, the first warden of Bathurst, the clerk of the peace, at least two members of the Assembly, and a legislative councillor. In 1820 it was estimated that the income of the half pay officers and pensioners in the Perth settlement amounted to at least £5000.²⁵

The list of persons who received the 25 acre park lots reflected the type of élite which the planners expected would control the town's future. At least eight of the thirteen were half-pay officers, three of whom became magistrates, two represented the county in the assembly, and one was appointed to the Executive Council. The civilian John A. Murdoch, a Roman Catholic teacher favoured by Superintendent Daniel Daverne, became an assistant to the Lanark superintendent. The Presbyterian minister William Bell, also a teacher, had come to Perth as part of a policy of allowing large bodies of emigrants bring over their own minister who would be paid by the government. Three civilians, John Greenly, John Hughes, and William James, received park lots farthest from the town centre and there is no evidence that they played a major role in the town's development.

In the early years Perth was the gateway to the newly opened township to the north and promised to become the "natural entrepot of the settlements on the St. Lawrence, and those of the Ottawa River".²⁶ Once Perth was made the capital of the Bathurst District in November 1822 a new stimulus was added. The presence of a dozen government officials and a growing number of lawyers, the construction of a jail and court house, and the establishment of a fair at Perth all helped fuel the local economy. The opening of the Rideau Canal, however, undercut the potential for growth in Perth while at the same time reducing its importance as an imperial

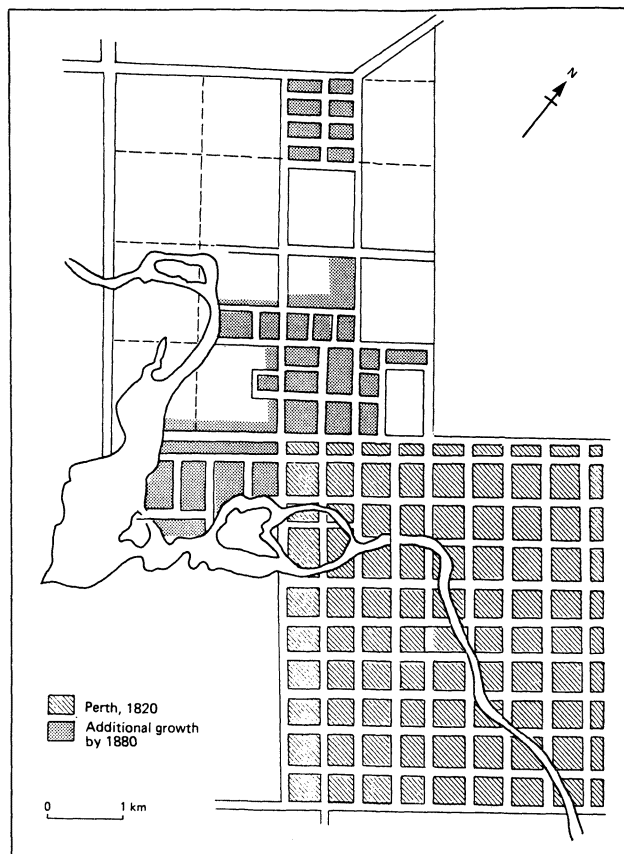


Perth, the Capital of the District of Dalhousie;—from the N. East bank of the River Tay: sketched 20 Aug 1828.

Map B

outpost. Commerce and strategic concerns increasingly bypassed the town although the Tay Navigation Company's feeder canal allowed Perth limited access to larger markets. In 1841 the creation of a new district centred at Bytown further weakened Perth's importance. Although the population of Perth had reached almost 1600 by 1851, the decision of the Brockville and Ottawa Railway to by-pass Perth underscored its declining position in the Ottawa Valley. Growth within the town had slowed. As late as the 1860s the section of town from Sherbrooke to Irwin Streets had virtually no buildings.²⁷ Nevertheless, even the limited growth of Perth revealed the value that control of the town's park lots gave to a few individuals. By 1880 all expansion outside the original townsite with the exception of one small area on the river was confined to a half dozen of the park lots (Map B). Control of the park lots and control of the town future development was in large part a legacy passed from the military superintendent to an élite group which he had selected.

Of all the towns Richmond least met its planners' expectations. This was to have been



Town Planning in Upper Canada

the major urban centre on the land route from the Ottawa to Kingston (Map C). In July 1818 Lt-Col Francis Cockburn had informed Sir John Sherbrooke of the need for an additional village to facilitate settlement in the new townships well beyond Perth. It should be located in Goulborn Township "with a view to the great object of opening a communication from the Ottawa to Kingston".²⁸ Although he said that he would "follow as nearly as possible the same plan which was adopted at Perth" the much larger townsite and the symmetry of the park lots encircling the town suggest that more was expected of

Richmond which would, as Dalhousie had predicted, "turn the tide of emigration into the Ottawa".³² By 1832 the Rideau Canal had sealed the town's fate. A critic described the village as being in a state of decay, and prominent early settlers were relocating in other valley towns.³³ In 1851 only 434 people lived in the village.³⁴ Although there was some good agricultural land around the village, the completion of the Rideau Canal removed any strategic value which Richmond might have possessed and, unlike Perth, it had little judicial or commercial role to play in the district. As late as 1889 the population was

the town's plan was modest (Map D). The two sections of the townsite — East Town and West Town — each had 40 one-acre building lots.³⁷ In addition to the twenty-five acre town lots on the north edge of town, there was an awareness of commercial necessities in the provision for ten acre lots "to be granted to mechanics only, to the cultivation of which they can turn their attention, when not fully occupied with their respective employments".³⁸ Unlike Perth and Richmond, the town lots were not envisioned purely as a reward and encouragement for a socially desirable élite. It was, rather, a tacit recognition of the need to build commercial incentives into the town building process. Unlike the first two towns, only one or two half-pay officers ever settled in Lanark.



Richmond, on the River Jacques, or Goodwood, a tributary of the Rideau River; Rep^d 1830.

Richmond than of Perth. 400 officers and men formerly of the 99th Regiment formed the town's nucleus and were to speed the development of "an industrious and loyal population" in the region.²⁹ For five years the settlement was under the military supervision of Colonel G.T. Burke, a former officer of the 99th and a man believed able to mould the new settlers "to those habits of industry so essentially necessary for their own welfare".³⁰ In the first years optimism was high, most of the 1600 acres within the townsite was assigned and at least seven half-pay officers had settled there. Nevertheless little building had been done by 1825.³¹ It would not be

only 500 and most of the town's buildings were clustered along McBean Street.³⁵

Although the last planned town was established only two years after Richmond, the movement to settle demobilized soldiers had waned and the government's strategic concerns were minor. While Lanark was run as a military settlement, it was almost entirely a product of Scottish emigration societies responding to the economic distress of the mother country and British official objectives were domestic relief rather than strategic security.³⁶ Besides, Lanark's location on the Mississippi River had little strategic value and

Despite encouragement, there is little evidence that the ten acre lots were laid out. By 1845 the only surveyed park lots lay in four tiers north of the town in square plots roughly 25 acres each and it is not clear how many of these had been taken up. Even the town lots were never fully occupied and the only urban expansion beyond the original town plan was a small group of buildings south of the bridge. Still, the military played a part in Lanark's early history. Colonel William Marshall directed the settlement for a decade, public improvements were carried out, and currency was injected into the local economy through transfers from the military chest.³⁹ The military establishment lasted longer in Lanark than in the other two villages but that reflected weakness rather than strength. When the government aid was ended "the little settlement which had made such fair promise almost completely collapsed".⁴⁰

Even before the military establishments at Perth and Richmond were abolished on 24 December 1822 it was clear that although they had enjoyed moderate success, the strategic impetus for their founding had waned. The failure to build a military road from the Ottawa to Kingston and the construction of the Rideau Canal rendered these planned towns obsolete in any strategic

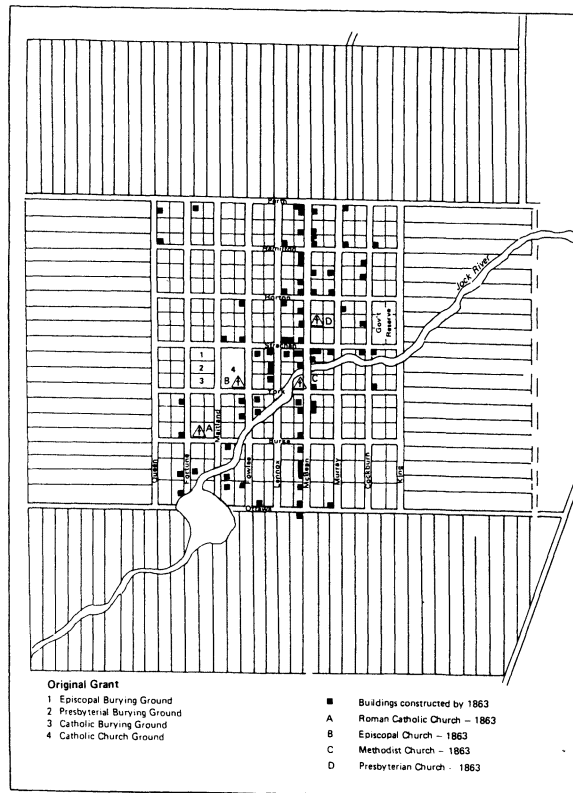
sense, undermined their commercial viability, and effectively ended continued government assistance. By 1830 the long term costs involved in establishing and maintaining these urban outposts had become clear. Concurrently, the apparent need for them, given better Anglo-American relations and vastly increasing British emigration to Upper Canada faded.

The location of the three towns in an area of marginal agricultural resources restricted their potential for commercial growth and left them as small service centres in an economic backwater. Even the military ethos which Dalhousie had fostered never matched expectations. The military's influence among many early settlers was weakened by the revelation in June 1819 of mismanagement by the Perth military secretary, David Daverne.⁴¹ Furthermore while a majority of incoming settlers were civilians from Britain, within the settlements it was the discharged soldiers, excluding officers, who most frequently left.⁴² In Perth and elsewhere, the military officials' arbitrary powers and pretensions grated on some of the civilian élite, although for most of the first generation half-pay officers were strongly represented among the district's justices of the peace and elected representatives.⁴³ It would not be until the end of the 1830s that a new commercial élite would dominate valley politics. At the same time that the completion of the Rideau Canal undermined the strategic importance of Perth and Richmond, it heightened British officials' awareness of the potential importance of Bytown. As a result the Ordnance Department sought to retain and expand its control of the village which it had initiated with little thought, in 1826. In its early years Bytown combined features common to both the planned and organic town. In addition, it clearly underscored the competing military and commercial interests behind the construction and direction of the town's *raison d'être* — the Rideau Canal.

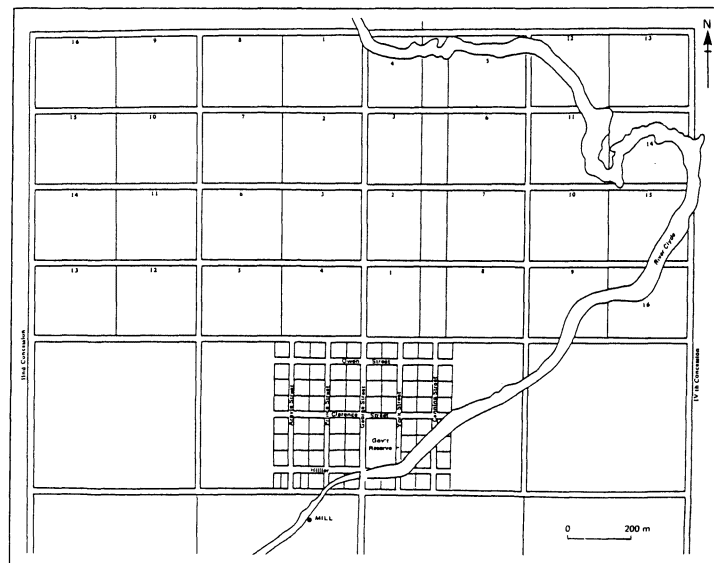
Bytown was originally conceived as merely a small military depot with a limited strategic

Map C

RICHMOND TOWN AND PARK LOTS



Map D



role in a location selected by default. The military initially favoured a site on the Ottawa which would be more defensible in time of war — either near the Grenville locks or at the “Petit Nation River on the North of the Ottawa [sic]”.⁴⁴ If it became necessary to build a depot close to the mouth of the Rideau, the military advisor strongly recommended the left bank of the Gatineau River. Even after Lord Dalhousie decided to establish a village on the Upper Canadian side near the proposed canal entrance, the initial site preferred, Richmond Landing, was unacceptable because of its owner’s exorbitant price.⁴⁵ The only alternative was a block of 415 acres owned by Hugh Fraser to the east of Le Breton’s land.⁴⁶ In 1823 Dalhousie paid Fraser £750 for his land.⁴⁷ Major Eliot then advised that before any village was laid out, land should be reserved to best secure the defense of the depot. The key to any defence of the depot and canal was the height of land later known as Barrack Hill plus another rise just to the east. Military interest caused this site to be held as a reserve, an act which effectively divided the townsite into two villages. No attempt was made to lay out a Georgian town plan, because there was little expectation of significant settlement here, nor would it have been possible given the land held in reserve by the Ordnance Department and the amount of swamp land in the remaining townsite.⁴⁸ In a critical departure from earlier policy, land in Bytown was not given, or sold, outright to settlers but rather leased out. By had been advised that town planning should avoid “interfering with the means of defence which it might be necessary to adopt . . . particularly if it should be contemplated to make it a place of importance”.⁴⁹

Both Lord Dalhousie and Colonel John By had hoped to dictate the social fabric of the town as well as its spatial form by encouraging “half pay officers and respectable people to apply for lots”.⁵⁰ It was hoped that Bytown’s society would resemble Perth’s. The economic opportunities offered by Bytown attracted settlers and By quickly

found that the initial terms of settlement being offered had been too generous. Perpetual leases on four acre lots at 2/6 Sterling per year were first offered and many in Upper Town taken up. A rudimentary survey in 1826, however, revealed that there was simply not enough usable land and future lots were restricted to 66 feet by 198 feet with the condition that a house 30 feet square be built within six months.⁵¹ When it was evident that speculators were taking up these lots, By made further changes. Lots would be leased for 30 years at rents between £4 and £9. The lease could be renewed if the lease holder wished with an increase of no more than one fourth of the original ground rent. At least 108 such leases were granted and revenues were used by Colonel By for such public improvements as building a market place.⁵²

Much of the swamp land in what became Lower Town had initially not been considered by Colonel By as suitable for lots, but pressure for land forced him to order the draining of the swamp in the spring of 1827. As the best sites were drained they were quickly allotted. As a result of By’s changing policy, by 1828 there was great disparity among leaseholders. Some, predominantly in Upper Town, held large lots in the best area for a small perpetual rent. Those tenants were most often politically conservative, Anglo-Protestants, and similar to the type of settlers encouraged in the planned villages.⁵³ In Lower Town some of the best lots were held by men with close ties to the Ordnance Department. In contrast, tenants with no connections held smaller, less advantageously sited lots for higher rents and on a shorter lease. The result was widespread dissatisfaction.⁵⁴ When the dissatisfied leaseholders, many of them French Canadians, petitioned, the government was not sympathetic, and accepted Colonel By’s argument that the leaseholders knew the conditions in advance.

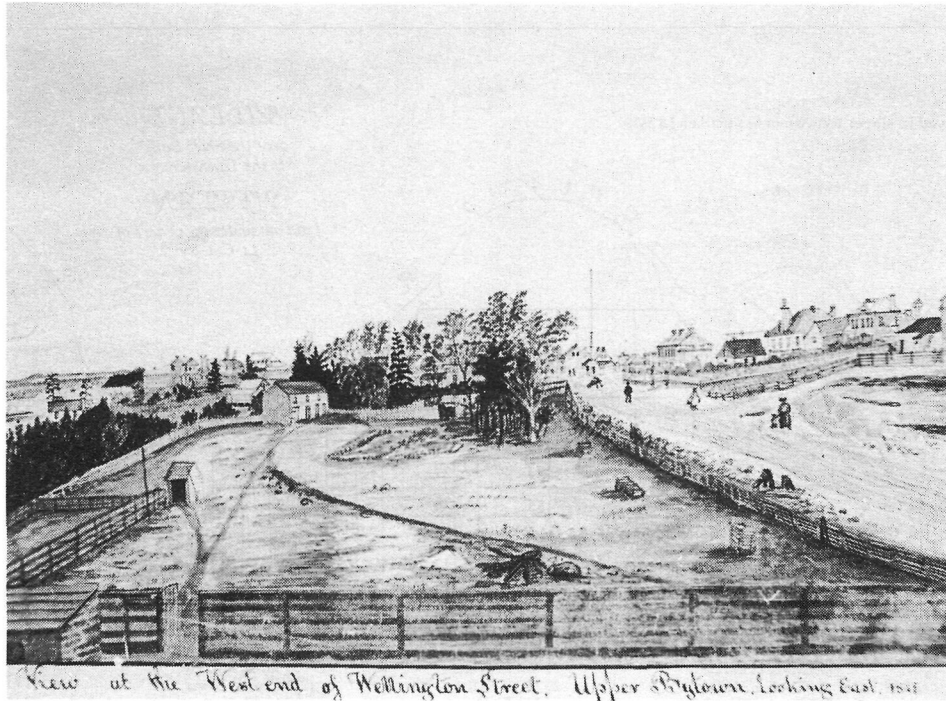
The Ordnance Department had, by then, re-evaluated the importance of Bytown and wished to tighten the control which it had

there. When Dalhousie had first authorized the granting of lots, By wrote in 1831, there had been no idea of fortifying Bytown. Once the land had been cleared, however,

the advantage of the position was so evident, that it became a subject of regret that Deed Lots had been granted, and I now take the liberty of suggesting, that in all new Leases a Clause should be inserted, barring all claims for damages that may arise to buildings erected in future on the Said Town Lots, in consequences of war; and for this reason, I am respectfully of opinion the Lots should never be sold, or held on any other terms than they are now granted . . .⁵⁵

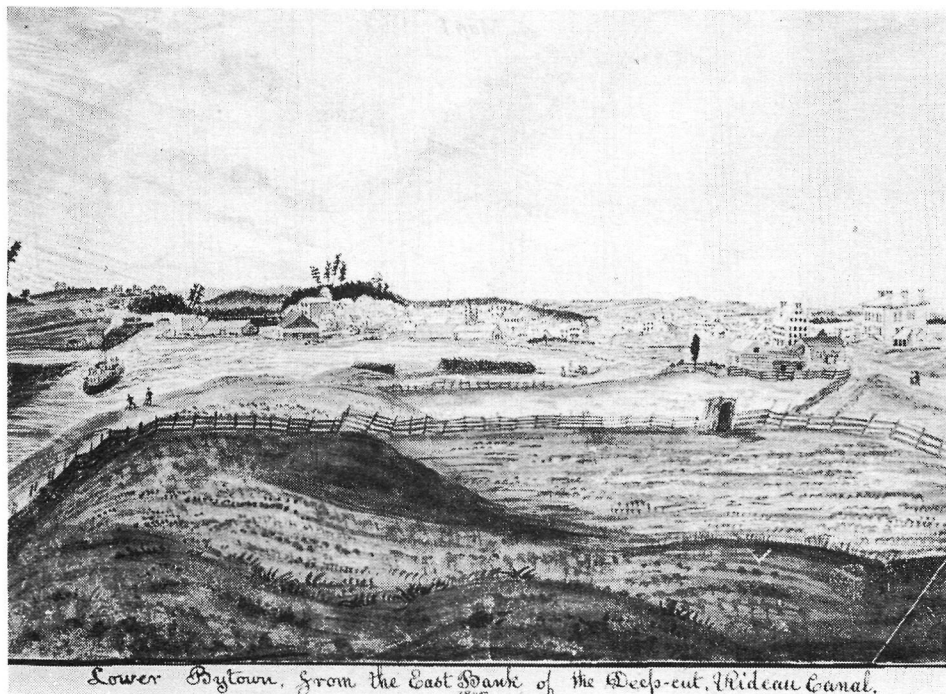
Even as late as 1838 proposed fortifications dividing Upper and Lower Town on an Ordnance Department map (Map E) reflected the military’s hopes for Bytown.

The growth of Bytown, which in the late 1820s was striking, revealed two separate themes — the town’s success as a commercial centre and the Ordnance Department’s unsuccessful attempt to maintain control of the townsite. Indeed the town’s very success increased the Ordnance’s desire to gain spatial control and, in late 1826, it cancelled the leases on a series of lots east of Bank Street. (Map F) By 1830 the population of the town was approximately 3,000 and much of Rideau and Wellington Streets were built up.⁵⁶ Entrepreneurs were promoting urban expansion on property which they owned adjacent to the original government purchase. Given the absence of park lots, these men would control the future expansion of the town. Lewis Sherwood and John LeBreton promoted a village adjoining the Richmond Landing but their venture was handicapped by its location and by the government’s animosity towards LeBreton.⁵⁷ More successful were Nicholas Sparks, and later L.J. Besserer, who developed and sold land south of Wellington and Rideau Streets.⁵⁸ Across the Rideau River at New Edinburgh, Thomas MacKay had developed



View at the West end of Wellington Street, Upper Bytown, looking East, 1844

Upper Bytown

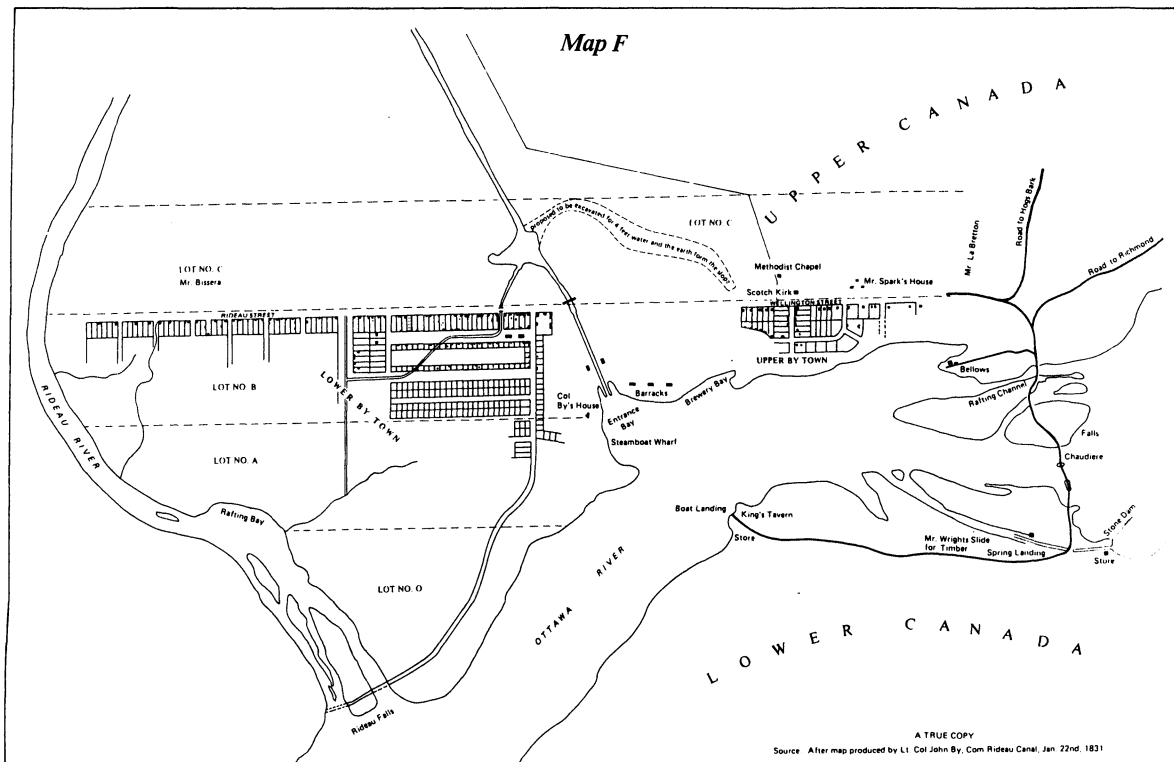
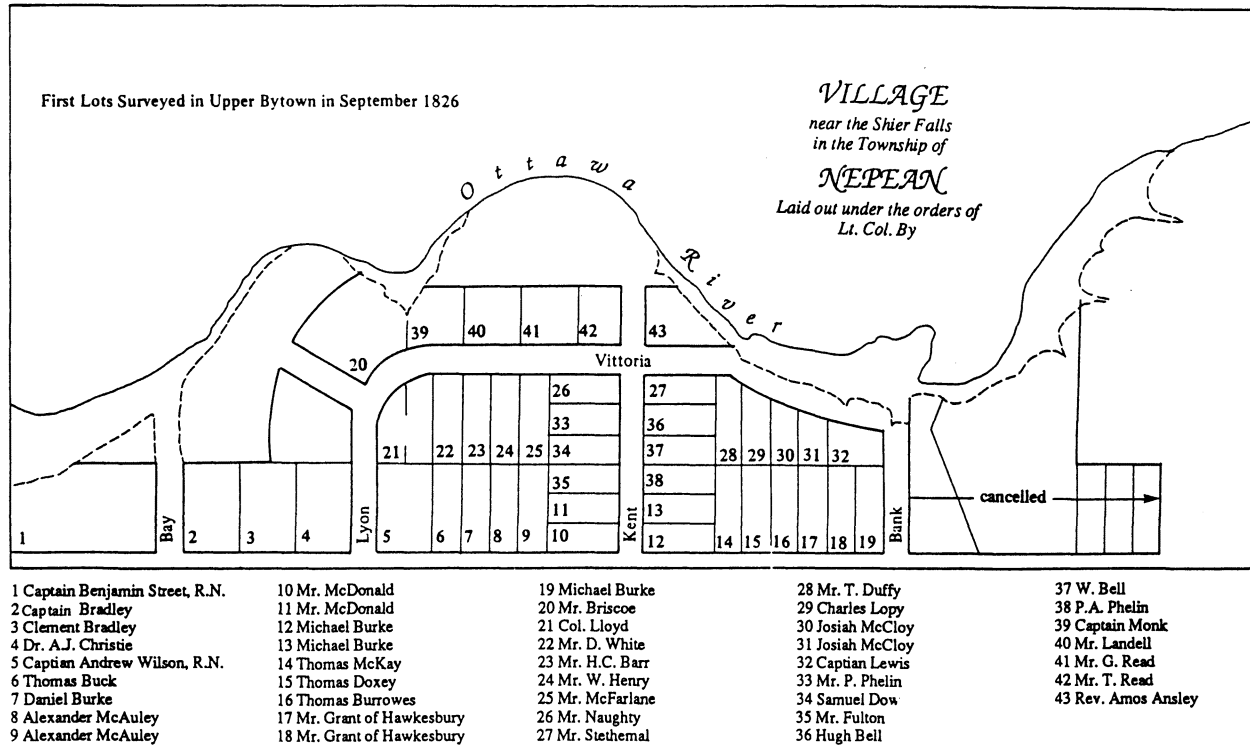


Lower Bytown, from the East Bank of the Deep-cut, Rideau Canal, 1847

Lower Bytown

Town Planning in Upper Canada

Map E



a mill site at the Rideau Falls into a thriving industrial village complex.⁵⁹ It would be the 1850s before these areas contained a significant population, but they established the blueprint for a series of satellite developments, each laid out in a grid pattern and expanding outward from the original town survey. All were attractive alternatives because, unlike the Ordnance land, lots could be purchased outright.

As Bytown became more a commercial entrepôt servicing the Ottawa timber trade rather than the imperial outpost which officials had envisioned and as the importance of the canal grew, conflict between the Ordnance Department and Bytown citizens became more frequent. This struggle contrasted sharply to the willingness of the military to divest itself of responsibility for Perth, Richmond and Lanark. Leaseholders in Bytown began petitioning as early as 1829 to be allowed to buy land outright in the town while some individuals refused to pay their rents.⁶⁰ The need to build a court house in Bytown raised the issue of its proper location. A building commission appointed to select a site ultimately decided against land held by the Ordnance Department which must be leased and approved a location south of Rideau Street on land owned by Nicholas Sparks.⁶¹ One factor in the commissioner's decision was the desire to avoid Ordnance involvement.

Nicholas Sparks, the owner of the land chosen, had become a central figure in the struggle between the Ordnance Department and Bytown citizens over land held theoretically for canal purposes. In 1827 By had appropriated without compensation 84 acres of Sparks' land directly south of Barrack's Hill under the provision of the Rideau Canal Act.⁶² What was not used was to be returned to Sparks.⁶³ The Ordnance Department continued to hold the land in hopes that a citadel might be constructed but only on the spurious argument that a canal basin might be excavated there.⁶⁴ Upper Town merchants, who wanted this prime

commercial property available for private sale, were outraged.

The election of 1841 in Bytown illustrated the extent to which Ordnance control disenfranchised most townspeople. Although Bytown's population was about 4,000, only 81 people voted.⁶⁵ An extended franchise might have threatened the Ordnance's control of Barrack's Hill, Sparks' land, and even Lot No. 0 north of Lower Town.⁶⁶ Furthermore, it was argued, widespread leaseholding discouraged prospective settlers.⁶⁷ The confusion over ownership and the legality of Ordnance control had encouraged squatters who occupied lots, erected flimsy structures, and refused to pay any rent. In order to correct the problems created by both squatters and leaseholders whose rents were in arrears, the Ordnance Department lobbied the Canadian government in 1843 for an act legalizing its control of land in Bytown. The move backfired. In December 1843, an act was passed vesting control of crown land within Bytown in the Ordnance Department but with the provision that land not needed for the Rideau Canal would be returned to the original parties.⁶⁸ The Ordnance grudgingly began in 1844 to dispose of land in Bytown to leaseholders, while Sparks launched a successful campaign to get his vacant land back.⁶⁹

By late 1847, not only had Sparks' land been returned to him but also 327 new deeds or leases had been issued covering 437 town lots.⁷⁰ Another 177 vacant lots remained to be sold or leased by the Department.⁷¹ A new commercial area in Upper Town emerged now as a potential rival to the mercantile complex around Sussex and Rideau Streets. Now that the uncertainties of land ownership had been resolved and much of Bytown was held in freehold, the way was open for the town's incorporation. No longer would the Ordnance Department and appointed magistrates easily dictate the course of events. Nevertheless Ordnance opposition to Bytown's incorporation in July, 1847 forced a

new one in 1850 and it continued to control the canal and local bridges.⁷²

Even after the Ordnance's domination of Bytown had ended, the effects of its early town planning remained. The segmentation of the town, the class and ethnic make-up of Upper and Lower Town, and the satellite urban developments were all a product of the Ordnance's early activity. Within Lower Town itself the first area surveyed between Sussex and King Streets differed markedly from the eastern half centred on Anglesea Square. Throughout Lower Town there was a disincentive to construct substantial buildings before the Vesting Act. Only in the mid-1840s did stone and brick begin to replace the cheap wooden housing which had dominated the town in the first decades.⁷³

The early decades of the four towns studied revealed two very different imperial policies. The first, as practiced in Perth, Richmond and Lanark, used the towns as agents of settlement in a scheme to create a loyal British society in eastern Ontario. Events in 1837 and afterwards suggest that the policy was generally successful. Long term involvement in town life was not envisioned and the creation of the Rideau Canal made it unnecessary in any event. These towns continued a tradition of earlier town planning in Upper Canada. The policy applied to Bytown, however, was different. On one hand the surprisingly rapid growth of the town outstripped imperial planning and explained much of the dissatisfaction over both leasing arrangements and the military's influence. The very fact that in Bytown the imperial agent was the Ordnance Department, a body with substantial administrative autonomy and a proprietary attitude towards fortification and structures, helps explain why the military wished to act as Bytown's trustee. Finally, by the late 1830s the Rideau Canal had demonstrated its importance just as events raised concerns about its security. In the imperial mind it made Bytown essential. The other towns were merely useful.

Notes

- ¹ CO 42/355 Lt. General G. Drummond to Governor G. Provost 19 February 1814 cited in Helen I. Cowan, *British Emigration to British North America* (Toronto, 1961), p. 41.
- ² The towns Perth, Lanark, and Richmond were established in 1816, 1818, and 1820 respectively. The term "settlement" was used by officials and emigrants sometimes to mean the actual townsite but most often to describe both the town and adjacent townships. Thus the Perth settlement usually referred to an integrated town and county community.
- ³ As early as the late twelfth century Normans invading Ireland constructed fortifications and then towns at sites possessing strategic value, with economic considerations assuming importance only after the settlement was established. R.A. Butlin, (ed.) *The Establishment of the Irish Town* (London, 1977), pp. 35-9. A century later, Edward I used a combination of military fortification, planned towns, and a transplanted English commercial presence in his efforts to subjugate Wales. John M. Steane, *The Archaeology of Medieval England and Wales* (Athens, 1984), pp. 45-6, 53. This policy was continued as the British expanded their colonial empire into North America.
- ⁴ Engin F. Irin, *The Birth of the Modern City in British North America: An Introduction* (University of Toronto, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, Research Paper 173), p. 9-10; J. David Wood, "Grand Design on the Fringe of Empire: New Towns For British North America", *Canadian Geographic* 26 (1982), p. 248-50.
- ⁵ Established by colonial administrators for strategic considerations, a planned or pre-conceived town was externally imposed and artificially directed. For a discussion of the difference between pre-conceived and organic towns see James E. Vance, *This Scene of Man: The Role and Structure of the City in the Geography of Western Civilization* (New York, 1977), pp. 24-25.
- ⁶ R. Louis Gentilcore and C. Grand Head, *Ontario's History in Maps* (Toronto, 1984), pp. 62-5, 208-9; Wood, "Grand Design", p. 245.
- ⁷ Gilbert A. Stelter, "The City Building Process in Canada", pp. 1-29, in Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise, *Shaping the Urban Landscape* (Ottawa, 1982). The author wishes to acknowledge an intellectual debt of gratitude towards Gil Stelter, who for so many decades has been one of Canada's leading urban historians.
- ⁸ Gentilcore & Head, *Ontario's History*, pp. 58-9.
- ⁹ Irin, *The Birth of the Modern City*, pp. 21-2.
- ¹⁰ His blueprint for town planning was outlined in *Rules and Regulations for the Conduct of the Land-Office Department*. Two separate plans were designed for townships with or without water frontage. Townships on a river or lake had nine miles of frontage and were twelve miles deep. The townsite was in the middle of the water frontage. Inland townships were ten miles square with the townsite in the middle. In both cases the townsite was a Georgian design — a central grid focusing on a public reserve surrounded by town lots. A military reserve surrounded the townsite and beyond that were park lots for privileged town people. Within the town public space was symmetrically allocated. The best depiction of Dorchester's plan is to be found in Wood, "Grand Design", pp. 245-6.
- ¹¹ Planners of Cornwall attempted to carry out Dorchester's 1789 regulations but by 1792 the reality was very different. Gentilcore and Head, *Ontario's History*, pp. 64-5.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3, 89, 211-13.
- ¹³ National Archives of Canada [hereafter NAC], National Map Collections [hereafter NMC], H3/430, Marlborough and Oxford, 1791.
- ¹⁴ *Third Report of the Ontario Bureau of Archives* (Toronto, 1906), p. 447; E.A. Cruikshank, "Petitions for Grants of Land", *Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records* XXIV (1927), pp. 134-5.
- ¹⁵ William C.H. Wood, ed., *Selected British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812* (Toronto, 1928), vol. III, part II, pp. 785-7.
- ¹⁶ NAC, Upper Canada Sundries, vol. 23, pp. 10, 1770-1, Alexander McDonnell to Peter Robinson, 24 July 1815; NAC, Dalhousie Papers, Vol. 5, Dalhousie to Maitland, 22 September 1820; Edward Allen Talbot, *Five Years Residence in the Canadas* (London, 1824), vol. 1, p. 165.
- ¹⁷ NAC, Dalhousie Papers, vol. 5, Lord Dalhousie to Sir James Kempt, 23 September 1820.
- ¹⁸ *British Parliamentary Papers: Reports, Correspondence and Papers Relating to Canada, 1800-1899* (Shannon, 1969) vol. 6, pp. 376-77. This Irish University Press 1000 volume series is extensively subdivided and Part II consists of subject sets in alphabetical order. All further references and volume numbers, unless otherwise indicated, come from the 32 volume subject set subtitled, *Colonies Canada*.
- ¹⁹ AO, RGI, A-1-7, Crown Lands Dept., Box 10, Military Settlements, 1823-35. Bathurst to Dalhousie, 17 March 1821.
- ²⁰ The Tay River ran through Perth, the Goodwood or Jock through Richmond, and the Clyde through Lanark.
- ²¹ The *Rules and Regulations* had required "Town-park" lots of twenty-four acres to be established outside of the military reserve which encircled the idealized townsite. The type of individual given park lots in these towns illustrated the type of society which the British government wish to reproduce.
- ²² Sixteen were surveyed and assigned at Perth while thirty-two were surveyed at Lanark.
- ²³ NAC, Robert Bell Papers, vol. 48, book 2, p. 48.
- ²⁴ There were 708 ex-soldiers plus 179 women and 287 related children. Emigrants numbered 239 men, 111 women and 366 children. Queen's University Archives [hereafter QUA], Journals of William Bell, vol. 11, p. 46.
- ²⁵ *Kingston Chronicle*, 29 December 1820.
- ²⁶ Joseph Bouchette, *The British Dominions in North America* (Toronto, 1846), vol. 1, p. 80.
- ²⁷ *Historical Atlas of Lanark and Renfrew Counties* (Toronto, 1881), p. 67. The exception was the railroad station.
- ²⁸ Andrew Haydon, *Pioneer Sketches in the District of Bathurst* (Toronto, 1925), p. 62.
- ²⁹ *British Parliamentary Papers: Colonies, Canada*, vol. 6, pp. 376-7.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, Haydon, *Pioneer Sketches*, p. 62.
- ³¹ NAC, NMC, H3/440. "Town of Richmond and Park Lots", 18 December 1825.
- ³² Marjory Whitelaw, *The Dalhousie Journals* (Oberon Press, 1981), vol. 2, pp. 39-44.
- ³³ NAC, Hill Collection, vol. 2, pp. 3236-9. "Hamnett Pinhey to the Freeholders of Carleton", 25 February 1832; Keefer Collection, vol. I, "Petition of John B. Lewis", 3 August 1847; Upper Canada Sundries, pp. 926, 556, "Address of Inhabitants to Lieutenant Governor, Sir F.B. Head", 29 August 1836.
- ³⁴ Canada, Census, 1851.
- ³⁵ Good, Charles E., *Richmond* [Fire Insurance Map], 1:600, 1 sheet, (Montreal, 1889).

- ³⁶ The societies establishing settlers in or around Lanark included the Abercrombie Friendly Emigration Society, plus the Anderson Rutherglen, Lesmakagow, Transatlantic, Budgets, and Winston Societies. Haydon, *Pioneer Sketches*, p. 87; Robert Lamond, *Narratives of the Rise and Progress of Emigration: From the Counties of Lanark and Renfrew to the New Settlement in Upper Canada* (Glasgow, 1821), pp. 17-18; NAC, Lanark Military Settlement, pp. 294-300. In addition to the supervisory military personnel there was at least one half-pay officer, Captain Leech, in the village. NAC, Wilson Family Papers.
- ³⁷ A.O., Map Collection, "Lanark with the Park Lots", 14 January 1845.
- ³⁸ Lamond, *Narrative of the Rise and Progress*, p. 52.
- ³⁹ NAC, Lanark Military Settlement, pp. 175,294-300.
- ⁴⁰ *Atlas of Lanark and Renfrew*, p. 21.
- ⁴¹ Queen's University Archives [hereafter QUA], Journals of William Bell, vol. 2, p. 80.
- ⁴² A study of the first settlers around Perth reveals that while almost 70% of the civilians remained on the land long enough to receive a patent, only 47% of discharged British soldiers stayed while the rate among foreign soldiers was 39%. Virginia Lindsay, "Perth Military Settlement", (M.A. thesis, Carleton University, 1976), pp. 68-70.
- ⁴³ The Scottish settlers complained that the officers were haughty and tyrannical while the officers accused the settlers of being insolent and unreasonable. Dr. Thom and Daverne, in particular were seen as "the tyrants of our settlement". QUA, Journals of William Bell, vol. 2, pp. 39, 50.
- ⁴⁴ NAC, Hill Collection, "Remarks on the Best Position for a Military Depot", September 1823, pp. 5510-14; "Major G.A. Eliot's Remarks on the Purchase at the Falls of the Rideau", 1824, pp. 5515-18. The South Nation flows into the Ottawa out of Prescott County.
- ⁴⁵ Captain John Le Breton had purchased land at the Richmond Landing for £499 after being present at a dinner at which Lord Dalhousie discussed its potential value. Le Breton then offered half the land to the Crown for £3,000. Michael Newton, *Lower Town Ottawa* (Ottawa, 1979), p. 57; Robert Legget, *Rideau Waterway* (Toronto, 1955), pp. 173, 214-16; Hamnet P. Hill, *Robert Randall and the Le Breton Flats* (Ottawa, 1919), pp. 37-38.
- ⁴⁶ NAC, Hill Collection, vol. 18, p. 4417, Hugh Fraser to Andrew Cochran, 12 December 1822.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 22, p. 5844.
- ⁴⁸ John H. Taylor, *Ottawa: An Illustrated History* (Ottawa, 1986), p. 14. As Taylor points out, because all the canal costs were being paid by Britain, the Ordnance Department had a remarkably free hand.
- ⁴⁹ NAC, Hill Collection, "The Purchase on the Purchase at the Falls of the Rideau", p. 5516.
- ⁵⁰ Newton, *Lower Town Ottawa*, p. 58; John H. Taylor, "City Form and Capital Culture: Remaking Ottawa", *Planning Perspectives*, 4 (1989), p. 82.
- ⁵¹ By originally granted lots of four acres at 2/6 sterling per annum. NAC, Hill Collection, vol. 18, pp. 4459-60, By to Captain Richard Airey, 18 July 1829; *Canadian Freedman*, 4 November 1830.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ They included half a dozen half-pay officers, members of the Ordnance staff, and several clergyman.
- ⁵⁴ NAC, Hill Collection, vol. 21, pp. 5547-50, "Memorial from Bytown Lessees", 9 July 1829; vol. 22, p. 5933. "Petition to Lord Sydenham", 4 June 1841.
- ⁵⁵ NAC, Hill Collection, vol. 18, pp. 4463-4, Lt. Col. John By to Capt. Richard Airey, 20 June 1831.
- ⁵⁶ *Canadian Freedman*, 4 November 1830.
- ⁵⁷ During the 1820s Dalhousie encouraged old tenants of Randall (from whom LeBreton had purchased the land), A. Bertie, Mrs. Isaac, and Mr. Firth to ignore the claims of Sherwood and LeBreton. When Sherwood went to court in 1828 to eject Randall's tenants to establish his legal claims, Governor Dalhousie ordered the Attorney General to defend the case. Although Robinson refused, and Sherwood was ultimately successful, the ensuing legal action dissuaded potential buyers from settling in "the town of Sherwood" while there was available land elsewhere. *Petition of Will. Mackenzie, Acting as Executor to the Estate of the Late Robert Randall* (Quebec, 1852), p. 20; Paul Romney, "Robert Randall", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. VI, p.
- ⁵⁸ NAC, Hill Collection, vol. 13, "Bytown in 1837", p. 4041; vol. 22, p. 5877; C.J. Taylor, *Some Early Ottawa Buildings* (Ottawa, M.S. Report 268, National Historic Parks and Sites, 1975), pp. 84-85.
- ⁵⁹ NAC, Hill Collection, vol. 2, pp. 621-2, A.J. Christie to Friends, 1833; William Smith, *Canadian Gazetteer* (Toronto, 1846), p. 122.
- ⁶⁰ NAC, Hill Collection, vol. 21, p. 5545, 26 August 1828; vol. 22, p. 5933, 18 October 1838; Michael Newton, "The Search for Heritage in Ottawa's Lower Town", *Urban History Review* IX (1980), pp. 27, 31. Newton suggests that there was evidence of a tenants' strike.
- ⁶¹ *Bytown Gazette*, June 26, 1839.
- ⁶² Taylor, *Ottawa*, p. 32.
- ⁶³ NAC, Hill Collection, vol. 4, p. 1974, Sparks to By, 17 November 1826.
- ⁶⁴ A map of Jan. 22, 1831 depicted what amounted to a moat "proposed to be excavated for 4 feet water" running through the block of land. NAC, NMC, VI/440, Ottawa, 1831 (1858). Seven years later, a map drawn by Major Bolton showed "the proposed Fortifications" at Bytown with the moat protecting its front. NAC, NMC, (R), HI/440, Ottawa, 1838.
- ⁶⁵ NAC, Hill Collection, vol. 4, pp. 1140-42, A.J. Christie to Stewart Derbishire, n.d.; A.H.D. Ross, *Ottawa Past and Present* (Toronto, 1927), p. 115.
- ⁶⁶ Newton, "The Search for Heritage", p. 32.
- ⁶⁷ NAC, Hill Collection, vol. 22, p. 5933, "Petition to Lord Sydenham", 4 June 1841.
- ⁶⁸ NAC, W.O. 44, vol. 35, reel B 1305, p. 167. "An Act for vesting in the Principal Officers of Her Majesty's Ordnance, the Estates and Property therein described".
- ⁶⁹ Lots then under lease could be converted to freehold by paying all arrears plus a sum large enough to generate an interest equal to the original yearly rate. The occupied lots were advertised for sale by tender. The highest bidder could obtain the lot in freehold for the amount tendered, or in leasehold at a yearly rent equal to the annual interest generated by the amount tendered. Squatters were allowed twelve months to pay the prevailing value of their lots and receive them in freehold or leasehold. If they did not make payment, they would be evicted.
- ⁷⁰ M. Newton, *Lower Town Ottawa*, p. 164.
- ⁷¹ In addition the Ordnance Dept. still had 140 lots occupied by squatters. NAC, W.O. 44, vol. 35, pp. 54-55. "A Schedule of Valuation of further Town Lots at Bytown".
- ⁷² Taylor, *Ottawa*, pp. 39-40, 66.
- ⁷³ Newton, "The Search for Heritage", pp. 32, 34-5.