

## Belleville and Environs Continuity, Change and the Integration of Town and Country During the 19th Century

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### Résumé de l'article

Si l'on a raison de faire référence au cadre économique, politique et social engendré par le développement du capitalisme pour expliquer l'absorption des économies semi-autarciques et des cultures locales dans des systèmes régionaux, nationaux et internationaux de plus en plus vastes au long du dix-neuvième siècle, on généralise à l'excès, sur le plan spatial, les concepts de modernisation et de métropolitisme. Certes, beaucoup de communautés rurales et de petites villes du Haut-Canada se sont intégrées sans retard à des systèmes de production plus étendus, mais elles ont conservé un rôle essentiel face aux besoins liés aux notions de continuité et de communauté. Les petits centres urbains frappés de stagnation ou de déclin durant la « Grande Transformation » n'étaient pas tous des métropoles en gestation; certains ont continué à vivre de leurs exportations de matières premières et de produits de base, et, à l'échelle régionale, se sont spécialisés dans le développement et la mise en marché de tels produits. L'étude de Belleville et de ses relations avec son hinterland montre l'utilité de l'approche contextuelle pour analyser les transformations amenées dans la société rurale par la marche du capitalisme industriel.

## ***Belleville and Environs:***

### ***Continuity, Change and the Integration of Town and Country During the 19th Century***

***Randy William Widdis***

#### **Abstract**

***This article suggests that while the economic, political and social context provided by the development of capitalism is the framework for the study of the absorption of semi-autarchic economies and local cultures into increasingly broader regional, national and international systems during the nineteenth century, the concepts of modernization and metropolitanism are spatially over-generalized. While it is true that rural communities and small towns in Upper Canada were integrated right from the beginning into these larger systems of production, they on their own played an essential role in satisfying the need for continuity and community, however defined. Smaller urban centres experiencing stagnation or decline during the period of the "Great Transformation" were not all incipient metropolises; some of these centres continued to depend on the export of staples and developed regional specialization in the development and marketing of these products. This examination of Belleville and its relationship with its hinterland supports the case for a contextual approach to the study of the transformation of rural society with the growth of industrial capitalism.***

#### **Résumé**

***Si l'on a raison de faire référence au cadre économique, politique et social engendré par le développement du capitalisme pour expliquer l'absorption des économies semi-autarciques et des cultures locales dans des systèmes régionaux, nationaux et internationaux de plus en plus vastes au long du dix-neuvième siècle, on généralise à l'excès, sur le plan***

The transformation of rural society with the growth of industrial capitalism has received considerable historical attention in the last few years. Many have focused on the developing primacy of the largest cities; the small town and the countryside have received far less attention. This paper has two aims: first, to critically review those approaches followed by scholars examining the integration of city and countryside; and second, to examine the changing relationship between a small urban centre, Belleville, and its hinterland, the Bay of Quinte region, during the 19th century (Figure 1).

#### ***Town and Country Relationships: Philosophies and Conceptual Debates***

Perhaps the major theme of study for 19th century North America is the absorption of semi-autarchic economies and local cultures into increasingly broader regional, national and international contexts. In their attempts to examine this process known interchangeably as "urbanization," "modernization" or "The Great Transformation," scholars have been concerned primarily with mobility, family structure and class relationships, particularly in the larger cities. While some studies, most notably the work of David Gagan, Donald Akenson and Bruce Elliott<sup>1</sup>, have shed light on the relationship between demographic, economic and social structures of rural populations and the institutional environments in which these populations evolved, much research into Canada's rural past continues to be dominated by perspectives which disregard the ways in which different levels of community responded and adjusted to change.

This brings into focus the problems researchers face in selecting the appropriate theory to frame such an investigation.

No theory or interpretation alone adequately explains the changing relationships between town and country during the 19th century but few researchers have freed themselves from the pervasive influence of modernization theory. In the United States, the debate has not centred on the validity of the modernization paradigm but rather has focused on the nature of the transition to capitalism in rural America. Kulikoff suggests that there are two sides in this discussion, one influenced by neoclassical economics and the other by British social history.<sup>2</sup> The former group, who Kulikoff calls the 'market historians',<sup>3</sup> "stress the impact of market forces on human behaviour and explain the spread of market processes through rural society" while the latter group, labelled 'social historians'<sup>4</sup>, seek "to uncover patterns of economic and social behaviour and to relate their behaviour to the social relations of production and to social and political consciousness."<sup>5</sup>

The market historians view early American farmers as pre-nascent capitalists while the social historians argue that "most exchange was for the immediate use of the farm household or its neighbours."<sup>6</sup> Yet, as Kulikoff rightly notes, the two sides are not that different as the controversy really boils down to "the degree of local self sufficiency and the extent of market exchange rather than the fact of exchange."<sup>7</sup>

Growing crops for changing markets certainly signalled changes in farm production but cannot be assumed to be indicative of fundamental changes in the nature of rural society. Farmers in North America experienced early capitalist development and participated in commodity markets almost from the beginning of settlement but at the same time

*spatial, les concepts de modernisation et de métropolitisme. Certes, beaucoup de communautés rurales et de petites villes du Haut-Canada se sont intégrées sans retard à des systèmes de production plus étendus, mais elles ont conservé un rôle essentiel face aux besoins liés aux notions de continuité et de communauté. Les petits centres urbains frappés de stagnation ou de déclin durant la «Grande Transformation» n'étaient pas tous de métropoles en gestation; certains ont continué à vivre de leurs exportations de matières premières et de produits de base, et, à l'échelle régionale, se sont spécialisé dans le développement et la mise en marché de tels produits. L'étude de Belleville et de ses relations avec son hinterland montre l'utilité de l'approche contextuelle pour analyser les transformations amenées dans la société rurale par la marche du capitalisme industriel.*

were fully involved in a system of non-commercial exchange between neighbours.

In Canada, historical debate has not centred so much on the degree and extent of market exchange but has instead focused on the relative merits of the staples thesis and metropolitanism theories of development. Modernization theory has been the central organizing frame for this discussion. The centre and margin dichotomy of Innis, the exploitation and dependency of Lower, the entrepreneurship of Creighton, and the metropolitanism of Careless all picture the countryside as a passive entity, shaped by urban centres at different levels of the hierarchy. This process of increasing domination is most clearly articulated in the metropolitanism theory of Careless.<sup>8</sup> Metropolitanism constructs a hierarchical dependency argument where both smaller centres and their hinterlands are viewed as peripheral. In this dependency relationship, the hinterland serves as a pool of labour, raw materials and capital exploited and controlled by the metropolitan core. Also implicit in this relationship is the assumption that the penetration of urban and market values and institutions combines with new inventions and means of communication (postal service, telegraph, telephone, automobile) to erode the local institutions and values of rural communities.

Both Careless and his followers<sup>9</sup> base much of their interpretations of metropolitanism on the four stage model of urban development created by the economist, N.S.B. Gras.<sup>10</sup> Briefly, Gras's stages include: 1) the creation of a marketing system for a city's territory with an establishment of warehouses, wholesaling and exchange facilities; 2) a period of manufacturing growth either in the city

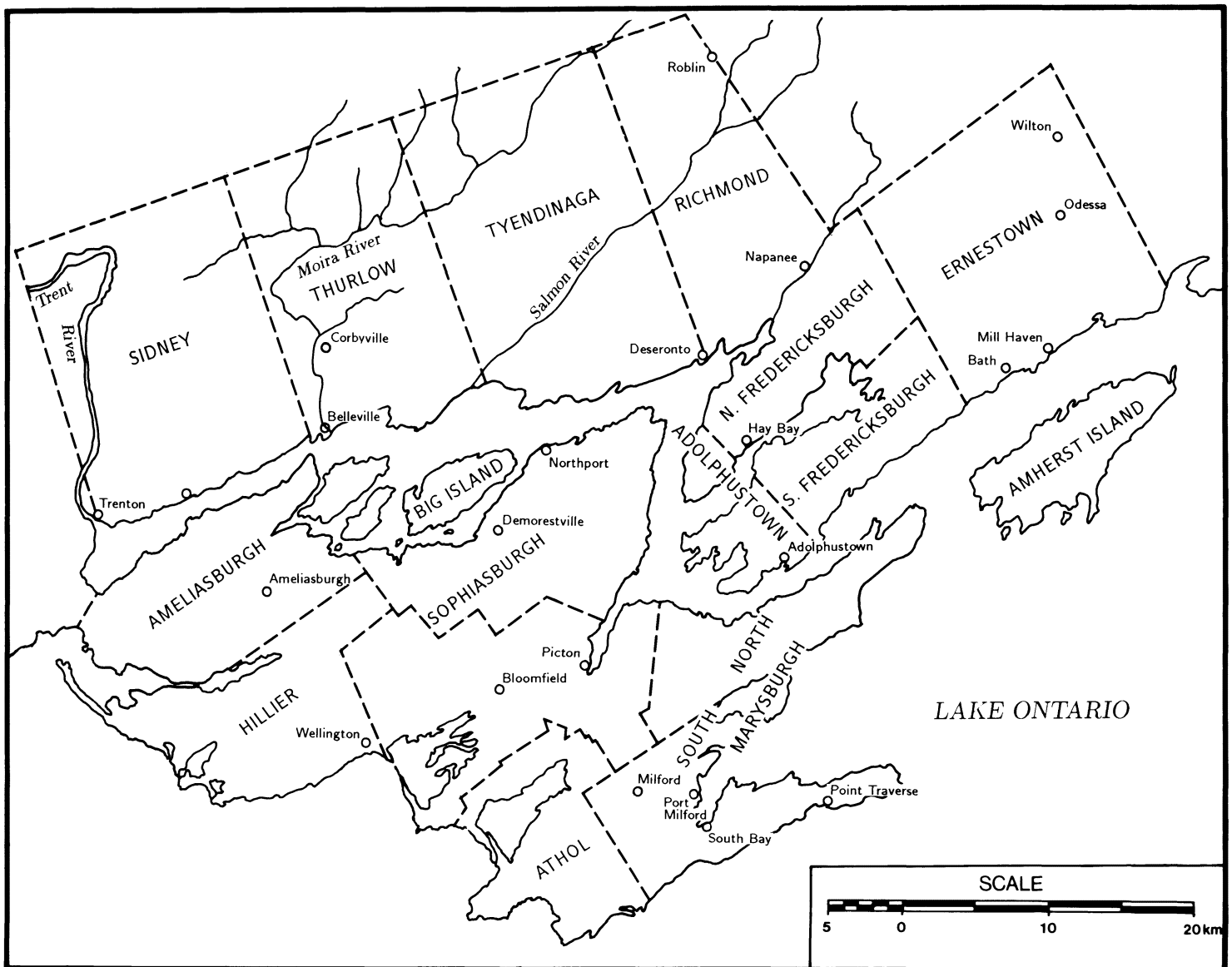
or the hinterland but directed by the former; 3) the improvement of the transport system to gain urban centres better access to their hinterlands and other urban places; and 4) the development of financial institutions to service both hinterland trade and the external world.<sup>11</sup>

Geographers have also examined the process of modernization, the most notable interpretation being the central place theory developed by Christaller<sup>12</sup> which ranks communities according to their abilities to support certain market threshold levels. Vance has criticized central place theory for its emphasis on internal forces and retail gravitation.<sup>13</sup> His 'mercantile model' suggests an exogenic system, whereby cities grow in relation to their long-distance ties as well as their particular linkages with surrounding hinterlands.

Recently, both historians and geographers have argued for the importance of the regional context for the study of urban history. Stelter contends that the concept of metropolitanism has served to illuminate the relationships between urban development and urbanization. Both he and Gaffield<sup>14</sup> argue for a regional approach to the study of urbanization with greater emphasis placed on city-hinterland relationships within regions.

The debate in Canada is largely the result of the criticisms directed towards the metropolitan viewpoint by Davis<sup>15</sup> who instead emphasizes the need to understand the evolution of places in their spatial context.<sup>16</sup> Davis challenges Stelter's view of 19th century cities as both independent and dependent entities, arguing that "metropolitan ambitions should be attributed not to cities but to the individuals to whom they properly

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belong."<sup>17</sup> Stelter responds to this by stating that Davis's interpretation "ignores the necessity of community context, for elites do not operate in a vacuum or from rural areas."<sup>18</sup>

Davis favours the heartland-hinterland approach, a modified version of dependency theory developed by geographers following the arguments of Innis. Such an approach, Davis reasons, recognizes that industrial manufacturing is not necessarily the major key to metropolitanism and realizes the importance of class relations, of change, and internal social structure. By emphasizing the importance of spatial context, Davis makes the point that metropolitanism abstracts simple processes from a more complex spatial system. In summary, researchers studying changes taking place in rural society during the period of the "Great Transformation" have for the most part adopted one of a number of different interpretations of the modernization perspective. Ideology certainly plays a major role in how scholars view this process. Those who see modernization in a favourable light view it as a progressive process whereby traditional rural communities give way to a new urban-industrial society, involving development of a more centralized political and social control; social mobilization; the transformation of social relationships; commercial and industrial development; and improvements in transportation and communications which place both country and city into a growing inter-regional network of activities. Those who adopt the Marxist perspective, on the other hand, portray modernization as a process whereby people come to exist for production rather than creating a society where production exists for people. Within Canada, rural areas are seen to have become increasingly dependent on the metropolis, or core, from which

economic, political and socio-cultural decisions effectively subjugated the countryside. In this dependency relationship, the rural hinterland was developed/exploited by both internal (Montreal, Toronto) and external (London, New York) metropolitan centres.

Although both the Marxist and modernization perspectives differ, particularly with regards to the benefits of industrial capitalism, they share a similar feature. Both views assume that social change in rural areas paralleled urban and industrial trends. But can we assume that characteristics of urban society, traits primarily associated with large cities, provide satisfactory models for understanding both rural life and change in rural society?

Rural historians in the United States are now seeking to unravel the complex transformations of rural society free of metropolitan bias. This research has questioned the organizational principles of metropolitan dominance and central place theory subsumed within the modernization perspective.<sup>19</sup> How well do they explain the changing relationships taking place in rural society during the 19th century? While the economic, political and social context provided by the development of capitalism is the framework for the study of both rural and urban society, the precise ways in which these exogenous forces affected individuals or local social groups also depend on a number of local features. Central place theory and metropolitanism tend to mask regional and local variations. We need to focus on the processes of human interaction between town and country and the experiences of people in both settings.

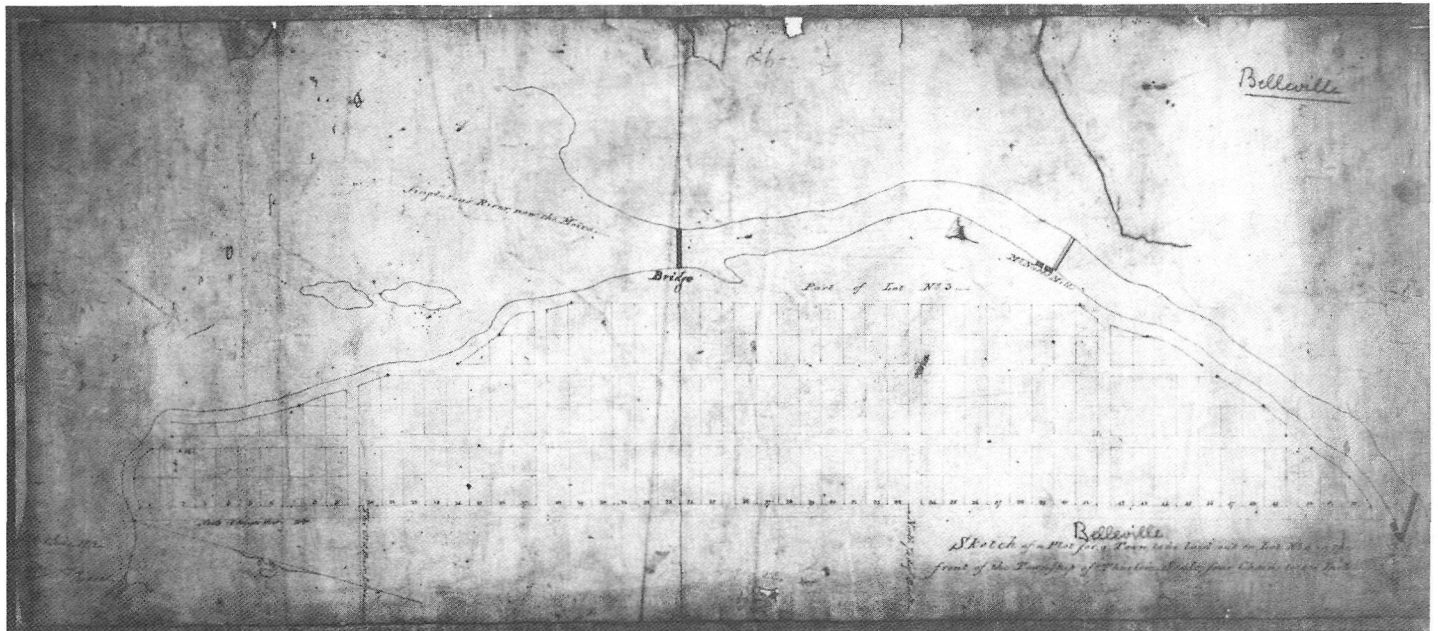
The question of scale is crucial in the study of metropolitan forces. Few stu-

dents have freed themselves from the pervasive influence of modernization theory. As soon as the process is seen as contextual, instead of being assumed to have a standard mold as described in the literature, it becomes possible to view the varied forms of the transformation in a new light. This perspective accepts the fact that there were many different rural-urban experiences in 19th century North America as there were significant differences between regions in terms of settlement patterns, staple resources, government policies, physical features, tenure arrangements, ethnicity and diffusion of metropolitan forces. Such a perspective does not equate change in the nature of farming and the appearance of non-farm activities in rural communities with "the end of ruralness."<sup>20</sup>

Modernization and metropolitanism are spatially "over-generalized." Conzen questions the stereotypical view of metropolitanism when he states:

Much of the concern has been with large cities, because in them new trends emerge earliest or with greatest impact because of their size. But there are valid questions to pose about urban thresholds for any and all urban phenomenon: did urban traits diffuse regionally by proximal visitation as it were, or rather hierarchically, because towns reached a size when a characteristic would naturally emerge? Was the small town in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America merely an incipient metropolis, or was it a distinct type needing, in view of stunted or stagnant growth history, its own analysis.<sup>21</sup>

While it is true that rural communities and small towns were integrated right from the beginning into larger regional, nation-



al and international systems of production, they on their own played an essential role in satisfying the need for community, however defined.<sup>22</sup> Residents of small communities needed the cooperation and business of the surrounding farm population in order to survive. A smaller population pool ensured more ties of friendship and kinship and encouraged a sense of community and, perhaps in some cases, a regional identity. Indigenous capital development, not originating from the larger metropolis, also played a role in changing relationships between different groups in the countryside.<sup>23</sup>

This contextual view of the transformation process has shaped my research on the Bay of Quinte region during the 19th century and, in particular, my investigation of changing relationships between Belleville, the largest urban centre, and its immediate hinterland. Belleville developed as a rural service centre functioning as a central place which processed and traded products from its local hinterland and distributed incoming finished products to the same hinterland. It continued to serve primarily as a distribution centre throughout the century despite its increasing size, a greater diversity of functions, and its efforts to attract industrial development. Eventually the city was left behind by others in the drive to industrialize. The story of Belleville is unique and yet the experience of this urban centre is representative of many other Canadian towns undergoing stagnation and decline in the late 19th century. And so the remainder of this paper addresses the last question asked by Conzen and examines the character of interactions between Belleville and the surrounding countryside as the fortune of the town and region changed.

### ***The Pioneer Period: 1784–1840***

The Bay of Quinte region was among the first to be settled in Ontario with the United Empire Loyalists and their families establishing an agrarian-based society along the Bay and the St Lawrence River. A frontier elite developed quickly and succeeded in establishing social control. It was a landed, military-based group supported by extensive grants of land awarded to them as loyalists and soldiers.<sup>24</sup> From this base, certain members extended their operations into mercantile activity and staple exploitation. Government grants also resulted in rapid settlement. In Hastings County, much of the land in the first six concessions of Thurlow was taken up by 1800. Thurlow received its first settlers in 1789 when some 50 people crossed over from Prince Edward County to settle, most in the neighbourhood of Foxboro.<sup>25</sup> The more attractive lands in Sidney were also being occupied although the steep hills in the rear of the township deterred settlement and made access to the front difficult. Tyendinaga was still controlled by the Mohawk Indians and remained so until 1819 when the first four concessions were surrendered to the government. The remaining portion of the township was sold by the government on behalf of the Indians in 1840.<sup>26</sup>

By 1790, the days of scarcity were over for Quinte farmers. In 1791, the Midland District was producing more wheat than it consumed and surplus was sold at the Kingston market. In fact, farmers of Sidney and Thurlow by 1793 had enough pork to spare to furnish the military garrison at Kingston with a surplus of 480 barrels.<sup>27</sup> While a ready market existed at Kingston, Quinte farmers were hampered by the lack of roads to that centre. Produce was transported by

bateaux to Kingston but westerly winds slowed the trip back home.

Improving transportation would prove to be the key to development of the Quinte region. By 1800 Dundas Street had been opened from York to the Bay of Quinte but this road crossed the isthmus to Prince Edward and the bay by ferry to Adolphustown so that inhabitants of Sidney and Thurlow were left to provide roads for themselves. The Danforth Road, opened by statute labour between Kingston and York (Toronto) by the end of the first decade of the 19th century, connected Sidney and Thurlow with the colony's two largest markets, but this was a dirt road that was largely impassable for long periods of the year. Thus for reasons of geography, Hastings County farmers did not have ready access to markets for their produce. In fact, pioneers had to travel to Napanee in order to have their grain milled, a distance of some 30 miles from the mouth of the Moira River, the location of what was to become the site of Hasting's primary settlement, Belleville.<sup>28</sup>

While pioneers in Sidney and Thurlow were disadvantaged in terms of accessibility to market, they were not entirely dependent on markets for disposal of produce. Farms still produced most of what was required for the family and farm in terms of food, clothing, tools, harnesses and furniture. Yet conditions were ripe for the development of mercantile activity to serve the growing population, augmented by the so-called "late loyalists", American settlers who were attracted by the 200 acre grants awarded by Lt. Governor Simcoe in his 1792 Proclamation, and the influx of British immigrants after the War of 1812. The loyalists, "late loyalists" and British migrants that settled the region had experienced early capitalist development in

their former homes. In America, loyalists and "late loyalists" for the most part had been petty producers who grew much of their own food but also participated in local and regional commercial markets. A commercial orientation existed among the pioneer population in the Quinte region, an inclination which was to be exploited by those who took advantage of large landholdings and speculative practices to develop a regional market and create new centres of commerce.

Three such individuals were Captain John Walden Meyers and James and Simon McNabb, the most important players in the early development of Belleville. The first settler of what was to become the city of Belleville was Asa Wallbridge who built a log cabin on the banks of the Moira River in the early 1780s. But the first business at this site was the log trading post established by Captain George Singleton, a Loyalist from Fredericksburg Township.<sup>29</sup> In 1789, Singleton sold his land to John Taylor who the following year sold part of his parcel to Captain John Walden Meyers, a loyalist from Albany, New York. With his son, Meyers erected a dam on the river and built Thurlow's first industries, a lumber and grist mill, providing Hastings farmers with an alternative to the long trip to Napanee or Kingston. Meyers expanded his trade business and began to export flour, grain, lumber, potash and other items to Kingston and Montreal in bateaux and Durham boats. He also built a distillery and erected an inn and a small settlement, known interchangeably as Thurlow Village and Meyer's Creek, began to grow.

In 1800, the McNabb brothers moved from York (Toronto) to Thurlow and soon established links with such leading Kingston merchants as Richard Cartwright and Donald McDonnell. In

1802, James and Simon built a dam near Meyer's mills and in 1804 built their own saw and grist mill and a cloth factory. The brothers shipped flour, potash and other Hastings produce to their Kingston partners who forwarded these items overseas to Britain. With such assistance, they were soon involved in a fierce competition with Captain Meyers. In 1811, James dissolved his partnership with Simon and devoted his efforts to politics. In 1816, he organized a petition to make Thurlow a town site. Later that year, the settlement was surveyed by Samuel Wilmot (Figure 2) and was renamed Belleville after Mrs. Anna Bella Gore, wife of Lt Governor Francis Gore.<sup>30</sup>

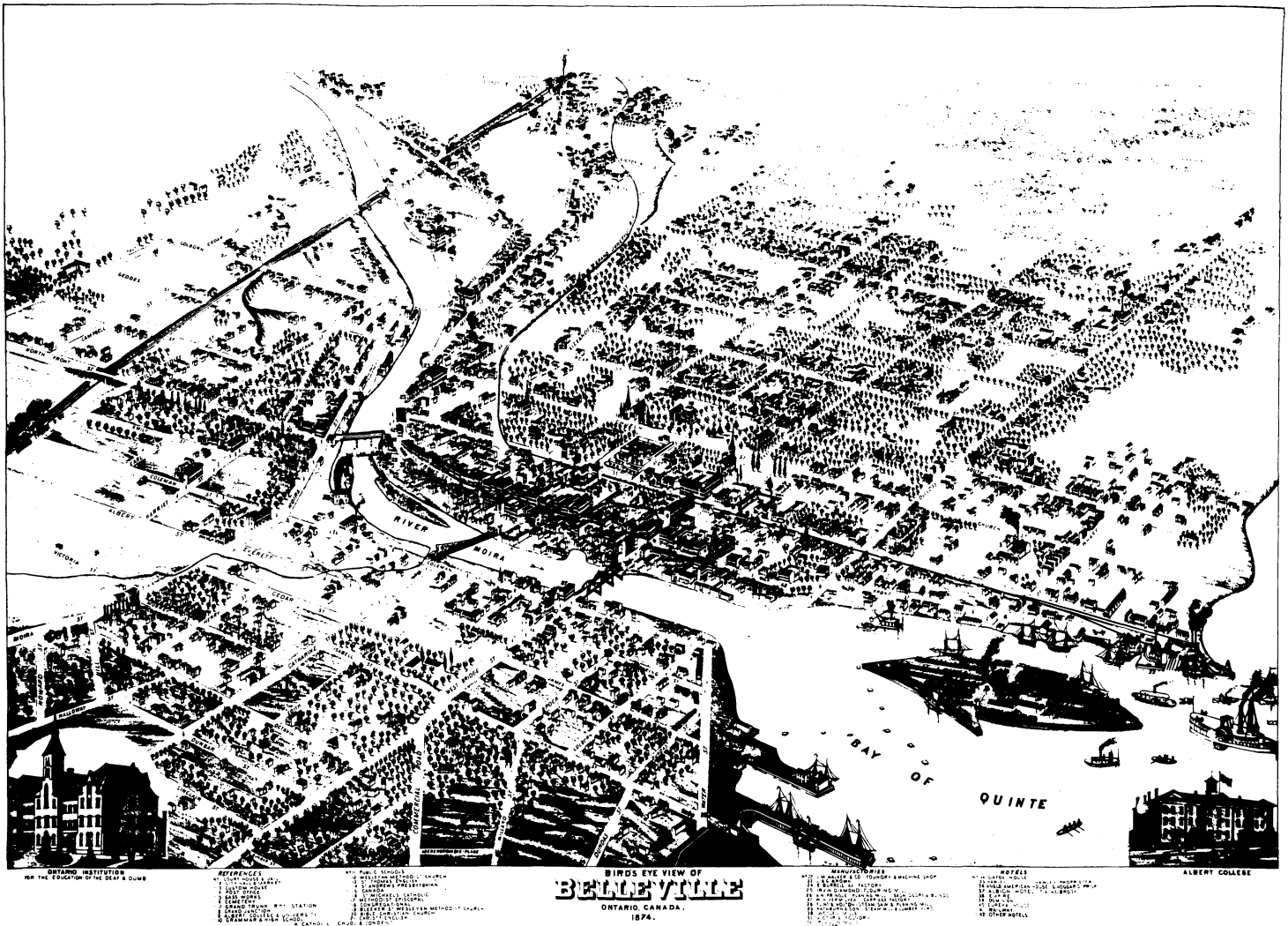
Belleville became the major market for Thurlow, Sidney and Prince Edward County farmers, the latter crossing the bay by ferry. Early merchants such as Captain Meyers and William Bell made great profits because they controlled the movement and pricing of provisions and the export of agricultural produce. They bought grain from Hastings farmers, milled it into flour and then sold it at a high profit to the military at Kingston. By 1812, two grist mills had been built above Belleville on the Moira, Reed's at Corbyville and Canniff's at Cannifton.<sup>31</sup> While these villages could provide some of the services and markets which hitherto had been located at Kingston and then Belleville, they were never able to compete with the lakeshore communities. Because of its central position on the Bay of Quinte and its situation at the mouth of the Moira River, Belleville was ensured of a growing primacy in the region. The key to growth was the development of a transportation system that would link Belleville and its surrounding hinterland with regional, national and international markets.

The whole Quinte region was disadvantaged during the pioneer period as travellers and merchants preferred to sail directly from York to Kingston, bypassing the bay and avoiding the slow and often difficult passage via the Dundas and Danforth roads. However, a significant event in the history of Belleville and the Quinte region took place in 1818 when the steamer "Queen Charlotte" sailed from Kingston up the Bay of Quinte and down the St. Lawrence as far as Prescott. Within five years, five steamships sailed the bay and gradually the Durham boat and the bateaux disappeared. The coming of the steamships increased the importance of Belleville as a port and market town and made it easier to export the produce of its hinterland. By 1830, William Weller's stage coaches from York (Toronto) were connecting with Bay of Quinte steamers at Carrying Place and this became the common way of travelling in the summer. And so transportation links gradually improved but only with the arrival of the Grand Trunk in the 1850s did Belleville citizens feel that their community could break out of their perceived position as a backwater settlement.

After the War of 1812, the pace of British immigration to Upper Canada increased and a considerable number found their way to the Quinte region. One hundred and fifty four landowners held land in Thurlow Township in 1820, the average holding being 256.4 acres.<sup>32</sup> The 1818 response of Thurlow residents to Robert Gourlay's questionnaire identified a lack of a yeoman population and insufficient money invested in agriculture as the major factors retarding development. Land was the major source of capital in money scarce Upper Canada and farmers often borrowed to finance their farm's expansion, their major source at this time being the local store.<sup>33</sup> Yet even



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Hastings County Historical Society  
Belleville, Ontario, Canada

as late as 1839, not one store existed in the township outside of Belleville.<sup>34</sup> According to William Hutton, an Irish farmer settling in Sidney Township in 1834, farmers could not always get cash for their produce in Belleville. In a letter written to his brother-in-law and dated June 25, 1834, Hutton complained: "You are occasionally obliged to take groceries or other goods out of the store, if you require them, and credit the merchant until the article is forwarded."<sup>35</sup>

Such shortages were to be expected in a community with a population of only 700 in 1829.<sup>36</sup> Yet new migrants would breathe life into the little village and consolidate its position as one of the most important urban centres in the young province. In 1827, Henry Baldwin, an English emigrant, constructed a wharf on the east side of the Moira's mouth and began to operate a steamship service between Belleville, Kingston and Prescott, stimulating trade and the export of flour, wheat, potash, staves and lumber.<sup>37</sup> Two years later, Billa Flint arrived and erected Belleville's first steam saw mill.<sup>38</sup>

By the 1840s, Belleville had become a booming lumber centre and it was the development of this staple, rather than wheat, that would play the most important role in the future prosperity of the community. Lumbering actually began as early as 1804 in Thurlow. It was especially attractive to farmers wishing to supplement their income in the winter months. But there was little effort to develop the industry beyond the local level as markets were distant and transportation was difficult. The Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812, however, created a demand for Canadian timber for ship building.

In the early 1820s, timber on public land was legally opened for anyone who paid a fixed scale of fees. Prior to this, timber

had been reserved for the Royal Navy and could only be cut after obtaining a licence. The new system spurred the lumber industry, providing full time employment for lumbermen and part time employment for farmers.<sup>39</sup> By 1839 there were eight saw mills in Thurlow as opposed to only four grist mills.<sup>40</sup>

Wheat would never dominate in the Quinte region although it certainly played a major role in the development of the local economy. While the local wheat economy was stimulated after Britain granted colonial preferences to Canadian wheat in 1822, Quinte farmers never specialized in wheat to the point where they excluded other crops. In the aforementioned 1834 letter written by William Hutton to his brother-in-law, the former speaks enthusiastically about the regional market:

The market of Belleville (which town contains about 1,000 inhabitants) is a good one; prices of grain being rather better, and that of other things nearly the same as Toronto. Besides having a home [Quinte] consumption of beef and mutton, and butter and milk, we have Kingston market within reach, where there are 4,800 inhabitants, and a good meat market.<sup>41</sup>

Belleville grew steadily, if not spectacularly, during the 1830s and 1840s, reaching a population of 1,800 in 1835, and 1,926 by 1844.<sup>42</sup> Yet the population would more than double by 1850 (4000), reflecting the impetus given the community by an expanding lumber industry and the imminent arrival of the Grand Trunk Railroad. It was these two developments that allowed Belleville to extend its hinterland and solidify its role as the major urban centre along the bay.

Belleville At Mid-Century: 1840–1880  
(Figure 3)

That noted observer of Upper Canadian society, Susanna Moodie, was generally quite impressed with the Quinte region at mid-century although she felt that the area suffered from its geographical isolation:

By a simple inspection of the map of Upper Canada, it will be seen, that as the Bay of Quinte was out of the general route of the steamers, and too near the lower end of the lake navigation, it did not suit the views of the parties most interested to direct emigration to its shores. Thus the beautiful Bay of Quinte, with the most fertile land on its shores, and scenery which exceeds in variety and picturesque beauty that of any part of Upper Canada, Hamilton and Niagara alone excepted, has been passed for years for situations much less desirable or attractive to European settlers.<sup>43</sup>

The lack of accessibility was deemed by many observers to be the major hindrance to development of the region and so Quinteans placed considerable importance on the building of the Grand Trunk Railway in opening markets for the region and furthering development of the hinterland. The immediate townships surrounding Belleville were largely dependent on agriculture while forest exploitation was dominant in the rear townships of Hastings and Lennox and Addington. Belleville was well situated to be the major port for the export of these products and thus experienced significant growth during the mid-century period (Table 1).

Wheat production suffered when wheat midge struck the region in 1849 but by this time farmers were already diversify-

**TABLE 1:**  
**Changing Populations in the Bay of Quinte Region 1824–1901\***

Census Divisions and Subdivisions	Population In:									Change Over Periods (%)							
	1824	1830	1839	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1824– 1830	1830– 1839	1839– 1851	1851– 1861	1861– 1871	1871– 1881	1881– 1891	1891– 1901
LENNOX AND ADDINGTON	7202	8104	9341	14353	16120	16396	16314	14900	13421	12.5	15.3	53.7	12.3	1.7	–0.5	–8.7	–9.9
Adolphustown	610	659	671	718	801	756	737	720	544	8.0	1.6	7.0	11.6	–5.6	–2.5	–2.3	–24.4
Amherst Island	253	391	804	1287	1270	1189	1089	938	821	54.5	105.6	60.1	–1.3	–6.4	–8.4	–13.9	9612.5
Ernestown <sup>a</sup>	3063	3370	3445	5111	5450	4233	3961	3597	3317	10.0	2.2	48.4	6.6	–22.3	–6.5	–9.2	–7.8
Fredericksburg, N.						1722	1720	1659	1523						–0.1	–3.5	–8.2
Fredericksburg, S.	2434	2408	2585	3166	3376	1497	1340	1125	1103	–1.1	7.4	22.5	6.6	–4.6 <sup>b</sup>	–10.5	–16.0	–2.0
Richmond <sup>c</sup>	842	1276	1836	4071	3450	3431	3241	2888	2563	51.5	43.9	121.7	–15.3	–0.6	–5.5	–10.6	–11.6
Napanee	–	–	–	–	1773	2967	3680	3433	3143	–	–	–	–	67.3	24.0	–6.7	–8.4
Bath	–	–	–	–	–	601	546	530	407	–	–	–	–	–	–9.2	–2.9	–23.2
PRINCE EDWARD	8132	9794	14018	18887	20869	20366	21044	18889	17864	20.4	43.1	34.7	10.5	–2.4	3.3	–10.2	–5.4
Ameliasburg	1380	1642	2342	3286	3487	3304	3451	3079	2585	17.0	42.6	40.3	6.1	–5.2	4.4	–10.8	–16.0
Athol <sup>d</sup>	–	–	–	1621	1823	1740	1573	1204	1187	–	–	–	12.5	–4.6	–9.6	–18.4	–7.6
Hallowell	2637	3182	3545	3203	3629	3554	3704	3380	2924	20.7	11.4	–9.6	13.3	–2.1	4.2	–8.7	–13.5
Hillier <sup>e</sup>	976	1450	2120	2963	3153	2224	2192	1890	1647	46.6	46.2	39.8	6.4	–29.5	–1.4	–13.8	–12.9
Marysburg, N.						1794	1700	1430	1213						5.5	–15.9	–15.2
Marysburg, S.	1343	1468	2396	3512	3852	2140	2205	1643	1342	9.3	63.2	46.6	9.7	2.1 <sup>f</sup>	3.1	–25.5	–18.3
Sophiasburg	1796	2052	2604	2734	2857	2702	2646	2341	2095	14.3	26.9	5.0	4.5	–3.4	–2.1	–11.5	–10.5
Pictou	–	–	1011	1569	2067	2361	2975	3237	2698	–	–	55.2	31.7	14.2	26.0	10.5	12.5
Bloomfield	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	521	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Wellington	–	–	–	–	–	517	598	555	652	–	–	–	–	–	15.7	–7.2	16.6
HASTINGS	3844	4962	8925	19812	25433	27124	30154	32254	30252	29.0	79.9	122.0	28.4	6.6	11.2	7.0	–6.2
Sidney	1730	2145	3192	4574	5082	5264	4842	4685	4430	24.0	46.8	43.3	11.1	3.6	–8.0	–3.2	–5.3
Thurlow	1762	2444	3746	4469	4864	5186	4922	4817	4210	38.7	53.3	19.3	8.8	6.6	–5.1	–2.1	–12.6
Tyendinaga <sup>g</sup>	352	373	1987	6200	7812	7573	7832	5135	4743	6.0	432.7	212.0	26.0	–3.1	3.4	–34.4	–7.6
Belleville	–	–	–	4569	6277	7305	9516	9916	9117	–	–	–	37.4	16.4	30.3	4.2	–8.1
Deseronto	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3338	3527	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	5.7
Trenton <sup>h</sup>	–	–	–	–	1398	1796	3042	4363	4217	–	–	–	–	28.5	69.4	43.4	–3.3
REGION	19178	22860	32234	53052	62422	63886	67512	66043	61537	19.2	41.2	64.3	17.7	2.3	5.7	–2.2	–6.8

\* Changing census boundaries account for some of the notable population changes. (a) Bath was included as part of Ernestown until 1871. (b) This population change figure includes both North and South Fredericksburg in 1871. (c) Napanee was part of Richmond until 1861. (d) Athol was part of Hallowell until 1840. (e) Wellington was part of Hillier until 1871. (f) The population change figure includes both North and South Marysburg in 1871. (g) Deseronto was part of Tyendinaga until 1891. (h) Before it was incorporated in 1852, most of Trenton lay in Murray Township, Northumberland County.

Sources: Upper Canada House of Assembly, Journal, 4th Session, 9th Parliament, 1828. Appendix, Population of Midland District, 1824; Upper Canada House of Assembly, Journal, 1st Session, 11th Parliament, 1831. Appendix, Population Returns for Midland District, 1830; Upper Canada House of Assembly, Journal, 5th Session, 13th Parliament, 1839. Appendix, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, Population Returns for Midland District, 1839; Census of Canada, 1851, Vol. 1, Table 1, 4–25; Census of Canada, 1861, Vol. 1, Table 2, 58–71; Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. II, Table 12, 61–77.

ing.<sup>44</sup> The Bay of Quinte area emerged as a leading cheese producer by 1850 partly on account of the failure of the wheat crop but also because of the migration of Americans from nearby upstate New York who were familiar with the process of cheese making. However, it was not until 1866 that the first cheese factory in the Belleville District, the "Front of Sidney," was built. It was organized along the lines of the so-called "American" system whereby a number of farmers united in a syndicate, chose a board of directors, and appointed one of their members to act as a manager who in turn provided a building and equipment and hired a cheese maker in return for a commission, usually two cents a pound, on all the cheese produced. The rest of the proceeds were then divided among the patrons in proportion to their supply of milk.<sup>45</sup> Thus, indigenous capital development, largely in response to a growing urban market but developing from within the region, resulted in the creation of a viable rural industry in the region. Small scale capitalist development in the form of cheese production depended upon dairy farmers who sold them their milk. Ironically, as we shall see, the cheese industry would become important in Belleville later in the century as the dreams of attracting large scale heavy industry gradually would fade.

Rye production was also important in the region at mid-century. About 85 percent of the rye grown in the province in 1850 was produced in the region, chiefly because of a large distillery in Kingston.<sup>46</sup> Dairying on a commercial basis did not develop in the province until after mid-century but Quinte emerged as one of the leading dairy areas. As mentioned, wheat continued to be important despite problems of soil exhaustion, wheat midge and the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. A greater demand for Canadian

wheat and other products followed the Crimean War (1854-56) and the negotiation of the Elgin Reciprocity Treaty with the United States in 1854.<sup>47</sup> Canadian wheat found new markets in the U. S. and the American Civil War served to boost Ontario agriculture. Wool, beef, cheese and mutton were needed to feed and clothe the northern troops.<sup>48</sup> But it was another development in America, the tax placed on whiskey which had the effect of increasing beer consumption in the northern states during the war years, that resulted in barley becoming one of Ontario's principal exports. By the mid 1880s, barley had replaced wheat as the major cash crop in Ontario but this overthrow of "King Wheat" had taken place much earlier in the Quinte region. Much of the region's barley was shipped across the lake to Oswego and then sent to large American breweries. Hastings and Prince Edward became well known for the quality of their barley.

Yet it was the forest industry that proved to be more valuable to the region in terms of export value. In 1851, almost 15 million feet of sawed lumber was exported from Belleville and Trent Port (later renamed Trenton) to the American market bringing in over \$29,000 and providing employment for hundreds. It was the lumber industry that stimulated development not only in Belleville but in other towns throughout the region (Trenton, Deseronto). By 1856, there were almost 60 water mills on the Moira, about 35 being saw mills, and many other mills on the Salmon and Trent.<sup>49</sup> Steam mills gradually replaced water mills making it possible for some industries to locate away from the principal waterways.

In 1846, Belleville had four flour mills, four grist mills, one iron foundry, two carding and cloth dressing mills and three tanneries.<sup>50</sup> Fourteen years later,

Belleville's industries included: three agricultural implements factories, two axe and edge tool factories, two distilleries, seven carriage makers, four flour mills, five iron founders, five lumber companies, and three saw mills. The two largest employers were Flint and Yeoman's and Bogart's, both lumber companies. The former employed 90 men and operated between 90 and 100 saws, capable of manufacturing 75,000-100,000 feet of lumber every day while the latter firm employed over 50 men.<sup>51</sup>

Belleville was not alone in its dependence on the lumber industry. Lumber companies and saw mills were the dominant employers in most communities, large and small, throughout the region. Almost 66 percent of the total value of exports shipped from Belleville to the United States during the year ending September 20, 1872 were lumber products (Table 2). Lumber itself made up almost 60 percent of this total followed by barley (24.7%).

While Belleville had the largest saw mills west of Ottawa in the 1860s and was full of optimism for the future, it relied on an industry which was soon to decrease greatly in importance. The preferred stands of pine and oak were overcut and companies had to proceed farther north. It became increasingly obvious to Belleville residents that in order for the town to tap the major resource of its hinterland and to increase its importance as a central place in the Toronto-Montreal corridor, railroads would have to be built. The Grand Trunk linked Belleville and the Quinte region with major cities east and west and provided employment for many of its residents but it was felt that the key to the city's future was the building of a line to the north that would not only tap the products of the forest but develop the iron ore mines at Marmora and provide

**TABLE 2:**  
**Exports from Belleville to the United States**  
**During Year Ending September 20, 1872**

Product	Amount	Value(\$)	
Lumber	59,169,527 ft.	538,380.05	(59.29%)
Lathes	9,858,300 pieces	10,837.20	
Pickets	224,565 pieces	1,210.22	
Heading	1,315,900 pieces	2,354.75	
Staves	1,284,800 pieces	4,321.80	
Railroad Ties	111,894 pieces	22,378.80	
Shingle Bolts	3,082 cords	11,508.25	
Posts	1,433 cords	2,996.00	
Square Timber	11,730 ft.	1,173.10	
Floats	18,912 ft.	1,323.91	
<b>Total All Lumber Products</b>		<b>596,484.08</b>	
Horses	48	6,156.00	
Cattle	78	1,423.16	
Sheep	4,325	10,865.27	
Barley	234,342 bus	224,547.12	(24.73%)
Rye	29,262 bus	20,801.15	
Peas	26,184 bus	18,219.41	
Buckwheat	875 bus	667.19	
Eggs	2,184 doz	270.94	
Skins	8,949	6735.62	
Scrap Iron	339,000 lbs.	4,935.00	
Household Effects		13,355.50	
Miscellaneous		2,393.85	
<b>Total</b>		<b>908,009.40</b>	

Source: Report from the American Consul in Belleville Regarding Exports from Belleville to the United States, Belleville Intelligencer, Friday, October 11, 1872, p. 4.

Belleville with a direct connection to the Canadian west. One of the earliest smelters in Upper Canada was opened at Marmora in 1821 but it was small in scale and hampered by poor transportation connections. The distance from the ore deposits in Madoc and Marmora was only 33 miles but it took a wagon carrying ore 24 hours to make the trip from Marmora to Belleville in 1850. The same trip by train would only take four hours and the cost would be reduced from 9p per ton mile to a fraction more than 1p per ton mile.<sup>52</sup>

The Grand Junction Railway, incorporated by the Grand Trunk Railway in 1852, was to be built as a loop line from Belleville via Peterborough to Toronto. It was hoped that the line would haul lumber, carry western grain, and help develop minerals in northern Hastings ensuring terminal status and growth for Belleville.<sup>53</sup> Belleville was envisioned as the Lake Ontario outlet for the Hudson River-Erie Canal system and with railroad development would become the major import-export node in the system as it extended farther into the continent and the Canadian hinterland. The project was never carried out by the Grand Trunk which faced severe financial difficulties during the decade and in 1870 the charter was surrendered to a group of Belleville businessmen, including Billa Flint, D.D. Bogart and Henry Corby. These three individuals, all involved in the processing of the region's staples, the first two producing lumber products and the latter distilling whiskey and milling flour, felt that a line to the interior was vital to the future growth of the town. Flint expressed his hopes in a letter written to the editor of the Belleville Intelligencer dated May 3, 1872:

If 3 1/2 feet gauge is going to bring to Toronto \$500,000 of lumber and

produce for shipment in one year [via the Toronto and Nipissing Railway], what will a 4 foot 8 1/2 inch or 5 foot 6 inch gauge do for Belleville, the best shipping point for lumber and produce along the whole line of Lake Ontario?<sup>54</sup>

Flint and his colleagues were obviously worried about the future of their town despite two decades of prosperity. An examination of Belleville's relative industrial standing for 1870, afforded by the industrial manuscript census data collected by Bloomfield et al,<sup>55</sup> reveals that these men had good reason to worry. The 1870 schedules on industrial establishments contain information on all non-domestic manufacturing activity, including names of proprietors, statement of type of establishment and nature of product, value of fixed capital and of floating capital, number of working months in the year, average numbers employed, motive power other than manual with nominal force stated in units of horse power; quantities and values of specified raw materials; and quantities and values of manufacturing products. Bloomfield et al published summary tables of industrial data by value of production and numbers employed which clearly show a great diversity among Ontario urban centres in terms of industrial growth. Belleville, the eighth largest city in the province in 1870 with a population of 7,305, was compared to the other 145 communities and ranked according to various criteria (Table 3). The analysis shows that Belleville was not undergoing the same degree of industrial expansion that other centres of comparable and smaller size were experiencing. The largest employers in 1870 were the H.B. Rathbun saw and flour mill, Flint and Yeoman's steam saw mill, and G. and J. Brown's iron foundry, employing 90, 45 and 45 respectively.<sup>56</sup> Not one of these industries ranked in the

top 52 firms in terms of numbers employed although Flint and Yeoman's did rank 40th in amount of water and steam power used.<sup>57</sup>

In 1850, manufacturing accounted for 18 percent of the total Gross National Product of Canada but over 50 percent of this consisted of the products of saw and grist mills. While the percentage of the total GNP accounted for by manufacturing was not that different in 1870, saw and grist mill products were down to about 1/3 of the total while larger scale iron and steel plants and textile industries were more in evidence.<sup>58</sup> The directors of the proposed Grand Junction Railway were convinced that rail lines to the interior were the only means by which the city could industrialize and

reduce its dependence on processing of timber and agricultural products. But they faced opposition as evidenced in an unsigned letter written to the editor of the *Intelligencer* and dated November 22, 1872 which accused the directors of building the feeder line to fulfill their "desire of ruining this town".<sup>59</sup> Opposition was further strengthened upon the completion of the 1875 investigation of the town's financial affairs which was in response to the shortage in the treasury discovered under the tenure of Robert Perry Davy as treasurer. The investigation made public that the three largest financial investments were the Belleville and North Hastings Railway, another scheme proposed by the directors of the Grand Junction; the \$100,000 bonus given to the Grand Junction Railway, with

**TABLE 3:**  
**1879 Industrial Rankings for Belleville<sup>1</sup>**

Criteria	Belleville		Ontario Average
	Data	Ranking	
1) Industrial Employees as a Percentage of Total Population	12.51%	61	13.91%
2) Capital per Establishment	\$2803.63	49	\$3333.94
3) Average Wage per Employee	\$ 233.86	83	\$ 271.51
4) Average Value of Product per Establishment	\$7945.74	57	\$10685.09
5) Wages as a Percentage of Total Production	26.37	27	19.89
6) Average Number of Employees per Establishment	8.96	23	7.83

<sup>1</sup> Bloomfield et al. (1986:51-55)

payment due in 1890; and \$50,000 awarded to the Grand Trunk Railway for construction of workshops, half delivered and the other half due upon completion.<sup>60</sup>

Despite the controversy, the Grand Junction line connecting Belleville and Peterborough was finished in 1879 and the following year, the Belleville and North Hastings Railway was completed connecting Madoc Junction near Stirling to Madoc and Eldorado.<sup>61</sup> The Belleville *Intelligencer* editorial of January 20, 1880, commenting on the completion of the GJR to Omeemee and the connection of Belleville to the Midland Railway, enthusiastically claimed that this enterprise "would open the shortest route between Belleville and all points east, and the northwest, and thereby prove of great advantage not only to the locality but to the largest part of the province."<sup>62</sup> The same editorial also called for the swift completion of the North Hastings line, finished later that year, as it would help increase the development of the Marmora iron mines and extend the hinterland of Belleville's merchants:

As every ton of iron ore shipped hence will benefit the city; as every man employed in the mines and on the railways will to some extent increase the trade of our merchants, it is clearly to the interest of the ratepayers that the line [Belleville and North Hastings] should be extended. Further it will open up to unrestricted trade with the city a fine agricultural region in the northern townships, the inhabitants of which now have to find a market elsewhere . . .<sup>63</sup>

And so the citizens of Belleville pinned their hopes on the railways which were to open up the city's hinterland to industry and trade and secure the city's vital position in the grain route from Georgian Bay

to the Atlantic. But even while the hopes of some remained high, others, including one of the city's longest residents and most prominent businessman, Billa Flint, were becoming more frustrated by the lack of development taking place. Flint, who had long been involved in the lumber business with his partner Horace Yeomans, realized that if the city was to grow and prosper in the face of a declining forest industry and a world recession, it would have to use the resources of its immediate hinterland and the accessibility to these resources afforded by the newly constructed railway lines to attract new types of heavy industry. In a letter to the editor of the *Intelligencer* dated February 6, 1880, Flint argues for the building of a smelting works:

I reference more to the necessity of having a Smelting Works established in Belleville . . . I trust that the citizens of Belleville will not let the present favourable opportunity slip by, and, Rip Van Winkle like, go to sleep for another 20 years, until they may wake up to find that the opportunity has passed by, and nothing is left but Rip's lean half-starven dog to remind them of their loss . . . I am sure that Mr. Kent [the potential developer of the iron and glass works] would prefer Belleville if he gets the encouragement he ought to have, and now while the whole is within our grasp. I do hope and trust that he will not allow Kingston, Port Hope, Toronto or any other place to take the lead and thereby deprive us of what I believe is a rare chance to not only obtain smelting and glass works, but also rolling mills, steel works and the manufacture of heavy and shelf hardware, and by such means soon double the population of our city, as also to keep in the country a vast amount of money which has now to go yearly to support manufac-

tories in England and the United States.<sup>64</sup>

Six months later, the editorial of June 28 commented on the "sad" history of Belleville's efforts to attract a smelting works. A few years prior, the city awarded a bonus of \$75,000 to a Mr. Pardee of Hazleton, Pennsylvania to erect a smelting works in Belleville but depression in the iron trade caused the failure of that project. Despite the pleas of Billa Flint and the *Intelligencer* for support of the smelting works and the interest expressed by the American, Mr. Kent, their efforts "amounted to nothing". In desperation, the editorial scolded the citizens of Belleville for their lack of enterprise:

There is no other place in Ontario so favourably situated as is Belleville with regard to the iron smelting business. Connected by railway with finest iron mines on the continent; with limestone located within the city; having water communication with all ports on both sides of the lakes, there is no condition wanting to the manufacture of iron ore here on the cheapest possible terms. But unfortunately the spirit of enterprise seems lacking in our midst, and we fear that the golden opportunity will be allowed to pass, namely that of making our city the site of the first iron smelting furnace in Ontario .

Nature has given every possible advantage to our city and if Toronto or any other place be allowed to take the lead in the matter, it is the fault of our own people.<sup>65</sup>

Immediately a committee was set up to figure out ways to attract industrial development. A July 9, 1880 edition of the *Intelligencer* reported on the first meeting of this group. In that meeting great concern was expressed over

high taxes and a decrease in property values with several citizens voicing their opinion that both were due to a lack of industrial enterprises and the tax dollars they would deliver to the coffers of the community. The discussion and debate centered on the granting of bonuses to industrial interests. The committee was particularly interested in attracting an iron and smelting works which would take advantage of the ore deposits of north Hastings and the new railway connection to these deposits. Some favoured the city taking stock and issuing debentures for a municipally owned iron company. Thomas Wills argued that the key to industrialization was ensuring water power from the Moira and questioned whether Belleville could maintain competition against England in terms of iron production. T.C. Wallbridge, barrister and saw mill owner, agreed with Wills and was of the opinion that a smelting works would not last six months because it could not compete with Scottish manufactures of iron.<sup>66</sup>

Nothing came of the industrial development committee and shortly thereafter, the paper delivered one final editorial on iron smelting:

Strangers look on at amazement at the spectacle of the rich iron ores of North Hastings leaving our doors on the way to the United States, where heavy duties are paid on them, where they are manufactured, and whence they return in large part to Canada, either as pig iron, hardware, or in some other form. Thus our neighbours receive all the benefits which ought to flow to Belleville, were the ores reduced here..Surely there is a lack of enterprise here.<sup>67</sup>

#### ***Decline and Adjustment: 1880–1900***

Belleville was never to realize the hopes and dreams held by many of its citizens. The town developed as a distribution centre handling staples and continued to function in that capacity. New transportation linkages to the interior were to be the means by which the city could continue to tap the forest reserve and exploit the iron ore deposits of north Hastings. Great hope was placed on the processing of the latter staple in order to ensure

industrial growth for the community. But it was not to be. The world depression was felt locally and money was scarce for investment. Both population growth and industrial growth slowed considerably during the 1880s and the situation worsened during the next decade (Table 4). An examination of the pecuniary strength and credit ratings of Belleville businesses for the years 1864, 1871 and 1891 shows that while the number of businesses grew in proportion to the population, the percentage of firms with

**TABLE 4:**  
***Population and Industrial Growth of Belleville: 1851 to 1901***

Year	Population	Industrial Statistics		Value of Articles Produced (\$)	% Increase In Value of Articles Produced
		No. of Establishments	Employees		
1851	4569	—	—	—	—
1860	6277	—	—	—	—
1870	7305	102	914	810,465	—
1880	9516	132	964	1,091,208	34.6
1890	9916	197	1095	1,214,095	11.3
1901	9117	24	543	558,950	—

<sup>1</sup> 1901 census only includes information for establishments employing 5 or more persons.

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***Belleville and Environs During the 19th Century***

**TABLE 5:**  
***Pecuniary Strength and Credit Ratings of Belleville Businesses: 1864, 1871, 1891***

Pecuniary Strength	1864		Pecuniary Strength	1871		Pecuniary Strength	1891	
	# of businesses	% of businesses		# of businesses	% of businesses		# of businesses	% of businesses
<\$2000	73	51.4	<\$2000	124	55.4	not known	28	8.0
\$2000–5000	28	19.7	\$2000–5000	53	23.7	<\$500	131	37.5
\$5000–10000	17	12.0	\$5000–10000	20	8.9	\$500–1000	27	7.7
\$10000–25000	14	9.9	\$10000–25000	17	7.6	\$1000–2000	42	12.0
\$25000–50000	9	6.3	\$25000–50000	6	2.7	Total <\$2000	<u>200</u>	<u>57.2</u>
>\$50000	1	0.7	>\$50000	4	1.8	\$2000–5000	48	13.8
	<u>142</u>	<u>100</u>		<u>224</u>	<u>100</u>	\$5000–10000	35	10.0
						\$10000–20000	21	6.0
						\$20000–40000	10	2.8
						\$40000–75000	5	1.4
						>\$75000	2	0.6
							<u>349</u>	<u>100</u>

Credit Rating	1864		Credit Rating	1871		Credit Rating	1891	
	# of businesses	% of businesses		# of businesses	% of businesses		# of businesses	% of businesses
unlimited	0	0	unlimited	0	0	high	0	0
high	8	5.6	high	4	1.8	good	5	1.4
good	50	35.2	good	70	31.3	fair	19	5.5
fair	50	35.2	fair	80	35.7	limited	211	60.5
difficult to rate	34	23.9	difficult to rate	70	31.3	difficult to rate	114	32.7

**Source:** Public Archives of Ontario. Dun and Bradstreet Reference Books, 1864–1978.

pecuniary strength of less than \$2,000 and with low credit ratings increased also (Table 5).

The lumber trade declined as the timber stands were becoming depleted. The high costs of transportation, the inefficiency of production, and overwhelming competition and lower prices in the market caused all efforts to establish an iron industry either at Belleville or nearer the mines at Marmora to fail.<sup>68</sup> After 1880, flour milling and the farm produce export trade declined. Barley had replaced wheat as Ontario's major cash crop and the Quinte region was advantaged in terms of their accessibility to the Erie Canal-Hudson River route and their superior barley crop. But the substitution of corn for barley in beer making and the growing competition of barley production in Iowa and Wisconsin hurt Quintean farmers and in 1891 the McKinley Tariff effectively shut the door on the American market.<sup>69</sup>

An examination of the newspaper for the year 1891 reveals quite a change in attitude towards what avenues of opportunity the town should exploit. A letter from the chairman of the Industrial Committee to the editor, dated February 10, 1891, shows how earlier grand plans for large iron smelting works had been replaced by a strategy favouring small scale processing of agricultural products.<sup>70</sup> The letter encouraged "enterprising citizens" to take advantage of the opportunity which the market demand for cheese offered and to follow the example of Picton cheese factories which were so successful. The letter also recommended that tax exemptions for ten years and free sites be granted to persons operating a canning factory manufacturing at least 100,000 cans yearly. While town leaders earlier lamented the fact that Hastings was losing

money in sending iron ore to the United States, they were now upset with the hold of the Picton fruit processing plants over Hastings: "Is all Hastings fruit to be sent over the bridge to Picton? Let us make our market here and not there."<sup>71</sup>

Shortly thereafter, a group of individuals emerged to take advantage of the offer made by the Belleville Industrial Committee. Ironically, it was not Belleville or Hastings residents who stepped forward but three citizens of Picton who proposed to establish a canning factory in Belleville with a yearly capacity of 500,000 cans and paying out annually in wages at least \$7500.<sup>72</sup> They planned to employ for the first five months of the year at least 25 boys and 50 to 75 women and proposed to invest at least \$7000 in starting and equipping a factory. In fact, they also stated that they were willing to become citizens of Belleville and to show their sincerity gave the city a first registered lien on a mortgage for \$3500. Billa Flint must have thought it typical that once again Belleville failed to attract capitalist development from within its own community.

The Quinte area was developing a regional specialization in food processing at the very same time that other parts of the province, particularly the area surrounding Toronto and the Grand Valley region, were attracting heavy industry. The littany of industries for the city of Belleville in 1900—six agricultural implements factories, one brewery, two butter and cheese makers, three cheese exporters, one distillery, three flour and grist mills, two marble works, one woolen mill, one canning factory, one paper manufacturer, 1 rolling mill—attest to Belleville's continuing reliance on processing rural products.<sup>73</sup>

Yet Belleville was not alone in its continuing reliance on staple extraction and export.

Gilmour shows that even by 1891, Ontario was still an economy dominated by staples with a stagnant secondary sector framed between a falling primary sector and an increasing tertiary sector.<sup>74</sup> But there did exist within the province a notable variation in the relative importance of secondary manufacturing to local economies. Gilmour's analysis reveals that a greater percentage of the labour force in the Quinte region was employed in the primary sector than in the province as a whole. In fact, the percentage of the labour force employed in secondary manufacturing in Hastings fell from 15-19.9 per cent in 1851 to less than 10 per cent in 1881.<sup>75</sup>

The evidence reveals the increasing peripherality of the Quinte region vis-à-vis the urban-centered regions of Toronto, Hamilton and London. Belleville was distant enough from Toronto to offer some competition to metropolitan interests and ensure that it would not become merely an economic satellite. The process of integration into the larger Toronto-based economic and social region was not as overwhelming for Belleville as it was for those communities situated to the west. Although the effects of metropolitanism were felt, local institutions and values were not replaced entirely by "those generated and appropriate to the dominant metropolitan centre."<sup>76</sup>

### ***Belleville and Thurlow: An Empirical Investigation***

This paper will conclude with a brief examination of the relationship that existed between Belleville and the surrounding township of Thurlow during the latter part of the century. In this context, two questions will be addressed briefly: 1) What type of people did the declining town of Belleville attract from the surrounding countryside? 2) How did the city of Bel-

***Belleville and Environs During the 19th Century***

**TABLE 6:**  
***Industrial Profile, Belleville and Thurlow, 1871***

Industrial Establishments	Thurlow (Pop – 5264)				Belleville (Pop – 7305)			
	firms #	%	# of employees	Value of Production(\$)	firms #	%	# of employees	Value of Production(\$)
flour & grist mill	6	12.8	18	163396	3	2.9	7 <sup>a</sup>	51000 <sup>a</sup>
paper mill	1	2.1	10	4500	0	0	0	0
saw mill	3	6.4	64	50000	3	2.9	158 <sup>b</sup>	101000 <sup>b</sup>
brick manufacturer	1	2.1	45	13000	0	0	0	0
stave factory	1	2.1	3	1500	0	0	0	0
blacksmith shsp/forge	9	19.1	15	5950	5	4.9	22	17650
lime kiln	2	4.3	9	7625	1	1.0	5	1350
tannery	4	8.5	13	18225	0	0	0	0
weaver	4	8.5	13	18225	0	0	0	0
boat & shoe shop/maker	5	10.6	5	2510	9	8.8	66	21800
cheese company	1	2.1	4	14885	0	0	0	0
carriage & waggon maker	4	8.5	30	14300	6	5.9	48	29850
distillery	1	2.1	6	20000	0	0	0	0
cabinet shop	1	2.1	1	430	3	2.9	23	36600
millinery/dressmaking shop	1	2.1	2	350	7	6.9	33	10000
hand loom operator	3	6.4	4	1100	0	0	0	0
gas company	0	0	0	0	1	1.1	4	7700
potash manufacturer	0	0	0	0	2	2.0	21	25500
plaster business	0	0	0	0	1	1.0	4	4500
carpenter/joiner	0	0	0	0	5	4.9	15	26350
cloth dying	0	0	0	0	1	1.0	1	1500
brewery	0	0	0	0	2	2.0	7	9000
wollen manufacturer	0	0	0	0	1	1.0	5	1500
bakery & confectioner	0	0	0	0	4	3.9	44	46400
soda factory	0	0	0	0	2	2.0	3	4500
sewing machine maker	0	0	0	0	1	1.0	16	9000
stone ware	0	0	0	0	1	1.0	7	16000
sash, door & blind factory	0	0	0	0	5	4.9	31	28300
axe factory	0	0	0	0	1	1.0	25	26000
marble dealer	0	0	0	0	2	2.0	6	6500
cigar maker	0	0	0	0	1	1.0	6	2000
foundry & machine shop	0	0	0	0	4	3.0	108	100000

**TABLE 7:**  
**a) *Changing Holding Sizes in Thurlow Township 1851–91***

Years	Number of Occupiers of:									
	≤ 10 acres		11–50 acres		51–99 acres		100–199 acres		≥ 200 acres	
1851	107	(21.7)	60	(12.2)	197	(40.0)	133	(122.9)	16	(3.2)
1871	95	(16.2)	115	(19.6)	235	(40.1)	123	(21.0)	18	(3.1)
1891	247	(33.8)	102	(14.0)	209	(28.6)	139	(19.0)	33	(4.5)
Holding Size	% change									
	1851–71		1871–91		1851–91					
≤ 10 acres	–5.5		17.6		12.1					
11–50 acres	7.4		–5.6		1.8					
51–99 acres	0.1		–11.5		–11.4					
100–199 acres	1.9		–2.0		–3.9					
≥ 200 acres	0.1		1.4		1.3					

**b) *Changing Tenure Profile Thurlow Township 1851–91***

Year	Total Occupiers <sup>1</sup>		Owners		Tenants	
1851	493	(100)	–	–		
1871	586	(100)	477	(81.4)	103	(17.6)
1891	730	(100)	584	(80.0)	145	(19.9)
			% change			
Tenure	1851–71		1871–91		1851–91	
Total Occupiers	–	–	–			
Owners	–	–1.4	–			
Tenants	–	2.3	–			

<sup>1</sup> includes employees as well

Sources: Census of Canada 1850–51, Vol. II, Table VI, 20–21.

Census of Canada 1870–71, Vol. III, Table XXI, 38–39.

Census of Canada 1890–91, Vol. II, Table XVI, 276–277.

leville and the rural township of Thurlow differ in terms of family structure at the end of the century?

By 1871, Thurlow reached a population peak of 5,264 (Table 1). Over 81 per cent of the farmers owned their land; a growing local market was centred in Belleville; the demand for the area's cheese was increasing; and farmers found a ready market for their barley across the lake in Oswego. The industrial profile of the township (Table 6) shows that there existed a diversity of small scale rural industries with the most important enterprises in terms of value of production being Henry Corby's grist mill (\$37,500) and distillery (\$20,000), William Lingham's grist mill (\$39,654) and James Canniff's flour and grist mill (\$32,000). Not only could Thurlow farmers bring their wheat to one of the six flour and grist mills in the township, they could also choose to patronize one of three such establishments in Belleville. Low order goods and services were available in Cannifton, Foxboro and several other small villages scattered throughout the township with banks and higher order services present in nearby Belleville.

Yet Thurlow was to feel the effects of many of the same developments which signalled the change in fortune for Belleville. The township was hurt somewhat by the decline of the lumber and flour trade in the 1870s. Most of the saw mills and grist mills closed during the decade. The cessation of the American barley market combined with soil depletion and a worldwide recession to further the demise of the local economy. Although tenancy increased minimally between 1870 and 1890, larger numbers of land occupiers and a greater proportion of smaller holdings may be interpreted as

signs of an increasingly unfavourable man/land ratio (Table 7).

Another obvious indication of declining fortune is the loss of population experienced by Thurlow. The population of the township decreased 5.1 per cent in the 1870s, 2.1 per cent in the 1880s, and 12.6 per cent during the nineties (Table 1). A final signal of economic decline, or at least stagnation, is afforded through an examination of the probate records available in the Public Archives of Ontario (Table 8). While many people did not register a will, the probate records on file are revealing. They indicate, at least for value of personal estate and effects, a gradual decline in the proportion of estates valued at greater than \$1,000 (1859-69 – 42.9 per cent, 1870-79 – 42.0 per cent, 1880-89 – 30.7 per cent, 1890-1900 – 32.1 per cent). However, too much should not be made of these signs of decline. Additional research on farm families has revealed that many Quinte residents made adjustments to changing conditions and continued to persist in the area.

Table 9 shows the distribution of all males in Thurlow for the year 1881 and in Belleville for the year 1891 by occupational classification and lists the ten most frequent occupations in both communities for those particular years. The data show that Thurlow was very definitely a rural society with farming being the most popular occupation by far. Belleville had a more diverse occupational profile with a significant percentage of males employed in tertiary positions. Yet labourer was the largest single occupation. The Grand Trunk was one of the city's largest employers and hired many unskilled people to work in repair crews. The prevalence of carpenters and blacksmiths is interesting only in that most farm boys learned to use a saw and to

shoe a horse and thus were prepared to take up these occupations upon movement to the city.

Data were collected for every male resident of Thurlow in 1881 (N=2475) and every male resident of Belleville in 1891 (N=4500) and then those who made the move from Thurlow to Belleville during this period were traced on the basis of name, date of birth, birthplace and religion with the results shown in Table 10. Only 105 or 4.2 per cent of the 1881 Thurlow residents were living in Belleville in 1891. Of interest is the fact that the population of Belleville during the 1880s grew by only 400 people or 4.2 per cent. Of course, we cannot make too much of these statistics until census information is collected for 1881 Belleville and 1891 Thurlow.

The data presented in Table 10 reveal that this short distance migration was composed primarily of young couples and their children although a number of childless couples and single people were part of the group as well. Over 26 per cent of those who held an occupation in Thurlow were farmers. In addition, a number of carpenters and blacksmiths made the move. Without additional information provided by assessment rolls and property records, any suggestions that tenancy or insufficient holding sizes were the primary reasons why the 13 farmers made the move would be unfounded.

Most of the Thurlow residents lived in nuclear family units in Belleville although a few did reside with relatives or boarded. The majority found work in a semi-skilled or skilled positions although a considerable number were employed as labourers and carters. The information is sketchy but does suggest that Belleville in 1891 only attracted people from nearby Thurlow with poor economic

**TABLE 8:**  
***Value of Personal Estate and Effects from Thurlow Township Probate Files, 1859–1900***

Value of Personal Estate and Effects	Decade							
	1859–69		1870–79		1880–89		1890–1900	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
unknown or none	1	3.6	2	4.0	0	0	3	3.4
\$1–250	1	3.6	3	6.0	6	12.2	17	19.5
\$251–500	11	39.3	13	26.0	11	22.4	21	24.1
\$501–750	0	0	8	16.0	7	14.3	14	16.1
\$751–1000	3	10.7	3	9.0	10	20.4	4	4.6
\$1001–1500	3	10.7	13	26.0	4	8.2	12	13.8
\$1501–2000	3	10.7	2	4.0	2	4.1	5	5.7
\$2001–5000	5	17.9	2	4.0	7	14.3	6	6.9
>\$5000	1	3.6	4	8.0	2	4.1	5	5.7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100</b>
Average (known)	\$1487.48		\$2188.65		\$1436.01		\$1733.79	
Standard Deviation	1643.98		4246.50		2271.47		4183.66	
Coefficient of Variation	110.52		194.02		158.18		241.30	

***Value of Real Estate from Thurlow Township Probate Files, 1890–1900<sup>1</sup>***

Value of Real Estate	Number	%
None	24	27.6
\$1–500	4	4.6
\$501–1000	6	6.9
\$1001–2000	18	20.7
\$2001–3500	16	18.4
\$3501–5000	9	10.3
\$5001–10000	9	10.3
>\$10000	1	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100</b>
Average (known)	\$3059.40	
Standard Deviation	2268.2	
Coefficients of Variation	74.14	

<sup>1</sup> real estate values were, for the most part, not indicated until the 1890 decade.

Source: P.A.O. List of Probate Files, Surrogate Court Wills, Thurlow, 1859–1900.

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**TABLE 9:**  
***Distribution of Males by Occupational Classification***  
***Thurlow, 1881 and Belleville, 1891<sup>a</sup>***

Occupational Category	Thurlow (1881)		Belleville (1891)	
	#	%	#	%
1. rural operator	857	58.7	72	2.7
2. manufacturer	12	0.8	37	1.4
3. professional	41	2.8	164	6.0
4. merchant/business	26	1.8	355	13.1
5. semi-skilled and skilled	262	17.9	1032	38.0
6. clerical	30	2.1	436	16.1
7. unskilled	225	15.4	599	22.1
8. private	9	0.5	20	0.7
Total 1-8	1461	100.0	2715	100.0
9. unknown/not apply/retired	1014	41.0	1785	39.7
Total 1-8	1461	59.0	2715	60.3
	2475	100.0	4500	100.0

***Ten Most Frequent Occupations***  
***Thurlow 1881 and Belleville 1891***

Thurlow	No.	%	Belleville	No.	%
farmer	750	51.3	labourer	385	14.2
labourer	166	11.4	clerk	177	6.5
farm labour	85	5.8	carpenter	127	4.7
carpenter	49	3.4	carter/teamster	96	3.5
blacksmith	41	2.8	blacksmith	66	2.4
gardener	27	1.8	railroad engineer	60	2.2
brickmaker	21	1.4	salesperson	54	2.0
college student	21	1.4	agent	50	1.8
servant	19	1.3	lawyer/attorney	46	1.7
carter/teamster	13	0.9	grocer	45	1.7
	1192	81.6		1106	40.7
Total all occupations	1461	100.0	Total all occupations	2715	100.0

<sup>a</sup> not include retired, unknown and not apply categories (N = 1014)

**TABLE 10:**  
**Thurlow Male Residents (1881) in Belleville (1891)**

Characteristics	1881	1891
<b>1. Age Groups</b>		
0-4	10.9	0
5-9	25.7	0
10-14	13.9	10.9
15-19	9.9	25.7
20-24	15.8	13.9
25-29	5.0	9.9
30-34	2.0	15.8
35-39	5.9	5.0
40-44	3.0	2.0
45-49	2.0	5.9
50-54	1.0	3.0
55-59	1.0	2.0
60-64	3.0	1.0
65-69	1.0	1.0
70-74	0	3.0
75-79	0	1.0
80-84	0	0
85+	0	0
<b>2. Position within Household</b>		
head	22.6	30.7
eldest son	20.4	22.8
middle son(s)	21.5	12.9
youngest son	20.4	11.9
only son	10.8	5.9
relatives	2.2	7.9
not related	1.1	5.0
domestic servant	0	1.0
sibling of single head	1.1	2.0
<b>3. Occupational Category</b>		
rural operator	16.8	5.0
manufacturer	0	1.0
professional	2.0	3.0
merchant/business	0	3.0
semi-skilled and skilled	15.8	42.6
clerical	4.0	9.9
unskilled	3.0	13.9
private	4.0	5.9
not apply	50.5	15.8
unknown/no occupation	4.0	0
<b>4. Most Numerous Occupation<sup>a</sup></b>		
<b>1881 N = 50</b>		
farmer	26 (N=13)	
carpenter	8 (N=5)	
blacksmith	6 (N=3)	
butcher	4 (N=2)	
<b>1891 N = 85</b>		
labourer		9.4 (N=8)
no occupation		5.9 (N=5)
teamster/carter		4.7 (N=4)
clerk		4.7 (N=4)
blacksmith		3.6 (N=3)
carpenter		2.4 (N=2)

a – does not include the not apply category

resources and little in the way of skills and capital. Clearly, they could not provide the investment dollars so desperately called for by the city's elite. While certain Thurlow residents earlier in the century had contributed greatly to the city in terms of investment and energy, individuals such as Henry Corby Jr (distiller and mill owner), J.J. Flint (police magistrate, barrister and mayor), Roswell Leavens (magistrate and merchant), Alexander Sills (businessman), and Ashael Vermilyea (boot and shoe merchant and city councillor), fewer were attracted to a city which was clearly stagnating.<sup>77</sup>

Following the example of Gagan, an effort will be made to compare form and structure of Thurlow and Belleville families in order to see how much this city departed from the characteristics associated with rural family life.<sup>78</sup> Gagan showed that Brampton in 1871 was very different from its rural hinterland in terms of family form and structure and argued that "the people of Brampton could be seen to have moved farther along that path leading from a more to a less traditional world of social reality than had rural society."<sup>79</sup> Clearly the path Gagan talks about is the rural-urban transition and the driving force behind this movement is the process of modernization.

The nuclear family was the normal form for both 1881 Thurlow and 1891 Belleville (Table 11). A bit surprising is the fact that a greater percentage of Belleville households were composed of extended families, a form associated with rural societies. The close proximity of Thurlow and Belleville perhaps explains this characteristic. Newly arrived migrants from Thurlow may have lived with relatives for a time before establishing their own households. The stem family was more common in Thurlow but the percentage



**TABLE 11:**  
**Household Types to Which Males Belong, Thurlow, 1881 and Belleville, 1891**

Household Type	Thurlow		Belleville	
	#	%	#	%
nuclear	2037	82.3	3636	80.8
extended	148	6.03	350	7.8
stem <sup>1</sup>	57	2.3	36	0.8
stem/extended <sup>2</sup>	12	0.5	10	0.2
solitaire <sup>3</sup>	29	1.2	33	0.7
no family <sup>4</sup>	61	2.5	83	1.8
board <sup>5</sup>	131	5.3	352	7.8

<sup>1</sup> married son(s) and his/their family(ies) living with parents

<sup>2</sup> married son and his family living with parents plus other relatives

<sup>3</sup> widowed, single

<sup>4</sup> no nuclear family but co-resident with siblings or relatives

<sup>5</sup> not related to head

of this type of household is relatively insignificant.<sup>80</sup> A considerable number of males boarded in both communities, the majority being young and single.

Table 12a presents comparative age specific marital fertility rates for women of Thurlow in 1881 and their counterparts in Belleville in 1891. While Gagan witnessed a strong dichotomy between age specific fertility ratios for Brampton and rural Peel County in both 1861 and 1871, this table reveals no such sharp differential. In fact, Belleville women between the age of 35–39 in 1891 actually displayed a greater fertility rate than Thurlow women of the same age cohort ten years earlier. The fertility rates for both Belleville and Thurlow are less than the rates for Brampton and rural Peel County.<sup>81</sup> This may reflect the fact that the trend towards family limitation was more advanced in the Quinte communities than they were in Peel County ten or 20 years before. The time difference between both

of these cases may be very important in explaining this variation.

More revealing is Table 12b which shows that the proportion of Thurlow women under the age of 25 who had conceived two or more children was only slightly higher than the proportion of Belleville women who had borne more than one child before their 25th year. Again the discrepancy between rural and urban is much less than that noted by Gagan.<sup>82</sup> Belleville women under the age of 25 were, however, far more likely to have no children than their Thurlow counterparts. Whether this is due to later age at marriage or not will only be revealed after further census analysis. What is most striking about the behaviour of women between the age of 25 and 29 is that the percentages of Belleville and Thurlow women in this age category who had two or more children were almost identical even though the former were still more likely to have no children than the latter.

Also interesting is the fact that both the 15–24 and 25–29 age groups for Belleville in 1891 were more likely to have two or more children than the corresponding Brampton age groups two decades earlier, 30.1 per cent to 28.4 per cent and 59.3 per cent to 56.5 per cent respectively for both age groups in both communities. This discrepancy serves to point out the regional differences in the timing of family formation and family limitation within marriage in 19th century Ontario. It may even be suggestive of regional as well as temporal differences in the modernization process, at least in how the rural-urban transition affects family strategies.

It is argued by Gagan that by 1871 Peel's rural farm families had dealt with the problem of too many children competing for too little land by extending the period of dependence in the parent's household for at least some children. He showed that more than half of

**TABLE 12:**

***Comparative Demographics, Thurlow and Belleville, 1881 and 1891<sup>a</sup>***

**a)      *Number of Children not yet 10 Years per 1,000 Married Women  
by Age Cohort, Thurlow (1881) and Belleville (1891)***

	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44
Thurlow 1881	0	1170	1825	2142	1756	1479
Belleville 1891	667	1000	1809	1930	1784	1229
Rural – Urban Difference*	–	14.5	0.9	9.9	–1.6	16.9

\* % by which urban fertility ratio is lower than rural ratio.

**b)      *Distribution of Rural and Urban Wives Aged 15–29 by Number of Children,  
1881, 1891 (percentages)***

	Thurlow (1881)	Belleville (1891)
<b>Cohort Age 15–24</b>		
no children	33.0	42.5
1 child	32.0	27.4
2 or more	34.0	30.1
<b>Cohort Age 25–29</b>		
no children	10.9	17.2
1 child	30.7	23.4
2 or more	58.4	59.3

**c)      *Distribution of Rural and Urban Wives of Various Ages by Children  
Aged 17 or Older at Home, 1881, 1891 (percentages)***

	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64
<b>Thurlow (1881)</b>						
none	72.3	44.7	32.1	16.3	26.7	39.0
one	21.9	22.3	19.8	29.1	20.0	24.4
2 or more	5.8	33.0	48.1	54.6	53.3	36.6
<b>Belleville (1891)</b>						
none	73.6	45.4	30.1	31.6	21.4	37.7
one	19.4	28.6	28.2	19.9	19.1	21.7
2 or more	7.0	26.0	41.7	48.5	59.5	40.6

<sup>a</sup> after Gagan (1981: 131,133)

Brampton's families "in which the mother had reached the age of 55 had no older children (i.e. over the age of 16) living at home whereas at least half of the farm families in which wives were between the ages of 45 and 65 had two or more children living at home."<sup>83</sup> The discrepancy between Belleville and Thurlow was not nearly as great. In fact, the figures for various age groups for Belleville in 1891 were much closer to rural Peel County in 1871 than the Brampton figures in that same year.<sup>84</sup> Following Gagan's logic, we might say that the cycle of family life among Belleville residents was not that different from rural Thurlow families but much more analysis is needed before any such conclusion could be made. These demographic data need to be examined within the context of the larger body of statistics collected for the 50 year period for which the manuscript census is available.

### **Conclusion**

Belleville did not develop as a classic colonial entrepot like Kingston or Toronto. It was not planned in advance of general settlement nor was it developed for strategic purposes. It, like many other Canadian communities, developed as a collection centre for the staples of the surrounding hinterland and as a distribution centre for imported goods. Right from the beginning of settlement, metropolitan forces impacted on the Quinte region. To some extent, Belleville acted as a regional branch of European and then Montreal and Toronto sources of credit, supply and transportation. Yet residents of this community and its hinterland lived and interacted with buyers and sellers in their specific region.

The city grew as a commercial market town dependent on the expansion of its import-export function and the develop-

ment of its inter-regional trade. The former function tied the fortunes of Belleville with those of its hinterland and for much of the century the town prospered under this relationship. The processing and exporting of lumber, wheat and other agricultural produce and, to a lesser extent, minerals, linked Belleville with the surrounding hinterland. But the community was never really able to develop an inter-regional trade of manufactured goods. With changing world markets and a declining resource base, Belleville desperately attempted to break out of its staple dependency and industrialize. The city pinned its hopes on the promise of the rails but that promise was never fully realized. Its geographic isolation, always a problem, a limited agricultural hinterland, lack of investment capital and commercial rivalry of other centres combined with changing markets to seal Belleville's fate as a declining second order centre.

The fortunes of Belleville and its hinterland were directly intertwined. While both were directly and indirectly influenced by metropolitan forces coming from outside, they were inextricably connected in the import-export, staple producing relationship. The city did not receive an influx of capital or industries from elsewhere but continued to develop on the basis of local firms tapping the hinterland. When the fortunes of Belleville changed, rural communities in its hinterland suffered even more as less local money was available for expansion. Nearby communities such as Cannifton were especially hurt because their businesses were not able to compete with those of Belleville. Local elites were unable to attract outside investment and because most of them were involved so directly with the declining import-export function, they did not have the capital to develop growth in-

dustries. While domestic industries did develop in Ontario during the 19th century and were not entirely derivative from staples production, the export of such staples, in Marjorie Cohen's words, "are not to be undervalued for their role in the development of the Ontario economy and to the development and ultimate decline of smaller urban centres [like Belleville] in particular."<sup>85</sup>

What is most interesting is to consider how rural Quinteans dealt with the declining fortune of their major market centre. It is easy to assume that because the fortunes of both hinterland and urban centre were so closely connected, the rural sector would invariably feel the effects of change even more than the town. The townships of Hastings did feel the effects of the recession and closing markets and did lose considerable numbers of population at the end of the 19th century. But many chose to stay in the region despite the fact that Belleville and other urban centres offered much less than Toronto, Hamilton, New York, Chicago or even other rural areas in the way of opportunities. The fact that the urban centres in the Quinte region did not become large industrial entities significantly affects the way we look at this largely rural region in this period known as the "Great Transformation". Farmers in the region adjusted to changing markets and developed their dairying, cheese-making and fruit growing interests. And towns such as Belleville offered incentives for cheese-making and fruit processing factories to locate in their midst.

This reinforces the point made at the beginning of this paper that modernization should be viewed as a contextual process. Smaller urban centres experiencing stagnation or decline at the

turn of the 20th century were not all incipient metropolises. Some of these centres might have opened their arms to rural interests and rural types of production. We might find in some of these places a blending of new urban traits and traditional rural values. The important point is that we need to free ourselves from the pervasive influence of an aspatial, large scale perspective of modernization and realize that local conditions modified modernization forces.

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### **Notes**

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59. Belleville Intelligencer, November 27, 1872, 3.
60. Public Archives of Ontario. RG 18, Series B-3. Commission to Inquire and Report Upon the Financial Affairs of the Town of Belleville with Things Connected Therein, 1875-1877.
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66. Belleville Intelligencer, Friday July 9, 1880, 3.
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69. This decline is evidenced in the prices obtained at the Belleville market and the quantities grown in Hastings. On Saturday January 3, 1880, fall wheat, spring wheat, barley #1, barley #2, rye, oats and buckwheat fetched bushel prices of \$1.25-\$1.30, \$1.20-\$1.30, 60 cents, 50 cents, 75 cents, 35-37 cents and 50 cents respectively on the Belleville market. On Thursday February 14, 1901, the same items were sold for 65 cents, 65 cents, 40 cents, 38 cents, 48 cents, 28 cents and 45 cents respectively. Between 1882 and 1900, there was a 69.2%, 38.4% and 41.5% decrease in the number of bushels of fall wheat, barley and rye produced in Hastings County. This information is collected from: a) Belleville Intelligencer; Saturday January 3, 1880, 4; Thursday February 14, 1901; and b) Public Archives of Ontario. Ontario Bureau of Industry, *Agricultural Returns. First Annual Report, 1900. Part 1, Agricultural Statistics*, 1901, 43.
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