Urban History Review
Revue d'histoire urbaine

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Staniforth, M. (2000). The Wreck of the *William Salthouse*, 1841: Early trade between Canada and Australia. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, *28*(2), 19–32. https://doi.org/10.7202/1016524ar

Résumé de l'article

Le William Salthouse a été le premier navire marchand à quitter le Dominion britannique du Canada avec une cargaison de marchandises à destination des colonies anglaises nouvellement établies en Australie. Le navire a péri le 27 novembre 1841 en essayant d'entrer dans le port de Phillip Heads à la fin d'un voyage qui l'avait mené de Montréal et Québec jusqu'à Melbourne.Les recherches historiques et archéologiques ont révélé qu'une grande partie de la cargaison de viande et de poisson salés était contenue dans des tonneaux, contenants qui étaient les plus utilisés pour l'expédition des marchandises en vrac durant la première moitié du dix-neuvième siècle. Des informations sur l'origine des marchandises, le poids et le contenu sont inscrits sur bon nombre des tonneaux. La cargaison contenait également de l'alcool en bouteilles et en tonneaux. Cet article établit un lien entre les témoignages archéologiques et historiques au sujet de la cargaison et le contexte économique et social dans lequel se déroulait le commerce entre le Canada et l'Australie à l'époque. Le William Salthouse nous permet ainsi de mieux comprendre à la fois Montréal, une ville portuaire établie de longue date, et Melbourne, alors au seuil d'une période de développement urbain soutenu.

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Mark Staniforth

Résumé:

Le **William Salthouse** *a été le premier navire marchand à quitter le Dominion britannique du Canada avec une cargaison de marchandises à destination des colonies anglaises nouvellement établies en Australie. Le navire a péri le 27 novembre 1841 en essayant d'entrer dans le port de Phillip Heads à la fin d'un voyage qui l'avait mené de Montréal et Québec jusqu'à Melbourne.*

Les recherches historiques et archéologiques ont révélé qu'une grande partie de la cargaison de viande et de poisson salés était contenue dans des tonneaux, contenants qui étaient les plus utilisés pour l'expédition des marchandises en vrac durant la première moitié du dix-neuvième siècle. Des informations sur l'origine des marchandises, le poids et le contenu sont inscrits sur bon nombre des tonneaux. La cargaison contenait également de l'alcool en bouteilles et en tonneaux. Cet article établit un lien entre les témoignages archéologiques et historiques au sujet de la cargaison et le contexte économique et social dans lequel se déroulait le commerce entre le Canada et l'Australie à l'époque. Le **William Salthouse** *nous permet ainsi de mieux comprendre à la fois Montréal, une ville portuaire établie de longue date, et Melbourne, alors au seuil d'une période de développement urbain soutenu.*

Introduction

This paper examines the background and historical context to a voyage in 1841 by the trading vessel *William Salthouse*. It was a voyage between two very different urban centres: the bustling trading city of Montréal in Canada, and Melbourne, chief town in the newly-settled Port Phillip district of south-eastern Australia. The voyage ended when the *William Salthouse* sank at the entrance to Port Phillip Bay in July 1841 (see Figures 3 and 4). The ship carried a cargo valued at £12,000, that included flour, salted fish, salted meat, building materials and alcohol. Archaeological and historical research has been undertaken since 1982 to investigate the cargo of *William Salthouse*, and this paper presents and interprets some of the results of that research.

Background – Port Phillip

The Port Phillip district, in what would later became the Australian state of Victoria, was first permanently settled by Europeans during the mid-1830s. The first decade of settlement at Melbourne was characterised by the conservative *Argus* newspaper, during the International Exhibition of 1880, as evolving from a "primitive village" in 1835, to a "tiny port" by 1840, and to a "modest town" by 1845.[1]

In October 1839 Charles Joseph La Trobe assumed his duties as superintendent of the Port Phillip District, which was still administratively a part of the colony of New South Wales (NSW). By this time, Melbourne had grown to become a small town of two churches, 18 public houses but less than 5,000 people. It doubled in size by the end of 1840 and nearly doubled again to more than 20,000 by the end of 1841. But in 1842-3 an economic downturn reduced Melbourne, in the words of one contemporary, Robert Russell, to a state of "no money, no credit, no trade".[2]

The massive population growth between 1839 and 1841 placed enormous pressure on the capacity of the new colony adequately to supply the needs and wants of the thousands of recently arrived immigrants.[3] Some, like John von Stieglitz and his wife Emma, were relatively well off and could afford to bring significant amounts of portable material culture with them, but others had to select from what was made available to them in the new retail establishments of Melbourne. The extent and nature of some of the portable material culture that was available to well-off settlers in 1841 can be seen in Emma von Stieglitz's watercolour painting depicting the interior of their home (Figure 1). The presence of books, artworks and a piano on the right-hand side of the room, for example, are clear demonstrations of their owner's social status in the new settlement.[4]

During these early years of settlement, great profits were made by importers of food, drink, and other consumer goods. Luxury items could be sold at exorbitant prices.[5] Paul de Serville has suggested that "Land sales were conducted with the aid of Champagne breakfasts . . . [and that] The outskirts of Melbourne were marked by cairns of champagne bottles".[6] There were also — in common with many early colonial economies — times of food shortage before agricultural and pastoral activities became firmly established. In the case of the Port Phillip District during 1840, for example, flour was in short supply, and under these circumstances, doubled or trebled in price.[7] As Penelope Selby wrote in a letter dated 26 December 1840, "Provisions are very fluctuating in price, when we arrived the 4lb loaf was three shillings, now it is only one, so you may be sure we have laid in a good stock of flour".[8]

It is likely that Green and Company of Liverpool, owners of the small trading brig *William Salthouse*, heard about the economic opportunities offered by the new Port Phillip settlement either through the commercial sections of the newspapers or perhaps by more direct contact with the fledgling colony. This may be what encouraged them to take the vessel off the West Indies trade, where it had been engaged for more than a decade, and dispatch the vessel from London to Montréal and then on to Port Phillip.[9]

There had been a massive expansion in shipping arrivals to Port Phillip during the late 1830s and early 1840s. The number of vessels arriving from overseas ports increased particularly rapidly.[10] In the year 1841 alone at least 70 vessels arrived at Melbourne from overseas ports, the vast majority from ports in Britain. Most (at least 40) were large vessels of between 400 and 1,000 tons, each of which carried over 100 passengers, including bounty and free emigrants, as well as a general cargo which was usually described in the newspapers as "merchandise" or "sundries". There were also at least 25 vessels, referred to at the time as "short ships", which were smaller in size (between 100 and 400 tons), which carried a mainly general cargo and a restricted number of

Figure 1: *Interior of a Squatter's Hut at Port Phillip (1841), watercolour painting by Emma von Stieglitz (from the collection of Mr. H.O.C. Gilbert; reproduced from T. Lane & J. Serle,* **Australians at Home** *(Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1990), 65).*

passengers (usually less than 20). All of these vessels originated from ports in Britain including Liverpool, London, Plymouth, Bristol, Greenock, Leith, Dublin, Cork and Guernsey. In addition there were a small number (less than 10) of vessels which arrived from British colonial ports overseas such as Cape Town and Calcutta, or from "foreign" ports such as Oporto (Portugal), Lombok and Roti (in what is now Indonesia).

Many more vessels (at least 200), both small and large, arrived in the port of Melbourne in 1841 from places in Australia. Most originated in major Australian colonial ports like Sydney, Hobart, Launceston and Adelaide, and at least some of these would have been carrying cargo which had been transhipped from vessels arriving from overseas. A smaller, but still significant, number of small vessels (usually less than 100 tons) arrived from outlying settlements such as Twofold Bay (NSW), King Island and Flinders Is-

land (Tasmania) as well as Geelong, Western Port, Portland Bay and Corner Inlet (Victoria).[11]

Only one vessel would have arrived from Canada in 1841 but, after having sailed half way around the world, *William Salthouse* was wrecked during its final approaches to Port Phillip. Unlike the well-known case of *Sydney Cove*, which was simply one unsuccessful example among nearly 40 arrivals from India at Port Jackson between 1792 and 1810, the voyage of *William Salthouse* was a unique, and unrepeated, attempt to institute direct trade between British colonies in Canada and Australia.

Background – Montréal

In contrast to the new Australian colonies during the late 1830s, the eastern settlements of British North America (Canada) were firmly established. By 1840, as one Canadian historian has sug-

gested, British North America "could boast a very active, even vibrant, commercial economy based on its rich inheritance of natural resources and a growing transatlantic carrying trade".[12] This economy was primarily based on the export of furs, timber, fish, grain, meat and other primary produce.[13] Many of these bulk commodities had been at least partly processed in some form; for example, the timber was cut into boards or "deals" (planks), the grain had been milled into flour, while the meat and fish were salted and packed in casks.

Montréal, with a population of 40,000 by 1840, was the largest urban settlement in British North America at this time and had become firmly established as the key centre for British trade in the whole region.[14] The Lachine Canal, built to avoid the dangerous Lachine rapids on the St. Lawrence river at Montréal, which had been a barrier to the development of trade, had been opened in 1825.[15] In addition harbour improvements during the 1820s and 1830s, as well as the opening of the Welland (1829) and Rideau (1834) canals, helped to channel trade through the port of Montréal.[16] The 1830s also saw the increasing use of steam vessels to tow sailing ships up the St. Lawrence from Québec, and in 1832 Montréal was made an official port of entry, which allowed vessels

to make their first arrival from overseas at Montréal rather than having to stop at Québec (see Figure 2).[17]

The opening of the first railway in British North America in 1836, the Champlain and St. Lawrence railway, which linked Lapraire (across the river from Montréal) with St. Johns on the Richelieu River, considerably expanded the timber trade through the port of Montréal. A new Customs House was built at Montréal in the same year to assist the authorities to control the ebb and flow of commerce and to collect the duties payable on goods, particularly alcohol, which was a crucial part of the colonial government's economy at that time. Gerald Tulchinsky, writing about this period, has suggested that: "Commerce was the lifeblood of Montréal".[18]

Exports from Québec and Montréal in 1841 were valued at over £2 million, boosted by significant increases in the tonnage of shipping clearing from Québec and Montréal, as well as in the barge traffic on the Lachine Canal.[19] Manufactured goods imported from Britain and British North American exports, in particular the new staple products of timber and wheat, flowed through Montréal, bought and sold by the British merchants who had quickly come to dominate the trade and commerce of the city.[20]

Figure 2: **View of the port of Montréal (*c.1840*), *watercolour painting by Coke Smith. From the collection of the* Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec.**

Historical Background – William Salthouse

On 27 March 1841 *William Salthouse* sailed from London for Montréal under the command of Captain G. Burn, carrying a general cargo which included alcohol, tea, gunpowder, spices, candles, starch, and manufactured goods such as boots, shoes, toys and even a dinner service.[21] Timed to arrive in the St. Lawrence river shortly after the ice thaw in late April or early May, the vessel actually arrived at Québec on Friday 21 May.[22] On Sunday 23 May *William Salthouse* left for Montréal under tow to the steam vessel *British America*, together with *Henry Duncan*, *Papineau* and *Lord Keane*, and most of this group arrived at the port of Montréal on the evening of Tuesday 25 May.[23] Both the vessel and the cargo were consigned to R.F. Maitland and Company, a small grocery and dry goods firm, which acted later as the shippers of the outbound cargo from Montréal.[24]

On arrival at Montréal a small part of the inbound cargo of *William Salthouse* was listed for exportation (eight butts, 40 hogsheads and 36 quarter casks of sherry wine) and was, presumably, placed in a bond store.[25] Yet when the vessel left Montréal the outbound cargo manifest makes no mention of this considerable quantity of alcohol, and instead lists five cases of sauterne, five cases of muscat and 20 baskets of champagne, as well as 25 boxes of crown blue (starch), as having been "imported in the ship".[26] Some 1,010 bars of English iron were also listed in both the inbound and outbound cargo manifests.[27] However the majority of the ship's inward cargo was advertised for sale as part of a large auction at the stores of R.F. Maitland and Company on 31 May 1841 by Cuvillier and Sons, a leading auction company in the city.[28]

R.F. Maitland & Company were wholesale and wine merchants located at the corner St. Francois Xavier and Hospital Streets in the port of Montréal. They were one of only three wine merchants and one of 46 general merchants listed as operating in Montréal during 1842–43 in the earliest available Montréal Directory.[29] R.F.Maitland and Company was a relatively small company in terms of the city's commerce and was involved in the import, export and sale of general merchandise including tea, alcohol, salt pork and flour.[30] They appear typical of the small Anglophone merchant companies which had come to dominate commerce in Québec and Montréal since the British takeover in 1763.[31]

There were, however, also businessmen of French extraction who were active in both Québec and Montréal at the time, and Cuvillier was an important and interesting individual in this respect. Born Augustin Cuvillier at Québec City in 1779, he married Claire Perrault at the Catholic Cathedral of Notre Dame de Montréal in 1802 and later anglicised his name to Austin Cuvillier. The Cuvillier family maintained their Catholic religion, however, as at least three of his children and one of his grandchildren were married in Notre Dame de Montréal and Cuvillier himself was buried there in 1849.

Cuvillier and Sons operated in the wholesale and retail dry goods trade and by the late 1830s specialized in selling goods at auction on commission.[32] In addition to his business interests, Cuvillier served with distinction against the Americans during the War of

1812, he opposed the French Patriotes during the rebellion of 1837, and from 1841 served as speaker of the Legislative Assembly of United Canada.[33] Cuvillier managed to establish, and maintain for more than four decades, a position as one of the leading auctioneers and businessmen in Montréal. The example of Augustin/Austin Cuvillier suggests that, despite his French heritage and Catholic religion, it was still possible to effect a considerable measure of commercial and social success in British North America during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The Final Voyage of William Salthouse

William Salthouse was listed as having cleared customs in Montréal on 17 June 1841, for a voyage to Port Phillip and then Sydney in NSW (see Figure 3).[34] Although there is no direct documentary evidence we must assume that the vessel made a relatively lengthy stop in Québec City, as it is not listed as having cleared that port until almost a month later on 12 July 1841.[35] The vessel subsequently called in at Cape Town for refreshments in mid-October. It stayed for just three days and, as far as can be determined from archival sources examined in South Africa, did not load or unload cargo.[36]

At the end of the voyage from Montréal on Saturday 27 November 1841 *William Salthouse* attempted to enter Port Phillip Heads, the entrance to the port of Melbourne, but struck a submerged rock off Point Nepean. The rudder became unshipped, the hold gradually filled with water, and the vessel eventually sank on a sandbank known as the Pope Eye Bank, near the small town of Queenscliff (see Figure 4). It quickly became obvious that there was little hope of salvaging *William Salthouse* or any major portion of its cargo, which was valued at £12,000. Consequently H.G. Ashurst and Company, the vessel's Melbourne agents, quickly arranged an auction sale. This took place on 7 December 1841, when the hull and cargo were sold to Captain James Cain for just £275. Less than two weeks later on 18 December 1841 Captain Cain sold the wreck and cargo for £110 to Captain Cole.[37]

The loss of *William Salthouse* must have represented a significant financial blow to Green and Company, the owners of the vessel, as well as to the shippers of the cargo. Insurance might have offset the loss but was unlikely to have covered it fully. The *Port Phillip Patriot* (one of several contemporary Melbourne newspapers) suggested another possible consequence of the loss:

> The *William Salthouse* was, we believe, the first vessel, excepting the prison ship *Buffalo*, with the Canadian rebels, that ever came direct from British North America to any of the Australian Colonies... [The] catastrophe is therefore doubly to be deplored as likely to cast a damp upon the opening of trade which might have proved highly advantageous to these Colonies.[38]

The Archaeological Excavation of William Salthouse

The loss of *William Salthouse* was largely forgotten and remained a minor event in the early history of Melbourne for more than 140 years until the wreck was relocated by SCUBA divers in 1982. The site lies
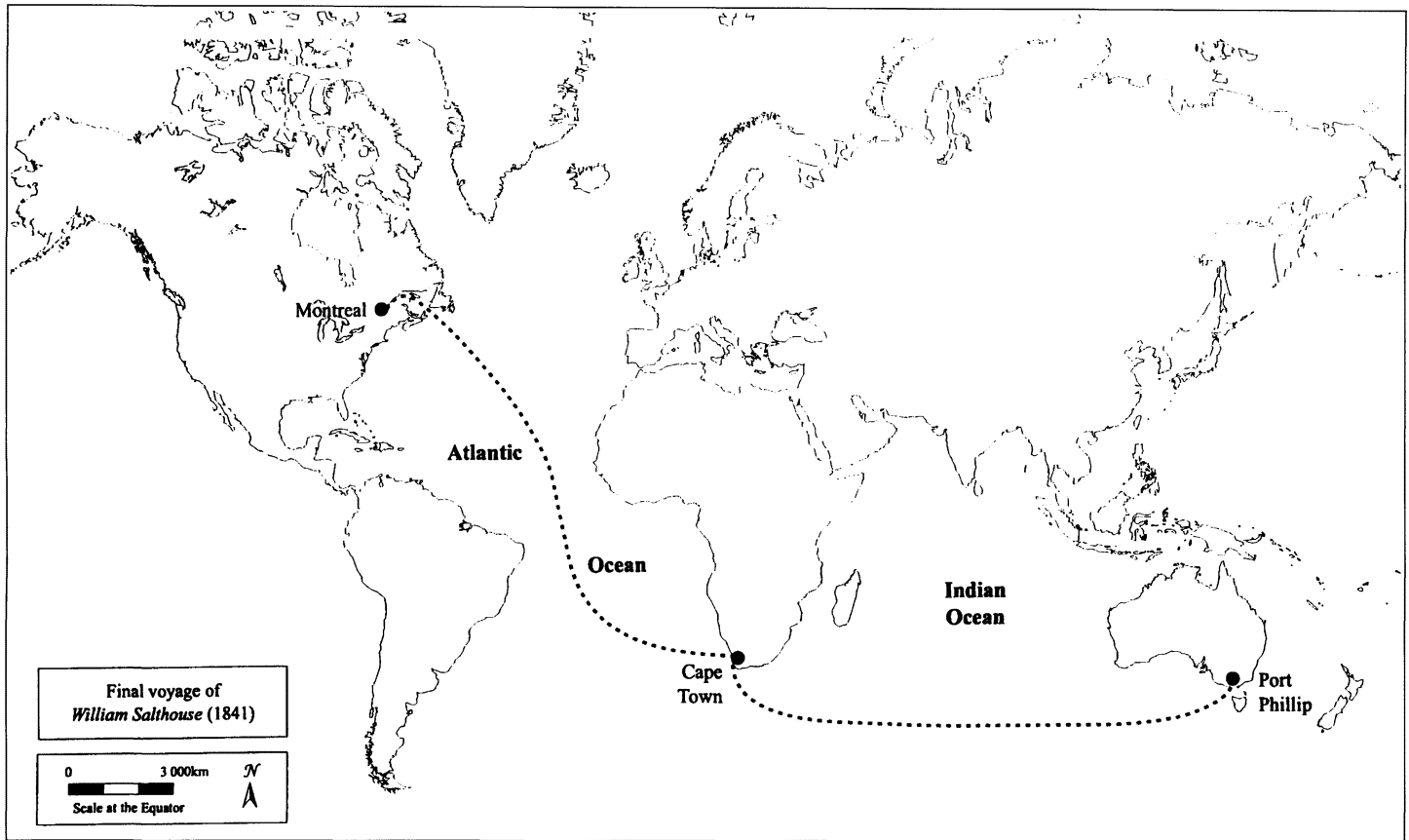
***Figure 3: Map showing the final voyage of* William Salthouse**

approximately 500 metres north of Pope's Eye in 14 metres of water in a two-metre high sand ridge on an undulating sandy seabed (see Figure 4). The wrecksite was declared a historic shipwreck in December 1982 under the provisions of the Historic Shipwreck Act 1981 (Victoria). Despite legislative protection the site was subjected to considerable surface interference and damage caused by visiting SCUBA divers in January 1983. As a result the wrecksite was declared a "Protected Zone", which prohibited diving within 250 metres of the site. In March and April 1983 an archaeological test excavation was carried out by the Maritime Archaeological Unit (MAU) of the Victoria Archaeological Survey (VAS).[39] Further excavation was conducted in 1991 to remove the contents of a cask of salted beef.[40] Site stablisation has been undertaken in recent years, including the installation of artificial sea-grass matting on the site.[41]

In 1993 the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments granted an amnesty under the Historic Shipwrecks legislation which resulted in a significant number of artefacts from the wrecksite of *William Salthouse* being reported, or handed in, to Heritage Victoria (which replaced VAS). Although these artefacts had lost their archaeological context, which was invariably not recorded by the divers who had illegally acquired these objects, they have extended our understandings of certain aspects of the cargo.[42]

Research into the history and archaeology of the wreck of *William Salthouse* has been conducted by a number of researchers over the past 20 years, and this paper will only consider the cargo component. Research has been carried out on the casks,[43] on the bone remains of the salted meat,[44] and on the bottles[45] and their contents.[46] As part of my current research program, archival and newspaper research was carried out in Canada in 1994 and South Africa in 1995, as well as artefact analysis of the additions to the archaeological assemblage (in storage at the laboratory of Heritage Victoria) as a result of the 1993 amnesty, together with supporting analysis of Victorian colonial newspapers and archives. The Maritime Heritage Unit Database listing of artefacts from *William Salthouse* was used as the basis for this analysis.

The Cargo of **William Salthouse**

The cargo of *William Salthouse* on its voyage to Melbourne appears to have included many of the important exports available in Montréal in the period around 1840, including building materials such as sawn timber (boards and deals) and nails, food (including salted meat, salted fish and flour) and alcohol. Generally, these items represent the kinds of food, alcohol and building construction materials which would be most useful in a newly established British colony albeit at the other end of the earth. There are,
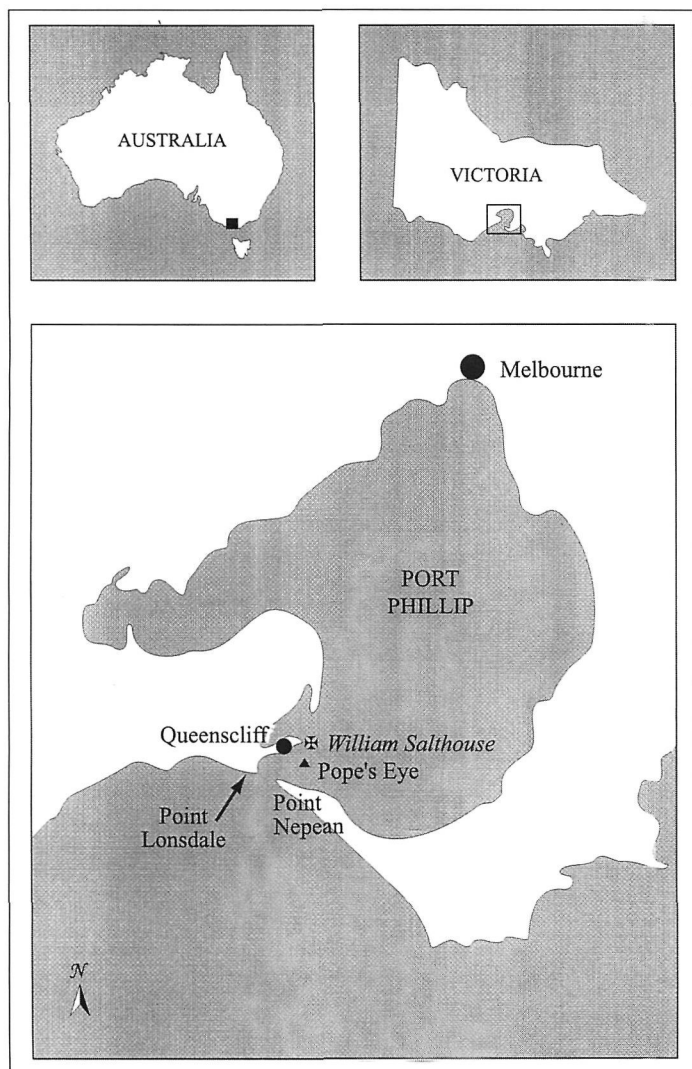
Figure 4: Map showing the location of William Salthouse

however, some interesting discrepancies between the various incoming and outgoing cargo manifests available in the contemporary Melbourne and Montréal newspapers, and the archaeological evidence. These reflect on cultural attitudes and behaviours, and will be discussed in more detail later in this paper.

A significant portion of the final cargo of *William Salthouse* was contained in what are generically known as casks.[47] At least 1,086 casks of six different sizes (in order of size from the smallest to the largest: keg, half-barrel, barrel, tierce, hogshead and puncheon) were listed in the outgoing manifest.[48] They included 110 casks, barrels and tierces of dry and salted fish (herrings, salmon, mackerel and codfish); 355 barrels and 20 half barrels of salt pork; 143 tierces and 33 barrels of salt beef; 396 barrels of flour; and 79 various casks, barrels, kegs, hogsheads and puncheons of vinegar, colouring, nails, crackers, cider and whiskey.

With regard to the cask heads (or lids) from casks containing salted meat, the results published in Staniforth[49] were based on just eight complete and a small number of partial cask lids raised during the test excavation. The sample has been considerably increased as a result of the 1993 amnesty, with 13 complete and more than 30 partial cask lids forming the basis for this artefact analysis.

Cask lids were commonly marked — with a brand, a painted stencil or incised mark — which we can decipher to reveal information about the quantity, quality and type of contents in the casks. The cask lids excavated from the wreck of *William Salthouse* reveal such markings,[50] and they also reveal that it is possible for considerable quantities of pork, beef and fish bone (as well as pork and beef fat) to remain in the casks.[51]

Casks and their contents have been poorly understood by historical archaeologists. For example, the widely-read publication on Sydney's First Government House asserted:

> There are references to the early settlers being issued with salt pork and beef provisions from the Government stores, but this meat, transported from England in barrels, would have left no archaeological evidence as the meat is boned before salting.[52]

This particular interpretation was clearly at odds with the available literature at the time of writing,[53] and has subsequently been recognised as an incorrect interpretation in publications by English and Birmingham.[54] Olive Jones' later assertion that it "will be difficult to identify the specific contents of staved containers from archaeological sites" is clearly not the case with casks obtained from well-preserved shipwreck sites such as *William Salthouse*.[55]

Building construction materials
Timber and nails were the principal building construction materials in the cargo of *William Salthouse*. The outbound cargo manifest from Montréal listed 498,400 feet of boards, 812 pieces of deals, 50 pieces of boards, and 26 casks of nails. This was basically matched by the inbound manifest at Melbourne, with the additional information that the first two mentioned items were made of white pine.[56]

During the first inspection dives on the wreck, wooden planks were seen on the site but it is not known if these represented boards or deals. SCUBA divers had so disturbed the site before the test excavation took place in 1983 that these timbers were no longer present. One cask of nails was located during the test excavation.

The presence of significant quantities of sawn timber and nails, destined for local building construction, is indicative of the high level of dependency by a new settlement like Port Phillip upon established urban centres. Victoria had enormous reserves of timber, which from the second half of the nineteenth century would form the basis of a major timber industry producing sawn timber for both domestic consumption and export. Nevertheless, in its earliest days the new colony was largely dependent on external

sources as the infrastructure simply had not been established to allow the exploitation of sufficient quantities of locally-available timber.

Flour

According to the *Montréal Gazette, William Salthouse* left the city with 250 barrels of fine flour, which it listed as being the produce of the United States. However the newspaper later reported that the ship had exported 395 barrels of flour, a total that was very nearly confirmed by the *Port Phillip Herald*, which listed the cargo of *William Salthouse* as including 394 barrels of flour.[57]

An MNV (Minimum Number of Vessels) of nine flour cask lids (three complete and six partial lids) were raised during the test excavation of *William Salthouse* or were handed in to Heritage Victoria as a result of the 1993 amnesty.[58] All the lids appear to be of barrel size (the three complete examples vary in diameter from 41.5 to 43.5 cm). All of the complete examples had a bung hole, in two cases with the bung still in situ. All were branded with all or part of the words:

<div align="center">

FINE
W. WATSON INS
MONTREAL
JUNE 1841

</div>

In every case the N in JUNE is back to front (see Figures 5 and 6).

At least one cask lid had the words LACHINE MILLS stencilled in black paint, which was visible at the time of excavation and shortly thereafter (Figure 5), but was no longer visible after conservation. Most of the cask lids also had talley or cooper's marks cut into the surface and other indistinct words painted onto the surface, including what is believed to be a weight of the contents in pounds (196 lbs).

The archaeological evidence suggests that a significant part of the flour cargo was, in fact, ground at the Lachine Mills, a flour mill on the Lachine Canal in Montréal during June 1841. Furthermore the brands on the cask lids indicate that this flour was inspected by William Watson in Montréal in June 1841. William Watson held the post of inspector of flour at Montréal for 30 years from 1827 — when he succeeded his older brother Robert — until 1857, when he retired from the position.[59] There is currently no archaeological evidence to support a United States origin for any part of the flour cargo, though it must be stressed that the available sample (nine heads from 395 barrels) is less than five percent of the total.

The presence of flour in the cargo from *William Salthouse* confirms the high level of dependency of the Port Phillip settlement upon external sources of supply for even the most basic commodities: the lack of wheat growing and the absence of flour milling infrastructure are clearly evident in the need to import such a commodity.

Fish

Commercial fishing is the oldest and one of the most important of Canada's resource-based industries. In the nineteenth century the fisheries comprised three major sectors: the saltwater Atlantic and Pacific fisheries, and the smaller, but still significant, freshwater
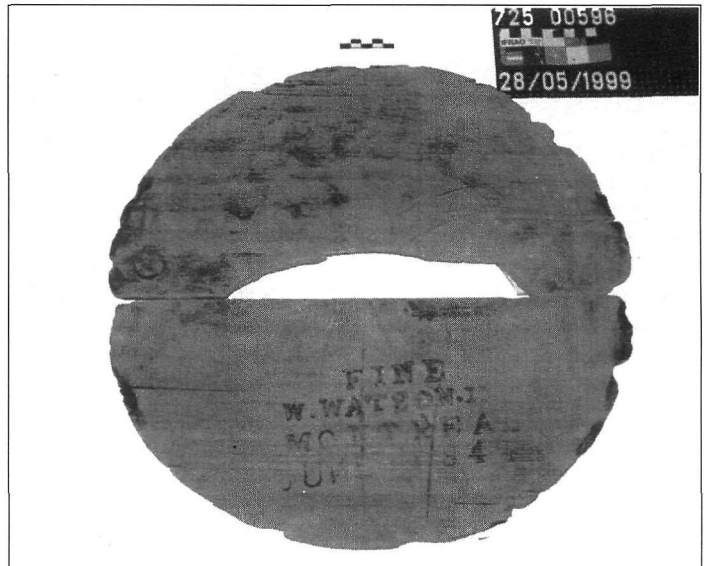

Figure 5: *Flour barrel lid (wreck no. 725, item no. 596) showing the incised, stencilled and branded marks made by the cooper, flour miller and inspector.* **Photo by Mark Staniforth**

Figure 6: *Flour barrel lid (wreck no. 725, item no. 654) showing the bung (at right) used for inspection, and the stencilled weight (196 lb) of the contents.* **Photo by Mark Staniforth.**

fishery. The Atlantic fishery and, probably, the freshwater fishery are relevant to our story.

The fisheries were seasonal with most activity during the spring through to the autumn when the water was not frozen. Many of the early commercial fisheries used seine nets, which could be 300

feet in length. In addition to seine nets, dip nets, spears and hooks and lines were used in the early fisheries. Once caught, the fish were cleaned (with the backbone left in), beheaded, and preserved by being either dried or "salted" (packed in barrels of brine).[60] Some of the catch was for export and some was for domestic consumption as winter provisions. Well-packed and salted fish would keep for months or even years.[61]

Cod became the first North American food to be exploited in great quantities, and for many years the cod trade was the largest and most valuable industry in the northern regions of North America. From the sixteenth century onwards, seasonal fishing stations were established on the shores of Newfoundland, Labrador and other Maritime provinces such as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia for the taking and drying of cod.[62] The cod was either dried or salted or some combination of both. Designations included "green" cod fish, which was lightly pickled in brine salt but not dried, but most of the catch was preserved as dry cod fish that had been split, salted and exposed to sun and air until it was perfectly hard and dry. Great quantities of cod were preserved and stored in this way for transport to European markets at the end of the summer.[63]

The freshwater fishery was divided into a number of regional fisheries, of which the most important was the Great Lakes fishery. Commercial fishing on the Great Lakes began about 1800, and during the nineteenth century the Great Lakes supported the largest freshwater fishery in the world. The early nineteenth century existence of large-scale commercial fisheries can be inferred from the existence of legislation to protect salmon in Lake Ontario (1807) and herring in Burlington Bay (1823). Commercial fishing for salmon and herring on both the US and Canadian sides of the Great Lakes was well established by the 1830s.[64]

In 1840, the vast majority of the fish exports from Montréal and Québec went directly to Britain, with only 356 barrels of herrings being exported to other British North America colonies, as well as 266 hundredweight of codfish, 31 barrels of herrings, 24 barrels of mackerel, and 140 tierces, 36 barrels and one half barrel of salmon to the British West Indies.[65]

According to the cargo manifest listed in the *Port Phillip Herald*, the cargo of *William Salthouse* included nearly 150 casks and boxes of assorted sizes containing at least four different species of dried or salted fish: 59 casks of dry cod fish, 26 tierces of No. 1 Salmon, 4 barrels of No. 1 Mackerel, 20 barrels of No. 1 Herrings and 40 boxes of large table fish. The *Montréal Gazette* later confirmed most of this part of the manifest, but also includes 1 barrel of salmon (perhaps for crew consumption?), and in place of the 40 boxes of large table fish lists 40 boxes of codfish.[66]

It is important to note that at the time of the ship's departure, however, the *Montréal Gazette* had made no mention of fish in the cargo.[67] According to its outbound manifest, there was no fish on board when the ship "cleared" — in other words, passed customs inspection — at Montréal. Presumably the large cargo of fish was loaded after clearing customs at Montréal, probably at Québec City or perhaps at an outport in the Maritime provinces. Was this simply

an example of the late loading of a convenient supply of preserved food for a new colony? If nothing else, it demonstrates some of the problems of relying solely for information on a single nineteenth-century cargo manifest.

Among the species caught, and represented in the *William Salthouse* cargo, were:

> Cod – probably Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*) or one of the several related species which occur only in seawater and were caught in fisheries in the Maritime provinces, especially Newfoundland.
>
> Mackerel – probably Atlantic mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*) or one of the several related species which occur only in seawater and were caught in fisheries in the Maritime provinces.
>
> Salmon – probably Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) or one of the several related species which occur in both fresh and sea water, and were caught either in fisheries in the Maritime provinces or on the Great Lakes (before 1860 when the fish became extinct there).
>
> Herring – probably the Atlantic herring (*Culpea harengus harengus*) or related species which are saltwater fish though, at that time, herring were still being caught in the freshwater fishery on the Great Lakes.[68]

The descriptors used for herring in contemporary newspapers in Montréal and Québec appear to be based on the location where they were caught.[69] Examples include:

N.S.	Nova Scotia
Baie des Chaleurs	Québec/New Brunswick
Arichat	Cape Breton Island/New Brunswick
Digby	Nova Scotia
Bay St George	Newfoundland

This evidence suggests that most of the herring being traded in Montréal and Québec was actually Atlantic herring, and that these were being caught in the Maritime provinces particularly Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland.

There is no indication in any of the available cargo manifests about the origin of the fish component of *William Salthouse's* cargo. The archaeological evidence provides us with only two tantalising clues. The first is a lid from a 200lb barrel, marked "200.... W Mac..... No 1 HERR....St John.....", which confirms the presence of at least one of the 20 barrels of No. 1 Herrings listed in the various manifests. Together with the evidence cited above, the name "St John" indicates that the herrings in the cargo of *William Salthouse* probably originated in either St Johns, Newfoundland, or St John, New Brunswick, and that therefore the contents were Atlantic herrings. The second archaeological clue is a section of a cask lid from what was clearly a barrel (43.5 cm diam), which is branded with the words "St Johns NFLD" (725 141). It is reasonable to assume that the contents of this cask were fish, as none of

the rest of the cargo with which we are familiar was contained in casks from Newfoundland. We can also infer that the contents were very unlikely to have been salmon, which was almost all contained in tierces (50 cm diam).

Salt Beef
According to the *Montréal Gazette*, the cargo of *William Salthouse* included 143 tierces and 33 barrels of salt beef.[70]

As far as can be determined an MNV of seven beef cask lids (two complete and five partial lids) were raised during the test excavation of *William Salthouse* or were handed in to Heritage Victoria as a result of the 1993 amnesty.[71] The lids were of three different sizes: three tierces (49.5 cm diam.), two barrels (43 cm diam.) and one half-barrel (34 cm diam.), with one partial lid of unknown size. The barrels and tierces were branded with all or part of the words:

<div align="center">

200 *or* 300 PRIME MESS BEEF

W. MOORE

MONTREAL

L.C. 1840 *or* 1841

OCT *or* MAY

</div>

This means that these beef casks and their contents were inspected in Montréal, not necessarily that they originated in Montréal. While six of the beef casks (all the tierces and barrels) are assumed to represent cargo items, the one half-barrel is believed to be part of the provisions for the crew on the basis that no half-barrels are listed in any of the manifests and only one example was raised during the archaeological excavation (see Figures 7 and 8).

Salt Pork
According to the *Montréal Gazette*, the cargo of *William Salthouse* included 355 barrels and 20 half barrels of salt pork.[72]

As far as can be determined an MNV of 13 pork barrel lids (eight complete and five partial lids) were raised during the test excavation of *William Salthouse* or were handed in to Heritage Victoria as a result of the 1993 amnesty.[73] All the lids appear to be of barrel size (the complete examples vary in diameter from 41 to 43.5 cm) and there are no examples of the half-barrel sized pork casks. All were branded with all or part of the words:

<div align="center">

200 PRIME *or* 200 PRIME MESS PORK

W.MOORE

MONTREAL

L.C. 1840 *or* 1841

DEC *or* MARC, APRIL, JUNE

</div>

As with the salted beef, this means that the casks and their contents were inspected in Montréal, not necessarily that they originated there. All of the eight complete casks have a full date of inspection: December 1840, March, April or June 1841. It is important to note that there is a direct correlation between the date and the designation PRIME or PRIME MESS that applied to the contents. All of the barrels inspected in June 1841 (three barrels) have the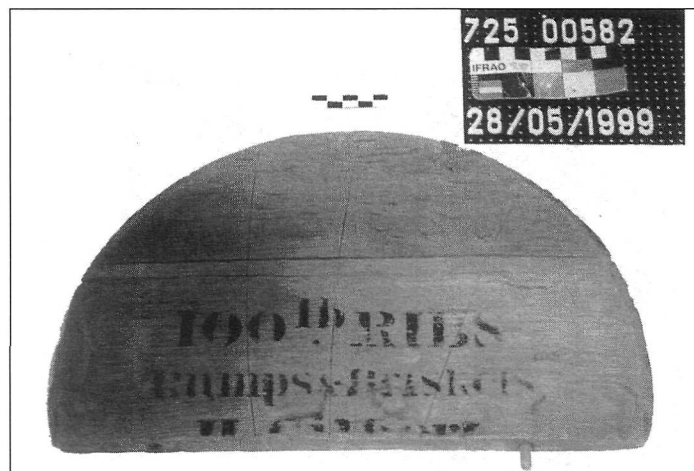 designation PRIME (see Figure 9), and all of the barrels inspected in June 1841 (three barrels) have the designation PRIME (see Figure 9), and all of the barrels in-

Figure 7: **Partial cask lid from a half-barrel (wreck no. 725, item no. 582), showing text "100 lb RIBS Rumps & Briskets H Gilbert" stencilled in black paint. Photo by Mark Staniforth.**
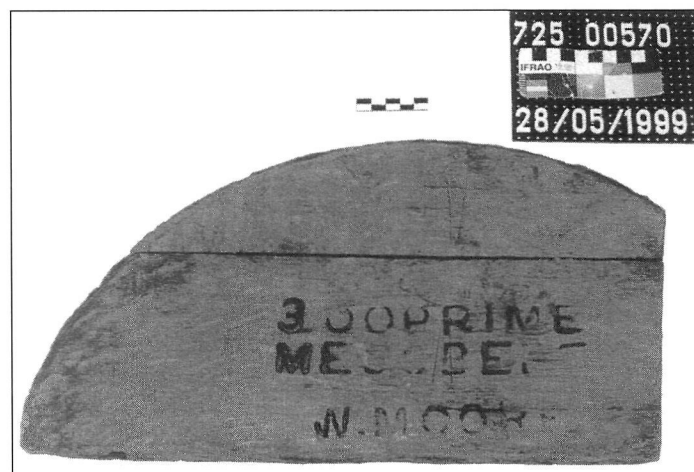

Figure 8: **Partial cask lid from a tierce (wreck no. 725, item no. 570), showing text "300 PRIME MESS BEEF W. MOORE" branded (burnt) into the surface. Photo by Mark Staniforth.**

spected at any other date (five barrels: December 1840, March or April 1841) have the designation PRIME MESS (see Figure 10). The June 1841 inspection date and associated designation PRIME suggests that these particular barrels were some of those received by R.F. Maitland & Co during late May and the first few days of June 1841. These are discussed further later in this paper.

From the prices current in the Montréal Gazette,74 we know that four grades of pork were being sold in Montréal at a cost per barrel of:

Figure 9: Partial cask lid from a barrel (wreck no. 725, item no. 584), showing text "200 PRIME PORK W. MOORE MONTREAL L.C. 1841 JUNE" branded (burnt) into the surface. Photo by Mark Staniforth.
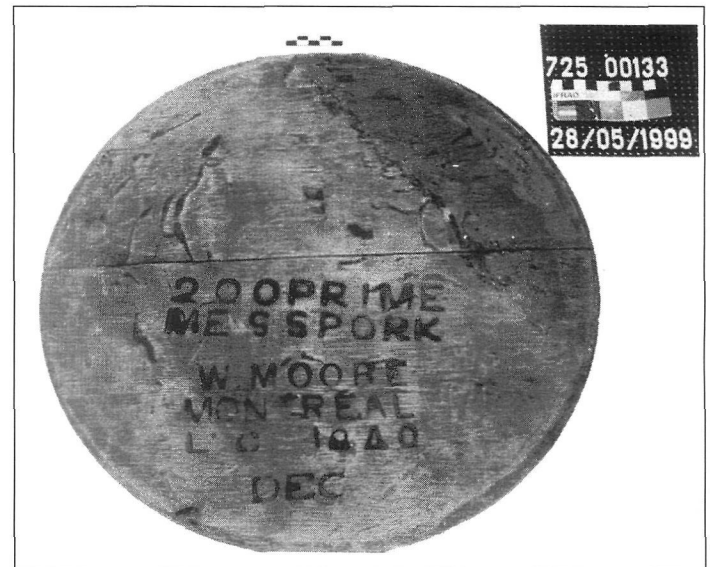

Figure 10: Partial cask lid from a barrel (wreck no. 725, item no. 133), showing text "200 PRIME MESS PORK W. MOORE MONTREAL L.C. 1840 DEC" branded (burnt) into the surface. Photo by Mark Staniforth.

Mess Pork	67s 6d to 70s 0d
Prime Mess Pork	60s 0d
Prime Pork	55s 0d
Cargo Pork	45s 0d

The following commentary is also significant: "Prime is in good request while Mess goes off slowly, at our quotations, and Prime Mess is neglected".[75]

Thus from combining the archaeological and historical evidence we know something about the quality, or at least the alleged quality, of the contents of some of the casks of pork. There were at least nine barrels containing Prime Mess pork, which was the second best quality, and four barrels containing Prime pork, which was the third best quality of four grades of pork that were defined by Lower Canada legislation.[76] The dates and associated designations on the cask lids suggest that part of the consignment consisted of "neglected" Prime Mess grade pork that had been inspected at least two months (April 1841) and as long as six months (December 1840) before being loaded aboard *William Salthouse*, but on the other hand the PRIME grade pork was newly inspected (June 1841). This may be partly attributable to the "good request" or demand for pork in Montréal, but may also signal that the consignors of the cargo of *William Salthouse* took the opportunity to rid themselves of old stock that they had lying around to customers who were too far away to complain effectively about the age of the consignment.

The figures cut, branded or stencilled on the cask heads excavated from the *William Salthouse* have provided us with valuable information about this significant portion of the cargo. Furthermore it has been possible to establish the grade and/or contents,

source, date of inspection and name of the inspector of some of the casks from the markings of the heads. The inscriptions give details about where the casks were inspected (Montréal in Lower Canada), when the casks were inspected (October/December 1840 or March/April/May/June 1841) and who inspected the casks (W. Watson or W. Moore).

Legislative attempts to regulate the sale of salted meat in Britain and the British colonies can be seen as a reaction to the sorts of problems exemplified in the evidence of the master of the female convict ship *Diamond* in 1838. At a board of inquiry established in Sydney, he described the provisions taken on board in Ireland as "mostly of bad quality[;]... a great part of the salt beef was shin bones and neck pieces[;]... it seemed very old and in a state of decay".[77]

It should be pointed out, however, that legislation only tells us what was supposed to happen, not what actually happened. The repeated repealing and suspension of this legislation suggests that the meat producers had trouble meeting the standards required by the inspectors. The controlled archaeological excavation of a number of intact casks, which has yet to be attempted, may provide further evidence about the extent to which the rules for grading the meat were actually adhered to.

Melbourne, the port of destination for this cargo, had only been settled for five years, and therefore the food component of the cargo provides us with insights into just how dependent the new settlement was (or was thought to be) on imported produce. The food also demonstrates how culturally determined the settlers' tastes were. Salt pork or beef, even if it had been in a cask for a year, was preferable — or perhaps easier or cheaper to obtain —

than either hunting the indigenous wildlife or slaughtering recently imported livestock. This also highlights the difficulties of establishing sufficient numbers of animals in a new colony to provide for the meat (protein) needs of a rapidly growing population.

Alcohol
Detailed examination of the corks from some of the Champagne-style bottles has revealed that at least two are clearly marked with the letters "AY" inside a circle. Peter Morgan has convincingly argued that this refers the village of Ay near the Marne river in the Champagne district of France.[78] Thus the archaeological evidence suggests that what are usually referred to as generic-style "Champagne" bottles did, in this case, actually contain genuine French Champagne that had been shipped from France to Canada, almost certainly via Britain.

Two distinct forms of wine bottle were found on the wreck of *William Salthouse*. The archaeological excavation also revealed the remains of two wooden packing cases, one marked "muscat" and the other "Lichtenstein, Fins & CE Cette".[79] These markings appear to be of a wine shipper based in the port of Cette (now Sete), on the Mediterranean coast of the French province of Languedoc. Languedoc muscat is a well-known wine, and other Languedoc wines have been described as "sweet and liquorous, something like Madeiras".[80]

The inbound cargo manifest listed only one type of wine — five cases of sauterne — as well as champagne, whisky and cider.[81] Analysis by the Australian Wine Research Institute has revealed that one type of bottle contained a high alcohol dessert-style wine, probably a fortified wine, which is much more in keeping with muscat than any of the other types of alcohol listed in the manifest.[82] Research in Canadian newspapers of the time has revealed that the outbound cargo manifest from Montréal actually listed five cases of muscat in addition to the five cases of sauterne.[83] In this case the historical record has subsequently confirmed the existing archaeological evidence. We are still left, however, with the question of why the muscat was not included in the inbound cargo manifest.

It is possible that the answer relates to some of the numerous discrepancies in the amounts, types and sources of the alcohol listed in the various cargo manifests. When *William Salthouse* cleared Montréal, for example, five cases of muscat, five cases of sauterne and 20 baskets of champagne were described in the outbound cargo list as having been "imported in the ship".[84] These items seem to have appeared from nowhere, as they are not listed in the ship's inbound cargo manifest to Montréal.[85] If we were totally dependent on the historical records there would be no way to reconcile such inconsistencies.

One possible explanation is that these are attempts to evade or reduce the duty payable on alcohol being imported and exported. Smuggling, evasion of customs duty, and private trade by the masters, officers and crew of ships in the nineteenth century was probably widespread, but conclusive evidence about this kind of

behaviour is rarely available in documentary records.[86] The cargo of *William Salthouse* may represent an example of these practices.

The Origins of the Cargo
The inbound cargo manifest published in the *Port Phillip Herald* provides us with no direct information about the origins or sources of particular components of the cargo.[87] Fortunately, the outbound cargo manifests from Montréal were examined as part of this research,[88] and these do provide some indications about where the cargo originated. As is so often the case, however, these documentary sources also posed at least as many questions as they answered.

We cannot, with any certainty, trace the precise origin of the 355 barrels and 20 half barrels of salt pork which are listed in the cargo manifests. Nevertheless, a detailed examination of Canadian newspapers of the time has provided some possibilities. During the period that *William Salthouse* was at Montréal (25 May to 12 June) we know that R.F. Maitland and Company took delivery of at least 236 barrels of pork. These consisted of 90 barrels of pork on 29 May and another 67 barrels on 2 June, both consignments carried on board the barge *Oswego*; 15 barrels carried by the barge *Kingston* on 5 June; and 64 barrels on board the barge *Victoria* on 10 June (all of which travelled via the Lachine Canal).[89] These particular barrels of pork clearly originated outside Montréal and were transported into the port via the Lachine Canal. Unfortunately we cannot determine from the historical documentation where these barrels of pork actually originated. Furthermore, the archival information is insufficient to tell whether any or all of these were included in the cargo of *William Salthouse*, though the date of inspection of June 1841 on the three PRIME pork casks discussed above is suggestive.

Both "whiskey" (note the Irish or Canadian spelling) and "cider" were listed on the inbound manifest to Port Phillip.[90] It would be very easy to assume that these represented Irish whiskey (or in this case locally-produced Canadian whiskey), as opposed to Scotch whisky, and West country (English) cider. The outbound manifest at Montréal, however, reveals that the five puncheons of "whiskey" and six hogsheads of cider were described as produce of Canada, which suggests that both the whiskey and the cider were Canadian in origin.[91]

Adverts in the Kingston newspapers (the *Chronicle & Gazette*, the *British Whig* and the *Kingston Herald*) during the early 1840s suggest that both Scotch whisky and Canadian whiskey were readily available in Lower Canada at the time. Descriptors applied to whisky/whiskey included Upper Canada whiskey, Proof and common whiskey, Port Hope whiskey, Durham family whiskey, Isla and Cambletown whiskey, Highland whiskey, Finest old Scotch whisky and Morton's Family whisky.[92] The inconsistent and interchangeable use of the words whisky and whiskey is best exemplified by the term Highland whiskey, which would seem to suggest a Scottish origin for what otherwise might be assumed to be locally-produced Canadian whiskey. If nothing else this illustrates some of the problems of trying to assess emic meaning from the inconsistently-applied descriptors that were used to describe ma-

terial goods in contemporary newspapers. The cargo was not only composed of local Canadian produce, however, as 250 barrels of "fine" flour and 50 dozen corn brooms were listed as "produce of United States".[93]

Conclusion

Analysis of the cargo of *William Salthouse* illustrates some aspects of the extent and complexity of the British mercantile trading system as it developed and expanded during the first half of the nineteenth century. Just four years into the reign of Queen Victoria, the British Empire extended from the Caribbean to Canada, and from Britain to Australia via the Cape of Good Hope. The trade in British goods was complemented by a growing global trade exemplified, in the case of *William Salthouse*, by the presence of English iron, Canadian whiskey, French champagne and American flour in the cargo.

Questions should be asked about the origins, types and quality of alcohol, food and consumer goods destined for the Australian colonies during the early nineteenth century, and answers to these questions can be sought through the historical and archaeological examination of cargoes from shipwreck sites. This paper has used data obtained from the *William Salthouse*, which was wrecked in 1841 at the end of a voyage from Montréal in Canada to the recently-established settlement at Melbourne. The inconsistencies in the incoming and outgoing cargo manifests, together with the archaeological evidence provided by the excavation of *William Salthouse*, appear to suggest attempts to evade or reduce the amount of duty paid on the ship's cargo, and assist us to understand this aspect of past human behaviour.

The ship's owners, and the merchants in Britain, Canada, South Africa and Australia who were involved in the last voyage of *William Salthouse*, would probably have seen nothing out of the ordinary in their attempt to send a mixed cargo of goods half way around the world. Had the voyage been successfully concluded, however, we might have celebrated the sesquicentenary of Canadian-Australian trade relations in 1991 instead of its centenary in 1995, but perhaps this imbues the whole event with more significance than it deserves. Such are the vagaries inherent in what the Annales school of historians have called the "history of the event": in this case a single, unsuccessful attempt at inter-colonial trade between Canada and Australia.

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