

# “Toronto Has No History!” Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Historical Memory in Canada’s Largest City

Victoria Freeman

Volume 38, numéro 2, printemps 2010

Encounters, Contests, and Communities: New Histories of Race and Ethnicity in the Canadian City

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/039672ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/039672ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Freeman, V. (2010). “Toronto Has No History!”: Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Historical Memory in Canada’s Largest City. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 38(2), 21–35. <https://doi.org/10.7202/039672ar>

## Résumé de l'article

En 1884, au cours d'une semaine complète d'événements commémorant le 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'incorporation de Toronto en 1834, des dizaines de milliers de gens fêtent l'histoire de Toronto et sa relation avec le colonialisme et l'impérialisme britannique. Une analyse des fresques historiques du défilé de la première journée des célébrations et de discours prononcés par Daniel Wilson, président de l'University College, et par le chef de Samson Green des Mohawks de Tyendinaga dévoile de divergentes approches relatives à la commémoration comme « politique par d'autres moyens » : d'une part, le camouflage du passé indigène de la région et la célébration de son avenir européen, de l'autre, une vision idéalisée du partenariat passé entre peuples autochtones et colons qui ignore la rôle de ces derniers dans la dépossession des Indiens de Mississauga. La commémoration de 1884 marque la transition entre la fondation du village en 1793 et l'incorporation de la ville en 1834 comme « moment fondateur » et symbole de la supposée « autochtonie » des colons immigrants. Le titre de propriété acquis des Mississaugas lors de l'achat de Toronto en 1787 est jugé sans importance, tandis que la Loi d'incorporation de 1834 devient l'acte symbolique de la modernité de Toronto.

# ***“Toronto Has No History!” Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Historical Memory in Canada’s Largest City***

Victoria Freeman

*In 1884, during a week-long commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Toronto’s incorporation in 1834, tens of thousands celebrated Toronto’s history and its relation to British colonialism and imperialism. The author’s analysis of the historical tableaux in the first day’s parade and speeches by Daniel Wilson, president of University College, and Chief Samson Green of the Tyendinaga Mohawks reveals divergent approaches to commemoration as “politics by other means”: on one hand, the erasure of the area’s Indigenous past and the celebration of its European future, on the other, an idealized view of the past of Indigenous-settler partnership that ignores the role of local settlers in the dispossession of the Mississaugas. The 1884 commemoration marks the transition from the founding of the settlement in 1793 to its incorporation in 1834 as the city’s “founding moment” and marker of the assumed “indigeneity” of settler-immigrants. The deed acquired from the Mississaugas in the Toronto Purchase of 1787 is deemed irrelevant, while the 1834 Act of Incorporation becomes the symbolic deed to Toronto’s modernity.*

*En 1884, au cours d’une semaine complète d’événements commémorant le 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l’incorporation de Toronto en 1834, des dizaines de milliers de gens fêtent l’histoire de Toronto et sa relation avec le colonialisme et l’impérialisme britannique. Une analyse des fresques historiques du défilé de la première journée des célébrations et de discours prononcés par Daniel Wilson, président de l’University College, et par le chef de Samson Green des Mohawks de Tyendinaga dévoile de divergentes approches relatives à la commémoration comme « politique par d’autres moyens » : d’une part, le camouflage du passé indigène de la région et la célébration de son avenir européen, de l’autre, une vision idéalisée du partenariat passé entre peuples autochtones et colons qui ignore le rôle de ces derniers dans la dépossession des Indiens de Mississauga. La commémoration de 1884 marque la transition entre la fondation du village en 1793 et l’incorporation de la ville en 1834 comme « moment fondateur » et symbole de la supposée « autochtonie » des colons immigrants. Le titre de propriété acquis des Mississaugas lors de l’achat de Toronto en 1787 est jugé sans importance, tandis que la Loi d’incorporation de 1834 devient l’acte symbolique de la modernité de Toronto.*

Pungent smoke rising from an abalone shell and fanned by an eagle feather marked the beginning of the official celebration of the 175th anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Toronto on Friday, 6 March 2009. Before a sparse crowd at Nathan Phillips Square, Peter Schuler, an elder of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, explained the meaning of the smudging ceremony as a ritual of purification and then offered “a history lesson.” He explained that according to tradition Toronto had been one of the stopping places of his ancestors on the Great Migration of the Anishinaabeg from the east coast.<sup>1</sup> “We stayed quite a while,” he added, but “in 1847 we were removed from this place.” He paused before continuing somewhat bemusedly: “I’m asked to come and celebrate this city but the city itself kind of moved us out.”

This was an assertion of a history that remains unknown to most Torontonians, who generally seem to reflect the attitude that Toronto has little history worth remembering . . . and certainly very little Indigenous history worth remembering. History does not form a large part of the city’s urban mythology or tourism promotion, and there is no museum or large-scale institution devoted to the whole span of the city’s history or that situates the history of Toronto in a larger context. While Indigenous people have lived in the Toronto region for at least eleven thousand years and the original peoples who have made this territory their home over the last several hundred years have included the Wendats (Hurons), Tionnontati (Petuns), Senecas, and Mississaugas (Ojibwa, Chippewa, Anishinaabeg), there is “little widespread awareness of the depth of this pre-contact settlement history, or general knowledge of the societies that inhabited Ontario prior to the onset of Euro-Canadian settlement,” according to a report prepared for the city in 2004.<sup>2</sup> Even rarer is the admission by non-Indigenous Torontonians that colonialism has shaped both the city’s history and public memory of the region’s past.

Yet, as Jordan Stanger-Ross, Coll Thrush, Penelope Edmonds, and others have documented, urban or municipal colonialism has been a key element of the settler colonial project.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the settler colonial city has often been viewed by colonizers and colonized alike as the “consummation of empire.”<sup>4</sup> Cities have been seen as the “ultimate avatars of . . . progress, representing the pinnacle of technology, commerce, and cultural sophistication,” at the same time as they have obliterated the Indigenous landscape of the past.<sup>5</sup> Because cities have been hubs of broader networks of power, engines driving regional

economies, and places where settler populations and resources were concentrated, cities have been important sites where colonial relations were enacted<sup>6</sup> and have played a major role in the development and diffusion of national, colonial, and imperial ideas and practices.<sup>7</sup> In fact, as Stanger-Ross and Edmonds have argued, the social, political, and cultural processes of urban development have themselves constituted a specific modality of colonialism.<sup>8</sup> Recent studies of colonial processes in Seattle, Edmonton, Victoria, Vancouver, and Melbourne have demonstrated that different urban settings produced very different colonial landscapes and spatial politics, which in some instances were distinct from larger regional or national dynamics.<sup>9</sup> As Edmonds notes, “These varying colonial economic and discursive formations came to frame particular Indigenous subjectivities and their representations.”<sup>10</sup> All of these colonial processes have been visible in the development of the city of Toronto, where, for example, Anna Jamieson wrote in 1835, “I can no more conceive a city filled with industrious Mohawks and Chipewas, than I can imagine a flock of panthers browsing in a penfold.”<sup>11</sup>

According to Penelope Edmonds, “The nineteenth-century city marked an unprecedented urban space in the New World, signifying a key moment in both Empire and modernity.”<sup>12</sup> In the case of Toronto, one of those key moments, at least discursively, was the 1884 celebration of the semi-centennial of the incorporation of the city.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to the rather modest and low-cost celebrations of 2009, the semi-centennial commemoration of 1884 consisted of a full week of events attended by tens of thousands of people, including many out-of-town visitors. During this week, Toronto’s history and its relation to British colonialism and imperialism were openly celebrated and linked to the centenary of the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists, which was honoured at the same time.

In Alan Gordon’s view, public memory is fundamentally “a discourse about power” which serves to “legitimize states, ideologies, or political factions by offering imagined communities a sense of shared posterity and common descent.”<sup>14</sup> Commemoration constructs a narrative about the past in support of the present and its power relationships and a desired future; in its story about one group, it also often features a story about another group, thus differentiating self and other.<sup>15</sup> H. V. Nelles has described such commemorations as “politics by other means,” turning “social structure into performance art.”<sup>16</sup> This article explores two somewhat divergent approaches to the performance of “politics by other means” at Toronto’s semi-centennial: one was the erasure of the Indigenous past of Toronto and the celebration of its British-Canadian and imperial future, while the other offered a vision of an idealized past in which Indigenous peoples and newcomers to the Toronto area coexisted harmoniously, thus supporting the idealization of Canada as a peaceable kingdom.<sup>17</sup> While both approaches to Indigenous pasts were common in settler colonial discourses across the new dominion and indeed North America, at the 1884 semi-centennial these discourses also served specifically urban ends, promoting an image of the city’s modernity and progress to tourists and investors, supporting the assertion of Toronto as the leader—economically, culturally, and ideologically—in the future development of Canada, and reinforcing the Toronto elite’s attempts to colonize the West. The semi-centennial popularized and perhaps also crystallized certain ways of talking about Toronto’s history that would remain hegemonic in Toronto popular histories and civic commemorations until the late twentieth century.

Cities, no less than nations, articulate founding moments in their efforts to define themselves. The vision of the past articulated through commemoration is guided by the needs of the present, as Harold Berubé’s contrast of the commemorative practices of Montreal and Toronto illustrates; each city turned to the “first moments” that best articulated current sensibilities and aspirations.<sup>18</sup> What is interesting about Toronto’s history of civic commemoration is that the “founding moment” celebrated has generally not been the European founding of the settlement in 1793 but the city’s incorporation in 1834. The shift in the “founding moment” from 1793 to 1834 appears to have occurred at the 1884 semi-centennial, which was the first major commemorative event in the city’s history. Civic leaders chose to commemorate Toronto’s status as the first incorporated city in British North America (outside of Quebec) rather than its origins, and so emphasized its entry into modernity.<sup>19</sup> However, as the incorporation was accompanied by the reinstatement of the Indigenous name “Toronto” over Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe’s 1793 imposition of “York,” the incorporation also marked the assertion of the city as a uniquely North American place and the “indigeneity” of its settler population, which was of course appropriated from the Indigenous peoples the city had displaced.

In 1884, Toronto was the capital of Ontario and a rapidly industrializing lake port and railway hub, a regional centre on its way to becoming a national metropolis, as the Canadian Pacific Railway lines linking it to the west would be completed the following year.<sup>20</sup> In 1882, its population had been 86,000 but was rapidly increasing with the annexation of Yorkville in 1883 and Don and Brockton villages in 1884, which extended the city north of Bloor and west from the Don River to High Park. More than 93 per cent of the population was of British heritage and a majority were Canadian-born; according to the 1881 census there were also about 2,000 Germans, 1,200 French, 124 Jews, 103 Italians, and smaller numbers of people of other origins. Indigenous peoples were not listed as a distinct category.<sup>21</sup> Protestants (mainly Church of England, Methodists, and Presbyterians) outnumbered Catholics by about three to one, and the Orange order was prevalent.<sup>22</sup> A powerful upper class of merchants, bankers, and entrepreneurs and a burgeoning middle class of industrialists, building contractors, professionals, and shop owners supported Macdonald’s National Policy of tariff protection; Toronto voted Conservative federally, yet the city was also the capital of the Liberal provincial government of Oliver Mowat, and the Knights of Labour were active among the working class. The city boasted impressive commercial and public buildings as well as imposing churches and mansions, but was also home to St. John’s Ward, a downtown slum. The rival department stores of Robert Simpson and Timothy Eaton at Yonge and Queen streets exemplified the city’s modern, commercial, and capitalist spirit.<sup>23</sup>

Toronto’s week-long semi-centennial commemoration was organized by the Citizens’ Semi-Centennial Celebration Committee, headed by former mayor William B. McMurich, and including current mayor Arthur Boswell. Council authorized McMurich to establish a committee of interested citizens and supported the event through a \$10,000 contribution, despite the economic downturn that year.<sup>24</sup> The 298 positions on the executive committee and eleven subcommittees were filled by leading citizens—mainly professional men, merchants, and



Figure 1: "The Indian Wigwam," a tableau in the Toronto Semi-Centennial Parade, 1884.

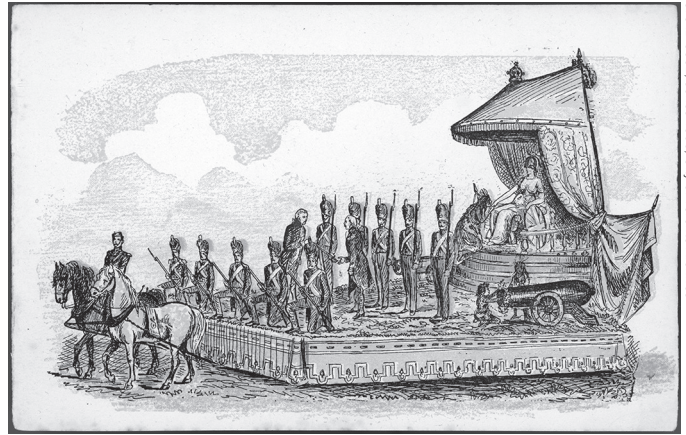


Figure 2: "The Occupation of the British," Toronto Semi-Centennial Parade, 1884.

manufacturers—as well as municipal and provincial politicians.<sup>25</sup> A few working men, chiefly craftsmen, also sat on committees that required their labour. Thus the biases and values expressed through the semi-centennial were overwhelmingly those of the white, male, upper-middle-class elite of the city.

The aim of the semi-centennial was to celebrate the material and social progress of Toronto and project an inviting image of prosperity and social harmony that would further encourage tourism and investment, outdoing similar celebrations in rival cities such as Buffalo.<sup>26</sup> A host of entertainments were planned, ranging from fireworks to parades to sports events. While ceremonies were held on 6 March 1884—the actual anniversary of the incorporation—most activities were scheduled for six days at the end of June and beginning of July, which was a better time for tourists and public participation in outdoor activities.

The first day of the summer festivities, Monday, 30 June, was named "Municipal and Historical Day" and began with a rousing parade down Yonge Street and along downtown city streets to the Exhibition Grounds.<sup>27</sup> Large crowds lined the route: as one commentator noted, "It seemed the entire population of the province had made it a special point to be present."<sup>28</sup>

The procession began with a marching band and then the mayor, the lieutenant-governor of the province, the mayor of Philadelphia, and the president of University College of the University of Toronto rolled into view in the lead carriage, followed by other civic officials, and then the city's firefighters. After them came the members of the Semi-Centennial Committee, and then more than a hundred members of the York Pioneers, the city's main heritage organization. The Pioneers, many of them elderly and "perhaps the most sombre part of the procession," were especially honoured with a long round of applause.<sup>29</sup> After the Pioneers came a series of twelve historical tableaux, which were erected on wagons drawn by horses; according to the *Daily Mail* these provided an "illustration of events which should be familiar to every inhabitant of Toronto."<sup>30</sup> The parade culminated at the Exhibition Grounds, where the guests of honour spoke to the theme of the day.

The comments of the "Orator of the Day" at the culmination of the parade are particularly salient to a discussion of historical memory in Toronto. The speaker, Daniel Wilson, the first professor of history and English literature at the University of Toronto, and later Sir Daniel Wilson, had been expected to relate "a retrospective history of the city."<sup>31</sup> Instead, he told the crowd that they inhabited a city with "scarcely a past either for pride or for shame":

They had no record they need look back upon as even the greatest and noblest of the nations of the past had; no such record as even noble England had to look upon; of times of persecution, of civil war, and tyranny and despotism; that they had nothing practically to repent of; that they had great white sheets spread before them upon which they had to write the record of their city and young Dominion.<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, the professor urged the assembled to look to the future, rather than the past, for the unfolding of the history of the city. "It remained for the young men of today to fill up the great white pages before them," he advised, foreseeing a future that might rival "the glorious histories of Thebes, with its ancient foundation 1,000 years before the Christian era; Jerusalem, with its great temple; and above all, that wonderful centre of modern civilization, London."<sup>33</sup> If this was rather standard Eurocentric fare at the time, it was delivered to the crowd by a figure of some authority. At the time of his comments to the crowd at Toronto's Exhibition Grounds, he was president of University College.<sup>34</sup>

In Wilson's view, while it was perhaps to be lamented that Toronto's history was too short and uneventful to be heroic and therefore worthy of great pride, what was more important was that it had no victims. Toronto's history—and by extension Canada's—was *virtuous*, as were the municipal and national subjects this history had created, an analysis that denied and ignored both the colonial relations that underpinned the Canadian state and the effects of colonialism on the Indigenous peoples of the Toronto area. To Wilson, the United Empire Loyalists epitomized Canada's and Toronto's moral virtue, and in his speech he honoured their achievements at some length.



## *“Toronto Has No History!”*

Although he was a world-renowned scholar, Wilson's historical expertise was more apparent than real; history was never his main interest and modern history less so.<sup>35</sup> Yet Wilson spoke with the authority of the university behind him. His words undoubtedly influenced many, reflecting and supporting the view that Toronto's past—and particularly its Indigenous past—was of no consequence to the modern city. Like public memory in many other instances, his discourse treated those excluded from power as unhistorical.<sup>36</sup> Wilson's semi-centennial speech thus gave official sanction to the ongoing erasure of the history of the Indigenous presence in Toronto and the colonial processes that had dispossessed them.

Wilson's depiction of Toronto's blameless history also accorded with accounts that stressed Indigenous vanishing as a natural and inevitable phenomenon. Visitor Johann Georg Kohl had written in 1855 that “Indians” had “vanished like the morning mist” from Toronto, “and nothing remains to recall even their memory, but the well sounding name they invented for this locality—the sonorous Toronto.”<sup>37</sup> This was the popular trope, but not the reality. The Mississaugas, who had been on the site and in possession of the land when the British gained control of the area in 1760, had not simply “faded away” through some natural process; they had been crowded out of their last 200 acres on the Credit River just west of Toronto in 1847, despite turning themselves into the “civilized” Christian farmers their British colonizers said they should become.<sup>38</sup> They had sent numerous petitions to the superintendent general of Indian Affairs, to the lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, and even gained Queen Victoria's promise of a secure deed to their last remaining lands, all to no avail.<sup>39</sup>

The Mississaugas' once vast territory on the north shore of Lake Ontario had been acquired by the British through a series of problematic land surrenders, including the 1787 Toronto Purchase agreement (declared invalid in 1794—one year after the founding of York—and “reconfirmed” in 1805 with a surreptitious increase in the amount of land surrendered).<sup>40</sup> The colonial government of Upper Canada, then based in York, had followed a deliberate policy of making the Mississaugas financially dependent on the Crown, disrupting their political alliance with the Six Nations, and paying them a fraction of their land's market value, an estimated 2.5 per cent in the case of the 1805 surrender of the Mississauga Tract, now the suburb of Mississauga.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile Mississauga hunting and fishing areas were destroyed by settler poaching, sawmill development, and the ecological transformations of colonial agriculture.<sup>42</sup> This was hardly the blameless history that Wilson claimed as Toronto's and Canada's heritage.

Indigenous people did not completely “vanish” from the Toronto area even after the Mississaugas were forced to move from the Credit River, though their numbers were few. Within the city there was still room for “a few talented native sons isolated from their fellows,”<sup>43</sup> largely Christians from influential Mohawk families at Six Nations or other “civilized Indians,” particularly Anishinaabe missionaries, who visited Toronto to meet with members of missionary societies.<sup>44</sup> People of mixed ancestry, some from Red River, also lived in the city, but hardening racial attitudes among the dominant population made it increasingly difficult for those who did not look white.<sup>45</sup> Less prominent individuals likely came to the city seeking education or work as servants or labourers, while others came periodically to sell crafts or produce at St. Lawrence

Market or the Industrial Exhibition. A few came to the city as performers of traditional songs and dances.<sup>46</sup>

By 1884, however, Indigenous people who lived or worked in the city were either invisible or too “civilized” to still be considered Indians, whereas “authentic” Indigenous people came to be seen as exotic Others outside of the modernity and the historical trajectory of Toronto.<sup>47</sup> “Real” Indians were increasingly conceived of as living in the north and west, where Toronto residents could plan and support missions for their conversion to Christianity and civilization, Toronto artists such as Paul Kane could paint them, Toronto's men of letters could study them anthropologically, and Toronto's businessmen, political leaders, and imperialists could call for the annexation of their land.<sup>48</sup>

Like many late-nineteenth-century Torontonians, Daniel Wilson believed that Toronto, as the capital of the most populous and important province, as well as the self-appointed custodian of all things British (and Protestant), had a leading role to play in Canada's unfolding destiny, especially in the west.<sup>49</sup> In Wilson's speech, the pasts and futures of Toronto and Canada were elided; in fact, either one could stand in for the other.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, writers or commentators on Toronto history, Canadian history, and the need for Canadian control of the Northwest and its Indigenous peoples were often one and the same.

Wilson's dismissal of Toronto's history stood in contrast to the works of William Canniff and Henry Scadding, who were also significant participants in the week's celebrations as well as the authors of the two popular historical works that had recorded the history of local European settlement.<sup>51</sup> Canniff, author of *The Settlement of Upper Canada* (1869) and the city's chief medical officer, was the main organizer of the fourth day of the semi-centennial, which was devoted to the centennial of the Loyalist migration to Canada. Although focused on Upper Canada rather than solely on Toronto, Canniff's book had originated or popularized many of the common tropes of Toronto historiography that would reappear in the works of others, such as the historical “oblivion” in which the previous Aboriginal residents of the region had purportedly lived, the selflessness and virtue of the Loyalists, the courage and hardiness of pioneers, and the brave militia saving Canada in the War of 1812.<sup>52</sup> Canniff had advocated western colonization in his book and had also been a member of Canada First, a largely Toronto-based movement to annex the Northwest that had inflamed the 1869 Red River Resistance.

Antiquarian Henry Scadding was one of the founders and in 1884 the president of the York Pioneers, whom he led in the 30 June parade. In 1869, Scadding had published a series of articles on the history of Toronto in the *Canadian Journal*. These were published in book form in 1873 as *Toronto of Old*, which marked the beginning of a historiographic tradition focused specifically on Toronto. He was also one of the compilers of *Toronto, Past and Present*, the semi-centennial commemorative volume.

In *Toronto of Old*, Scadding had outlined the history of the French fur trade and the establishment of French trading posts on the Humber River and Lake Ontario shoreline, documenting the migration on French maps of the name “Toronto” from what is now known as Lake Simcoe to the Toronto area.<sup>53</sup> His detailed account of Simcoe's founding of York included Joseph Bouchette's classic description of the bay and its

## *“Toronto Has No History!”*

surroundings in 1793, where “the wandering savage had constructed his ephemeral habitation” beneath the luxuriant foliage of “dense and trackless forests.”<sup>54</sup> Because Bouchette had described meeting only two families of Mississaugas amid the “uninvaded haunts of immense coveys of wild fowl,” his description had formed the basis for the oft-repeated trope that the site of Toronto was a virtually empty, virgin land or *terra nullius* when the British arrived and the Mississaugas were purely “nomadic” (when in fact they generally returned to the same hunting and gathering areas in a seasonal round), thus suggesting that their ownership of the land was purely nominal—a view that Scadding reinforced.<sup>55</sup> Yet Scadding had also discussed the ancient Indigenous portage route along the Humber River to Lake Simcoe as a significant local feature, instantly belying the region’s supposed tracklessness. He noted that the Toronto area had been “one of the quarters frequented by the [Mississauga] tribe,” but that their numbers had been “incredibly few,”<sup>56</sup> as a consequence of European epidemic diseases and the effects of the introduction of alcohol. He also made reference to the Toronto Purchase that provided the legal basis for the city’s existence.

Given the visibility and influence of Scadding and Canniff, both in Toronto historiography and at the semi-centennial celebrations, Wilson’s apparent dismissal of Toronto’s history in his semi-centennial speech was clearly not based on a lack of historical knowledge but rather on his conception of what constituted “history.”<sup>57</sup> In his own landmark work of anthropology, *Prehistoric Man*, published in 1862,<sup>58</sup> Wilson had explicitly linked his view of the history of Toronto and of North American Indigenous peoples to larger debates about the origin and antiquity of humankind, the nature of civilizational development, and the biological and cultural similarities or differences between the “races.”<sup>59</sup> He drew on archaeological evidence on two continents and his encounters with Indigenous people on his vacations to argue that the Indigenous people of North America were at the same stage of cultural development as the prehistoric peoples of Europe, the “long obliterated past of Britain’s and Europe’s infancy . . . here reproduced in living reality.”<sup>60</sup> Wilson argued that Europeans were bringing not just civilization but history itself to the New World.<sup>61</sup> History, in this sense, was both a *written* narrative rather than oral tradition and also a history of large organized states along the European model. “And so,” he wrote, “the wanderer goes forth to help to sow in other soils what makes historic lands.”<sup>62</sup>

In Wilson’s view, the capital of Upper Canada was “unstoried,” its precursor “but a group of Mississauga wigwams in the tangled pine forest.” An old resident of the city had described early Toronto to him as “a few log-huts in the clearing, and a small Indian village of birch-bark wigwams, near the Don, with a mere trail through the woods to the old French fort, on the line where now upwards of two miles of costly stores, hotels, and public buildings mark the principal street of the busy city.” In contrast, the historical consciousness of the Englishman or European was nurtured “amid the inspirations of a landscape vital with the memories of his country’s history, or haunted with the poetry of its legends and songs,” with a “thousandfold associations and inherited ideas.”<sup>63</sup> That the pre-urban past of the Toronto region might be richly storied by Indigenous people was outside the bounds of Wilson’s conception of history.

Instead, he remarked on “the strange sense of freedom that stirs in the blood in the New World’s clearings, where there is nothing to efface, to

undo, to desecrate.”<sup>64</sup> Toronto and its hinterland was “a nearly unvarying expanse, a blank: with its Indian traditions effaced; its colonial traditions uncreated . . . Its history is not only all to write, it is all to act.” He noted the characteristic orientation of Toronto’s citizens to the future rather than the past. “All is rife with progress. ‘Onward!’ is the cry; a distant and boundless future is the goal. The new past is despised; the old past is altogether unheeded; and for antiquity there is neither reverence nor faith.”<sup>65</sup> In Toronto, one could witness the “seeds of future empires taking root on its virgin soil.”

Although he offered this same discourse at the semi-centennial, by 1884 Wilson was well aware that the forests were not as history-less as they appeared. With intensifying agricultural settlement in Canada West after 1850 and the building of railways over lands previously untouched by settlers, many ancient Wendat and Petun ossuaries and village sites were being uncovered in the Toronto region.<sup>66</sup> In fact, Wilson had become one of the city’s foremost collector of antiquities, along with David Boyle, a bookseller who eventually became the first provincial archaeologist and curator of the provincial museum.<sup>67</sup> When workers uncovered what is now known as the Markham Ossuary adjacent to Woodbine Avenue in 1881, Daniel Wilson collected fifteen skulls and transferred them to the University of Toronto.<sup>68</sup>

In 1884, then, Daniel Wilson was clearly aware of the deep pre-urban Indigenous history of the Toronto area, yet his message was that the only Toronto history that mattered or that could truly be considered “history” began with the Loyalists and British settlement, since the Indigenous past of the area was “prehistory”—a temporal category that separated the pasts of literate peoples from all others.<sup>69</sup> In fact, Wilson appears to have been the first to use the term *prehistory* in English (in 1851).

If Wilson’s semi-centennial speech dismissed Toronto’s history, the historical tableaux of the parade brought Toronto’s creation story, as previously related in the works of Scadding and Canniff, to vivid life. The tableaux represented Toronto’s “frontier” history through a series of what Elizabeth Furniss has called “epitomizing events” that functioned as “convenient, easily condensed symbols that represent (just as they draw attention away from) more complex historical processes.”<sup>70</sup>

The effect of the tableaux was described in the *Globe*: “One is unconsciously taken back to the unhewn forests, and brought forward, step by step, through the gradual processes of our ever-growing civilization until we behold Toronto, the Queen City of a great Province, the centre of a thriving, populous agricultural district, a growing, stirring, unresting metropolis, the proud possessor of colleges of national repute, indomitable commercial pluck and enterprise, and vast material wealth.”<sup>71</sup>

The order of the tableaux was most interesting, for the historical procession did not begin with the presence of Indigenous peoples on the site of Toronto as the first of twelve tableaux, as was originally intended by the Tableaux Committee,<sup>72</sup> but rather with two tableaux enacted by the York Pioneers who immediately preceded them; these represented “Clearing the Land” and “Augustus Jones’ First Surveying Party.” These tableaux referred to the arrival of the Loyalists in 1784 in what would become Upper Canada and to the British survey of the entire north shore of Lake Ontario in 1791.<sup>73</sup> Thus, in watching the parade tableaux, spectators saw the origins of the city identified with the history of a

## *“Toronto Has No History!”*

particular group of people from elsewhere—the United Empire Loyalists—rather than with the ongoing history of the place.

Only after these two tableaux had passed did the “The Indian Wigwam”—the originally intended first tableau—come into view, featuring a group of “Indians” in war paint and feathers, thus adding colour, excitement, and exoticism to the proceedings.<sup>74</sup> The point of the tableau was explained in *Toronto Past and Present*: “In 1793 the wigwam of the aboriginal was the only human habitation to occupy the site on which Toronto now stands.”<sup>75</sup> The *Globe* described the recreation of that original habitation:

The car on which the tableau is erected is about 25 feet by 9 feet; the rear portion is occupied by a wigwam made of canvas, but painted to represent hides and bark. In front of this tent is a bank sloping down to a piece of water, which the spectator is requested to imagine the Don. On the bank is a canoe containing a fierce-looking red man in battle array, standing erect in the centre, and a meek-looking squaw sitting in the prow. A third Indian is engaged in shoving the canoe off. A squaw with her papoose, and an aged Indian smoking his pipe somewhat disconsolately, stand in the background, and with a dog squatting on his haunches, make up the scene.<sup>76</sup>

The *News* described the scene this way:

Then came the Indian Wigwam of 1796 [sic], with its birchbark canoe in front and the sward around covered in evergreen. Before the tent in full war paint were a detachment of Six Nations Indians in all the glory of war paint and feathers. They were armed with all the primitive weapons of their nation, the rude clubs, knives, bows and arrows of their tribe. Their appearance was striking and picturesque.<sup>77</sup>

That the Mississaugas were depicted by “Six Nations Indians” was a clear indication of just how fictive these “Indians” were. Indeed, it is quite possible that they were enacted by Tyendinaga Mohawks from the Bay of Quinte, who were not at all related to the Algonquian-speaking Mississaugas who were resident in the Toronto area when the British founded York in 1793.<sup>78</sup> Nowhere in the program for the semi-centennial or in news reports was there any mention of actual Mississaugas attending the semi-centennial; presumably they would have been identified if they had participated.<sup>79</sup> In fact, the only Indigenous people mentioned in newspaper reports of the celebrations were “Six Nations Indians from Tyendinaga” including several chiefs, who were present during the week’s festivities to celebrate the centenary of the arrival of the Loyalists.<sup>80</sup>

Mississaugas could conceivably have been subsumed under the category of “Six Nations Indians,” since after 1847 they lived as the “Mississaugas of the New Credit” on a corner of the Grand River territory of the Haudenosaunee, though they still remained politically distinct.<sup>81</sup> However there is no mention of anyone from Grand River in any of the accounts of the Toronto celebrations, while they were prominent at the Loyalist celebrations at Niagara on 14 August of the same year. Chief C. M. H. Johnson of the Six Nations at Grand River had initially accepted an invitation to participate in the Toronto event, and had promised to bring twenty chiefs and warriors with him, including his ninety-two-year-old father, John Smoke Johnson, but when the chief died and Niagara set up a rival event, the Mohawks appear to have decided not to participate in the Toronto festivities.<sup>82</sup> The Six Nations

had also begun as early as February 1884 to plan their own Loyalist celebration at Grand River for the following October.<sup>83</sup>

If the Mississaugas were indeed represented by “Six Nations Indians from Tyendinaga” in the semi-centennial parade, it would not be the only instance of one Native group representing another in settler historical re-enactments. At the Quebec tercentenary celebrations in 1908, more than two hundred Indigenous people from all over the Great Lakes region would be paid to take part in the massive recreations of the founding of Quebec, wearing Plains Indian costumes created by the organizers.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, the Indigenous actors of Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West Show, who hailed from many different nations, would re-enact battles from the Northwest Rebellion when they arrived in Toronto in 1885.<sup>85</sup>

The Toronto Semi-Centennial Committee’s notions of authenticity required only that the Mississaugas be played by “real” Indians, whatever their tribal affiliation, rather than white actors. As a report of the Tableaux Committee published in the *Globe* on 19 May promised, “There will be no deception in the Indians; they will be veritable red men from crown to heel, and will be borrowed from Brantford or elsewhere for the occasion.”<sup>86</sup> The homogenizing colonial category of the “Indian” thus erased tribal distinctions, as well as the history by which tribal or clan identities were constituted. Even if they did participate, it is highly unlikely that the Mississaugas would have had any control over their own representation, as the Semi-Centennial Committee determined the content of the tableaux.<sup>87</sup>

At the 1884 celebrations there did not seem to be the same concerns about representation as had been expressed during the Royal Tour of 1860, when the Toronto-based Methodist newspaper, the *Christian Guardian*, had chastised the Indian Department for staging “savagery” in the form of war dances and other spectacles that they charged gave a distorted picture of the progress that missionaries and others had made in transforming Indigenous cultures.<sup>88</sup> Since, at the semi-centennial, organizers were depicting a historic (and presumably extinct) Native population rather than one in the present, paint and feathers were called for. Spectators could experience the thrill of witnessing “untamed forest dwellers and peoples on the verge of extinction” and see “humanity in its wild state,” secure in their sense of their own civilization.<sup>89</sup>

Wherever they came from, the “Six Nations Indians” representing the Mississaugas did not appear in just one tableau. After “The Indian Wigwam” came “The Occupation of the British,” which could be read as a strikingly self-congratulatory vision of British interactions with the Mississaugas: “On the summit, was seated in a Roman chair, a fair lady, who assumed the role of Britannia, and who leaning upon her shield surveyed with satisfaction the scene beneath. Her outstretched hand was pressed by the lips of an Indian maiden, who is supposed to be in this way evidencing her gratitude and appreciation of the beneficent rule that is about to be inaugurated.”<sup>90</sup>

This and other tableaux drew on the well-known iconography of Britannia, a symbol of the British nation and of British imperial ideals, derived from a female figure of Roman times and conflated with the English queens, especially Elizabeth I and Victoria.<sup>91</sup> As such she also represented the legality of the settler presence and, as a mythological rather than a mere human figure, the sacredness of the British imperial



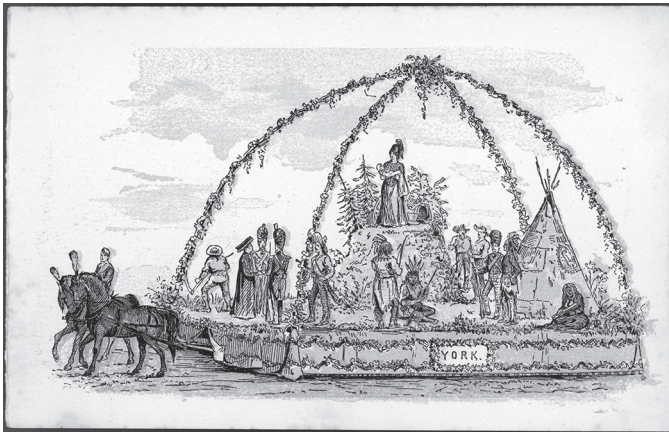


Figure 3: "Little York," Toronto Semi-Centennial Parade, 1884.

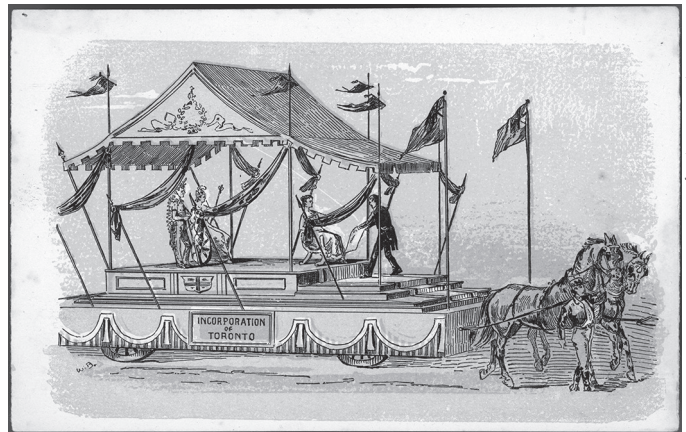


Figure 4: "The Incorporation of Toronto," Toronto Semi-Centennial Parade, 1884.

project. She was well known to city residents through her appearance on the city's coat of arms (designed when the city was incorporated in 1834), and in the imagery used during the Royal Visit of 1860, when, for example, J. Seel's Oyster Depot had commissioned a large transparency "representing Britannia holding out the olive branch to an Indian."<sup>92</sup> According to historian Ian Radforth, the latter image could be read both as signifying good relations between Indigenous peoples and the Crown, as compared to the wars of the United States, or good relations between Canada and Britain.<sup>93</sup>

The parade tableau of the Indian maiden kissing Britannia's hand, like the Toronto coat of arms, exemplified a long-established British practice of appropriating Indigenous imagery and constructing images of Indigenous/non-Indigenous friendship and co-operation to solidify the identity of settlers and legitimize the settlers' place in North America.<sup>94</sup> In the parade tableau, however, the power imbalance between the two figures was more marked; the young Native maiden expressed her deference and subservience to the more mature and powerful Britannia, the epitome of British stability and law. The image thus represented the extension of British rule of law over Indigenous territories and Indigenous socio-political systems, a "conquest through benevolence"<sup>95</sup> that allowed citizens of Toronto to feel exalted as law-abiding white subjects,<sup>96</sup> while masking the racism of their paternalism. In other tableaux, amicable coexistence was suggested by Indians welcoming Governor Simcoe's arrival in Toronto Bay, or by Indians and York pioneers being positioned on either side of a mound of evergreen and flowers with Britannia at the top holding an infant representing York.

According to the memorial volume, the next tableau, "The Incorporation of Toronto," "was a very pretty tableau, and one that would be readily understood, with the inscription beneath 'Britannia,' with an Indian seated beside [and the City coat of arms between them]. At her feet sat a girl, wearing a crown upon her head, and representing Toronto. Before her stood an official, with cocked hat and sword, in the act of handing her the document which proclaimed the incorporation of the city."<sup>97</sup>

The iconography of the city's coat of arms, which featured an "Indian" warrior on the left side of the shield and Britannia on the right, could

be read in various ways. On one level, the warrior on the coat of arms could be seen as commemorating the Mississauga presence on the land and perhaps the single moment of pre-urban Indigenous history that might have been significant to settlers—the moment in 1787 when the Mississauga chiefs agreed to the Toronto Purchase, but it is not known if city residents originally considered the warrior to be Mississauga specifically. Certainly in the 1884 tableaux that identification could easily be made. The warrior could also be read as representing the past, and Britannia the future, with a suggestion of an amicable transfer of resources depicted on the shield between them. Such imagery suggested that equal partnership between Britain and Indigenous peoples had provided the historic foundation for the city, belying the actual power imbalance in the treaty negotiations and subsequent settler encroachments on Indigenous lands.

However, the fact that for over one hundred years the warrior on the coat of arms was depicted wearing a Plains Indian headdress is an indication of his mythic and fictive nature.<sup>98</sup> The warrior may have been intended allegorically, as a figure representing the New World, distinguished by its Indigenous aspect from its partner, Britain. In this reading, the coat of arms could also represent Toronto as a partnership between or joint creation of colony and empire. According to art historian Stephanie Pratt, such allegorical representations were common in early-nineteenth-century British art.<sup>99</sup>

In the "Incorporation of Toronto" the iconography of the coat of arms was brought to life: an Indian and Britannia appeared on either side of the city's heraldic shield, which itself represented an Indian and Britannia on either side of a heraldic shield. Thus the theme of partnership, understood both allegorically, as between Britain and Canada, and historically, between York's pioneers and the Mississaugas, was strongly conveyed.

What is most striking about these tableaux is that, taken together, they suggested a history of far more substantial Indigenous presence than a single wigwam. Equally striking is the fact that the numerous fictive Indians in the tableaux were depicted as uniformly welcoming British rule and the founding of the city—an attitude that the "Six Nations Indians," as Loyalists and long-time allies of the British, could perhaps



## *“Toronto Has No History!”*

more convincingly portray than the now displaced Mississaugas. Such imagery of peaceful Indigenous-settler relations contributed to a local version of Canada’s self-identification as a more peaceful nation and of Canadians as “better” colonizers than Americans.

It was true that early relations between settlers and Indigenous people in the Toronto area had rarely been overtly violent, but, for several years after the founding of York, settlers had feared that the Mississaugas would join a threatened alliance of Western Indians and attack their isolated settlement.<sup>100</sup> An uprising very nearly did occur in 1796 when Mississauga chief Wabakinine was murdered on the waterfront by a British soldier who had tried to prostitute Wabakinine’s sister, a far cry from the happy relations depicted in the tableaux.<sup>101</sup> The tableaux also entirely ignored the role of local settlers in the dispossession of the Mississaugas. According to Mississauga petitions, the settlers had not helped them with farming as promised, but had run them off the land.<sup>102</sup>

The Toronto Purchase was not alluded to in the parade tableaux, except perhaps indirectly through the coat of arms; instead, the 1834 Act of Incorporation was represented as the city’s foundational legal document. Similarly, in most nineteenth-century historiography of Toronto, the Toronto Purchase would be characterized more as a beneficent formality than a legal necessity, and was often not mentioned at all. The underlying attitude seems to have been that “while an Indian might be of the land, he/she was not worthy of it, and had no legitimate, or respectable claim to it,”<sup>103</sup> and that the British, by virtue of their evident cultural and moral superiority, deserved to be its rightful owners. Furthermore, while Scadding and Wilson were both clearly aware of the Toronto Purchase, it may not have been represented in the parade tableaux because its problematic nature could have been controversial—or because representing a treaty relationship with Indigenous peoples raised questions of equality between two sovereign peoples, whereas the Indian Act of 1876 had declared Indigenous peoples inferior “wards” of the Crown.<sup>104</sup>

The “Incorporation of Toronto” was the last tableau of the day to depict Indigenous people. In the narrative of the parade, the Mississaugas were part of York’s history, but not Toronto’s, part of the story of Toronto’s childhood or adolescence, but not its maturity. They ended when the incorporated city began. They were constitutive of the initial event that had made Toronto what it was, but had been left behind in the forward march of progress. While the deed acquired from the Mississaugas was irrelevant to its present or future, the 1834 Act of Incorporation became the deed to Toronto’s modernity.

Subsequent tableaux—“Toronto, the Centre of Agriculture,” “Toronto, an Educational Centre,” “Toronto, the Queen City”—celebrated the mature city’s accomplishments and modernity. Finally, “Toronto Welcomes All” offered a representation of inclusivity that included everyone but First Nations, prefiguring the city’s later discourse of multiculturalism:

The title explained the idea set forth, which was that, irrespective of nationality, creed, or colour, Toronto welcomed all who came to add to its stores of wealth, or industry, or intelligence. A lady sat on a canopy supported by four painted poles and surmounted by a beaver. Around her stood an array of immigrants of every colour, creed, and clime. Here was Wah Hoo, a Chinaman, who intended to establish a laundry in the city; here a negro, who meant to become a “tonorial artist”; here an

Englishman who was going to try farming; and here were Irish, and Germans, and Scandinavians, and Icelanders, and Russians, and Italians, and many others, all seeking opportunities to make a successful start to a fresh life in the New World.<sup>105</sup>

Thus, the narrative arc of the parade tableaux was that Native people of the Toronto area, recognizing the superiority of British culture, had voluntarily made way for a virtuous and lawful British society, which in turn offered unprejudiced opportunity to multicultural immigrants. If Daniel Wilson’s claim that Toronto had a negligible history can be read as a denial of the significance of the Indigenous past of the land upon which York/Toronto was founded, the parade tableaux can be seen as another form of disavowal: a representation of history as Torontonians wished it might have been.

Elizabeth Furniss has suggested that it is as important to examine public silences and their conditions as to parse public discourse; in both cases, the relations of power limit the possibilities of speech (as also Gayatri Spivak has also noted in her discussions of the foreclosure of the voice of the subaltern).<sup>106</sup> Thus the voicelessness and lack of recognition of the Mississaugas at the semi-centennial celebrations may be contrasted with the discursive space given the “Six Nations Indians” during the same week of festivities. On 3 July, the descendants of the United Empire Loyalists from all over the province were invited to gather at the Horticultural Gardens for a day of activities exclusively for them. William Canniff gave the opening address. The cancellation of another speaker led to the substitution of Chief Samson Green of the Bay of Quinte (Tyindenaga) Mohawks, who was introduced as “a descendant of the great Thyendenagya (Joseph Brant), the friend of Britain in the great revolutionary war.” Green was a “progressive” and a known quantity, as he had spoken at the previous Loyalist celebration at Adolphustown on 17 June, was acting president of the Grand General Indian Council of Ontario, and was chief of the first elected band council in Canada.<sup>107</sup>

That a Mohawk (Kanienkehaka) was invited to speak at such a gathering indicates that the Six Nations were still acknowledged and remembered in 1884 as Britain’s loyal allies, and they commanded a certain degree of respect that the Mississaugas—who had initially been French allies and who had not participated to any great extent in the Revolutionary War—never received. Indeed, one notable element of William Canniff’s historical interpretation in *The Settlement of Upper Canada* had been his portrayal of the Six Nations as exceptional Indians and red Loyalists, who were more civilized and advanced than other Indigenous peoples. Unlike many writers who emphasized a discourse of Iroquois savagery, Canniff characterized the Americans as the true savages in North America, who had wronged and slandered the Six Nations and particularly Joseph Brant. Canniff admired the Haudenosaunee because they adhered to democratic principles in their confederacy, and because, in his view, the Six Nations were the original North American imperialists, their vast “empire” of subordinated nations a pagan analogue to the rapidly expanding British Empire. Also, because they were settled horticulturalists, they more closely conformed to European definitions of civilization than the Mississaugas, who had been hunter-gatherers.

According to the *Globe*, “Chief Green, a young man, appeared in a handsome native dress, gorgeous in beadwork, and with headdress of

## *“Toronto Has No History!”*

eagle plumes. He spoke in English with great fluency and with only the slightest possible trace of foreign accent. He addressed the audience briefly upon the deeds and prowess of his ancestors and the sacrifices made by them in order to remain the allies and friends of England.” Green expressed his great pleasure at being able to join with other descendants of Loyalists in celebrating the deeds of their forefathers. He told the audience that “the traditions of his tribe handed down from Joseph Brant said that the English people were kind to the Indians, and he found them so . . . Always the English had treated his people well since the earliest days. The Mohawks settling on the Bay of Quinte had been true to their country and true to their church, the Church of England.”<sup>108</sup>

Thus the sole Indigenous speaker during the week’s official events reinforced Wilson’s message of blameless history by insisting that the British had behaved virtuously in their treatment of Indigenous peoples, further effacing their history with the Mississaugas.

Chief Green’s speech also reflected the degree to which Kanienkehaka self-representations of the time could incorporate discourses of progress, civilization, and loyalty to Britain, while also advancing an alternative interpretation of their history as Loyalists and their political status within Canada that implicitly challenged settler histories.<sup>109</sup> While Chief Green commented “that of late years his people have made much progress in civilization and Christianity,” with two churches, four good schools, and two “white lady teachers,” he also clearly articulated the understanding that they were a nation with their own history and recounted the story of the Peacemaker and the founding of the Confederacy.<sup>110</sup> Thus the Kanienkehaka were allies, not subjects of the Crown; they were the equals of other Loyalists, and thus should be accorded full political rights rather than the wardship that they were reduced to under the Indian Act. As Norman Knowles comments, Chief Green and other Mohawk leaders who spoke at Loyalist celebrations that year “appropriated the language of Loyalism to advance their own political agenda.”<sup>111</sup> Yet Chief Green was restrained in his comments to his white Toronto audience, as were the Indigenous speakers at the settler-organized events at Adolphustown and Niagara; at their own subsequent celebrations at Tyendinaga and Grand River, Haudenosaunee speakers would speak far more critically of the government’s failure to uphold Indigenous rights.<sup>112</sup>

No Mississauga leader was given the same prominence in the week’s events or had an opportunity to express Mississauga views of the history of Toronto or Upper Canada, though Peter Edmund Jones, the accomplished son of the missionary Peter Jones (both named Kahkewaquonaby), was chief of the New Credit band in 1884. He was also an advocate of civilization, enfranchisement, and elected councils, had attended the University of Toronto medical school, and was very interested in both Mississauga and Toronto history.<sup>113</sup> It was also certainly not the case that the Mississaugas had “faded away” at New Credit, nor were they politically inactive. During the Prince’s tour in 1860, the Duke of Newcastle had received a petition from the Mississaugas of the New Credit that that their former “Council Grounds,” on the site of what is now the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health on Queen Street in Toronto still belonged to them.<sup>114</sup> Clearly, the Mississaugas, though departed from the Credit River, still remembered their history in Toronto and felt they had historic claims there.

In 1875, Jones had also participated in an extraordinary exchange of letters in one of Toronto’s leading newspapers, the *Daily Mail*.<sup>115</sup> Responding to letters that had demeaned Indigenous people in general and the Mississaugas in particular, Jones had provided statistics proving that the Mississaugas of the New Credit were highly “civilized” and more technologically advanced than many settlers.<sup>116</sup> Only two years before the semi-centennial, the Grand General Indian Council of Ontario had been held at New Credit and was attended by 109 delegates from twenty-one Native communities in the Great Lakes region. At that event, over three thousand people, including a large contingent of white participants, had attended the grand opening of the New Credit Council house, which was feted with a rich dinner, speeches by Six Nations and Anishnaabeg chiefs, music by reserve brass bands, and a war dance.<sup>117</sup> Given Jones’s self-conscious modernity, would he have agreed to have the Mississaugas represent themselves as “savages” in the Torontonians’ historical tableaux?

One other element of the semi-centennial celebrations offered a potentially complicating symbol of the obscured history of Indigenous–British interactions in the region and suggested a transfer of indigeneity from Natives to whites. A lacrosse game offered the only image of contestation between the settlers and Indigenous peoples during the entire week of celebrations; it was also an acknowledgement of a historic Aboriginal contribution to Canadian culture. According to the semi-centennial program, “Lovers of Canada’s National Game will have an opportunity of seeing a warm struggle between the whites and the aborigines, when the Torontos cross sticks with the Royal Team of Caughnawaga Indians, at the Rosedale Grounds. The Indians are those who played before royalty last summer. An exciting contest may be looked for.”<sup>118</sup>

That lacrosse was now described as Canada’s national game was an overt appropriation of the Native ritual of “baggageaway.”<sup>119</sup> The first recorded game between Euro-Canadian and Indigenous men took place in Montreal in 1844; the Montreal Lacrosse Club had been formed in 1856.<sup>120</sup> During the Royal Tour of 1860, the Methodists had denounced the Indian Department for organizing the spectacle of Indigenous people playing such “savage games” instead of arranging for the Prince to hear Christian Indians sing hymns. They argued that Indian grievances in their petitions to the Duke of Newcastle had not been addressed because the now-civilized Indians had been paraded around as savages.<sup>121</sup> But in 1884, these concerns appear to have disappeared; a white Montreal dentist, George Beers, had “civilized” and standardized the game in 1867, and it had become popular across the country. “Long, long after the romantic ‘sons of the forest’ have passed away,” Beers wrote in *Lacrosse* (1869), “long, long after their sun sinks in the west to rise no more, Lacrosse will remind the pale-faces of Canada of the noble Indians that once ruled over this continent.” The “rationalized” version of the game became a signifier of post-Confederation Canadian identity, with the motto of the newly founded National Lacrosse Association “Our country—our game.”<sup>122</sup> In this context, Torontonians could cheer on their city’s team to victory against the Indians and appropriate their indigeneity at the same time.

The lacrosse game also sparked an editorial comment in the *Toronto Evening Telegram* on 5 July:

## *“Toronto Has No History!”*

About the only Indians to be seen hereabouts now are the few who come to play lacrosse with their white opponents. Yet it is not so long ago that the whole country was inhabited by Indians. Where Toronto now stands was a forest with Indian wigwams scattered along the lake shore. The Indians have made way for a superior race. The burden of maintaining those of the race who still survive is annually growing heavier. Year by year they depend more largely on the government for assistance. As long as they were left to themselves they hunted and fished and were self-supporting, but the government has taken such good care of them that they have grown intolerably lazy, and have no disposition whatever to go to work. It costs Canada considerably over a million dollars per year to maintain her Indians, and when blankets and food are not forthcoming, they know that by kicking up a row they can soon secure them. The race has sadly degenerated. It has acquired the vices of the white man without acquiring his virtues. How to make the red man self-supporting is the problem.<sup>123</sup>

In this discourse, the role of settlers and the government in impoverishing the Mississaugas, reducing their agency, and rendering them dependent so that they would sell their remaining lands was completely invisible and was replaced by the notion that the government ruined Indigenous peoples simply by being too generous to them. This discourse also ignored the fact that the Indian Affairs Department had recently reported that the Indians of Ontario were largely self-supporting.<sup>124</sup>

The blending of Loyalist veneration, Toronto history, and imperialist sentiment so evident in the semi-centennial week's events was also expressed in *Toronto: Past and Present*, the memorial volume published under the auspices of the Semi-Centennial Committee and compiled by Henry Scadding and John Charles Dent.<sup>125</sup> Although an “Indian” chief was represented on the cover in an updated version of the coat of arms, there was no mention of the Toronto Purchase anywhere, in another indication of its insignificance to the city's identity.

The volume offered this retrospective: “A few years since we rightly regarded the founding of New Westminster, in British Columbia, as an event of great interest, indicating, as it conspicuously did, an important advance of English civilization into regions of the earth hitherto wholly undeveloped and savage . . . An incident of a parallel character . . . was the founding of York, Upper Canada, in 1794. It was, at the time, the establishment of an entirely new centre of influence and power in the domain of savagery.”<sup>126</sup>

This discourse suggested that the pre-urban past of Toronto was not history because it was not civilized; it was instead only the timeless moment of savagery. However, at the semi-centennial celebrations, “savagery” had been portrayed as rather toothless, as civilization's childhood, rather than as an uncontrollable or biological propensity to irrational violence. In fact, the Indigenous people represented in the celebration—even the fierce-looking warriors—were uniformly peaceful, and more exotic or picturesque than dangerous. This reflected the relative security that settlers felt in 1884, with Indigenous people no longer a potential military threat as they had been during the early days of York and no longer a visible presence in the city.<sup>127</sup>

These representations would change dramatically a year later, when thousands of Torontonians gathered to send off their men to fight

the Metis in Saskatchewan. Indeed, even in the midst of the week of semi-centennial celebrations, a small notice in the *Daily Mail* reported ominously that Louis Riel had re-entered Canada after his exile in the United States and was holding a meeting with the Metis, “purpose unknown.”<sup>128</sup> Once hostilities broke out, Torontonians would begin to employ new and far harsher discourses of Indian savagery, tropes of the Toronto region's pre-urban history as forest trails soaked in blood and of its Indigenous peoples as biologically inferior, subhuman, ignorant, violent, and deserving of extinction.<sup>129</sup> In such history, there would be no suggestion of friendship or partnership with Indigenous people as was invoked in 1884; rather, any form of relationship would be seen as completely unnecessary. But that was yet to come.

In their idealized version of the past, the semi-centennial organizers had depicted the Loyalists as the “makers, founders, and defenders of Canada” who upheld the solidarity of the British race and empire.<sup>130</sup> For this reason, Britannia, rather than Simcoe—the actual “founder” of Toronto—was the main character and heroic figure of the parade tableaux that represented Toronto's foundational narrative. However, as Knowles points out, this idealized image of the Loyalists had originally emerged during debates over government land and immigration policy.<sup>131</sup> It was land that had attracted many Loyalists to Upper Canada in the first place and that initially set the Loyalists and their children apart as a distinct group, since they received more land than other settlers.<sup>132</sup> Tellingly, in former Upper Canada generally, and Toronto specifically, the suffering and dispossession of the Loyalists was highlighted in historical discourses just as the dispossession and losses of local (and western) Indigenous peoples were obscured; in fact, the one masked and symbolically took the place of the other. More poignantly, in the historical representations at the Toronto semi-centennial, it was the Red Loyalists, and particularly the Mohawks or Kanienkehaka, who symbolically took the place of the displaced Mississaugas, though this was a representation that originated with the settlers. How the tableaux Indians understood “playing Indian” is unknown, though they clearly had their own reasons for agreeing to this role.<sup>133</sup>

Yet, although the semi-centennial offered a vision of the past to frame and ground present identities and power relations, this was not a one-way or uncomplicated process of semi-centennial organizers moulding the minds of Torontonians.<sup>134</sup> For as Gordon notes, “Memory does not construct nationalism and nationalism does not invent memories; they develop together in an entwined and symbiotic relationship.”<sup>135</sup> Pride in nation and “race” had to exist already in the minds of the audience attending the semi-centennial for the pageant before them to have any symbolic or emotive power.<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, although the United Empire Loyalists received special acknowledgement of their high standing by being allotted a day to mark an anniversary of their own, their program may have been the least successful. One editor considered that “it was probably a mistake” to devote a day to “the comparatively unexciting celebration of the virtues” of this select group, and another writer complained of the excesses of Loyalist hagiography that year.<sup>137</sup>

One hundred and twenty-five years later, at the 2009 celebrations marking the 175th anniversary of Toronto's incorporation, the representations of the region's Indigenous past had apparently once again undergone a sea change. The Mississaugas of the New Credit ceremonially opened and closed the event and were given the opportunity to speak, if only



briefly, while the people of Six Nations were little in evidence. Nobody was called a savage. Several of the books for sale recognized the time depth of human presence in the region, as did the historical account posted on the City of Toronto website, which documented thousands of years of Indigenous history, if only up to the founding of the city.<sup>138</sup> The event as a whole celebrated the city's diversity.

Yet historical memory is always fluctuating, contested, and precarious, especially in Toronto, a city of newcomers, where half its current residents were born outside of Canada. For many Torontonians, the story of the place begins with their arrival, as it did for those newcomers who first established York and then Toronto. The nature of the historical inheritance of city residents, particularly in relation to the land, its Indigenous past, and its displaced Indigenous peoples, remains conflicted, complicated, and contested. Today Toronto's Indigenous past is acknowledged only superficially in most quarters and remains largely unknown.

## Notes

- For information on the oral traditions of the Great Migration, see Edward Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* (Hayward, WI: Indian Country Communications, 1988), 114; Selwyn H. Dewdney, *The Sacred Scrolls of the Southern Ojibway* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 199; Thomas Vennum Jr., "Ojibwa Origin-Migration Songs of the Mitewiwin," *Journal of American Folklore* 91, no. 361 (1978): 753–791.
- Archaeological Services Inc., *A Master Plan of Archaeological Resources for the City of Toronto: Interim Report*, submitted to Heritage Preservation Services, Culture Division, City of Toronto, August 2004, 12. This assessment was born out in the forty-five interviews I conducted between 2005 and 2009 for my research on historical memory in Toronto. Literary critic Germaine Warkentin comments, "For a large part of its history, Toronto has been in a state of near amnesia, seeking desperately for its own memory." Germaine Warkentin, "Mapping Wonderland: The City of Toronto as Seen through Its Writers' Eyes," *Literary Review of Canada* 13, no. 10 (December 2005): 14.
- See especially Jean Barman, "Erasing Indigenous Indigeneity in Vancouver," *BC Studies* 115 (2007): 3–30; Dwayne Trevor Donald, "Edmonton Pentimento: Re-reading History in the Case of the Papaschase Cree," *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies* 2, no. 1 (2004): 21–53; Penelope Edmonds, "From Bedlam to Incorporation: Whiteness and the Racialisation of Colonial Urban Space in Victoria, British Columbia and Melbourne, Victoria, 1840s–1880s," in *Exploring the British World: Identity, Cultural Production, Institutions*, 60–90 (Melbourne: RMI, 2004); Jordan Stanger-Ross, "Municipal Colonialism in Vancouver: City Planning and the Conflict over Indian Reserves, 1928–1950s," *Canadian Historical Review* 89, no. 4 (2008): 541–580; Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).
- Robert Dixon, quoted in Edmonds, "From Bedlam to Incorporation," 67.
- Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 11.
- Stanger-Ross, "Municipal Colonialism," 543.
- See also J. M. S. Careless, *Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities and Identities in Canada before 1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 18.
- Edmonds, "From Bedlam to Incorporation," 62–69; Stanger-Ross, "Municipal Colonialism," 545.
- See note 3 above. Edmonds identifies such factors as economic, legal, and demographic disparities created by the fur trade, treaty making, different terms of engagement with colonial labour systems, and variable attitudes to intermarriage, "miscegenation," and assimilation as factors producing variations in racial and colonial formations in different cities. Edmonds, "From Bedlam to Incorporation," 69.
- Ibid.
- Anna Brownell Jameson's autobiographical work, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*, afterword Clara Thomas (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 339.
- Ibid., 67.
- See also J. M. S. Careless, "The First Hurrah: Toronto's Semi-Centennial of 1884," in *Forging a Consensus: Historical Essays on Toronto*, ed. Victor L. Russell, 141–154 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for the Toronto Sesquicentennial Board, 1984); and Peter G. Goheen, "The Assertion of Middle-class Claims to Public Space in Late Victorian Toronto," *Journal of Historical Geography* 29, no. 1 (2003): 73–92. For modernity in Toronto, see Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).
- Alan Gordon, *Making Public Pasts: The Contested Terrain of Montréal's Public Memories, 1891–1930* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 13, 17.
- Gordon, *Making Public Pasts*, 168; H. V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 168–169.
- Ibid., 12.
- For a discussion of the image of the peaceable kingdom as it relates to Canada, see Northrop Frye, *The Stubborn Structure: Essays on Criticism and Society* (London: Methuen, 1970), 310.
- In 1943, Montreal celebrated its founding in 1642 rather than its incorporation in 1833, as part of a reappropriation of urban space by its Franco-Catholic community, and thus emphasized the founders' heroism, missionary mystique, and divine support. The city's 1833 incorporation didn't serve the interests of the organizers, especially because the incorporation was revoked in 1836 in the wake of political troubles. Toronto, on the other hand, was able to get more political mileage out of its incorporation than its 1793 founding. See Harold Bérubé, "Commémorer la ville: une analyse comparative des célébrations du centenaire de Toronto et du tricentenaire de Montréal," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 57, no. 2 (2003): 217–218.
- Ibid., 218.
- See Careless, "First Hurrah," 142. The railway already linked Toronto to Montreal, New York, Ottawa, Muskoka, Detroit, and Chicago.
- Census of Canada, 1881–1882. Vol. 1 (Ottawa 1882), 174, 276–277.
- Ibid. The main religious denominations were 31,000 Church of England, 15,700 Roman Catholics, 15,200 Methodists, 14,500 Presbyterians.
- Careless, "First Hurrah," 144–145; Goheen, "Assertion of Middle-class Claims," 76.
- McMurrish had initiated planning in 1882, when he was still mayor. As Goheen notes, City Council records indicate little involvement in the actual organizing, although ten councillors were designated as responsible for city matters relating to the semi-centennial. Minutes and Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto, 21 January 1884, item 52; 15 April 1884, item 105, City of Toronto Archives. Goheen, "Assertion of Middle-class Claims," 77.
- These included an executive committee of twelve members, a Tableaux committee of twenty-four members, and a Memorial Volume Committee of sixteen members. Goheen, "Assertion of Middle-class Claims," 78; Henry Scadding and John Charles Dent, eds., *Toronto, Past and Present, Historical and Descriptive: A Memorial Volume for the Semi-Centennial of 1884* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose, 1884), 303–307 (hereafter TPP).
- Goheen, "Assertion of Middle-class Claims," 79.

## *“Toronto Has No History!”*

27. The parade moved down Yonge to Queen, along Queen to Jarvis, south on Jarvis to King, west to Simcoe, north on Simcoe to Queen, west on Queen to Strachan, and then south to Exhibition Park. Scadding and Dent, *TPP*, 313.
28. “Jubilee: Opening of Toronto’s Great Holiday,” *The News*, 1 July 1884, 1. Many had come from out of town via railroad or lake steamer.
29. “The Queen City (cont.),” *Daily Mail*, 1 July 1884, 2; “Toronto Jubilee,” *Globe*, 1 July 1884, 3.
30. “The Queen City (cont.),” *Daily Mail*, 1 July 1884, 2.
31. Scadding and Dent, *TPP*, 315.
32. “The Queen City (cont.),” *Daily Mail*, 1 July 1884, 1.
33. Scadding and Dent, *TPP*, 315.
34. In the *Globe* report the day after his speech he was misidentified as president of the entire university, which he would become a few years later.
35. Careless commented that Wilson’s knowledge was said to encompass “ancient rocks to Henry VIII.” Careless, “First Hurrah,” 149. Wilson did not have a university degree himself and in any event history as an academic discipline was then in its infancy. Robert Bothwell, *Laying the Foundation: A Century of History at University of Toronto*. (Toronto: Department of History, University of Toronto, 1991), 9–11.
36. In Canada, those considered history-less have variously included women and French Canadians as well as Indigenous peoples. Gordon, *Making Public Pasts*, 34, 49.
37. See J. G. Kohl, *Travels in Canada: And through the States of New York and Pennsylvania*, ed. and trans. Mrs. Percy Sinnett (London: Manwaring, 1861), 2:14. Similarly, the artist Paul Kane wrote, “I had been accustomed to see hundreds of Indians about my native village, then Little York, muddy and dirty, just struggling into existence, now the City of Toronto, bursting forth in all its energy and commercial strength. But the face of the red man is now no longer seen. All traces of his footsteps are fast being obliterated from his once favourite haunts, and those who would see the aborigines of the country in their original state, or seek to study their native manners and customs, must travel far through the pathless forest to find them.” Paul Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America: From Canada to Vancouver’s Island and Oregon through the Hudson’s Bay Company’s Territory and Back Again* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859), xxii.
38. See Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquaonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 372, for an account of their transformation and the struggle to maintain their lands at the Credit River.
39. Peter Jones, *History of the Ojibway Indians: With Especial Reference to Their Conversion to Christianity* (London: Bennett, 1861), 123–128; Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 162–172.
40. Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation, *Toronto Purchase Specific Claim: Arriving at an Agreement*, [n.d.]; Indian Claims Commission, *Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation Inquiry: Toronto Purchase*; see ‘Surrender, 23 September 1787,’ in *Canada, Indian Treaties and Surrenders, from 1680 to 1890* (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin, 1891; Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers 1992), 1:32–34.
41. Leo A. Johnson, “The Mississauga–Lake Ontario Land Surrender of 1805,” *Ontario History* 83, no. 3 (September 1990): 234–253; Donald B. Smith, “The Dispossession of the Mississauga Indians,” *Ontario History* 73 (1981): 67–87; Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 372; Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 341–350.
42. See, for example, Speech of Quinepenon at a Meeting of the Messissaugues at the River Credit, 1 August 1805, vol.1:294, RG10, Library and Archives Canada (LAC); Petition of the Messissague Nation to Sir Peregrine Maitland, Credit River, 16 November 1825, vol. 2, Lieutenant-Governor’s Correspondence, G14, RG7, LAC; Petition of the Mississauga Indians to Sir Peregrine Maitland, River Credit, 14 December 1826, vol. 3, Lieutenant-Governor’s Correspondence, G14, RG7, LAC; Peter S. Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 106.
43. Jennifer S. Brown, “Ultimate Respectability: Fur Trade Children in the ‘Civilized World,’” *Beaver* (Spring 1978): 48. Indigenous people who lived in Toronto for periods in the mid to late nineteenth century included Oronhy-atekha (Dr. Peter Martin), James Ross; Dr. Peter Edmund Jones, the son of Rev. Peter Jones; Francis Assignack; John Sero-Brant; Allen Wawanosh Johnson; Ellen Hill; and Evelyn Johnson.
44. Peter Jones, for example, stayed for seven weeks at the home of former Credit Mission missionary Egerton Ryerson in 1856. Jones, *History*, 15. See also James Johansen, *Indian Preacher: The Life and Teachings of Rev. Allen Sait, 1818–1911* (Sarnia, ON: St. Clair United Church, 1985).
45. See Sylvia Van Kirk, “‘What if Mama is an Indian?’: The Cultural Ambivalence of the Alexander Ross Family,” in *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Metis in North America*, ed. Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown, 207–217 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985).
46. Maungwudaus, half brother of the Mississauga missionary Kahkewaquaonaby (Peter Jones), performed at St. Lawrence Hall in 1851. Mr. Ma-zaw-keyaw-se-gay and Mr. and Mrs. Mah-koonce (the “grand-daughter of the famous, brave and warlike, yet generous and hospitable Captain Brant”), performed at the same venue in 1856. Edwin Clarence Guillet, *Toronto from Trading Post to Great City* (Toronto: Ontario Publishing, 1934), 409, 411. Increasingly, however, Indigenous performers came from further afield, such as Kawshawgance and his troupe who illustrated “the manners and customs of the Rocky Mountain Indians,” in 1856. The year after the semi-centennial celebrations, Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West show, featuring Sitting Bull, would be the first of several itinerant wild west shows to visit the city. “Buffalo Bill,” *Globe*, 22 August 1885; and “The Wild West,” *Globe*, 25 August 1885, 6.
47. See Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 1992); Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 307.
48. For example, George Brown and George Taylor Denison III. Land had become scarce in Upper Canada / Canada West by the 1850s; potential settlers and Toronto’s rapidly expanding business class needed a new hinterland to exploit.
49. See, for example, Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970); J. M. S. Careless, *Brown of the Globe* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1959), 1:229–233; Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).
50. See also Daniel Wilson, “Toronto of Old,” *Canadian Monthly and National Review* 4, no. 2 (August 1873): 96. See also F. H. Armstrong’s introduction to the abridged edition of *Toronto of Old*: “Since the town, and later the city, was the centre of activities for Upper Canada, the leading figures of both capital and province tended to be the same.” Henry Scadding, *Toronto of Old*, ed. and abr. Frederick Henry Armstrong. 2nd ed. (Toronto: Dundurn, 1987), xvii.
51. Canniff, Scadding, and Wilson were all members of the committee organizing the Loyalist commemoration on the fourth day. For the members of the committee, see United Empire Loyalists Centennial Committee, *The Centennial of the Settlement of Upper Canada by the United Empire Loyalists, 1784–1884* (Toronto: Rose, 1885), 50.
52. William Canniff, *History of the Settlement of Upper Canada (Ontario): With Special Reference to the Bay of Quinté* (Toronto: Dudley & Burns, 1869), 522.
53. Henry Scadding, *Toronto of Old: Collections and Recollections, Illustrative of the Early Settlement and Social Life of the Capital of Ontario* (Toronto: Adam, Stevenson, 1873), 3.

## *“Toronto Has No History!”*

54. Ibid., 508; the original source was Joseph Bouchette, *The British Dominions in the North America, etc.* (London: Longman, 1832), 89.
55. “From time to time, previous and subsequent to 1813, and for pecuniary considerations of various amounts they surrendered to the local Government their nominal right over the regions which they still occupied in a scattered way.” Scadding, *Toronto of Old*, 369.
56. Ibid., 8.
57. In fact, Wilson had reviewed Scadding’s *Toronto of Old* in the *Canadian Monthly and National Review*. Wilson, “Toronto of Old,” 90.
58. Daniel Wilson, *Prehistoric Man: Researches into the Origin of Civilisation in the Old and the New World* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1862).
59. Wilson described North America as a historical and cultural laboratory. While Britain had become great through a slow “collision with races only a little in advance of herself, in the natural transition through all the stages from infancy to vigorous manhood,” in North America the “free savage” in a state of nature was “brought into contact with some of the highest phases of European civilization while the inheritor of that same civilization, divested of its inevitable control, has been left amid the widening inheritance of his new clearings to develop whatever tendencies lay dormant in the artificial European man.” Thus, in an apparently natural historical process, “the American red-man is displaced by the American white-man,” the “free product of the great past and the great present.” Furthermore, this experiment included Africans as well, “to try whether the African is more enduring than the American even on his own soil,” and offered the opportunity to study “amalgamation and hybridity,” and the “development and perpetuity of varieties of a dominant, a savage, and a servile race.” Although Wilson employed racial categories in his analysis, he did not conceive of them as biologically fixed or as arising from separate acts of creation as did polygenists such as Josiah Nott, but rather as the result of divergent historical development. Also rejecting Darwin’s theory of the origin of the species through evolution from apes, he argued for the biological unity of the human race as “descendants of one primal pair.” Ibid., 4, 16, 13.
60. Ibid., xiii.
61. Ibid., 43.
62. Ibid., 26.
63. Ibid., 29–31, 17.
64. Ibid., 17.
65. Ibid., 31.
66. The Wendat and Petun had departed the area by 1600, well before the Mississaugas arrived ca. 1700. While there is a scholarly archaeological literature on specific pre- and post-contact Indigenous sites in the region as well as Victor Konrad’s now outdated 1973 report, *The Archaeological Resources of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area: Inventory and Prospect*, there is to my knowledge no overview of the archaeology of the Toronto region for non-specialists. For the Huron-Wendat period, there are general historical works on the Hurons and Huron-French interactions, especially by Bruce Trigger, Conrad Heidenreich, and Gary Warrick, as well as the counter-history or “autohistory” of Wendat scholar Georges Sioui, but nothing specifically focused on the Toronto area. See Conrad E. Heidenreich, *Huron: A History and Geography of the Huron Indians, 1600–1650* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), 337; Georges E. Sioui, *For an Amerindian Autohistory: An Essay on the Foundations of a Social Ethic* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992), 125; Georges E. Sioui and Jane Brierley, *Huron-Wendat: The Heritage of the Circle*, rev. ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 258; Bruce G. Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic* (1976; Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987), 913; Gary A. Warrick, *A Population History of the Huron-Petun, A.D. 500–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 296.
67. See Gerald Killan, *David Boyle: From Artisan to Archaeologist* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 276.
68. One such find was reported in “‘The Red Man’: Evidence of His One Time Residency North of Toronto Unearthed,” *Globe*, 24 May 1881.
69. See Marinell Ash, *Thinking with Both Hands: Sir Daniel Wilson in the Old World and the New* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Daniel Wilson, *Prehistoric Man*. For other discussions of Wilson’s concept of the prehistoric, see Steven Conn, *History’s Shadow: Native Americans and Historical Consciousness in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); and for the impact of this concept on Indigenous peoples, see Susan Roy, “‘Who were these mysterious people?’ The Marpole Midden, Coast Salish Identity, and the Dispossession of Aboriginal Lands in British Columbia” (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2007). Wilson was a prominent member of a deputation to Premier Oliver Mowat calling for the founding of a provincial museum “to illustrate the life history of those who occupied the soil before the advent of the white man, of those who are rapidly disappearing before the march of civilization.” See “Grant Asked for a Provincial Museum,” *Indian*, 17 February 1886, 35.
70. Elizabeth Furniss, “Challenging the Myth of Indigenous Peoples’ ‘Last Stand’ in Canada and Australia: Public Discourse and Conditions of Silence,” in *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa*, ed. Annie E. Coombes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 173, 182.
71. *Globe*, reprinted in Scadding and Dent, *TPP*, 313.
72. “Semi-Centennial Tableaux,” *Globe*, 19 May 1884, 5. Newspapers varied in their reporting of the sequence, some calling the York Pioneers’ tableaux the first in the sequence, and others not mentioning them but beginning with the first of the twelve commissioned ones.
73. Then the western portion of the colony of Quebec.
74. Compare Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building*, 172.
75. Scadding and Dent, *TPP*, 10.
76. “Toronto’s Jubilee: The First Day an Unqualified Success,” *Globe*, 1 July 1884, 3.
77. “Jubilee: Opening of Toronto’s Great Holiday,” *News*, 1 July 1884, 1.
78. The Mississaugas had arrived in the Toronto area ca. 1700, from the north shore of Lake Huron. See Donald Smith, “Who Are the Mississaugas?” *Ontario History* 73 (1981): 67–87.
79. There is no mention of Mississaugas, Credit Indians, Ojibways, Chippewas, or any similar name.
80. “U.E. Loyalists,” *News*, 4 July 1884, 3. “There were quite a number of Indians present, descendants of those who accompanied the Loyalists to Canada in 1784.” It is possible that the Tyendinaga Mohawks acted the part of the Mississaugas at the instigation of William Canniff, the chief organizer of the day of Loyalist celebrations, who had close ties to the Bay of Quinte area.
81. The Six Nations had offered them refuge in 1847, in recognition of the fact that the Mississaugas had agreed to a surrender of land in 1784 for the benefit of Six Nations refugees from the American Revolution. The Mississaugas subsequently purchased the land for the New Credit reserve. Relations between the Six Nations and the Anishinaabeg nations were somewhat strained in 1884 following a political crisis among members of the Grand General Council of the Indians of Ontario. See Norman D. Shields, “Anishinaabek Political Alliance in the Post-Confederation Period: The Grand General Indian Council of Ontario, 1870–1936” (MA thesis, Queens University, 2001), 70.
82. See City of Toronto Semi-Centennial Scrapbook 1883–1884, 35, 36, 49, 51, 53, file 10, series 1241, fond 2, City of Toronto Archives. The 1885 annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs mentioned that the Six Nations had been invited to participate in the Niagara celebration and made no mention of the Mississaugas in this regard, though their population was enumerated separately from the Haudenosaunee elsewhere in the report. The report was reprinted in Peter Edmund Jones’s newspaper, the *Indian*, 31 March 1886. Although Jones did not mention Mississauga participation in



## *“Toronto Has No History!”*

- the Toronto semi-centennial, he did reprint articles on Toronto and on historical place names written by Henry Scadding, David Boyle, Arthur Harvey, and others, and also reported a meeting as well as articles by several other Toronto authors.
83. Norman James Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 87–88; “Six Nations Indians Propose a Centennial Celebration,” *Globe*, 8 February 1884.
  84. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building*, 18, 174, 81. Native people, including Huron-Wendats from Lorette, Anishinaabeg from Sault Ste Marie, Mohawks (Kanienkahaka), Onandagas, and others were the only paid actors in the Quebec pageant. According to Nelles, they largely followed the script given them, dressing and acting according to dominant cultural perceptions of Indianness.
  85. “Buffalo Bill,” *Globe*, 22 August 1885; “The Wild West,” *Globe*, 25 August 1885.
  86. “Semi-Centennial Tableaux: The Queen City Presented under a Variety of Aspects,” *Globe*, 19 May 1884, 5.
  87. *Ibid.*; Report of the Tableaux Committee, Report of Subcommittees of Semi-Centennial Committee, Toronto Reference Library.
  88. Ian Radforth, *Royal Spectacle: The 1860 Visit of the Prince of Wales to Canada and the United States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 227.
  89. Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 236.
  90. Scadding and Dent, *TPP*, 310. On another part of the same float, the victorious Major Rogers received the sword of the “vanquished” French general.
  91. See Roy T. Matthews, “Britannia and John Bull: From Birth to Maturity,” *Historian* 62, no. 4 (2000): 799–820.
  92. Quoted in Radforth, *Royal Spectacle*, 210–211.
  93. *Ibid.*
  94. Compare the Indian depicted as saying, “Come over and help us,” on the 1629 seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.
  95. Furniss, “Challenging the Myth,” 183.
  96. Sunera Thobani, *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 39–41.
  97. Scadding and Dent, *TPP*, 311.
  98. He received more culturally appropriate apparel in the 1960s. “Brief History of the City of Toronto Coat of Arms,” typescript, n.d., “Toronto (Former City) Symbols” Information file, City of Toronto Archives. See also “Toronto’s Indian Has His Feathers Plucked,” undated newspaper article; and “Toronto Date Book: Toronto’s Coat of Arms,” from *Key to Toronto* (n.d.), 100, from same file.
  99. Stephanie Pratt, *American Indians in British Art, 1700–1840* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 6, 73.
  100. Relations with Indigenous peoples were peaceful compared to the frequent warfare in the United States in the same period. The Mississaugas had initially welcomed the British as a source of trade goods, before they fully realized that the treaties they had signed were land “surrenders” rather than friendship treaties to share the land. Robert Surtees, “Land Cessions, 1763–1830,” in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*, ed. Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith, 92–12 (Toronto: Dundurn, 1994); and Smith, “Dispossession,” 67–87.
  101. E. A. Cruikshank, ed. *The Correspondence of the Honourable Peter Russell* (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1932–1936), 1:40–45; Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 28.
  102. Quinepenon, Meeting with the Messissagues at the River Credit, 1 August 1805, vol. 1:294, RG10, LAC.
  103. Thobani, *Exalted Subjects*, 51. See also Barbara Arneil, *John Locke and America: The Defence of English Colonialism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996).
  104. Similarly, the parade organizers did not represent other historic interactions between the British and local Mississaugas from the city’s pre-urban past in which the Mississaugas might have been seen as valuable or powerful allies rather than subjects, such as the significant role that local Chief Wabibicomicot played in containing and finally ending Pontiac’s War in 1763–1764. (Scadding had discussed this history in *Toronto of Old*).
  105. Scadding and Dent, *TPP*, 312.
  106. Furniss, “Challenging the Myth,” 186–190. Public silences, she says, can be deliberate, repressive, or traumatic. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, 271–313 (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988).
  107. Tyendinaga had elected its first band councillors in 1870, according to the online version of the exhibition, “Mohawk Ideals, Victorian Values: Oronhyatekha, M.D.” <http://woodland-centre.library.cornell.edu/synoptic.html>.
  108. “He exhibited a silver communion service presented to the Mohawks on their conversion from Paganism by Queen Anne.” “The Jubilee: The United Empire Loyalists Celebrate,” *Globe*, 4 July 1884, 5.
  109. Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*, 88.
  110. “The Queen City (cont.),” *Daily Mail*, 4 July 1884, 2. It was also true that the Tyendinaga Mohawks were more Christianized than those at Grand River. See Green’s speech at Adolphustown, in *The Centennial of the Settlement of Upper Canada*, 39.
  111. The non-Indigenous organizers were not willing to endorse this agenda, since to them Indigenous peoples should demonstrate their loyalty by assimilating with Anglo-Canadian society. Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*, 86.
  112. *Brantford Expositor*, 25 October 1884.
  113. The Mississaugas of New Credit were the only band in Ontario to adopt the Indian Advancement Act of 1884 in the nineteenth century; it provided for annual elections of municipal-style government and was opposed both at the Grand Council and at Six Nations. Dr. Jones considered it to be a “batch of privileges” for which he was “very thankful,” according to Shields, “Anishinabek Political Alliance,” 77. By 1886, Jones clearly had cordial relations with Scadding, Wilson, Boyle, and other Toronto historical and archaeological writers/researchers, for they all agreed to contribute to his newspaper, the *Indian*, and he published articles on the history of Toronto and on local archaeology. See “Our Contributors,” *Indian*, 3 February 1886, 11; “The York Pioneers,” *Indian*, 20 October 1886. Whether these relationships were established prior to or as a result of the Toronto semi-centennial, or were established independently, is an area for further research.
  114. “A lot of three acres in the vicinity of Toronto City near or where the Provincial Lunatic Asylum now stands, this was a Reserve for camping and council purposes.” Colonial Office Records, Memorial from the Mississauga Indians of New Credit to the Duke of Newcastle (C.O. 42, vol. 624, 17 September 1860): 458.
  115. See Oronhyatekha, “The Prohibition Question,” *Daily Mail*, 4 December 1875; B.A., “Red Men vs White Men,” *Daily Mail*, 8 December 1875; P. E. Jones, “Red Man v. White Man,” *Daily Mail*, 14 December 1875; Oronhyatekha, “Red Man v. White Man,” *Daily Mail*, 14 December 1875.
  116. “I will commence by stating that there is not in Canada a tribe of Indians more clean, industrious, and sharp in business than are my people. Although a band of only a little over two hundred souls we have two schools in active operation, taught by well-educated members of the tribe . . . My small reservation can boast of thirty-one sewing machines, and eleven organs and pianos, which in comfortable houses are handled with dexterity by the women, while the buzz of nineteen reapers and mowers is heard in the fields cutting down the golden grain, and in the evening the young men make the reservation ring again with the sweet music of a splendid brass band.” P. E. Jones, “Red Man v. White Man,” *Daily Mail*, 14 December 1875.

## *“Toronto Has No History!”*

117. Shields, “Anishinabek Political Alliance,” 63–66.
118. The Caughnawaga Indians described were from the largely Mohawk settlement of Kahnawake, near Montreal. Toronto’s Semi-Centennial Programme 1884, file “1884—Centennial Celebrations,” Baldwin Room, Toronto Reference Library.
119. Gillian Poulter, “Becoming Native in a Foreign Land: Visual Culture, Sport, and Spectacle in the Construction of National Identity in Montreal, 1840–1885” (PhD diss., York University, 2000).
120. Donald M. Fisher, *Lacrosse: A History of the Game* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 24–25.
121. Radforth, *Royal Spectacle*, 227.
122. William George Beers, *Lacrosse: The National Game of Canada* (Montreal: Dawson, 1869); Canadian Lacrosse Association, “A Short History of Lacrosse in Canada,” <http://www.lacrosse.ca/Default.aspx?cid=83&lang=1>; Fisher, *Lacrosse*, 26.
123. “Saturday, July 4, 1884,” *Toronto Evening Telegram*, 5 July 1884, 4. See also “Yesterday’s Amusements,” *News*, 4 July 1884, 1.
124. “Indian Affairs,” *Globe*, 30 January 1884, 5.
125. Dent was a freelance writer of popular history, formerly editor of the reform newspaper, the *Weekly Globe*, author of the four-volume *Canadian Portrait Gallery* (1881), and *The Last Forty Years: Canada since the Union of 1841*, which soon became the standard English account of that period. “John Charles Dent,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, <http://www.biographi.ca>.
126. Ibid.
127. Similarly, Edmonds recounts that after Indigenous peoples were excluded from Melbourne, they became objects of curiosity and were put on display at the Melbourne Zoological Gardens as part of Australian Centennial Exhibition of 1888. Edmonds, “From Bedlam to Incorporation,” 61.
128. “Riel in Canada,” *Daily Mail*, 3 July 1884, 1.
129. See especially Charles Pelham Mulvany, G. Mercer Adam, and Christopher Blackett Robinson, *History of Toronto and County of York, Ontario: Containing a History of the City of Toronto and the County of York, with the Townships, Towns, Villages, Churches, Schools, General and Local Statistics, Biographical Sketches, etc., etc.* (Toronto: Robinson, 1885), 6; Mulvany’s poem “Our Boys in the North-West Away,” *Globe*, 24 May 1885; and an untitled poem by Agnes E. Wetherald, published in the *Week*, reprinted in G. Mercer Adam, *The Canadian North-West: Its History and Its Troubles* (Toronto: Rose, 1885), 388. The blood-soaked forests of Toronto were described in G. Mercer Adam and Henry Scadding, *Toronto, Old and New: A Memorial Volume, Historical, Descriptive and Pictorial* (Toronto: Mail, 1891), 6.
130. The organizers’ discourses were not monolithic, however; there had been disagreement about whether the Loyalists should be celebrated as an elite group or simply as pioneers, and whether the celebration should be used to advance the political cause of imperial unity. Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*, 123–180.
131. Ibid., 11.
132. Ibid., 20–21.
133. There is no record of the Native actors receiving payment for their appearance in the tableaux. See also Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), for a discussion of forms of colonial mimicry involving Indigenous people in the United States.
134. Gordon, *Making Public Pasts*, 16.
135. Ibid., 165.
136. Ibid.
137. Quoted in Goheen, “Assertion of Middle-class Claims,” 79; Charles Pelham Mulvany, wrote, “Let us give the U.E. Loyalists the glory they so unquestionably merit, and refuse to daub their honoured sepulchers with the whitewash of indiscriminate flattery.” See Charles Pelham Mulvany, *Toronto, Past and Present: A Handbook of the City* (Toronto: Caiger, 1884), 5.
138. See <http://toronto.ca>. Recent publications include Ronald F. Williamson, ed., *Toronto: An Illustrated History of Its First 12,000 Years* (Toronto: Lorimer, 2008); and Frank A. Dieterman and Mississauga Heritage Foundation, *Mississauga: The First 10,000 Years* (Toronto: Eastendbooks, 2002).