

*Kingston Mechanics and the Rise of the Penitentiary, 1833-1836**

by Bryan D. PALMER**

I

In the years 1820 to 1850 Kingston was an important Upper Canadian community, and one with many functions. As an administrative centre it became the capital of the united provinces in 1841, and served that role for three years, until the government seat was removed to Montreal. The 1830 population of 3,800 grew to 4,500 by mid-decade, establishing Kingston as the second most populous centre in Upper Canada, and one of only six town electoral districts in 1836. Economically, the community's significance as an exchange centre in the North American trade in lumber, livestock, and grain was rivalled only by Toronto; the Kingston Road traversed the colony and the town was a focal point in the early transportation network. In the political sphere, Kingston stood as the centre of a "loyalist" district; few regions so assiduously cultivated their reputations as Tory strongholds. To be sure, these years prior to 1850 were ones of important change, and Kingston's decline had already begun, in part because it lacked a large, insulated hinterland. When the government seat was transferred to Montreal the town suffered a population loss of 1,700. By the late nineteenth century Kingston would be clearly outdistanced by its old rival, Toronto, and new western Ontario industrial cities — Hamilton and London — were leaving Kingston struggling in their wake. This, then, is the image of early nineteenth-century Kingston commonly derived from the available literature: a bustling commercial and administrative centre of pronounced conservatism resting comfortably on the edge of its forthcoming, but unanticipated, demise.

One would not want to revise this picture dramatically, for it captures the essential character of the town. But it is perhaps necessary to introduce another variable, that of small-scale manufacturing, and to recognize that the town housed, not only merchants, clerks, and Tories, but craftsmen, mechanics, and labourers. Production was largely confined to workshops employing only a handful of journeymen, but by 1850 a number of substantial "manufactories" had emerged in the steam engine, shipbuilding, and machinery realms, employing from twenty to fifty workers. Indeed, as early as the War of 1812, two hundred shipwrights had been

* A version of this paper was prepared for the Ontario Historical Society meetings, London, June 1978. I would like to thank Robert Babcock, Kathryn Bindon, Gregory S. Kealey, and Patricia E. Malcolmson for their comments on an earlier draft.

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imported to staff the dockyard, and their "vile and disorderly conduct" prompted a quick complaint from Captain Owen Edward, commodore of the colony's navy.¹

We know virtually nothing about such incidents in the history of early Canadian class relations, about the recruitment of a wage-labouring group and the painful process of adjustment. Historians of Canadian labour have concentrated their studies on the working-class presence in the years 1860-1950, with pronounced emphasis on the twentieth century. Perhaps it is time to open the book at page one, or at least turn to the introductory chapters, for it was in the pre-Confederation years that the history of Canadian workers commenced. Without first ascertaining the values of the lower orders in this early period, before the rise of the factory, and without first looking at the nature of plebeian behaviour in these years, as ambiguous and as interpretively problematic as these values and this behaviour may be, the foundation upon which we construct analyses of the impact of a developing industrial capitalism will be unstable at best. Many problems intrude, blocking efforts to study these pre-1850 years. The lack of sources (especially quantitative material facilitating a precise discussion of the structural makeup of the labour force) present serious impediments to analysis. But it is possible to explore aspects of plebeian activity and life, especially through local studies of specific events and developments. What follows is one such effort to take a particular "moment" in the history of the pre-Confederation "producing classes" and use it to introduce a discussion of class in early Canada.²

II

The coming of the prison has historically been an event giving rise to much consternation. Kingston, that city of many correctional and penal institutions, and the site of the first Upper Canadian provincial penitentiary in the 1830s, became the battleground where opposition to the Canadian prison was first voiced. Mechanics

¹ The above overly compressed sketch draws upon Jacob SPELT, *Urban Development in South-Central Ontario* (Toronto, 1972); Brian S. OSBORNE, "Kingston in the Nineteenth Century: a Study in Urban Decline", in *Perspectives on Landscape and Settlement in Nineteenth Century Ontario*, ed.: J. David WOOD (Toronto, 1978), pp. 159-82; Margaret ANGUS, "John Counter", *Historic Kingston*, 27 (January 1979): 16-25; R. A. PRESTON, "The History of the Port of Kingston", *Ontario History*, 46 (Autumn 1954): 201-11, and 47 (Winter 1955): 25-38. The note on shipwrights is culled from Waldo E. SMITH, *The Navy Chaplain and His Parish* (Ottawa, 1967), pp. 164-71, drawn to my attention by George Rawlyk. Cf., many of the essays on the city's economic history in Gerald TULCHINSKY, ed., *To Preserve and Defend: Essays on Kingston in the Nineteenth Century* (Montreal, 1976). On the shipyard as "manufactory" see Richard RICE, "Shipbuilding in British America, 1787-1890: An Introductory Study" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Liverpool, 1977), pp. 168-98, although this source deals with the export-trade in deep-sea vessels, almost exclusively a product of the Maritimes and Quebec.

² I mean to imply no denigration of the important work of H. C. Pentland and J. I. Cooper, nor would I ignore the recent research of Michael Cross, Judith Fingard, and others, but, on the whole, "labour history" is a post-Confederation area. This is dramatically revealed as one glances at the table of contents of the first four issues of *Labour/Le Travailleur*, where only two of thirty-three articles have anything to say of the plebeian experience prior to 1850. This concentration on the period of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries is all the more startling given the fascinating studies of the earlier period that have recently been undertaken by English and American scholars.

organized a series of agitations in the years 1833-1836.³ These skilled workers opposed the prison on the grounds that the practice of teaching inmates a trade debased craft skills and threatened their economic well-being.⁴ Pointing to the experience of their fellow craftsmen in upstate New York, where the Auburn prison had virtually destroyed the shoemaking trade, these Kingston mechanics vehemently denounced the establishment of a penitentiary in their midst.⁵ As one of the first organized efforts of Canadian workingmen, opposition to the prison and convict labour is an intrinsically important, albeit complex, chapter in early working-class history. In reconstructing the history of these years we catch something of the ties linking the anti-penitentiary workingmen to the reform cause of the period, establishing the elementary social fact that "progressive" and "conservative" views on socio-political issues often coalesce. Finally, this history of opposition to the prison draws us into the matrix of plebeian life in early Kingston, illuminating the obscure corners of emerging class relations in a period as yet virtually unstudied.

Those Kingstonsians of the 1830s who refused to doubt the reality of divine presence may well have regarded a seemingly unimportant event with considerable concern. On 27 September 1833 a workman engaged in breaking stone at the future site of the Provincial Penitentiary was struck by lightning. The bolt apparently descended down the trunk of a tree, brushed the man's face, singeing his beard. Drop-

³ On the origins of the penitentiary see J. M. BEATTIE, *Attitudes Towards Crime and Punishment in Upper Canada, 1830-1850: A Documentary Study* (Toronto, 1977), pp. 1-35; Richard B. SPLANE, *Social Welfare in Ontario, 1791-1893* (Toronto, 1965), pp. 33-39, 128-47; J. Jerald BELLOMO, "Upper Canadian Attitudes Toward Crime and Punishment, 1832-1851", *Ontario History*, 64 (March 1972): 11-26; Rainer BAEHRE, "Origins of the Penitentiary System in Upper Canada", *Ontario History*, 69 (September 1977): 185-207. To my knowledge the only published reference to the Kingston mechanics' agitation of the 1830s is brief and unenlightening. See James ROY, *Kingston: The King's Town* (Toronto, 1952), p. 149. Roy draws upon E. E. HORSEY, "Kingston", Unpublished mss., 1937, 71, Queen's University Archives.

⁴ From the beginnings of the penitentiary system the practice of teaching inmates trades was defended, both for its rehabilitative consequences, and because it was regarded as economically necessary for the prisoners to contribute to their own material upkeep while incarcerated. Indeed, the question of convict labour figured forcefully in both the Auburn and Philadelphia systems, to which Canadians looked for guidance. See David J. ROTHMAN, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston, 1971), pp. 57-108; Dr. Charles DUNCOMBE, "Report of Commissioners on Subject of Prisons and Penitentiaries", *Appendix to the Journal of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada*, Vol. I, #71 (Toronto, 1836): 14-15. Note the Upper Canadian advocates of training prison inmates in craft skills in "Report of the Commissioners for Creating a Penitentiary", 25 November 1833, in Kingston Penitentiary, Minutes of the Board of Inspectors, with Annual Reports, 1839-1847, Queen's Archives; *Upper Canada Herald*, 5 March 1834; *Globe*, 20 July 1851.

⁵ On opposition to convict labour in this period in the United States see Stephen MAYER, "People vs. Fischer: The Shoemakers' Strike of 1833", *New York State Historical Society Quarterly*, 62 (January 1978): 16-20; Walter HUGGINS, *Jacksonian Democracy and the Working Class* (Stanford, 1960), pp. 155-61, 255-56; *Proceedings of the State Convention of Mechanics Held at Utica, August 21-22, 1834* (Utica, 1834); *The Man* (New York), 26 February-30 March 1835; *New York Daily Advertiser*, 23 January 1834; *New York Evening Post*, 18 July 1835; John R. COMMONS et al., *Documentary History of American Industrial Society* (Cleveland, 1910), Vol. V: 203, 230-38. Late nineteenth-century opposition to convict labour is discussed in Glen Albert GILDEMEISTER, "Prison Labor and Convict Competition with Free Workers in Industrializing America, 1840-1890" (Ph.D. dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 1977). Note the discussion of opposition to prison labour in France in the 1840s in Michel FOUCAULT, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, 1977), pp. 240-41.

ping his hammer, the mechanic put out the fire with his hand. While uninjured, the workingman had, in the parlance of the times, “brushed the grass that skirts the tomb”. To some, perhaps, the incident was merely an unfortunate accident. But to others it may have been a portentous omen, for opposition to the prison had been voiced as early as 1830. “Mechanicus” had written to a local paper to condemn convict labour, “a system which instead of punishing evil doers, becomes a scourge for them that do well”.⁶ Indeed, among Kingston workingmen, the emergence of the penitentiary was regarded as an ill wind that blew no good.

Direct opposition to the new prison erupted in late 1833. As local newspapers carried advertisements soliciting labourers to work on the construction site of the penitentiary, and as the *Montreal Gazette* promised completion of the institution by the fall of 1834, the town’s mechanics marshalled their forces. By early December 1833, a movement of opposition was well underway, drawing the ire of some local residents. “Howard” endorsed the penal institution, denying that it was, as the mechanics claimed, a “palace” for “pampered villains”. In closing, this advocate of the prison postulated that “the great outcry against Penitentiaries no doubt *originated* with those persons who expected, or who had a chance one day, to become inmates of them.”⁷

As if to undercut “Howard’s” contention, the mechanics met at the Court House in the second week of December, their body described as an “exceedingly respectable” lot. With David Williamson, a dry goods merchant active politically as a reformer, in the chair, and William A. Forward, a young lawyer prominent in the Kingston Young Men’s Society, acting as a secretary, a group of tradesmen and workingmen drafted a series of resolutions condemning convict labour, denying the necessity of a provincial penitentiary, and advocating the rigorous use of tread-mills to discipline and punish criminals. They viewed “with much dissatisfaction the establishment of a Penitentiary in this Town on the principle of manufacturing”, deploring “the tendency to bring the labor of rogues in competition with honest men... tend[ing] ultimately to drive from this Town the most valuable and industrious portion of its inhabitants”. A petition in accordance with these sentiments was drafted by Alexander J. Ferns (boot and shoe maker), John Butterworth (hatter), John Milner (builder), and John Cullen (stonecutter). Marshall Spring Bidwell, a lawyer whose allegiance to the reform interest was well known to all in Upper Canada, was asked to present the petition to the House of Assembly, informing the authorities of the mechanics’ distaste for convict labour and the competitive threat it posed to honest workingmen. Trusting in Bidwell, one of Upper Canada’s leading critics of the Family Compact, Forward, later to be arrested on charges of insurrection and treason in the aftermath of the abortive uprising of 1837-1838, and Williamson, easily identified as a local reformer, the mechanics and tradesmen appeared appropriately deferential, for these individuals were obviously not of the labouring poor. But the tradesmen and workingmen had also asserted themselves politically, in a town known as a Tory stronghold. Their choice of Bidwell, Forward, and Wil-

⁶ *Kingston Chronicle and Gazette*, 28 September 1833; 2 October 1830. Hereafter *KCG*.

⁷ *KCG*, 13 July 1833; 21 September 1833; 7 December 1833.

liamson spoke strongly of their allegiance to the reform cause, a cause backed openly by at least one of their number, the prosperous hatter John Butterworth.⁸

The convict labour question quickly polarized the community, and drew comment across the province. A local newspaper, the *Kingston Chronicle and Gazette*, defended the Penitentiary, arguing that it relieved "Society from insecurity of life and property". But a "Tradesman" saw things differently. To him, prisons resting on the foundation of convict labour were a "*black plan*", and the government that would endorse such a practice seemed indifferent as to "whether its subjects [were] rogues or honest people, provided money could be made of them". Finally, the "Tradesman" argued that the introduction of mechanical pursuits into the routine of prison life would lead to economic depression throughout the province. As industry was undermined by the competitive threat of convict-made goods, poverty and vice would be the predictable consequence, and the prison would stand as a force increasing the very evils it was intended to restrain.⁹ Outside of Kingston the issue was also hotly contested, Montreal and Halifax papers endorsing the penitentiary, the *York Patriot* standing behind the mechanics and their opposition to convict labour.¹⁰

By mid-February 1834, with an election pending, the tradesmen nudged their opposition to the prison into the political arena. "Sydney" urged Kingston mechanics to elect a "liberal" to the Upper Canadian Parliament to fight their battle against convict labour. Praising the earlier meeting at the Court House as the "largest as to numbers, and equal in respectability to any I have ever seen in Kingston", "Sydney" called for unity, firmness, and determination in the ensuing political struggle: "It now remains for the mechanics to come forward to a man, let no consideration separate them... [and they will] yet weather the storm which now threatens to destroy them". Condemning despotic, aristocratic government, but quick to disassociate himself from the uncouth "*republicans and levellers*", "Sydney" urged respectable mechanics to elect a democratic reform candidate that would look to their interests.¹¹

It was with this object in mind that the Kingston mechanics organized three meetings during the last week in February. At the first gathering, at John Lance's Tavern, with A. J. Ferns in the chair and the cooper John Spence acting as secretary, resolutions were passed declaring "the necessity of union among the mechanics, who have the selection of the town member of parliament in their own hands, ought to determine upon sending thither a man... who would advance their rights and

⁸ *KCG*, 14 December 1833. On Bidwell see any standard account of reform in the period. The main aspects of his life are summarized in Gerald M. CRAIG, "Bidwell, Marshall Spring", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. X, 1871-1880 (Toronto, 1970), pp. 60-64. Forward is listed in Charles Lindsey's appendix of those arrested in Upper Canada after the rebellion. See LINDSEY, *The Life and Times of Wm. Lyon Mackenzie and the Rebellion of 1837-1838* (Toronto, 1862), II: 375. On Butterworth and Forward, and the first stirrings of the Kingston reform group in 1833-1834, see S. F. WISE, "Tory Factionalism: Kingston Elections and Upper Canadian Politics, 1820-1836", *Ontario History*, 57 (December 1965): 220.

⁹ *KCG*, 21 December 1833.

¹⁰ Comments from these papers in *ibid.*, 28 December 1833; 4 January 1834; 1 February 1834.

¹¹ *British Whig*, 18 February 1834. Other letters in *Whig*, 25 February 1834, and *KCG*, 22 February 1834, document continuing opposition to the penitentiary.

pledge himself to use his best endeavors to mitigate the anticipated evils arising out of the system of penitentiary labor". The second meeting, convened at Meagher's Tavern, witnessed the first factional rift in the movement of opposition. Mechanics appeared divided over whether Abraham Traux, an active reformer, or a Mr. Drummond, a wealthy Kingston resident, should oppose Christopher A. Hagerman, "an object of detestation among the mechanics of Kingston". When a vote decided in favour of the former, protests were issued, arguing that Traux's committee had "stacked" the meeting. A third gathering, to be composed of mechanics only, was thus called. When Traux was again nominated, the workingmen united behind him, thus casting their lot unambiguously with the small group of reformers that had first surfaced in the town in the early 1830s.¹²

Traux, however, failed to serve the interests of the workingmen. He could have had the 1834 reform nomination for the asking, but dropped out of the contest on the eve of the election. His replacement was the Reverend William O'Grady, a suspended priest and editor of a radical Toronto journal, the *Canadian Correspondent*. A more unlikely candidate could hardly have been found. As an outsider he stood scant chance of victory in such a parochial community; as a reformer he attracted few adherents within a town long dominated by Tories; and as a defrocked priest he drew rebuke rather than support. Nevertheless, when the Toronto reformer travelled to the eastern Canadian town to address the local Whigs on the need to oppose Hagerman, his inflammatory speech at a rowdy meeting of the Friends of Constitutional Reform, held in Scanlon's Long Room, won him a place representing Kingston's small reform community. With Traux refusing to stand, the reformers readily seized the first candidate who came their way.

Threatened for the first time, Kingston's various Tory factions closed ranks to oppose this unprecedented radical intruder. For his part, the imported ex-priest saw the contest, not in terms of victory or defeat, but as an opportunity to spread the propagandistic word. "It is a glorious thing to commence in this hot-bed of toryism the battle of reform", proclaimed O'Grady from the hustings, "and tho' the Reformers may not, for the present, be able to slay the Goliath (here he turned to Mr. Hagerman) is it not a glorious thing, that on examining the materials of the pedestal on which he stands, and discovering their rottenness,... we may anticipate the not far distant day... when public opinion will dash the proud Colussus in the dust." A virtual stream of invective, satire, and insult flowed from the Irish radical's mouth on the eve of the election, but all to no purpose. His "extreme" language probably alienated many moderates, although Marshall Spring Bidwell, for one, would publicly cast his vote for O'Grady with no misgivings. Some of the anti-Penitentiary mechanics likely tied to the reform interest may well have been disenfranchised by the town electoral qualification of £5 freehold or £10 copyhold. O'Grady could thus not even exploit the mechanics' resentment fully, and he polled a mere thirty-seven votes before throwing in the towel in the face of obvious defeat. Hagerman was easily returned to the Upper Canadian Assembly, and O'Grady slipped unobtru-

¹² *Whig*, 28 February 1834. For information on the 1834 election I have drawn heavily upon Wise, "Tory Factionalism", pp. 218-22, and the following paragraphs reflect that debt. On political relations in the town in this period, especially the consolidation of Tory factions in the face of reform opposition, see William R. TEATERO, "John A. Macdonald Learns — Articling with George Mackenzie", *Historic Kingston*, 27 (January 1979): 98-102.

sively back to Toronto. Victory in the 1834 election had not so much eluded reformers and mechanics; it had been thrown away.

This early instance of political activity, then, was a reflection of the mechanics' impotence in the political realm, as well as an indication of the reform interest's essential weakness. But it did serve to crystallize early class sentiments, developing a keen appreciation of the established political structure's inability to respond to the workingman's needs. Tory power was attacked in the midst of the election by a "true Irishman". Asserting that the mechanics were the "most useful class in our society", the Irish workingman raged against George Mackenzie, John A. Macdonald's legal and political mentor. "I tell Mr. Mackenzie", thundered the mechanic, "that we are as capable of judging on a point which concerns our interests, either as citizens or mechanics as well as he; we will not be led by the nose by an interested set of men."

Despite the mechanic-reform failure, however, concessions were made to the anti-Penitentiary workingmen, at least in the abstract realm of commitment, if not in practice. The *Kingston Chronicle and Gazette* admitted that convict labour should never be instituted so as to cause injury to honest mechanics. In no case, argued the paper, should the products of prison labour be sold below current prices, and each section of the province should receive its appropriate share of the goods. With these nods in the direction of the mechanics, the Tory paper closed the issue, dismissing anti-convict labour sentiment as "a factious tampering with public feeling". Given this stern reproach, the termination of the political struggle, and the apparent concessions to their cause, the workingmen retreated into the background. Silence on the penitentiary question prevailed for nine months.¹³

The mechanics reasserted themselves in January 1835. At Bamford's Steamboat Hotel the workingmen met to reaffirm their endorsement of the 1833 petition and continue the struggle against convict labour. A committee of twelve (A. J. Ferns, George Webster, John Cullen, John Spence, Elihu Parry, John Milner, Charles Sewell, Henry Oliver, James Meagher, Azel Cook, Thomas Smith, George Bathgate, William Lyall, and John MacLeod) was instructed to correspond with mechanics throughout the colony and draft another petition. Another group of mechanics, however, gathered at Leahy's Tavern to offer their support to the besieged Penitentiary. The event was not to be repeated, and its leaders went unnamed in the local press, so this contingent could not have been large, and may have been nothing more than an arm of established authority. Even in the midst of opposition, the strength of the anti-Penitentiary movement was obvious. Although those meeting at Leahy's had rejected the mechanics' petition, they agreed that it had been "very numerously signed", and that the debate over the issue of prison labour was tinged with some "desultory conversation".¹⁴

Agitation continued with a mid-February meeting in Meagher's Long Room in the Wellington Inn. A notice of the gathering "hoped that every mechanic who values the future respectability of his trade, will afford this meeting the benefit of his

¹³ KCG, 8 March 1834; 22 March 1834; *Whig*, 21 March 1834. The Irishman is quoted in William R. TEATERO, "'A Dead and Alive Way Never Does': The Pre-Political Professional World of John A. Macdonald" (M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1978), pp. 82-83.

¹⁴ *Whig*, 16 January 1835; 23 January 1835; KCG, 17 January 1835.

advice". Christopher A. Hagerman's acknowledgement of the January petition was a major topic of discussion, as was the proposal, then before the Legislative Assembly, to employ convicts at the Marmora Iron Works. In rejecting this latter suggestion, which would have relieved the situation in Kingston, the town's mechanics revealed their understanding of the essentially political dimensions of their struggle. Opposition to convict labour was not merely a local issue, and the Kingston workingmen sought to protect other communities from the spectre of the prison. Henry Oliver, chairman of the meeting, drafted a list of twenty-six Kingston trades that would be injured by penitentiary labour, and twelve other crafts, not yet established in the town, that would be unlikely to sink roots in the inhospitable soil of an environment threatened by competition from convict-made goods. The tone of the meeting was set by Donald Urquhart (woodworker) and Thomas Smith (merchant hatter) who moved that, "the employment of any trades in the Penitentiary would have the effect of degrading the condition of the mechanics from respectability to that of being a companion of convicts."¹⁵

Support for the Kingston movement of opposition emerged in Toronto. At a 2 March 1835 meeting held at the Town Hall, a group of mechanics and tradesmen led by William Atkinson and William Ketchum supported the stand of their Kingston counterparts. "It is paying very little respect to a mechanic", they noted, "after having served a number of years to acquire a trade, to make an honest living through life, to set all the criminals in a country in competition with him." Taking their stand against all forms of convict labour that tended to "deprive the mechanic of a fair remuneration for his labor", the Toronto workingmen argued that prisoners should be employed breaking stone for macadamizing roads.¹⁶

The support of the Toronto workingmen hinted at the escalation of the anti-Penitentiary movement, for the spring of 1835 was indeed a period of increased activity. Up to this point, the Kingston mechanics had been battling a perceived threat. But with the opening of the Kingston Penitentiary in June of 1835 they faced a concrete foe. In April 1835 they again gathered to prepare petitions stating their opposition to prison labour. Hagerman, ever the astute politician, and prominent in the House of Assembly's active role in establishing the prison in Kingston, assured the mechanics that prison labour would not compete with local mechanics, and that convicts would be employed largely in breaking stone for use on the roads. Once again the assurances of an adept politician stifled open dissent, and the workingmen retreated into inactivity. Under the surface of tranquillity, however, seethed deep resentments.¹⁷

Over a year later, the patience, trust and good will of the mechanics having been exhausted, the anti-Penitentiary movement revived as workingmen united to crush, once and for all, the threat of prison labour. The immediate factor pushing mechanics towards activity may well have been the forthcoming 1836 election, for the workingmen had a score to settle with Hagerman and his slippery tongue. But the visible presence of convict labour, as we shall argue, must have been the most irritating force. Stung by the threat of convict-made goods, angered by Hagerman's

¹⁵ *KCG*, 11 February 1835; 14 February 1835; *Whig*, 16 February 1835.

¹⁶ *Toronto Courier*, n.d., cited in *Whig*, 12 March 1835; *KCG*, 21 March 1835.

¹⁷ *KCG*, 11 April 1835.

obvious indifference to their plight, the mechanics met at the Duke of York Inn and passed resolutions attesting to their long-standing complaints:

Resolved, That it is with feelings of deep regret that this meeting finds itself under the necessity of again adverting to the subject which had so much engrossed the attention of the Kingston mechanics for years back, namely, that of the penitentiary system of learning criminals different trades during the term of their confinement, the produce of which comes in powerful competition with the honest mechanics, who support their proportionate share of its expenses. Resolved, That from the promises that the Mechanics of this Town had received from C. A. Hagerman, Esq., MPP, for Kingston, during the session 1834-35 that their petition which had been signed by upwards of 500 individuals, inhabitants of Kingston, would be presented to the Assembly, and that as far as he had any influence, no trades would be carried on in the Penitentiary that would hurt the business of any mechanic in the Town; the said mechanics rested satisfied till they find now that their hopes are blasted by the witnessing of the said injurious system now in active operation in many instances — therefore it behooves the mechanics of the province in general and Kingston in particular to bestir themselves to counteract the evil with every effort in their power.

The session closed with a resolution to arrange a meeting of all mechanics at Bamford's Steamboat Hotel, Thursday 2 June 1836, and the local reform press chastized Hagerman's misrepresentations, which had served to pull the wool over the eyes of the workingmen.¹⁸

Anti-Penitentiary mechanics could not have played a significant role in the election of 1836, for again Hagerman was returned. Given the general collapse of the reform cause in the politics of 1836, this is understandable. But the mechanics remained determined. Their June meeting continued the attack on convict labour and led to the formation of a Mechanics' Association, similar to a body formed in Toronto. Even in the anti-reform climate of 1836, Kingston workingmen chose to assert, if only symbolically, their ties to the reform cause, their antagonism to the entrenched Tory élite. They selected John "Dirty Jack" Vincent as the official printer of the newly-created Mechanics' Association. Vincent, editor of the *Kingston Spectator*, and a practicing typographer, had also been an original member of the small stalwart reform group first consolidated in Kingston in 1833. His place as a dissident reached back to the Gourlay agitation of 1817.¹⁹

With the formation of this Association, the tradesmen apparently threatened "a combination not to employ any artizan taught in the Penitentiary", an indication of the employing status of some of the mechanics. This action earned them the

¹⁸ *Whig*, 9 June 1836; *KCG*, 28 May 1836.

¹⁹ The formation of the Toronto Mechanics' Association (1836) is noted in G. P. DE T. GLAZEBROOK, *Life in Ontario: A Social History* (Toronto, 1968), p. 68, where it is argued that the Association was formed for "the protection of mechanical labour, either by petition to the Legislature, or to any branch of Government, for any alteration or extension of duties, by enforcing the law against such as may violate it to their injury, by addresses to the public, or to its other members, or by any other lawful means in its power." On the Kingston Association see *KCG*, 15 June 1836; *Whig*, 23 June 1836. The existence of these bodies, which were in touch with each other, hints at the beginnings of an Ontario working-class movement that extended beyond the immediate boundaries of specific communities. Given the Kingston mechanics' ties to the reformers, it is possible that the links followed paths first trod by advocates of political reform. Note Eric JACKSON, "The Organization of Upper Canadian Reformers, 1818-1867", *Ontario History*, 53 (1961): 95-115. On Vincent see WISE, "Tory Factionalism", p. 219; Robert GOURLAY, *Statistical Account of Upper Canada* (Toronto, 1974), pp. 247-49.

scorn of many critics, and the applause of others. The town newspapers continued to keep the convict labour issue in the political and social limelight, and the *British Whig* urged a popular demonstration of the people's opposition to "the Monster". "Make a simultaneous attack upon this horrible Nuisance", urged the paper's editor, Dr. E. J. Barker, "every man lift his stone — and precipitate in piece-meal, the odious edifice, with its villainous inmates, into Hatte's Bay." Barker continued his inflammatory appeal, suggesting that the Stone Cutters might request those gentleman of the city who now sent their work to the prison, "to send there also for their TOMB STONES — the sooner the better!" Labour's poets even came to articulate the workingmen's irritation, "a Mechanic" writing:

Shall Kingston tradesmen be forgot,
And rogues be well supplied?
Then Honesty availeth not —
Away with honest pride.

Then villainy may clap its wings
And triumph in its lot;
Since honesty starvation brings
Be honest men forgot.²⁰

By the end of October 1836 the Kingston mechanics had filed a petition with the Upper Canada Parliament advocating the restriction of convict labour to breaking stones, pumping water, and working at efforts that would not injure the interests of tradesmen. This document, which likely circulated outside of the town, nevertheless attested to the widespread support that the anti-convict labour cause produced; it was said to bear the signatures of nearly 2,000 individuals. Beyond this parliamentary appeal, the mechanics adopted a new stance, and brought before the public "numerous reported cases of oppressive cruelty and arrogant injustice, said to be daily and even hourly perpetrated within the prison walls". This claim, perhaps one of the first outcries against Henry Smith, Sr., and his corrupt and inhumane administration, would be proven all too true with the report of George Brown's 1849 Commission inquiry. In Toronto, the mechanics' cause was taken up by William Lyon Mackenzie. Writing in the *Constitution*, he railed against "sending down our rogues and vagabonds to the Kingston Penitentiary, to be fed like lords in idleness, or only to work to the injury of honest mechanics." Instead, Mackenzie claimed, these "able-bodied rascals" might be more usefully employed pumping water or clearing swamp-land in the Toronto vicinity. Mackenzie, often seen as a staunch anti-working class element because of the confrontation with his printers in 1836, was capable of supporting the producing classes in times of upheaval and conflict; indeed, such action could be regarded as consistent with his world view.²¹

²⁰ KCG, 18 June 1836; 29 June 1836; *Whig*, 30 September 1836; 7 October 1836.

²¹ *Whig*, 3 November 1836; *Constitution*, n.d., cited in *Whig*, 30 November 1836. Mackenzie's resistance to his printers' demands is outlined in F. H. ARMSTRONG, "Reformer as Capitalist: William Lyon Mackenzie and the Printers' Strike of 1836", *Ontario History*, 59 (September 1967): 187-96. Mackenzie always supported the producing classes, arguing that "labour is the source of all wealth". Too often, perhaps, historians have only considered his endorsement of the independent yeomanry. See Lillian F. GATES, "The Decided Policy of William Lyon Mackenzie", *Canadian Historical Review*, 40 (1959): 185-208; G. M. CRAIG, "The American Impact on the Upper Canadian Reform Movement Before 1837", *Canadian Historical Review*, 29 (1948): 333-52; J. E. REA, "William Lyon Mackenzie — Jacksonian?", *Mid-America*, 50 (1968): 223-35.

The enthusiasm of the local movement of opposition must have been kindled by Mackenzie's support. Towards the end of November 1836, the Mechanics' Association appointed Donald Urquhart as their delegate to a Toronto meeting of mechanics. They sent the woodworker on his way with explicit instructions:

Where you go Donald, away from the town,
To Toronto, tell him who wears the black gown,
We wish what is just upheld, and unjust turned down,
But till death will uphold the King and the Crown.

Tell the noble and gallant McLean,
Whose kind heart is free from hollow greed,
That we never without a cause would complain
All, all that we wish is our rights to maintain.

Those felons of the Monster, whose pay is so small
Doth labor for little or nothing at all;
And poor men felons doth buy at their hall,
Such base competition must ruin us all.

By the end of the year the mechanics' petition had been referred to a select committee of the Upper Canadian Parliament, in which Messrs. Cartwright and Hagerman of Kingston figured prominently. A majority of the committee, the mechanics were assured, regarded the prayers of the petitioners with favour. The mechanics were certainly not lacking in trust, for with this promise of "pie in the sky" their opposition was again stifled.²²

At the foundation of the resurgence of 1836 was the emergence of the Penitentiary as a visible foe, and the development of a programme of convict labour within the prison walls. While much prison labour was directed towards internal expansion and construction in these years, the thin line separating threatening work from non-threatening labour was never clearly defined by prison officials, nor perceived by the town's mechanics. Indeed, a wide range of sources — petitions for employment, Warden Smith's solicitations for contracts, penitentiary inspectors' reports, prison advertisements, and convict labour work books — indicate that between 1836-1839 a programme based on convict labour was established. By 1839 the construction of prison workshops was completed, and craft training was provided the inmates. Shoes were the most important commercial product, although the Penitentiary also embarked on rope making. Moreover, the institution was prepared to hire out to employers an impressive variety of workers. While the actual contracting of convict labour was never extensively practiced, the inmates continuing to be employed in expanding prison buildings and facilities throughout the 1840s, it was clear to Kingston's mechanics that the dreaded reality of the convict labour system had emerged in their midst. Perceiving their status and their economic well-being to be threatened, local workingmen were understandably upset. To quiet this discontent, the prison administration itself employed subtle and sophisticated tactics to diffuse working-class resentments. We need only study the appointment of the President of the Board of Penitentiary Commissioners, in 1836, to confirm this assessment. The new official was James Nickalls, and the rationale behind his rise to prominence on the penitentiary board tells us much about the strength of the me-

²² *Whig*, 30 November 1836; 8 December 1836; 22 December 1836.

chanics' opposition to convict labour, and the ultimate commitments of the prison administration and political authorities. Nickalls was seen to be a fit candidate for the post for two reasons:

1. He is in a manner the Head of the mechanics — i.e., they all look up to him for advice in their affairs.
2. Having a Mechanical turn he would be exceedingly useful to the Board, in devising proper modes of employing the Convicts so as to render their labour productive, and at the same time, as little offensive and injurious to the mechanics as possible.

Thus, constituted authority sought to balance concessions to the mechanics, carefully avoiding unduly antagonistic confrontations, with a private, almost clandestine, policy dependent upon convict labour. The political machinations of Hagerman, whose promises persistently came to naught but whose success in quieting angry workingmen was truly startling, can be understood in this context.²³

After 1836 the Kingston movement of opposition to convict labour failed to resurface. In 1837 a series of three letters, penned by "Engineer", argued the case for the removal of the Penitentiary to Marmora, where convicts would be employed in the iron works, and this debate over removal continued for a brief period. But the forceful intervention of the mechanics was conspicuously absent. Not until the revival of agitation around the issue of convict labour in 1849, perhaps stimulated by George Brown's report on prison discipline and management, were the workingmen again heard from: shoemakers circulated a petition in 1849 protesting the production of shoes in the prison; a more general petition followed in 1850, the town's mechanics formally complaining of the unfair competition fostered by convict-made shoes, clothing, chairs, and ironworks; and in 1852 Kingston stonemasons struck work in May, angered by their employers' willingness to hire discharged convicts whose knowledge of masonry had been attained while serving stints in the

²³ I have argued these points at length in a longer version of this study. The establishment of a programme of convict labour and the prison administration's policy of appeasing the mechanics is outlined in H. CLARE PENTLAND, "Labour and the Development of Industrial Capitalism in Canada" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1960), p. 29; A. E. LAVELL, "The Penal and Reformatory Institutions in Upper Canada, 'Canada West', and Ontario, 1792-1931: A History", in Queen's University Archives, Lavell Papers, Box 1, Folder 7; Petitions for Employment, Kingston Penitentiary Papers (1835-1838), in Lavell Papers, Box 2, Subject Files; Work Book, Kingston Penitentiary (1837-1840), Correctional Staff College Museum, Kingston; Circular dated 6 May 1835 and Henry Smith (Warden) letter dated 4 May 1835, Warden's Letter Book, #1 (1834-1843); Macaulay to Rowan, 23 December 1836, Grant to Macaulay, 11 April 1839; Nickalls to Macaulay, 10 June 1839, Nickalls to Harrison, 12 October 1839, all in Correspondence of the Provincial Secretaries, Originals, Upper Canada Sundries, Canada West, Public Archives of Canada; A. Pringle to H. Smith, 3 March 1837, and J. Nickalls to J. Joseph, n.d., in Inspector's Letter Books, #1 (1835-1866), Correctional Staff College; CHARLES DICKENS, *American Notes for General Circulation* (London, 1972); KCG, 21 December 1836; "Report of Inspectors of the Provincial Penitentiary", *Appendix to the Journal of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada*, Vol. I, #10 (Toronto, 1837): 2-22; Upper Canada Penitentiary Board, 11 December 1839, in Kingston Penitentiary, Minutes of the Board of Inspectors, 1839-1847, 23, Queen's Archives.

penitentiary.²⁴ But these were isolated events, and pale in comparison with the sustained movement of 1833-1836. Why, we must ask, did the mechanics' opposition founder in December 1836, never to recover fully?

An answer lies in the confluence of a number of developments of the mid-to-late 1830s. The first factor, economic recession, was recognized as early as 1835. "For two years past", noted "Ichabod", "the Penitentiary has been bogging the Mechanics of Kingston out of their senses, and caused an excitement amongst them which has given the horrors to many." This fear of penitentiary labour, and the refusal of aristocratic elements to support them in their opposition to the prison had, claimed "Ichabod", led many tradesmen to abandon the city and move to the West. Those who stayed trusted to the "plaister of promises from Toronto" that the new institution would "not succeed in overturning a Taylor's table, a Cobbler's stall, a Joiner's bench, a Cooper's block, or anything else the property of a mechanic." In truth, the writer argued, the Penitentiary had not drastically undermined the mechanic's place in the economy of the town. But stability and economic security were far from assured:

It is of no use to be hiding the State of Kingston from the Public, for it is too well known, at home and abroad. The lands in its rear are locked up for want of Roads; stores in consequence are shutting up for want of buyers; houses are closed for want of tenants, and mechanics are pocketing their hands instead of dollars for want of work and not from cold: — and some undertakers knowing the fact, take advantage of the needy to the degree, that mechanics are now working 'Yankee style', from sunrise to sunset in some parts of the town for wages — but I will not mention the amount for the honour of the place and the workmen in it; yet one fact should be known to which I can certify, that country mechanics, like birds of passage, this summer are pouring into undertakers, working late and early for *twelve dollars a month* subject to be hired out again like slaves, to others at advanced wages — a degradation that the meanest bushwacker swaying an axe, who neither spent years nor months in practice or study of his calling seldom submits to. Indeed, I must say, that tho' the Mechanics of Kingston were highly offended, and incensed against the Gentlemen who advised them to go to the Bush, if they did not like the Penitentiary, the advice was not of the worst description, and several who that have since taken it, by all accounts have not had, instead of their tobacco, to chew the cud of disappointment.

"Twelve dollars per month", exclaimed "Ichabod" in outrage and concluding disbelief, "for the Mechanic who has to provide himself with tools to the amount of some scores of dollars! — My Conscience!" These sentiments may have been endorsed by William Andrews, an unemployed opponent of the Penitentiary

²⁴ The debate over removal of the penitentiary to Marmora is discussed in *KCG*, 4 February 1837; 8 November 1837; 18 November 1837; 2 December 1837; Gerald E. BOYCE, *Historic Hastings* (Belleville, 1967), pp. 64-65; J. Alex EDMISON, "Some Aspects of Nineteenth Century Canadian Prisons", in *Crime and Its Treatment in Canada*, ed.: W. T. McGRATH (Toronto, 1965), pp. 357-59; EDMISON, "The History of the Kingston Penitentiary", *Historic Kingston*, 2 (1954): 26; PENTLAND, "Labour and Capitalism", p. 30; Susan Elizabeth HOUSTON, "The Impetus to Reform: Urban Crime, Poverty, and Ignorance in Ontario, 1850-1875" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1974), p. 27; *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Assembly*, Vol. II, Part 1 (Toronto, 1839): 236-55. On the post-1849 opposition to convict labour see *Whig*, 25 November 1849; PENTLAND, "Labour and Capitalism", p. 29; Paul Campbell APPLETON, "The Sunshine and the Shade: Labour Activism in Central Canada, 1850-1860" (M.A. thesis, University of Calgary, 1974), pp. 43-44; J. K. JOHNSON, ed., *Letters of John A. Macdonald* (Ottawa, 1968), p. 160. Special reference to Kingston cabinet-makers and the penitentiary in this period is found in Joan MACKINNON, *Kingston Cabinetmakers, 1800-1867* (Ottawa, 1976), pp. 95-115.

who, in 1836, united with thirty-seven other mechanics to dispute claims that work was readily available in Kingston.²⁵

"Ichabod" had identified a complex process at work in Kingston. On the one hand, he chronicled and denigrated the first stirrings of the impersonalization of work, captured in the rise of wage labour and the beginnings of the demise of the independent craftsman. This process, to be sure, would not run its course until the turn of the century, but it first reared its head in these early years. On the other hand, "Ichabod" noted the dislocation exacerbating this phenomenon, the economic stagnation of the 1830s.²⁶ It was this latter development, coupled with the rigidity of political power in the Canadas, that precipitated the reform movement and the rebellions of 1837-38. The Kingston mechanics, supported by Mackenzie and the radical Toronto press, battling Tory politicians, opposing a prison backed by conservative elements throughout the colony staffed by supporters owing their positions to patronage and influence, were closely linked to the politics of reform. Their early ties to Bidwell and Forward, as well as their admittedly impotent involvement in the 1834 election, underlined this political commitment. But when the reform movement culminated in armed rebellion that drew savage repression, it helped to silence the Kingston mechanics. In a town priding itself on its loyalty, sentiment soon gravitated towards an attack on the anti-Penitentiary stand of the workingmen; the repressive climate of 1838-39 no doubt took its toll, enforcing passivity in once dissident mechanics.²⁷

Economic dislocation, which left many Kingston tradesmen reduced to dire poverty, coupled with the hostility of 1838-39, then, wrote *finis* to the mechanics' movement to curb the threat of convict labour. These problems were further complicated by what must have been something of a leadership crisis. By 1836 a number of individuals active in opposing convict labour had either died or departed from the town. A. J. Ferns, for instance, committed suicide. Shaken by the threat of the Penitentiary, he also suffered great personal loss in the period: an infant son died in 1830, followed by the passing of a daughter in 1833; his house was destroyed by fire. His way out lay off the Strange's Wharf, and on 2 May 1835 he drowned himself there. Although his obituaries declared that he was not financially embarrassed, the downturn of the economy could not have helped his business, and he appeared to have died owing Sir Francis Bond Head £800.²⁸ Another activist, the hatter John Butterworth, was a victim of the cholera epidemic of 1834. James Kerr, a painter antagonistic to the Penitentiary, died in 1836, as did the reform-minded merchant David Williamson.²⁹ A radical bookseller, stationary merchant, and druggist active in the

²⁵ *KCG*, 27 June 1835; *Whig*, 2 June 1836.

²⁶ Note the discussions in H. C. PENTLAND, "The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market in Canada", *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 25 (November 1959): 450-61; Patricia E. MALCOLMSON, "The Poor in Kingston, 1815-1850", in *To Preserve and Defend*, ed.: TULCHINSKY, pp. 281-98.

²⁷ Note the anti-reform letter in *KCG*, 8 May 1838.

²⁸ *KCG*, 2 May 1835; 30 March 1836; *Whig*, 5 May 1835; Alexander J. Ferns, Probate Will, 20 June 1836, Probate Court Records, RG 22, Public Archives of Ontario, 1793-1859, Series 6-1.

²⁹ *KCG*, 23 August 1834; 12 August 1835; 17 December 1836; 7 January 1837; *Whig*, 22 August 1834; Index to Wills, Frontenac County, Records of the Surrogate Court of Ontario, RG 22, Public Archives of Ontario, Series 6-2.

anti-prison labour movement, William Lesslie, moved to Toronto in 1835. The brother of William Lyon Mackenzie's staunch advocate and former partner, James Lesslie, William was but another link in the chain connecting mechanics and reformers. He was present at Mackenzie's secret meeting at Doel's Brewery in October 1837, one of a select group of fifteen invited to discuss insurrectionary activity and bold action. Arrested 19 December 1837, Lesslie and his brother languished in jail. Their property was seized, and their shop plundered and placed under the guard of militia. Upon his release, William proceeded to Kingston to be married, only to be arrested again, taken off the stage near Kingston and imprisoned. Local authorities did not easily forget a man who had backed both the anti-Penitentiary workmen and the reform "party".³⁰ The loss of these leaders, then, may have played some role in the demise of the movement against convict labour. In the following years the trend continued: the anti-Penitentiary tinsmith Alexander Ross died in 1839, while John Vincent passed away in 1842.³¹

Economic crisis, political repression and manipulation, circumstance, and loss of leadership thus silenced the mechanics, and from 1837-1849 few voices were raised against the Penitentiary's convict labour system. Rather, in these years, concern shifted to new ground, and the issues of prison discipline and mismanagement came to the forefront. The mechanics had lost the battle, their momentum slowed; the historical moment when convict labour could effectively be opposed had passed them by. With a fifteen-year existence in the community by mid-century, the prison had sunk its roots deep enough that it could not be dislodged. Reform, rather than rejection, became dominant.

As a movement to curb a specific threat, the agitations of 1833-1836 must be regarded as a failure. Yet the history of early working-class organization and activity is seldom so clear-cut as to allow such precise evaluations of victory and defeat. Opposition to convict labour remained a central concern of the North American working-class movement well into the late nineteenth century. It could still draw rebuke in the opening years of the twentieth century.³² The Kingston mechanics, and their efforts throughout the 1830s, thus link an emerging working class, groping for self-expression, with the more mature class stance of a later period. In providing a foundation upon which later working-class activists could build, the mechanics did not act totally in vain. But to make this connection we are faced with an analytical dilemma. Was opposition to convict labour a consequence of the small manufacturer's uneasiness with cheap competition, or was it an essentially working-class demand, aimed at preserving jobs, status, and economic security? It is in an-

³⁰ On Lesslie see LINDSEY, *Life of Mackenzie*, II: 384; Edwin C. GUILLET, *The Lives and Times of the Patriots* (Toronto, 1938), pp. 13, 61; H. P. GUNDY, "Publishing and Bookselling in Kingston since 1810", *Historic Kingston*, 10 (1960-1961): 29; "Memorandum from the notes of the late James Lesslie", 12, in Lesslie Family Papers (1828-1956), Public Archives of Ontario.

³¹ Index of Wills, Frontenac County.

³² PENTLAND, "Labour and Capitalism", pp. 36-38; Charles LIPTON, *The Trade Union Movement of Canada, 1827-1959* (Montreal, 1968), pp. 36, 43-44, 117; H. A. LOGAN, *Trade Unions in Canada* (Toronto, 1948), pp. 45, 64. For a brief discussion of opposition to convict labour in Kingston in 1880 see *British Whig*, 26 April 1880, cited in Pamela HILLEN, "Economic Change: Labour Conditions in Kingston, 1850-1880" (Undergraduate essay, Queen's University, 1978).

swering this question, moving narrative history into the realm of interpretation, that we confront openly the question of class relations in the Kingston of the 1830s.

III

Just precisely what motivation lay behind the mechanics' opposition to convict labour is, of course, a difficult issue to resolve. It is clouded by much of the clamour about respectability, and the threat of association with rogues: both employing master craftsman and journeyman mechanic could oppose prison labour on this basis, perceiving the meaning of respectability in fundamentally different ways. "A Plain Man" raised the question in 1836, seeing the movement against the Penitentiary initiated by journeymen, an undisciplined, threatening contingent:

Let Master Tradesmen beware how they yield to the clamour of their journeymen, for it is easy to perceive that in the affair the latter have been the chief movers, I may add not the only instance in which they have injured the former by compelling their customers to leave them on account of high charges. Let Masters be liberal and kind to all in their service, but let them be firm in resisting extravagant demands, and all will be well. The Penitentiary would tend to benefit both. The Masters if deserted by their journeymen can get their work done by the convicts, and the journeymen knowing this will be sober, attentive, and satisfied with liberal treatment, without extorting exorbitant wages.

But this "Plain Man" was grinding a rather dull axe, ideologically mounted on his own prejudices. In fact, as "Scraper" replied, there were few divisions between producing masters and journeymen in the Kingston of the 1830s, and any divisions there were might have been mediated by the depressed economic context; both groups united in opposition to convict labour. The real distinction must have been between these groups and the city élite, composed of prominent Loyalist families like the Cartwrights, supplemented by extremely successful men of commerce and business. Some of these, to be sure, had emerged from the producing classes and had become large, employing or contracting masters. They, however, stood apart from the mechanics in general, and the distinction that John R. Commons discerned in the United States in the 1830s between employers and journeymen had not yet dramatically divided Kingston's tradesmen. Social class was, in these early years, a fluid process, with a man's place often changing significantly over the course of a lifetime. Journeyman and master shared an essential perspective. A threat to one was regarded as potentially injurious to both groups.³³

It is difficult to establish this unity of master and man conclusively, for complete listings and data on those engaged in the agitations are unavailable. It is possible, however, to reconstruct the social basis of the movement. Thirty-nine individuals were named in the press as being actively involved in the opposition to the Penitentiary. This, of course, grossly understates the size of the movement, for only

³³ KCG, 18 June 1836; 29 June 1836. Cf., John R. COMMONS, "American Shoemakers, 1648-1895: A Sketch of Industrial Evolution", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 24 (November 1909): 39-84. Two recent American studies have noted the beginnings of class distinctions separating masters and journeymen in the revolutionary (1775-1790) and Jeffersonian (1800-1820) periods. See Eric FONER, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (New York, 1976); Howard B. ROCK, *Artisans of the New Republic: The Tradesmen of New York City in the Age of Jefferson* (New York, 1979). Note, as well, David MONTGOMERY, "The Working Classes of the Pre-Industrial American City, 1780-1830", *Labor History*, 9 (1968): 3-22.

those functioning in official capacities — chairmen, secretaries, members of committees — were directly named. Nevertheless, within this group of thirty-nine, three distinct strata existed. The more prominent tradesmen — Alexander J. Ferns, James Meagher, Thomas Smith, John Butterworth, George Webster, John Spence, and Donald Urquhart (who solicited business with poems addressed to “Her Respectableness, The Public”) — were clearly master craftsmen of some stature. Often advertising their wares in the pages of the local press, many were almost certainly employing tradesmen, and some had occupied places of prominence in the town of the 1820s. They were often landowners, and had perhaps engaged in speculation, although they embraced this practice much later than many of the town’s “leading” Loyalist families. This established group was complemented by a contingent of reform-minded barristers, merchants, innkeepers, and clerks, led by the talented Marshall Spring Bidwell and, for a time, the staunch William Lesslie. This group, as well, was not likely to have suffered from severe economic deprivation, and held considerable property. Both of these groups may have contained commercial men on the rise in the 1820s, a bourgeoisie in the making. But their climb up the social and economic ladder of success had undoubtedly been thwarted by the economic dislocation of the 1830s, as well as the stranglehold over administrative-institutional power exercised by second-generation Loyalists like Christopher Hagerman, a man with ties long-established at York. For these tradesmen, merchants, and professionals, the prison may have been one more institution — like the Bank of Upper Canada — imposed upon them by the York connection and its local apologists. Moreover, this new institution threatened to cut into their hegemony over the local market should prison labour be retained. Politics and economics thus united these two groups and opposition to the Penitentiary was directly related to cultural-political antagonisms of at least a decade’s duration.

Finally, the anti-convict labour group was buttressed by a group of journeymen, many of whom occupied a marginal place in the local economy, holding no real property, boarding with families, or living in hotels. If married, with wives and children to support, they may have owned or rented accommodations. This last group included men like the cooper Oliver Mowat (not to be confused with the future political leader), the printer Peter Rhea, and the unemployed mechanic William Andrews, or labourers like Antoine Busseau and Robert Forrest, whom posterity has left buried in obscurity. The movement to oppose convict labour was thus composed of a group of commercially successful (but thwarted, threatened, and perhaps declining) master tradesmen, a contingent of non-producing elements whose allegiance seemed to be to the general cause of reform, and an explicitly working-class or plebeian segment, dominated by journeymen of small or no means.

To locate the economic place of these three components within the community of the 1830s is a difficult task, for the evidence is fragmentary. Nevertheless, a preliminary effort can be made. The lawyer/merchant group, led by Bidwell and Lesslie was undoubtedly economically secure. The first Kingston assessment, undertaken in 1838 (after Bidwell had fled the country), lists the reformer as the owner of real property (a house and land) valued at £55. This dramatically understates his real wealth, but it does indicate significant holdings. Lesslie’s real wealth in this period is difficult to ascertain, for he left Kingston before the assessment, and died intestate in 1843. At that time, however, he possessed “goods and chattels rights and credits in the Home Districts and in the Midland Districts”. In 1852 this pro-

perty was valued at £2800. This group, then, hardly suffered impoverishment.³⁴

It is when we assess the remaining anti-Penitentiary activists — the substantial tradesmen and journeymen — that a hint of the unity of master and man emerges. It was these men who formed the backbone of the movement. Only eight of these activists could be located in the 1838 assessment. Donald Urquhart, assessed for goods and chattels (a house in Ward 3) valued at £25 appears as the most significant property owner. But thirty activists did not appear, an indication that they had either died, departed, or owned no real property. To be sure, this source can tell us little about men like Ferns and Butterworth, for they had been dead for a number of years. The obituaries of both men noted that they were among “the oldest, most respectable and useful inhabitants”; they must, at some point in their lives, have owned considerable property. But they were still not quite of the upper crust, at least not as far as Kingston’s older élite was concerned. We have seen that Ferns left this world in debt, and when Butterworth succumbed to the cholera his four-line eulogy was overshadowed by a similar note, running on for paragraphs, bemoaning the loss of one of the city’s *first* (no such honorific was deemed necessary in Butterworth’s case) citizens, Mr. Robert Drummond. To conclude, then, we can note that Ferns and Butterworth (whose economic place in the town had been consolidated in a stormy if profitable series of partnerships), as well as the tinsmith-tavernkeeper, James Meagher, the merchant hatter, Thomas Smith, and the cooper John Spence, were all men of some means. But they seemed to have been hard hit by the troubled times of the 1830s, and even in their days of economic contentment their involvement in business and land owning existed in the shadow of other, more socially prominent, figures.

To make the point bluntly, it is only necessary to glance at the will of the printer, John Vincent, who allowed his wife an annual living stipend of £20 from the proceeds of his printing shop, left to his son. When Robert Drummond died he left his widow £1000 in currency, while the Honourable John Macaulay bequeathed extensive property and numerous heirlooms to his wife and son, £2000 to his son, £1000 to his daughter, £250 to the church, and an annual income of £350 to his wife. The division, clearly, was not between master and man, but between producing mechanics and the patrician elements. Compared to John Counter, a Kingston baker and confectioner who would later sit in the mayor’s chair, and a man whose assessed property holdings in 1838 were well in excess of £250, the men involved in the agitations of 1833-1836 were petty proprietors indeed. A wrong business decision or miscalculation, a bad partnership, or the uncertainties of the market could all take

³⁴ Directories do not exist prior to the mid-1850s and tax assessments are incomplete and unavailable before 1838, when the town was incorporated. Evidence for the 1820s, when many of the individuals involved in the anti-Penitentiary movement came to economic maturity is difficult to come by, but Kathryn BINDON’s forthcoming “Kingston: A Social History, 1785-1830” (Ph.D. dissertation, Queen’s University, 1979) will establish the place of many of these prominent tradesmen in the local economy. What follows must thus be regarded as highly tentative, and will perhaps be revised in light of Ms. Bindon’s findings. The above and following paragraphs have benefitted greatly from discussions with Ms. Bindon, who shared her knowledge and raw data with me, suggesting the possibility that commercially successful trades would have been locked into a conflict with second-generation Loyalists. Cf., Gerald M. CRAIG, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years* (Toronto, 1963), p. 108. For information on Bidwell and Lesslie I have relied upon Corporation & Assessment, Kingston, 1838, Queen’s Archives, 17; William Lesslie, Probate Will, Toronto, 10 March 1846 and 6 July 1852, Probate Court Records. Cf., John Smith, Probate Will, 4 May 1852, in Probate Court Records.

their toll. (The experience of A. J. Ferns hints, suggestively, at this.) The unity of master and man that "Scrapper" asserted, and that bound these mechanics together in opposition to the Penitentiary, thus grew out of their common situation. Both groups perched precariously on the edge of economic security, and both had good reason to fear the threat of unfair competition.³⁵

Culturally, as well, there must have been much to cement ties between master and man, although the pronounced lack of sources and commentary on plebeian life in these years necessitates caution in the analytical realm. Associational life, for instance, may have consolidated ties. Butterworth, Ferns, Meagher, Smith, Spence, and MacLeod all served as principal officers of the Masonic Lodge in Kingston between 1795 and 1821, and the active role of such prominent, well-to-do craftsmen in the milieu of the fraternal lodge may well have been buttressed by the presence of many "lesser" mechanics. The tavern, obviously a vital institution patronized by many mechanics — from the established master to the humble labouring man — may also have linked elements of the producing classes. But we know so little of all of this that it is clearly a mistake to attempt any cultural typology, and the coexistence of "rough" (tavern life) and "respectable" (fraternal association) impulses within this world of the Kingston 'preindustrial' working classes surely makes a mockery of any stress on such interpretive devices as the "cult of respectability".³⁶

Bred of economic and cultural forces, the mutuality of master and man was a complex process resting upon a foundation characterized by ambivalence and ambiguity. At times the birth pangs of class divisions disrupted social relations. Among clerks, shoemakers, bakers, and female shirt and stay makers the last years of the 1830s gave rise to work stoppages, protests, and ritualistic combat — all aimed to secure shorter hours, establish better conditions, or avoid wage cuts. Such struggles revealed the tensions inherent in early class relations. Yet, on the whole, such tension was apparently easily displaced, especially when issues like the threat of convict labour drew master and man together.³⁷

³⁵ Data drawn from Corporation & Assessment, 3, 6, 15, 17, 20, 23, 25; "A Statement Showing Gross Amount of Assessed Property, Taxes, and Statute Labor of the City of Kingston, from 1839 to 1848 Inclusive", Volume 949, Queen's Archives; Robert Drummond, Probate Will, 28 August 1834 and John Macaulay, Probate Will, 10 September 1857, both in Probate Court Records; John Vincent, Probate, in "Old Wills", Probate Book D, Frontenac County, Vol. 7 (1733-1851), in Records Surrogate Court of Ontario, RG 22, Series 6-2; *Whig*, 5 May 1835; 22 August 1834; *KCG*, 2 May 1835; HORSEY, "Kingston", pp. 85-89. On the essentially precarious situation of small business elements, admittedly in a different context and period, see Michael KATZ, "The Entrepreneurial Class in a Canadian City: The Mid-Nineteenth Century", *Journal of Social History*, 7 (Winter 1975): 1-29.

³⁶ Here I am obviously reacting to the kind of argument found in Alan DAWLEY and Paul FALER, "Working-Class Culture and Politics in the Industrial Revolution: Sources of Loyalty and Rebellion", *Journal of Social History*, 9 (June 1976): 466-80. HORSEY, "Kingston", p. 271, notes that McKay's Tavern would later be known as "Mechanics' Hall". A general statement on the importance of tavern life is found in James J. TALLMAN, "Life in the Pioneer Districts of Upper Canada, 1815-1840" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1930), pp. 82-91.

³⁷ See *Whig*, 19 June 1835; 8 December 1836; 10 February 1837; 11 March 1837; 26 April 1837; 1 May 1837; *KCG*, 4 March 1837; 7 March 1837; 11 March 1837; MALCOLMSON, "Poor in Kingston", p. 285; Bryan D. PALMER, "Discordant Music: Charivaris and Whitecapping in Nineteenth-Century North America", *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 3 (1978): 26; Joanne BURGESS, "L'industrie de la Chaussure à Montréal: 1840-1870 — Le Passage de l'Artisanat à la Fabrique", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, 31 (September 1977): 196. Note, too, the instances of early class conflict in other eastern Ontario towns described in Stanley RYERSON, *Unequal Union: Roots of Crisis in the Canadas, 1815-1873* (Toronto, 1973), pp. 104-5; Edwin C. GUILLET, *The Valley of the Trent* (Toronto, 1957), pp. 278-79; Gerald BOYCE, *Historic Hastings*, p. 50.

This unity of small master and journeyman was manifested in 1834, with the establishment of a Mechanics' Institute (separate and distinct from the Mechanics' Association later formed). The impetus behind the formation of this body, a letter penned by "Somebody", indicated clearly that it was designed to alleviate the plight of the journeyman mechanic, whose boarding house was often too crowded to allow cultivation of the mind, and whose habit of gathering in taverns to discuss political and social issues often led to dissipation. "Somebody" lobbied diligently for the "humble mechanics", setting up a meeting, ironically enough, at McKay's Tavern on 7 March 1834 to discuss the formation of a Mechanics' Literary Society, urging "those who are not mechanics, yet friends to such institutions" to lend their assistance. Chairing this first gathering was Charles Sewell, a watchmaker judged the most learned man in the town; he may well have been the author of "Somebody's" letters. Acting as secretary, and later to be elected "provisional" treasurer, was the radical reformer William Lesslie. Both men, as we have seen, were involved in the anti-Penitentiary movement. They were joined by other familiar figures: A. J. Ferns, John MacLeod, Donald Urquhart, Dr. Barker, John Cullen, John Butterworth, John Spence, David Williamson, and Thomas Smith. Indeed, of the sixteen men present at this early meeting, only five were not easily identified as opposed to convict labour.

The leading, more substantial tradesmen and citizens, according to Dr. Barker, boycotted the gathering, piqued at not being consulted about the formation of the Institute. Charles Sewell and Donald Urquhart, the spearheads behind the organization of the meeting, had neglected to solicit their permission to proceed. Deference, thought the established elements, was definitely their due. Those gathered to establish a Mechanics' Institute were thus characterized by their relatively small means and opposition to the Penitentiary.³⁸

But at the first official meeting of the Institute in April 1834, the complexion of the body had altered. Joining the anti-convict labour group were men like John Macaulay, James Nickalls, John Counter, and John Oliphant. These men, all holding significant amounts of assessed property, were or would be strong advocates of the Penitentiary. Unlike their anti-Penitentiary counterparts, moreover, their place in the community was secure and they abhorred dissidence; at the very least they were employing masters, often staunch advocates of the Tory cause. None associated with the reform group. They terminated their boycott to assert their influence. Their presence, however, must have caused considerable friction, perhaps explaining the

³⁸ See *KCG*, 8 March 1834; 1 March 1834; 5 April 1834; *Corporation & Assessment*, 21-22. Barker's assessment is reprinted in "Kingston Mechanics' Institute", *Historic Kingston*, 5 (1955-1956): 45-46. Sewell died in 1848 in Toronto, still a practising watchmaker. See Charles Sewell, Toronto, Probate, 3 July 1850, in Probate Court Records. Given the established elements' response to this early society, it is worth noting a comment by William Lesslie's brother, the prominent York reformer James Lesslie, pertaining to the situation in York in the same period. "The M. Institute", he wrote, "is viewed with suspicion by some of our gentry & some of its professed and warmest friends seem to be influenced by them. The intelligence of the lower classes they and their system would if possible keep under — their *Lord and slave system* is not to be grafted upon the people of U.C. and their favourite maxim, 'Ignorance is Bliss' which was this day defended by one of them shows clearly the principle from which their opposition to the dissemination of knowledge arises." See James Lesslie Diary, 21 March 1832, Dundas Historical Museum, Dundas, Ontario.

apparent failure of the Institute to establish itself on a firm footing in the years 1834-1835.³⁹

As early as the end of April 1834, for instance, the editor of the *Whig* objected to the Mechanics' Institute meeting in rooms physically located over the premises of the *Kingston Chronicle and Gazette*. Such proximity, he argued, could only cultivate Tory influence. Barker was apparently not far wrong. When Marshall Spring Bidwell applied, in the autumn of 1834, for an honorary membership in the Kingston Institute he was ceremoniously rejected. Charges of political influence circulated freely, precipitating an open split in the membership. Many dissidents must have reluctantly abandoned the fledgling institution. It took two years for these difficulties to be partially overcome, but by 1836 the Institute appeared to be reviving. Its membership had increased from the thirty-eight reported in 1835 to seventy-six. But a price had been paid for this resurgence: the anti-convict labour group had been driven from prominence. At the helm stood James Nickalls, whose position as President symbolized the consolidation of power in the hands of the well-to-do pro-Penitentiary group. Donald Urquhart — arch-enemy of the prison and prominent in the recently formed Mechanics' Association — served as the Corresponding Secretary of the Institute, attesting to the perseverance of the mechanics. But the effort of these anti-Penitentiary workingmen to establish a literary society had run aground on the antagonisms bred by the convict labour issue. While the Mechanics' Institute survived, it must have been severely divided along factional lines.⁴⁰

IV

This foray into local history in the years 1833-1836 suggests the need for a subtle appreciation of the specific context of class formation in Upper Canada. Kingston's anti-Penitentiary mechanics did not comprise the sole voice of the working classes of the 'preindustrial' town, but they were perhaps the most vocal, visible segment. To present a complete depiction of the Kingston working or producing classes (it is too early in the history to speak of a working class) in these years is impossible, for the sources enabling us to identify various strata — unskilled labourers, propertyless journeymen, master craftsmen — do not exist. Those who see class only as a structural category, expressing a relationship to the means of production, perhaps mediated by cultural factors, dominated by wealth, occupation, and ethnicity, will undoubtedly find this discussion of the Kingston mechanics inadequate. Others, who lay the stress upon consciousness, and who demand that a class act *for* itself before it be considered as a class, will also fail to see the significance of the Kingston movement of opposition to the Penitentiary. For was this all not just a minor episode reflecting threatened interests? It was that, to be sure, but it was also something more. Class is not solely a structural category, nor does it only

³⁹ Corporation & Assessment, 3-5, 8, 20; *KCG*, 12 April 1834; *Whig*, 20 November 1835; Pringle to Smith, 3 March 1837, Inspector's Letter Book, #1, 25; Mrs. ANGUS, "The Macaulay Family of Kingston", *Historic Kingston*, 5 (1955-1956): 3-12; S. F. WISE, "John Macaulay", in *Preserve and Defend*, ed.: TULCHINSKY, pp. 197-98; HORSEY, "Kingston", pp. 85-89; F. H. ARMSTRONG, *Handbook of Upper Canadian Chronology and Territorial Legislation* (London, 1967).

⁴⁰ *Whig*, 23 June 1836; *KCG*, 30 November 1836. Dissent, and the Bidwell affair, outlined in *Whig*, 29 April 1834; 4 November 1834; 12 December 1834; 19 December 1834. Brief reference to the Institute is found in HORSEY, "Kingston", pp. 257-58; ROY, *Kingston*, p. 155.

manifest itself historically through generalized class conflict, uniting the working class against its enemies in a struggle for social, political, cultural, and economic hegemony. Rather, class emerges out of social cleavage, antagonism, and struggle. It has no meaning apart from the historical experience, and it is conditioned over time, as men and women come to react in class ways to class situations.⁴¹

In Kingston, the rise of the Penitentiary and opposition to convict labour provided one of the first instances of serious division within the community. As mechanics banded together to oppose a Penitentiary controlled and consciously supported by the Tory élite, confronting a process that threatened producing interests with economic and social dislocation, we glimpse the first stirrings of the local working-class movement. This movement was only in its infancy, but it reached out to attract support across south-central Canada. It was in this context that workingmen allied with reformers, men whose political opposition to the Family Compact made them natural allies of a group struggling against the Hagermans and Cartwrights of Kingston. As our overly quick glance at developing tensions within the Mechanics' Institute in these same years indicates, antagonisms arising out of this anti-convict labour agitation were not easily forgotten, and intruded on realms of life sufficiently removed from the shadow of the new prison. In the resentments of 1833-1836, permeating intimate corners of social relations, flared the first instances of a class confrontation that would become more acute and widespread in future years.⁴²

That Kingston would itself occupy only a marginal place in working-class agitations of the post-1850s was a consequence of many factors. Not the least of these, of course, was the city's failure to effect a full-scale transition from the commercial to the industrial city. For many historians this explanation will suffice. But it is also worth pondering this first "moment" of class practice in the 1830s, when obscure labourers and unpropertied journeymen united with master tradesmen of substance and non-working-class elements of the reform persuasion to attack "the Monster" and its Tory backers. Perhaps in that early coalition lies something of an explanation of labour's quiescence in Kingston, and of the wider problem of "collaboration". If historians continue to resist the study of the pre-1850 years, however, we will never have answers to such questions, only further confusions and a distressing ignorance.

⁴¹ There is obviously not space here to develop a conception of class fully. I am attempting such a discussion in a forthcoming work, "Class and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Canada: Cleavage, Antagonism, and Struggle". See the comments in E. P. THOMPSON, "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?", *Social History*, 3 (May 1978): esp. 146-151; and THOMPSON, "The Poverty of Theory: or an Orrery of Errors", in *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (London, 1978), pp. 238-39.

⁴² See, for instance, PENTLAND, "Labour and Capitalism"; APPLETON, "Sunshine and the Shade".

APPENDIX

The following listing includes those individuals involved in the movement to oppose convict labour, as well as those active in the establishment of the Mechanics' Institute. A (P) denotes opposition to the Penitentiary, while an (M) signifies a role in the early Mechanics' Institute. The information was culled from local newspapers, and is assembled here to provide an impressionistic, rather than definitive, depiction of the people involved in the issues of concern to the city's mechanics in the 1830s.

1. George Bathgate (PM) —
2. John Butterworth (PM) 1782-1834 hatter, business established by 1811; married (1814); subscriber, Kingston Compassionate Society (1818); member, Kingston Auxiliary Bible Society (1820); dies of cholera, aged 52 (1834).
3. John Cullen (PM) stonemason, formerly of Bytown; arrives in city 1833; marries widow (1834); advertises products of marble works manufactory, quarrying stone, throughout 1830s; infant son dies (1837).
4. Alexander J. Ferns (PM) 1799-1835 boot and shoe maker, business established since 1820, when partnership with Thos. Underhill dissolved, Ferns carrying on trade; numerous advertisements for boots and shoes, often noting suitable for workmen; apparently had house to let in 1822-1823; business located Store and King Streets (1820s); subscriber, Female Benevolent Society (1827); subscriber, Wesleyan Methodist Auxiliary (1830); death of infant son (1830) and daughter (1833); house destroyed by fire (1833); commits suicide (1835).
5. James Kerr (PM) 1794-1836 painter and glazer, dissolution of partnership (1826); married (1833); committee member, St. Patrick's Society (1836); dies, aged 42 (1836).
6. William Lesslie (PM) (also Leslie) bookseller, secretary, Kingston Temperance Society (1832); librarian, Kingston Young Men's Society (1833); active politically as reformer, supported by *Whig* and *Colonial Advocate*; moves to Toronto (1835) where he is an alderman and president, Canadian Alliance Society; runs for office in Frontenac County (1836), described as "a radical"; director, People's Bank (1836); arrested and papers seized (1837).
7. John McLeod (PM) woodworker (?), teamster (?), subscriber, Kingston Wesleyan Chapel (1817); committee, Kingston Auxiliary Bible Society (1820); escorted weapons from Kingston to Toronto (1837); officer, Quebec St. Andrew's Society (1837).
8. James Meagher (PM) tinsmith, tavernkeeper, owns tinplate factory close to Royal Artillery Barracks (1815); subscriber, Kingston Wesleyan Chapel (1817); subscriber, Kingston Compassionate Society (1817); landowner, homes to let (1824); owns and operates Wellington Inn (1831); member, St. Patrick's Society.
9. Oliver Mowat (PM) cooper; infant son dies (1823).
10. Peter Rhea (PM) printer (?), employee KCG, member, Volunteer Fire Company (1835).
11. Charles Sewell (PM) clock and watchmaker, shop on Store Street (1833); involved in controversy with *Whig* and E. J. Barker (1835); referred to as "a Jew".
12. Thomas Smith (PM) merchant hatter, partner of Butterworth (1811); married (1813); infant daughter dies (1815); subscriber, Kingston Auxiliary Bible and Common Prayer Book Society (1817); subscriber, Kingston Wesleyan Chapel (1817); subscriber, Kingston Compassionate Society (1818); road master (1828); two sons die

- (1833); steward, St. George's Society (1836); Captain, Volunteer Fire Company (1836); founder, British Constitutional Society (1836); active in meeting to discuss conduct of Sir Francis Bond Head (1836); alderman, Ward I (1838); active in soliciting funds for widows/orphans of men killed in 'patriot' war (1839); member, Frontenac County Branch of Midland Agricultural Society (1838).
13. John Spence (PM) cooper; married (1821).
14. Donald Urquhart (PM) woodworker; member, Kingston Highland Society (1834); married (1834); runs for office, town clerk (1836); present at meeting to discuss high prices (1837); establishes labour exchange, Cartwright's Wharf (1837); infant son dies (1838); landowner, Pittsburgh Township (1838).
15. David Williamson (PM) dry goods storeowner; active politically, reformer (1834); wife dies (1838); sale of his library (1836).
16. William Andrews (P) unemployed mechanic (1836); one of 37 disputing claims work available in city.
17. William Benson (P) tinsmith (?), paid for 45 fire buckets by town of Kingston (1829).
18. Marshall S. Bidwell (P) barrister, politician, established in city by 1815; married (1818); born in U.S., but claims British citizenship rights due to Loyalist background; candidate in Lennox and Addington election at Adolphustown to replace expelled member, his father, B. Bidwell (1822); active politically throughout 1820s, member of Parliament (1826); subscriber Wesleyan Methodist Auxiliary Missionary Society (1830); daughters die (1829 and 1831); Vice-President, Kingston Temperance Society (1834); prominent moderate reformer.
19. Antoine Busseau (P) —
20. John Collins (P) apparently in Kingston-Napanee district since 1811.
21. Azel Cook (P) builder (?), received pay, Midland District, for services as Constable (1829); advertises escape of indentured servant (1834); paid, Midland District, for erecting hustings for election (1836).
22. William Ferguson (P) tavernkeeper; reformer, advocate of *Whig*; prominent among city's Irish and supporter of Roman Catholic Church (1837-1838).
23. Robert Forrest (P) owes money (1834-1835).
24. William A. Forward (P) barrister; Secretary, Kingston Young Men's Society (1833); qualifies as lawyer (1835); supports early closing movement (1837).
25. George Hay (P) arrives at Mansion House Hotel from Glengarry in 1833.
26. Robert Jeffers (P) journalist; described as "literary freebooter" and opposes incorporation of town (1836); attacks incorporation for it leads to corruption and unbridled democracy; member, St. Patrick's Society (1836); attacks Mackenzie, charges treason (1837); applies to Bond Head for position as postmaster and treasurer of Bank of Upper Canada (1836); ambivalent attitude to Penitentiary.
27. William Lyall (P) paid, throughout 1830s, for doing jobs for local jail.
28. William Mathews (P) one of Kingston Volunteers in suppressing Rebellion, 1837.
29. John Mathews (P) apparently in Kingston in 1812.
30. Peter McDonald (P) elected town clerk (1825); house to rent (1825); member, St. Patrick's Society (1832); married (1836).
31. Daniel McMillan (P) —

32. John Milner (P) builder; contributor, fund for repair of Catholic Church (1837); paid by police (1833-1834) for pulling down chimneys.
33. David Nicolson (P) —
34. Henry Oliver (P) ensign, Frontenac militia (1821); council candidate in Kingston election (1836).
35. Elihu Parry/Perry (P) —
36. Alexander Ross (P) tinsmith, paid, Midland District, repairing pipes in local jail (1830); indentured servant runs off (1833).
37. D. J. Smith (P) merchant; subscriber, Kingston Auxiliary Bible and Common Prayer Book Society (1817); director, Savings Bank (1822-1823); treasurer, St. George's Church Committee (1825); treasurer, Midland District Committee of Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (1826); committee, Kingston Men's Auxiliary of the Society for Promoting Education and Industry among the Indians and Destitute Settlers (1827); subscriber Female Benevolent Society (1827); supports town incorporation; married (1829); Kingston Board of Health (1835); treasurer, Hallowell Bay Navigation Committee (1836); director, Upper Canada Mutual Fire Insurance Company (1836); active in meeting to discuss Bond Head (1836); militia Captain (1837).
38. George Webster (P) tailor and habit-maker, occupies stone house on Store Street (1822); selling publications of London Peace Society, benefit Sunday School Union Society (1824); thanked by Dorcas Society for cutting/measuring clothing given out by society (1825); seeks £100 loans (1825); subscriber, Female Benevolent Society (1827); subscriber, Wesleyan Methodist Auxiliary Missionary Society (1830); two houses to rent (1834); takes over John Nickall's Brewery, formerly run by John England (1835); steward, St. George's Society (1836); lieutenant in militia (1838); hiring tailors to fill government contracts (1838); member, Frontenac County Branch of Midland Agricultural Society (1838); prizewinner, Frontenac Cattle Show (1838).
39. Thomas Webster (P) carpenter; brother of George Webster; clashes with Henry Smith, Jr., son of Penitentiary Warden (1835); houses to rent (1835).
40. Thomas Askew (M) merchant, established in town by 1819; subscriber, Wesleyan Methodist Auxiliary Missionary Society (1830); land agent (1834); magistrate (1835); Justice of the Peace, Midland district (1835); member of Indians and Destitute Settlers Society (1835).
41. Dr. E. J. Barker (M) proprietor, editor, *Whig*; moderate reformer.
42. James Bryant (M) established in town by 1819; married (1821).
43. Ephraim Cone (M) master carpenter, advertises for two journeymen and an apprentice (1836); cf., MacKinnon, *Kingston Cabinetmakers*.
44. John Counter (M) master confectioner/baker; prominent political figure; mayor in 1840s and 1850s; committee, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (1826); committee, Kingston Branch Sunday School Union (1827); active in local improvements throughout 1830s; treasurer, Kingston Volunteer Fire Company (1833); land speculation (1835); described as an independent politically; member, Frontenac County Branch of Midland Agricultural Society (1838).
45. Robert Drummond
1791-1834 (M) brewer, banker, shipper, active in Rideau Canal (1830); director, Commercial Bank of Midland District (1832); building extensive brewery and distillery (1832); owns schooners and steamboats (1832); land for sale (1832-1833); ally of J. S.

- Cartwright; director, Midland District Agricultural Society (1834); purchases brewery owned by Cormack and Morton (1834); runs as M.P. in Frontenac County (1834); attacked by William Lyon Mackenzie; Scotsman, dies of cholera, aged 43 (1834).
46. Walter Eales (M) painter, houses for rent (1834); schooners for sale (1836); paid, Midland District, for work on Court House (1836).
47. John R. Forsyth (M) barrister, owner of wharf and storehouse (1834); steward, Kingston races (1831); called to Bar (1834); supporter of J. S. Cartwright and ally of John Macaulay; active in St. Andrew's Society (1837); director, Commercial Bank (1838), member, Frontenac County Branch of Midland District (1838).
48. Simon Harrison (M) bookbinder, located opposite Roman Catholic Church (1834); sells house and binding machinery (1835).
49. Francis M. Hill (M) proprietor *KCG*; secretary, Kingston Volunteer Fire Company (1833); associate of C. A. Hagerman; member, Kingston Board of Trade; active in militia (1837); steward, St. George's Society (1839); member, Frontenac County Branch of Midland Agricultural Society (1838).
50. Alexander McNabb (M) banker; treasurer, Kingston Young Men's Society (1833); teller, Commercial Bank of Upper Canada (1832); director, Commercial Bank of Upper Canada (1834); treasurer, Celtic Society of Upper Canada (1835); married (1835); member, British Constitutional Society (1836); licensed to sell wine/liquors (1837); distillery and farm for sale in Newcastle District (1838); member, Frontenac County Branch of Midland Agricultural Society (1838).
51. John Macaulay (M) prominent politician, Tory; established family; Kingston Penitentiary Commissioner (1835).
53. Stephen Miles (M) editor, printer, *KCG* (1811); member, Kingston Temperance Society (1834); member, Kingston Auxiliary Bible Society (1820); committee member, Frontenac Agricultural Society and Sunday School Union (1822).
54. James Nickalls (M) brewer, involved in Fire Company (1819); lieutenant, Frontenac militia (1821); active in local improvements throughout 1820s; clerk of peace (1826); married (1821); surveyor, Franklin Fire Insurance Company of New York (1825); secretary, Kingston Merchant's meeting (1830); Hagerman supporter; Captain, Volunteer Fire Company (1834); succeeds Macaulay as Kingston Penitentiary Commissioner (1836); Inspector, Kingston Penitentiary (1837); active in movement to support widows/orphans of those killed in 'patriot' war of 1837-1838 (1839).
55. John Oliphant (M) merchant tailor, established in town by 1820; infant daughter dies (1833); member, Celtic Society (1835); house burns, arson suspected (1835); member, Frontenac County Branch of Midland Agricultural Society (1838).
56. John Robertson (M) established in town by 1819; supporter, Female Benevolent Society (1832); invited to York Typographical Society dinner (1833); land surveying (1837).
57. (?) Stewart (M) —