

*Household and Transiency in a Loyalist Township: The People of Adolphustown, 1784-1822**

by Darrell A. NORRIS**

Historical geographers have devoted more attention to where and how people moved than to whether they moved. Thus migration and residential mobility are well treated themes in North American historical geography,¹ whereas transiency and persistence are not. The linkage of records separated by time to identify persistent and transient elements of a population has been a methodological point of departure of much scholarship in social history.² A key problem is that persistence arises from a complex set of social, demographic, economic and environmental circumstances which underlie the behaviour of individual households. Although abundant evidence has associated persistence with socio-economic status, tenure and the life cycle, the localized nature of these associations has

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¹ See, for example, John C. HUDSON, "Migration to an American Frontier", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 66 (1976): 242-65; John PATTEN, "Rural-Urban Migration in Pre-Industrial England", *School of Geography, University of Oxford, Research Paper No. 6* (1973); Michael J. DOUCET, "Nineteenth Century Residential Mobility: Some Preliminary Comments", *Department of Geography, York University, Discussion Paper No. 4* (1972).

² Representative works include those by Stephan THERNSTROM, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964); Clyde GRIFFEN, "Workers Divided: The Effect of Craft and Ethnic Differences in Poughkeepsie, New York, 1850-1880", in *Nineteenth Century Cities: Essays in the New Urban History*, eds: Stephan THERNSTROM and Richard SENNETT (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 49-97; Peter R. KNIGHTS, *The Plain People of Boston, 1830-1860: A Study in City Growth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); David GAGAN and Herbert MAYS, "Historical Demography and Canadian Social History: Families and the Land in Peel County, Ontario", *Canadian Historical Review*, 14 (1973): 27-47; Stephan THERNSTROM, *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880-1970* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973); Michael B. KATZ, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975). Useful general discussions of nineteenth-century mobility are Stephan THERNSTROM and Peter R. KNIGHTS, "Men in Motion: Some Data and Speculations about Urban Population Mobility in Nineteenth Century America", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 1 (1970): 7-35; and Stanley L. ENGERMAN, "Up or Out: Social and Geographic Mobility in the United States", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 3 (1973): 469-89.

blunted serious effort to generalize from geographical and temporal variation in population persistence, with three notable exceptions.³ The problem is compounded by inconsistencies between studies of mobility. Persistence may be overestimated or understated depending on the size of the area examined, the nature and reliability of records, and the record-linkage criteria which are used.⁴ Mortality is subsumed within the level of transiency and itself differs through time and across space. One standard of comparison, decadal persistence, is largely based on the availability of manuscript census evidence. Using such a measure, the characteristics of transients at the time of their departure must be inferred from their characteristics up to nine years beforehand. Moreover, differences in population turnover, from place to place and year to year, may be obscured by decadal comparison. The need for a short-term measure of transiency is especially pressing when the pace of settlement development is rapid. Nowhere is this need more evident than during the pioneering phase of urban or rural settlement.

Comparing prior persistence measures for twenty-two North American communities, Alcorn and Knights infer that rapid population turnover was a characteristic of pioneer nineteenth-century settings.⁵ They suggest that a subsequent increase in persistence reflected the replacement of external migration by internal competition, and a simultaneous limiting of opportunities to those who were well-established in North American communities. One problem with this interpretation is that it disregards the particular demographic circumstances of pioneer settlement. Given the demonstrable prior mobility of settlers, an unbalanced age-sex structure, and distinct patterns of household size and composition, it is to be expected that transiency will have a singular cast during initial settlement.

This paper explores the association between transiency and demographic structure in an Ontario township, Adolphustown, which was settled after the end of the Revolutionary War. Whereas cursory examina-

³ James P. ALLEN, "Changes in the American Propensity to Migrate", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 67 (1977): 577-87; Richard S. ALCORN and Peter R. KNIGHTS, "Most Uncommon Bostonians: A Critique of Stephan Thernstrom's *The Other Bostonians, 1880-1970*", *Historical Methods Newsletter*, 8 (1975): 98-114; THERNSTROM, *Other Bostonians*.

⁴ Other things being equal, measured persistence increases both with the area and population sampled, and with the degree of underenumeration associated with censuses, tax rolls and directories, which were prone to overlook transients. See John B. SHARPLESS and Ray M. SHORTRIDGE, "Biased Underenumeration in Census Manuscripts", *Journal of Urban History*, 1 (1975): 409-39; D. S. CROSS and J. G. DUDLEY, "Comparative Study of Street Directories and Census Returns for 1871", *Urban History Review*, 3 (1972): 12-16. Applications and strategies of record linkage are introduced in the volume edited by E. A. WRIGLEY, *Identifying People in the Past* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973). See also Michael KATZ and John TILLER, "Record-Linkage for Everyman: A Semi-Automated Process", *Historical Methods Newsletter*, 5 (1972): 144-50. A critical assessment of record linkage is Myron P. GUTMAUN, "The Future of Record Linkage in History", *Journal of Family History*, 2 (1977): 151-58.

⁵ ALCORN and KNIGHTS, "Most Uncommon Bostonians", p. 100. ALLEN, "Changes in American Propensity", p. 586, draws a similar conclusion.

tion of the township suggests that it reached and maintained demographic stability within two decades of first settlement, additional evidence points to constant demographic transition and flux, particularly with respect to household size. This aspect of Adolphustown's population is related to its transiency, which is shown to have maintained a high level after the initial settlement phase. Transiency was consistently high, measured at two year intervals over a twenty-eight year period. The emergence of a persistent minority of households is consistent with a traditional interpretation of Loyalist settlement, yet household persistence obscures an undercurrent of individual mobility related to the functional diversity of the household during pioneer settlement.

I. — ADOLPHUSTOWN TOWNSHIP

The township of Adolphustown was a by-product of the Revolutionary War. It was among the first to be surveyed as a haven for the minority of Loyalist refugees and discharged combatants who had reached the north shore of the upper St. Lawrence River and the eastern end of Lake Ontario (Figure 1).⁶ The settlement of the township began on 16 June 1784, with the arrival of forty-one settlers and their families under the direction of Captain Peter Vanalstine.⁷ This nucleus, augmented soon after by seven more households, drew lots for 200 acre land grants.⁸ To a population geographically mobile of necessity was given the task of fixing British North American society in the wilderness.

Adolphustown is exceptional not only in being the smallest of Ontario's townships in area, but also in having instituted elements of township self-government before these were required or permitted by statute.⁹ After

⁶ Of about 50,000 persons in this exodus, 30,000 went to Nova Scotia and 7,000 made their way to the province of Quebec. By 1784, there were more than 6,000 of these refugees in the western section of the province, which subsequently became Upper Canada. This partition of Quebec occurred in 1791 (Gerald M. CRAIG, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), pp. 3-18). Adolphustown was the fourth of a range of five townships west of Kingstown surveyed by Deputy Surveyor General John Collins during 1783-4 (Louis GENTILCORE and Kate DONKIN, "Land Surveys of Southern Ontario", *Cartographica, Monograph No. 8* (York University, Dept of Geography, 1973), pp. 2-3).

⁷ William CANNIFF, *History of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto: A. H. Hovey, 1872), pp. 448-49.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 450. These were interim grants. The terms of the royal instructions of 1783 entitled heads of families to one hundred acres, plus an additional fifty acres for each family member. Discharged soldiers received grants ranging from one hundred acres to 5,000 acres, depending on their rank and regiment. The terms are summarized by Lillian F. GATES, *Land Policies of Upper Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 15. The interim grant and lottery system was intended to prevent the larger grantees from monopolizing the more valuable "front" lots on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.

⁹ W. S. HERRINGTON, *History of the County of Lennox and Addington* (Toronto: Macmillan Co., 1913), pp. 140-41. Until 1841, local government powers were vested in the appointed magistrates of each District Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace. Between 1802 and 1849, Adolphustown Township was part of the Midland District, which

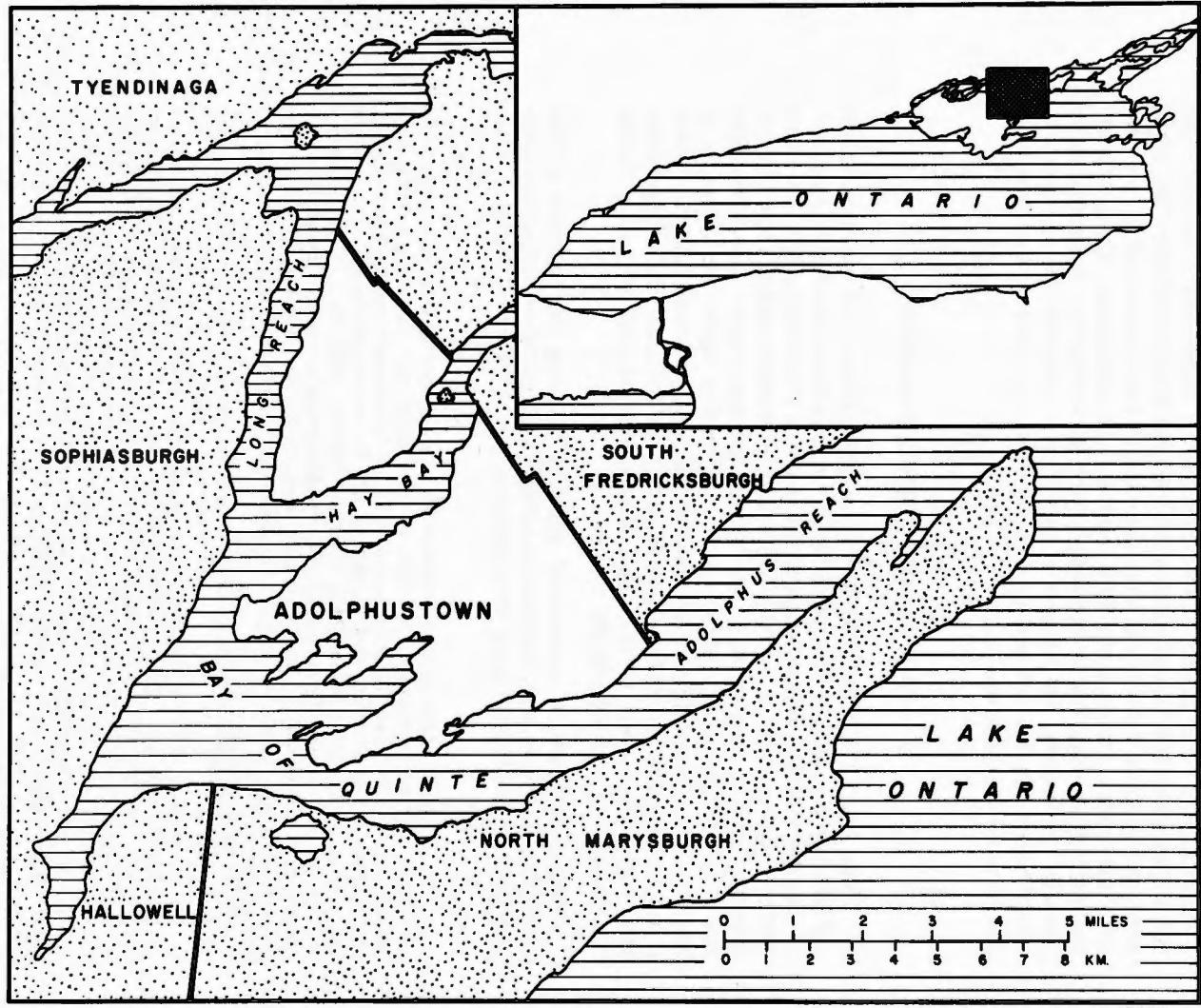


Figure 1. — ADOLPHUSTOWN, ONTARIO.

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1793, an elected Township Clerk kept minutes and maintained an annual return of households, which was taken in March or April. The surviving censuses for the period 1794 to 1822 were published in full in 1897.¹⁰ Each census records the name of every household head, and the number of men, women, boys and girls in each household. Children were defined as being less than sixteen years old. The censuses reveal elements of demographic stability and change as the first generation of Loyalist settlement drew to a close.

II. — DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE

First impressions are of relative demographic stability or of gradual transition (Figure 2). The population of Adolphustown was approaching 400 after the first decade of settlement, exceeded 500 by the turn of the century, and remained stable at between 550 and 600 during all but one sampled year between 1804 and 1822. The number of households rarely exceeded ninety or fell short of eighty. Average household size rose from fewer than six to more than seven persons between 1794 and 1813, and subsequently fell to circa 6.5 persons, large by contemporary standards.¹¹ For every 100 females there were always between 110 and 130 males in Adolphustown's population, and the male sex ratio did not register a long term decline between 1794 and 1822. This surplus of males is almost equally apparent among adults and children, which suggests that co-residence of persons outside the nuclear family was a norm which persisted beyond an initial settlement phase, and which put a premium on male labour regardless of age.¹² By 1806, just over two decades after first settlement, there were only 67 adults in Adolphustown for every 100 children under sixteen years old. Thereafter, the median age of the population evidently increased, for by 1822 there were 120 adults for every 100 children. Whereas in 1802 almost two thirds of Adolphustown's households comprised one man, one woman and one or more children (Figure 2, Type A), twenty years later over sixty percent of the households recorded additional adults (Figure 2, Type B).

These initial findings suggest a simple interpretation of Adolphustown's population dynamics: large farm households augmented by unmarried male immigrants, family completion occurring about two decades

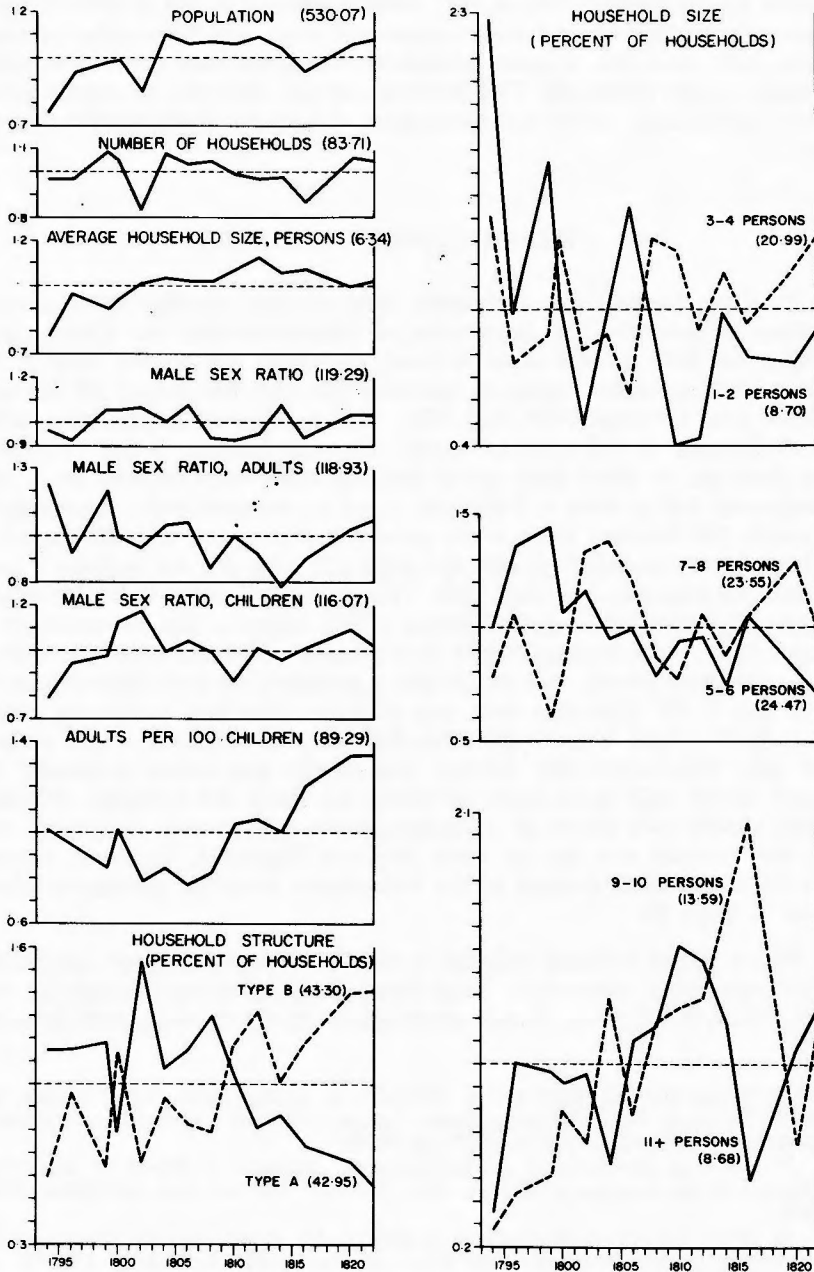
comprised twenty-two townships with a population of approximately 15,000 in 1822. See George W. SPRAGGE, "The Districts of Upper Canada, 1788-1849", in *Profiles of a Province* (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1967), pp. 34-42

¹⁰ ONTARIO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, *Appendix to Report of the Bureau of Industries for the Province of Ontario, 1897* (Toronto: Warwick Bros and Rutter, 1899), pp. 27-49.

¹¹ These ranged between four and six persons. See Peter LASLETT, "Characteristics of the Western Family Considered over Time", *Journal of Family History*, 2 (1977): 89-116, reference on p. 96.

¹² Associated by Goody with agricultural systems based on livestock or arable farming. Jack GOODY, *Production and Reproduction: A Comparative Study of the Domestic Domain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 35.

Figure 2. — CHANGES IN THE DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE OF ADOLPHUSTOWN TOWNSHIP, 1794-1822.



Figures in brackets are averages of the fourteen years sampled. Vertical scales represent values for single years divided by the fourteen year average. The male sex ratio is the number of males per one hundred females. Type A households contain two adults plus one or more children under sixteen years old; type B households contain additional adults.

after marriage among pre-1794 settlers,¹³ and a subsequently stable and aging population, reflecting limited opportunities to establish new farms and thus a net out-migration of young adults.

To some extent this simple interpretation is confirmed by the changing household size distribution of Adolphustown (Figure 2). Very small (new?) households declined in relative frequency, while those of nine or more persons increased from 7.4 to 31.4 percent of all households between 1794 and 1810. The most conspicuous feature of Adolphustown's household size distribution, however, is a marked short-term fluctuation in the incidence of households of any given size. For example, households of three or four persons varied in relative incidence from thirteen to thirty percent of all households, at a cyclic interval of between six and eight years. If nothing else, this short-term fluctuation adds a cautionary note to any single cross-sectional interpretation of household composition in the past.¹⁴ Analysis of spatial variation in household size must take cognizance of temporal variation too. The evidence suggests that, during initial settlement, household formation, dissolution and relocation were frequent, and that individual households varied in size and composition by more than merely the effects of mortality, fertility and the life cycle.¹⁵

III. — TRANSIENCY AND PERSISTENCE OF HOUSEHOLDS

In order to reconstruct the short-term experience of individual households, twelve pairs of Adolphustown censuses between 1794 and 1822 were cross-linked by the name of each listed head of household.¹⁶ In view of modern patterns of residential mobility, estimates of annual turnover in nineteenth-century cities, and of biographical insights into past geographical mobility,¹⁷ it will come as no surprise that Adolphustown house-

¹³ Robert V. WELLS, "Demographic Change and the Life Cycle of American Families", in *The Family in History: Interdisciplinary Essays*, eds: Theodore K. RABB and Robert I. ROTBERG (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 85-94.

¹⁴ The problem is discussed by Lutz K. BERKNER, "Household Arithmetic: A Note", *Journal of Family History*, 2 (1977): 159-63.

¹⁵ The family cycle and mobility as factors in household structure are discussed by Martine SEGALIN, "The Family Cycle and Household Structure: Five Generations in a French Village", *Journal of Family History*, 2 (1977): 223-35. See also Lutz K. BERKNER, "The Stem Family and the Developmental Cycle of the Peasant Household: An Eighteenth-Century Austrian Example", *American Historical Review*, 77 (1972): 393-418.

¹⁶ Automated record linkage was not employed. Pairwise matches with spelling inconsistencies were quite frequent. These were accepted as linked cases if the household itself was similar or if one or other spelling variant appeared in other censuses. These were, for example, three first name and five second name spellings of Reuben Bedell between 1794 and 1816.

¹⁷ For an illustration of modern residential mobility levels, see Eric G. MOORE, "Residential Mobility in the City", *Commission on College Geography Resource Papers, No. 13* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1972), reference on p. 2. Knights estimates that annual population turnover in ante-bellum Boston was at least thirty percent: KNIGHTS, *Plain People of Boston*, p. 60. For accounts of peripatetic nineteenth-century men consult KATZ, *People of Hamilton*, pp. 94-111; and R. LAWTON

hold heads were "men in motion".¹⁸ In a typical two year period, one quarter of all household heads changed their status within the household, left the township, or died (Table 1). This level of transiency suggests that Adolphustown provided a temporary residence for migrants in transit, an element of its demographic structure which has been noted by one local historian.¹⁹

Table 1. — TRANSIENCY AND PERSISTENCE OF ADOLPHUSTOWN HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD.

Period, $t_i t_j$	Number, t_i	Percent still Household Heads, t_j	Percent no longer Household Heads, t_j
1794-1796	81	74.1	25.9
1796-1799	81	75.3	24.7
1799-1800	91	80.2	19.8
1800-1802	88	62.5	37.5
1802-1804	70	78.6	21.4
1804-1806	90	72.2	27.8
1806-1808	87	70.1	29.9
1808-1810	88	70.5	29.5
1810-1812	83	81.9	18.1
1812-1814	81	80.3	19.7
1814-1816	82	81.7	18.3
1820-1822	88	75.0	25.0

Note: Censuses for 1798 and 1817-1819 are among those which were not available; hence the departure from a two year interval in 1796-1800, and its absence for 1816-1818.

Other writers have alluded to geographical mobility in nineteenth-century rural society as a means to, or substitute for, social mobility.²⁰

and C. G. POOLEY, "Individual Appraisals of Nineteenth-Century Liverpool", *Social Geography of Nineteenth-Century Merseyside Project, Working Papers, No. 3* (University of Liverpool, Department of Geography, 1975): 5-10.

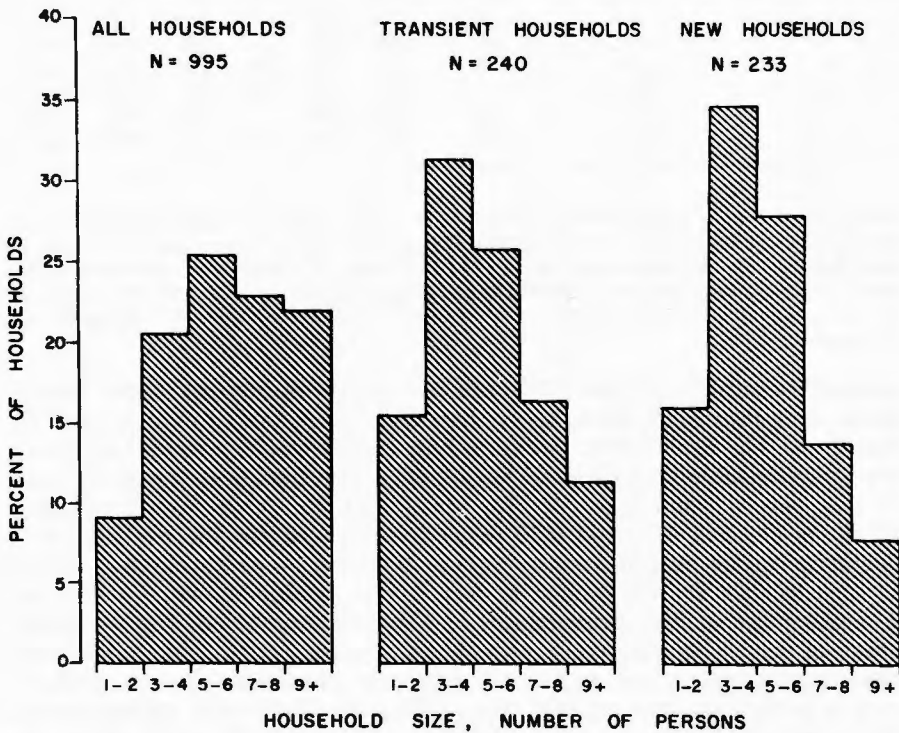
¹⁸ The term was coined by THERNSTROM and KNIGHTS, "Men in Motion". Nineteenth-century scholars were by no means ignorant of this flux. See D. B. GRIGG, "E. G. Ravenstein and the 'laws of migration'", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 3 (1977): 41-54.

¹⁹ William CANNIFF, *Province of Ontario*, p. 458. Canniff stated that "for several years, the families that came from the States would stop at the Fourth Township [Adolphustown], where they would work out, or take a farm on shares, or perhaps rent a farm, until they could find a place on which to settle in the back townships ... The ordinary terms for working a farm on shares were for the owner to furnish team, seed, etc., and take one half of the produce when gathered." The end of this practice in Adolphustown after the 1812 War and with rising land values is suggested by the following report: "Land is sometimes let on shares, but not practiced to a great extent in this township ... At the first settlement ... land could be procured at 1s. per acre ... At this moment there is no land ... [that] could be procured for less than £ 4 ... and it is believed few would sell at any price." In Robert GOURLAY, *Statistical Account of Upper Canada*, (London: Simpkins and Marshall, 1822, 2 Vols reprinted by Johnson Reprint Corporation, New York, 1966), 1: 485.

²⁰ See, for example, David GAGAN, "Geographical and social mobility in nineteenth-century Ontario: a microstudy", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 13 (1976): 152-64, reference on p. 153.

In Adolphustown, transient households were similar in size to the households which replaced them (Figure 3). On the other hand, transient and new households were both much smaller than the norm for Adolphustown. In short, it appears that the most persistent element of Adolphustown society was the large household, distant in time and context from an insecurity and readjustment characteristic of both ends of the family life cycle.²¹ Whatever were the dimensions of a household's commitment to *place* during early settlement — the size of holding, security of tenure, evolving kinship and social networks — it is evident that the transition to persistent status was expressed in part by forming a large growing household.

Figure 3. — ADOLPHUSTOWN HOUSEHOLD SIZE DISTRIBUTION, 1784-1822.



New households are those unlisted in the previous sampled census. Sizes of transient households are those given in the last census they appeared. Totals are based on fourteen censuses.

²¹ Greven demonstrates the economic importance and stabilizing effect of the family unit in colonial New England society: Philip J. GREVEN, Jr, *Four Generations: Population, Land and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970). A theme of family stability and persistence is also evident in Kenneth A. LOCKRIDGE, "The Population of Dedham Massachusetts, 1636-1736", *Economic History Review*, 19 (1966): 82-109.

The form and pace of this transition can be gauged by calculating conditional probabilities based on all observed shifts from one household size category to another. Results based on the eleven periods between 1794 and 1816 indicate not only a greater persistence of large households in Adolphustown, but also their greater stability (Table 2). The derived

Table 2. — HOUSEHOLD SIZE TRANSITION PROBABILITY MATRIX.

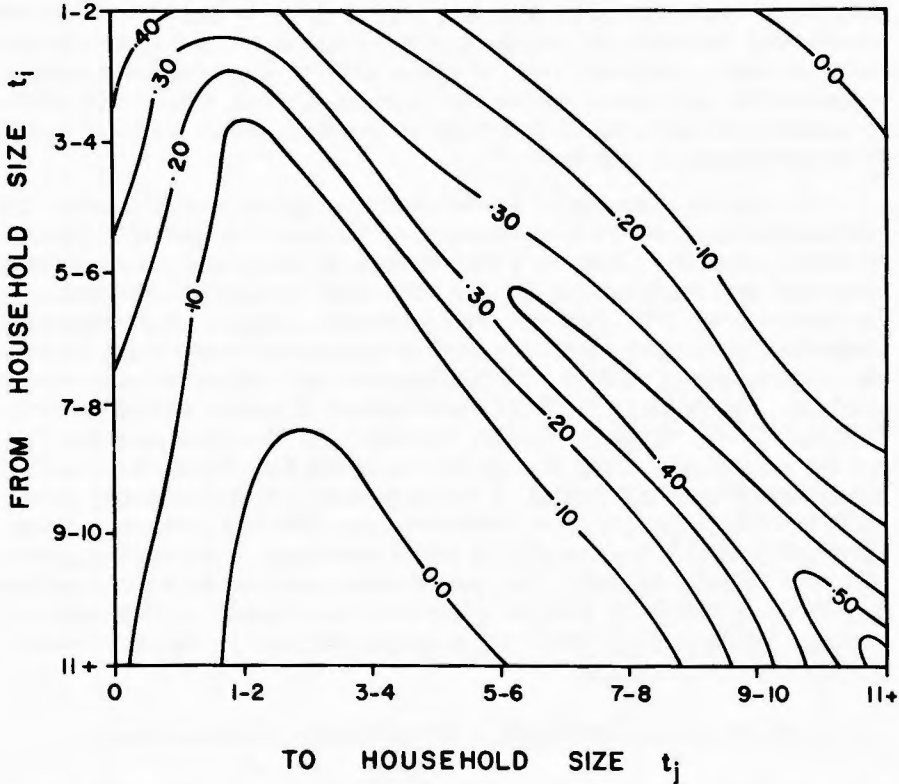
Initial Household Size in Year, t_i (Persons)		Household Size Two Years Later, t_j (Persons)						
		Unknown, Transient, $t_i t_j$	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11 +
Unknown, Arrived, $t_i t_j$	(Number of Cases)	(Transition Probabilities, Row Sum)						
	(233)	.000	.159	.347	.279	.137	.055	.021
1-2	(85)	.435	.318	.188	.047	.012	.000	.000
3-4	(192)	.391	.026	.323	.214	.042	.005	.000
5-6	(234)	.265	.013	.073	.393	.239	.013	.004
7-8	(210)	.185	.010	.028	.129	.452	.162	.033
9-10	(127)	.142	.000	.000	.031	.140	.472	.205
11 +	(74)	.108	.000	.000	.000	.027	.230	.622

Note: The transition probabilities are a composite of all observed transitions during eleven periods (average interval two years) between 1794 and 1816. Row vectors sum to 1.0. Underlined diagonal entries in the matrix indicate the probability of a household's remaining in the same size class over a two year period. The prior size of new households and the subsequent size of transient households could not of course be determined from the Adolphustown censuses.

probability surface (Figure 4) reveals five points of interest. Small households were four times more likely than large households to move on or be dissolved. The probability that large households would maintain their size was about double that of small households. The likelihood of an increase in size was not much greater for small than for large household (probabilities of circa 0.25 and 0.20 respectively), whereas the probability of declining in size ranged from as little as 0.03 for 3-4 person households to as high as 0.28 for the largest households in Adolphustown. Finally, the diagonal ridge of high probabilities in Figure 4, combined with extensive areas of zero²² or near-zero probability, demonstrates that, aside from complete disappearance, a *dramatic* change in household size was unlikely over a period as short as two years. Thus the two broad themes which characterized Adolphustown's evolving household structure were the constant attrition of new or small households and the relative persistence of large households.

²² Since the probabilities are empirically derived, it is common to obtain a zero probability of an extremely unlikely but theoretically possible transition. Whether the emerging household size distribution was a Markovian process is a question for further research. See, for example, J. F. HULTQUIST, "An Analysis of Population Growth and Decline of Small Urban Places over Time: A Markov Chain Analysis Approach" (M.A. thesis, Dept of Geography, University of Cincinnati, 1967).

Figure 4. — HOUSEHOLD TRANSITION PROBABILITY SURFACE.



The surface was derived by using values in Table 2 as control points. The top row of values in Table 2 was omitted because the prior size of newly entering households was unknown.

IV. — HOUSEHOLD PERSISTENCE AND DATE OF SETTLEMENT

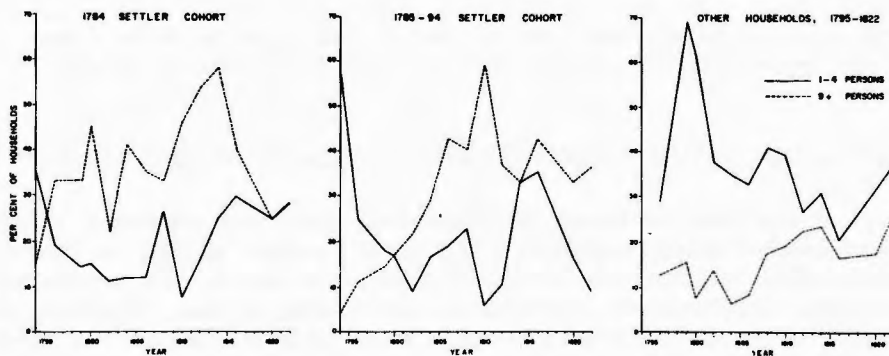
Aside from the structural differences, visible and otherwise, which distinguished Adolphustown in 1822 from its prospect in 1784, the cumulative effect of differential household persistence was to yield a stratified society, simultaneously expressed in the holding of land, of office, in bonds of kinship and marriage, and in length of prior residence. To what extent had the Loyalist pioneers, accorded preferential treatment by government land legislation,²³ established themselves in Adolphustown as a persistent élite? The evidence presented so far suggests that if Adolphustown mirrored the simplified society of two basic elements, the rooted and

²³ Although land had been granted on condition that it be occupied and improved, these requirements were rarely enforced. See GATES, *Land Policies*, pp. 123-41; and Leo A. JOHNSON, "Land Policy, Population Growth and Social Structure in the Home District, 1792-1851", *Ontario History*, 63 (1971): 41-60.

the rootless, that characterized mid-nineteenth-century rural Ontario,²⁴ then the prerequisites of permanence were little more than two years residence and the means to support a fairly large family. Yet some contemporaries took a narrower view of opportunity in Upper Canada society, regarding the entrenched position of Loyalist, Crown, Clergy and Military beneficiaries as a social landscape of privilege which retarded equality of opportunity in settlement.²⁵

The course of events in Adolphustown suggests that, if success and preferential status were concomitants of persistence, the residue of families remaining after the township's first decade of settlement was decidedly better off than later arrivals. Of the forty-eight households established in the township by 1784, just over half remained a decade later (Figure 5). Thereafter this settler cohort declined by ten percent every eight years, a rate commensurate with negligible transiency and normal attrition due to mortality. The experience of the second phase of known arrivals between 1785 and 1794 is strikingly similar. Of these, one third had gone by 1796, but the remaining element was no less tenacious than the earliest Loyalist immigrants (Figure 5). Indeed, if the persistence of the *remaining* households in each settler cohort is calibrated from 1794 and 1796 respectively, disregarding that is the loss due to initial transiency, it becomes apparent that after 1796 the foothold of *all* prior settlers was equally secure, subject only to the inevitability of death (Figure 5). As a result, by 1822, one out of every five household heads had held that position for between twenty-eight and thirty-nine years.

Figure 5. — THE PERSISTENCE OF EARLY SETTLERS IN ADOLPHUSTOWN.



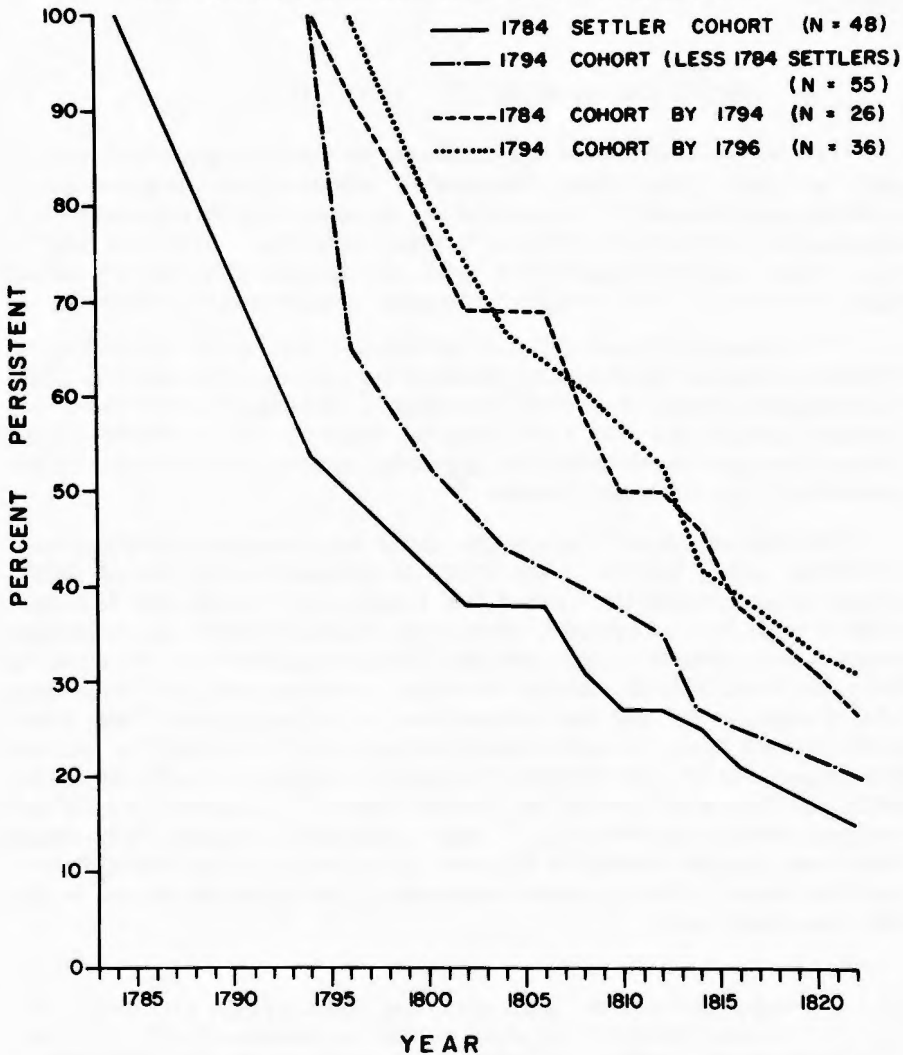
In a similar vein, the exclusiveness of the late-eighteenth-century settlers is reflected in their household size distribution as it evolved from 1794 to 1822 (Figure 6). Households headed by the 1784 settlers, or by

²⁴ GAGAN, "Geographical and Social Mobility", p. 162.

²⁵ An attitude best exemplified by those who sought to make Upper Canada a mirror image of her neighbour to the south (GOURLAY, *Statistical Account*).

those arriving between 1785 and 1794, were among the largest in the township. By the end of the century's first decade, households of nine or more persons comprised circa fifty percent of these earliest Loyalist families, in marked contrast to the general run of modest Adolphustown households (Figure 6). Only after their offspring came of age, married and moved out did the relative incidence of large households among the earliest settlers come to resemble that of other Adolphustown families.

Figure 6. — INCIDENCE OF SMALLEST AND LARGEST HOUSEHOLDS AMONG EARLY SETTLERS, AND AMONG OTHER ADOLPHUSTOWN HOUSEHOLDS, 1794-1822.



In a double sense, then, these were first families. The limited evidence concerning the marriage and mobility patterns of their offspring

suggests that the second generation reaffirmed the persistence of the first. For example, of the five children of Lieutenant John Huyck, a 1784 settler, four settled in Adolphustown.²⁶ Of seven grandchildren whose residence is known, none settled in the township. The ultimate incompatibility of the persistence and fertility of these early settlers was a crisis of identity resolved only by a genealogical binge toward the end of the nineteenth century.²⁷ There were, for instance, 15 children and 110 grandchildren who stemmed from Conrad Van Dusen, another 1784 arrival.²⁸ The social and spatial aspects of this inevitable diaspora have yet to be explored in detail.

V. — INDIVIDUAL MOBILITY AND THE HOUSEHOLD

The large households of the earliest settlers arose in part from the fact that they, more than others, remained in Adolphustown long enough to complete their families. In the light of the persistence of these families, it is tempting to attribute all observed fluctuations in their household size to birth, death, and the departure of children. Record-linkage of two households, however, reveals complex and changing patterns of co-residence.

The observed fluctuations in household size, could of course be simply a reflection of inaccurate enumeration or of later transcription and typographical errors. Published genealogical information for two of the Loyalist families was used to evaluate the reliability of the Adolphustown census, and also to estimate the character of individual mobility at the beginning of the nineteenth century.²⁹

Without exception, the changes in the four columns describing each household (men, women, boys, girls) correspond to the known demographic experience of the Conrad Van Dusen and Owen Roblin Jr households (Figure 7). For example, when a boy reached sixteen the household census always showed a loss and gain of one respectively in the count of boys and men. Known years of birth and marriage were also consistent with changes in the size and composition of the household. There were, however, two types of inconsistency between the household list and the genealogical record. The first was the apparent presence of individuals who could not have been part of the nuclear family. The second was the occasional absence of adolescents. I argue, from the consistency with which birth, marriage and coming of age were mirrored in the household record, that the record is also a reliable indicator of individual transiency at the farm household level.

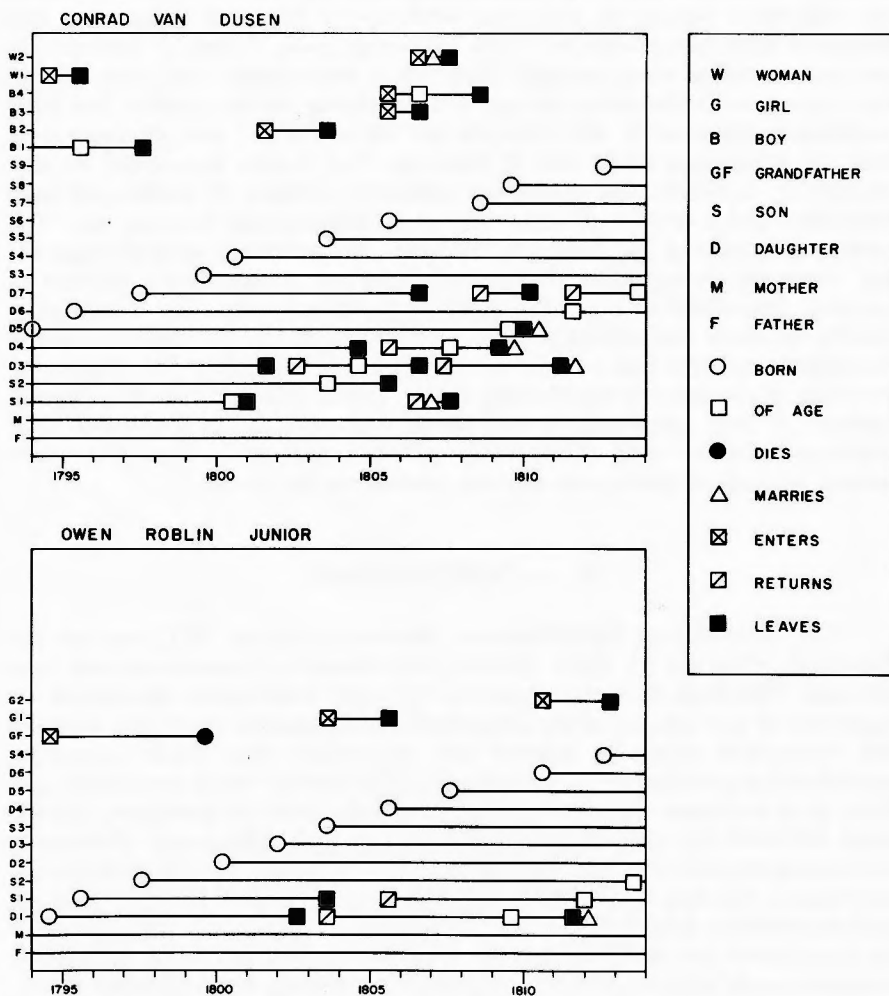
²⁶ *Pioneer Life on the Bay of Quinte* (Toronto: Ralph and Clark Ltd, 1904), p. 376.

²⁷ Changing attitudes of and toward Loyalists are summarized by J. J. TALMAN, "The United Empire Loyalists", in *Profiles of a Province*, pp. 3-8. This reawakening of interest resulted in the formation of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Ontario in 1896.

²⁸ *Pioneer Life*, p. 57.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-66 and 703-4.

Figure 7. — INDIVIDUAL MOBILITY AT THE HOUSEHOLD LEVEL: THE EXPERIENCE OF TWO ADOLPHUSTOWN HOUSEHOLDS, 1794-1814.



Based on genealogical and census evidence.

In the Van Dusen household, those outside the nuclear family were four boys and two women, one of whom was almost certainly the wife of Henry Van Dusen, who married in 1807 (Figure 7, W2 and S1). In the Roblin household, two outsiders were girls, while the third was Owen Roblin Sr, who moved in for the last five years of his life. Three Van Dusen daughters spent one or two years outside their family between ages twelve and eighteen. This pattern of boarding during youth has been encountered in other studies of nineteenth-century Britain or North America.³⁰ In

³⁰ Michael ANDERSON, *Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 85; KATZ, *People of Hamilton*, p. 263.

Adolphustown, co-residence was probably a localized phenomenon reflecting inter-family bonds of kinship, marriage and acquaintance. It served not only as a means of preparing adolescents for adult roles, but also stabilized farm households as viable economic units. Crises of widowhood and orphan status were certainly resolved in this manner, but co-residence also overcame imbalances of sex and available labour within the farm household. Consider in this light the arrival of B2, B3 and B4 coincident with the departures of S1 and S2 from the Van Dusen household. In that household, co-residential exchanges reflected a deficit of adolescent sons after 1801 and a surplus of daughters at or approaching working age. The reverse was true of the Roblin household. The evidence of both suggests that domestic or agricultural servitude was not a continuous feature of Loyalist households. Instead, sporadic individual mobility resolved a conflict between two unalterable circumstances: the basic requirements of sustenance and the age-sex profile of the nuclear family. The functional diversity of the pioneer household, which Tryon aptly termed the "family factory",³¹ may have contributed to an undercurrent of individual geographical mobility very different in purpose and scale from the more general aspects of nineteenth-century society on the move.

VI. — CONCLUSIONS

The township of Adolphustown between 1784 and 1822 was an environment moulded by three distinct components of transiency and persistence. The first, and most evident, was the continuous dissolution or departure of one quarter of its households every second year. The scale of this dislocation tends to support the suggestion that North American agricultural populations were notably transient during initial settlement, yet there is no evidence that, in Adolphustown, the level of transiency diminished between the second and fourth decades of settlement. Moreover, constant replacement of transient households by an identical population of newcomers vitiated what would otherwise have led to rapid change in Adolphustown's demographic structure. Finally, the actual percentage of the population which was transient was less than the rate of household turnover would suggest, because transient households were typically small.

The second component of transiency is detectable in the transitional characteristics of individual households. With securing and maintaining a foothold within Adolphustown went the maintenance of a large farm household. Underlying this general pattern of persistence among large households was the emergence of a distinct class, the Loyalists, whose background, early settlement, initial circumstances and subsequent per-

In Preston, Lancashire, twenty-one percent of fifteen to nineteen year olds were not co-resident with their parents; in rural Lancashire the figure was forty-four percent. In Hamilton, Ontario twenty-three percent of fifteen year olds were boarders; the figure was fifty-one percent for nineteen year olds.

³¹ R. M. TRYON, *Household Manufactures in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917).

sistence yielded a security of tenure reflected by large families. The articulation of a persistent élite in a transient environment of risk and opportunity is a theme of early settlement which merits further research. In a retrospective interpretation of early settlement, countless histories, genealogies and atlases of North American counties equated persistence with success. The fixing of society and people in the aftermath of initial settlement must be sought within a framework that embraces tenure, agricultural improvement, privilege, kinship, marriage and the characteristics of the household.

Transiency is not a process; it is a continuous reflection of the functioning and evolution of society. Nowhere is this more evident than in the inter-household individual mobility which contributed to short-term variation in the size and composition of Adolphustown's households. From slender evidence, we have suggested that this third component of transiency was a means of resolving the economic requirements and demographic facts of the family in a pioneer milieu. Whether this demographic balancing act, effected by a local short-term exchange of adolescent children, was a widespread phenomenon we cannot as yet substantiate. If this was indeed a means of bolstering large persistent farm households as economic units, the finding reinforces the point that short-term events, especially those related to the family life cycle, demand short-term measures of transiency and persistence.

Finally, this paper leaves open the question of geographical variation in the transiency of nineteenth-century communities. Transiency was a multi-faceted, short-term phenomenon involving both individuals and entire households. Viewed as such, it may reveal a great deal about similarities and differences between the variety of contexts in which North American settlement began.