

*The Duncombe Rising, Its Aftermath, Anti-Americanism, and Sectarianism**

by Colin READ**

In December of 1837 an insurgent "army" of perhaps four or five hundred men gathered in the London District township of Oakland, near Brantford. The force mustered under Charles Duncombe, one of Oxford County's representatives in the provincial assembly, after hearing the rumour that, to the east, William Lyon Mackenzie's rebels had taken Toronto. The western insurrectionists intended to march to the provincial capital to bolster Mackenzie's forces, but fled soon after assembling, on learning that the Home District insurgents had been scattered and that they themselves were threatened by advancing loyalists.

The short-lived Duncombe rising, which drew its support primarily from American-born settlers and their progeny, was an event which, first and foremost, gained its inspiration from political issues — for instance, from those heated controversies over the growth of "monopolies," over the undue influence of a few select people in the councils of government, and over the severely circumscribed powers of the Assembly. The agitation raised in response to such issues by William Lyon Mackenzie, Charles Duncombe and other radical reformers increased greatly in intensity and fervour with the elections of 1836, for these elections produced in certain circles the not unfounded conviction that the governor, Sir Francis Bond Head, and a coterie of officials had acted in a pernicious way to engineer results agreeable to them. Subsequently, Duncombe appealed for electoral justice to England, while a committee of the newly-elected assembly investigated several specific reform complaints made about alleged wrong-doing during the contest of 1836. Yet, all this bred only further radical bitterness, since the documents the reformers needed to substantiate their charges remained safely locked away in various government offices and files.¹ In 1837 the political climate in Upper Canada deteriorated further, particularly as Lower Canada drifted into rebellion and the economy of the upper province continued in the grip of a prolonged commercial depression. Yet, despite fairly widespread discontent, when revolt did come in Upper Canada, it was haphazard, ill-organized and ill-co-ordinated, and was, in the main, the product of the earnest labours of a few vitally interested men.

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¹ See, Colin Frederick READ, "The Rising in Western Upper Canada, 1837-38: The Duncombe Revolt and After" (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1974), pp. 98-100.

The Duncombe rebellion was demonstrably the result of political, not religious, discord. (Indeed, Charles Duncombe, the leader of the western rising, was so far removed from overtly religious controversies that his own precise church or sectarian affiliation cannot be determined with certainty.)² Still, even if the rebellion was basically political in its inspiration it must be recognized that political issues often involved matters of broad social significance, for instance, questions involving the respective spheres of the church and state — a topic which had produced heated discussion in the west. In light of this, it may be expected that among those who took up arms at Oakland certain religious biases or affiliations prevailed, biases and affiliations which were to be of some importance after the failure of the western rising when the “hunt” for rebels and the search, albeit an unofficial one, for “treasonable” organizations and bodies of men began.

The Duncombe rebels came from sixteen townships of the western peninsula — among them, two Gore District townships — Dumfries in Halton County and Brantford in Wentworth County. As well, the insurgents mustered from fourteen London District townships — from Windham, Woodhouse, and Townsend in Norfolk County, from Oakland, Blenheim, Burford, East and West Oxford, Norwich, and Dereham in Oxford County, and from Bayham, Malahide, Yarmouth, and Southwold in Middlesex County. (See maps one and two.) These essentially agrarian townships, whose settlers were primarily North American-born, were relatively isolated from the provincial capital, Toronto, and from the heartland of the colony about the head of Lake Ontario. In religious terms the rebel townships and, indeed, the entire western peninsula, were characterized by an incredible diversity of creeds and, as an itinerant Methodist preacher noted, surpassed “all for parties and sects.”³ (For the varied activities of the many religious groups in the area in the years 1834-37 see map number three.)⁴

The Methodists were the largest of the denominations in the townships examined, but were divided into three sects — the Wesleyans, the Episcopalians and the Canadian Wesleyans or Ryanites.⁵ The Methodist

² Duncombe may initially have been an Anglican, as he had his son baptized in the St. Thomas Anglican Church in 1828. St. Thomas Trinity Church, “First Parish Register of St. Thomas,” p. 130. Richard Bonnycastle, however, in discussing the composition of the 1836 assembly, indicated that Duncombe was a Methodist. Richard H. BONNYCASTLE, James Edward ALEXANDER, *Canada, As It Was, Is, And May Be* (London: Colburn & Co., 1852), Volume I, p. 196.

The author has been unable to discover any other information about Duncombe’s religious persuasion, though it is possible that Duncombe’s prominent association with Freemasonry signified that he was an ardent Protestant. For Duncombe’s association with Freemasonry, see *Gazette* (London), November 18, 1837, letter of James Fitzgibbon, Toronto, November 6, 1837. J. ROSS ROBERTSON, *The History of Freemasonry in Canada* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose C. Ltd., 1899), Vol. I, p. 1159; Vol. II, pp. 187-189.

³ Public Archives of Ontario (hereafter referred to as P.A.Q.), Samuel Rose Papers, Samuel Rose to Mr. John Rose, November 21, 1833.

⁴ For purposes of comparison the activities in those areas contiguous to the rebel townships have also been charted.

⁵ The places and dates of Methodist worship are extremely difficult to pinpoint thus map three does not adequately represent the extent of Methodist activities.

The 1839 religious census, plus a variety of other sources — letters from missionaries, reminiscences, etc. — provide the basis for the discussion found in this article of the relative

Church in Upper Canada had originally been an American adjunct, but in 1827 Henry Ryan, an elder who had been agitating for the establishment of a separate provincial organization, severed his connection with the existing body to form the Canadian Wesleyan Methodists. With Ryan's death in 1833 one of the new sect's main *raison d'être* was removed and that group went into a steady decline, though it still maintained considerable support in the west in the rebellion year.

The main body from which the Ryanites seceded severed its own ties with the American Methodists in 1828 to become the Methodist Episcopal Church, but this organization soon felt threatened by the return to the province of the British Wesleyans, who came with educated preachers and a fairly sophisticated service to minister to Upper Canada's British immigrants and to make inroads into the province's few urban centers. The Episcopalians thus negotiated a union with the Wesleyans in which the two co-operated under the banner of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. In 1837 this latter Methodist sect was the most significant one in the rebel townships, as it was in the province as a whole.⁶

In 1833 not all Episcopalians agreed to enter the union with the British Wesleyans, fearing, among other things, that anyone allying with the conservative Wesleyans must be prepared to abandon voluntarist principles which demanded that there be a complete separation of church and state lest either be corrupted by its association with the other. Voluntarism, largely a North American phenomenon, differed from accepted British practice and tradition which sanctified the marriage of church and state. Those opposing the union consequently formed their own church, or rather, as they insisted, continued the organization of the Methodist Episcopal one. The western peninsula was their stronghold, and they were an important religious element of the rebel townships.

The Baptists, the second largest religious group to be considered, resembled the Methodists in several respects, for, in general, both utilized revivalist techniques and allowed individuals to become preachers simply by answering the "call." This latter fact caused some embarrassment to the Baptists, particularly to their more sophisticated British members, who had been entering the province since 1820. In 1837 one such adherent lamented that Baptist churches were seldom built "in towns, villages, & c., but always in some remote country place," since it was felt that "our ministers were not qualified for occupying... [town]... stations."⁷ A similar re-

sizes of the constituencies of the various religious groups. The 1839 religious census for most of the area can be found in *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Assembly, Session 1839-40*, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 148-51.

⁶ In 1837 the Wesleyans reported a provincial membership far exceeding that of the other two Methodist sects. The Wesleyans recorded that they had 14,530 whites and 923 Indians belonging to their organization. United Church Archives, *The Minutes Of The Annual Conferences Of The Wesleyan-Methodist Church In Canada, From 1824 to 1845, Inclusive, With Many Official Documents And Resolutions Not Before Published To Which Is Added The Marriage Act* (Toronto: Published by Anson Green, Conference Office, 1846), p. 56.

⁷ *Baptist Magazine*, Vol. XXIX (September, 1837), p. 404, letter to the editor from Rev. John Gilmore, Montreal, July 7, 1837. In 1837 the Canada Baptist Missionary Society was organized to recruit British missionaries.

port had it that the preachers of one Baptist association about Lake Erie "labour for their own support, and are extremely deficient in useful information and sound religious knowledge: they are generally good and zealous people, and chiefly Americans."⁸

Three different Baptist sects laboured in the region scrutinized. Most important were the Regular or Calvinistic Baptists, who clung to the doctrine of the elect and who admitted only church members to their communion and hence who were also known as Closed Communionists. Second in significance were the Open or Free Communion Baptists, who, though they did not accept predestination, felt themselves divided from the Regular Baptists only by the communion question.⁹ Nonetheless, the two groups may have been distinct in point of membership, for it has been suggested that the Open Communionists were largely British, while the Closed Communionists were mostly North American in character.¹⁰ The final Baptist group was composed by the relatively insignificant Free Will Baptists, who, though American, were like the Open Communionists in that they too denied the doctrine of predestination and admitted non-members to communion.

The Church of England, which had pretensions of being the "Established" Church of the colony, appealed particularly to the urban, the propertied, and the office holding segments¹¹ — especially British — of Upper Canada's population; yet Anglicans formed the third most numerous group in the sixteen townships reviewed, even though those townships had few urban centers and relatively few office holders.

Presbyterians of various persuasions constituted the fourth greatest component of the religious population of the area. The largest Presbyterian group was that of the Church of Scotland, but though one zealot proudly asserted that members of the Kirk were "generally of respectable character and stati[o]n in society, and many of them occupy the most influential station in their respective neighbourhoods,"¹² the Church of Scotland in the west drew its support largely from the Highland communities, which were most often agrarian in character and poor in pocket.

A variety of other Presbyterian sects functioned in the region, chief of which was the United Secession Church. In 1832 ministers of that voluntarist body arrived in the province from Scotland to begin their labours; in succeeding years they built up support in several rebel townships. Also active was the United Synod, created in 1831 by the members of an earlier association whose ministers had been ordained in Upper Canada. The Sy-

⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVII (April, 1835), p. 147, extracts from a letter of Mr. Fraser, dated Breadalbane, October 24, 1838.

⁹ Zella M. HOTSON, *Pioneer Baptist Work in Oxford County* (Woodstock: Commercial Printcraft, n. d.), p. 43.

¹⁰ Samuel Delbert CLARK, *Church and Sect in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948), p. 202.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹² United Church Archives, The Correspondence of the Glasgow Colonial Society, Vol. 4, No. 159, Mr. Romanes to Dr. Burns, Hamilton, June 25, 1833.

nod declared its doctrines to be identical with those of the Kirk,¹³ but lacked the broad appeal of that organization, having, for example, just one settled minister in the townships studied — in Brantford, and he was to desert the Synod after 1837 for the Church of Scotland. As well, three American Presbyterian churches had entered the area. In 1834 an itinerant of the Associate Reformed Church had laboured in Yarmouth, but more significantly, the United Associate Synod maintained a large congregation at Galt, a Scots center, while the Niagara Presbyterians, who were in favour of voluntarism and temperance, had established small congregations in the towns of Brantford and Vienna.

Closely akin to the Niagara Presbyterians were the Congregationalists. The stream of Congregationalism which found its way into Upper Canada was the English rather than the New England variety, and the main point at issue between the members of the Niagara Presbyterian and the Congregational or Independent churches was the refusal of the latter to espouse temperance. Also, the two groups could not unite, one observer thought, for "there is a national difference which renders it probably unpleasant to both English and Americans to meet together."¹⁴ The records of the Oakland Congregational church, however, do not indicate that those associated with it, several of whom were leading spirits in the rebellion, were primarily British in origin. Over the rebel townships the Congregationalists — whether of English or American origin — were not that numerous, as Oakland was only one of four townships where regular Congregational preaching occurred.

Another religious persuasion entrenched in certain sections of those townships which produced insurgents in 1837 were the Friends or Quakers. In terms of ethnicity they were primarily American-born or the offspring of American parents, and they were noted for their unyielding pacificism. In 1828-29 a split developed between the followers of Elias Hicks and the Conservative Quakers. Hicks, reportedly believing that Christ had been a mortal man,¹⁵ insisted that the traditional freedom of Quakers from being obliged to subscribe to any particular creed must be preserved. The Conservative Quakers were not prepared to extend their tolerance, however, to Hicks's peculiar doctrines, and Quaker societies divided. Of the two resulting groups, the Hicksites were the most numerous in the rebel area, though Friends were concentrated in but two townships — Norwich and Yarmouth.

¹³ Wm. Gregg, *Short History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada from the Earliest to the Present Time* (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1892), p. 51.

¹⁴ United Church Archives, American Home Missionary Society Congregational (microfilm), C.E. Furman and E. Marsh to Rev. A. Peters, Hamilton, November 14, 1836.

¹⁵ University of Western Ontario (hereafter referred to as U.W.O.), Proudfoot Family Papers, Rev. Wm. Proudfoot Diary, (typed copy), p. 286. Dorland says that Hicks' views about Christ were peculiar, but maintains that Hicks still felt Christ to be divine. In any event, adds Dorland, Hicks' views of Christ and the Scriptures were not widely shared by his followers. Arthur Garratt Dorland, *A History of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1927), pp. 120, 154.

There were yet other religious elements labouring in the rebel townships — the Catholics, the Christians, and the Mormons. The relatively few Catholics found in the area were mostly Irishmen who were, in the opinion of one priest, “extremely poor.”¹⁶ The Christians, an ecumenical sect which made no doctrinal statements and which spoke of “RELIGION WITHOUT BIGOTRY — Zeal Without Fanaticism — Liberty Without Licentiousness”¹⁷ had developed in the United States. Some time between 1834 and 1837 Christians operated stations in Dumfries, but these had become defunct before the outbreak of rebellion. Finally, the Mormons, who had just originated across the line and who believed that God had revealed His purpose and design to their founder, Joseph Smith, had organized several congregations in the eastern section of the rebel district, but these congregations were not large.

It is perhaps permissible to group the many divergent sects found in the rebel area into three broad groupings arranged according to their teachings and constituencies. First come those denominations and sects whose religious practices were perfectly in accord with accepted British tradition (and which were thus acceptable to colonial officialdom) and whose followers were often British or Upper Canadian-born in ethnicity. In this category fall the Churches of England and Scotland, the Roman Catholics, the United Synod, the Wesleyan Methodists and, possibly, the Canadian Wesleyan Methodists. The Episcopal Methodist Church, which had, in effect, originated in Upper Canada, as well as several sects which were imported directly from Great Britain — the Congregationalists, the United Secession Presbyterians, and the Free Communion Baptists — might be placed in a second category, as these preached either voluntarism or temperance (or both) — two causes which were often linked with reforming political elements and, in turn, with “Americanism.” Finally, many of the sectarians operating in the rebel region — the Regular and Free Will Baptists, the Niagara Presbyterians, the followers of the United Associate Synod and the Associate Reformed Church, the Hicksite and Conservative Quakers, the Christians and the Mormons — were all obviously American in inspiration and origin, if not always in appeal. Thus when American settlers and “Americanism” became suspect, the churches in the latter two categories became vulnerable to suspicion and innuendo.

Though the Duncombe revolt demonstrably was not mainly the product of religious discord, that revolt and its aftermath did have repercussions for the various religious groups in the rebel area, as many of the insurgents were identifiably American-born or descended in character. Therefore, it is not surprising that, once the revolt was crushed, attempts were made to ascertain the religious affiliations of the rebels and to impugn the loyalty of various religious bodies suspected of being pro-rebel in the first instance and of being pro-American in the second.

¹⁶ P.A.O., Catholic Archdiocesan Archives (Toronto) Collection, (microfilm), AbII, Rev'd Daniel Downie to Hon'l and Right Rev'd Alexander McDonnell, St. Thomas, March 5, 1835.

¹⁷ This is part of the mast-head of the *Christian Palladium*. A copy of its December 15, 1837 issue can be found in United Church Archives, Christian Connection Records.

In 1838 the *Canada Baptist Magazine and Missionary Register* decried the prevalent practice of speculating about the religious ties of the Upper Canadian rebels of December, 1837, asserting that if a few members of a particular denomination had been found among the rebel ranks:

we should be unjust in ascribing disaffection to the whole body on that account, or in charging the instructions of the clergy with having a tendency to produce it... The truth is, that religious or demoninational party as such, had nothing to do with the late outbreak, it must rather be ascribed to the operation of certain pestiferous principles of which all parties ought to be ashamed.¹⁸

Instead, the same journal made a great show of affirming the existence of "a wondrous alliance between Rebellion and Infidelity."¹⁹

It would be fair to assume that many of the Duncombe insurrectionists were not connected in any way with any church, as in fact a large proportion of the province's population was not. Early in 1838 Rev. Daniel Allen, a Church of Scotland missionary, calculated that over one quarter of those living in the London District were unaligned with any denomination.²⁰ Moreover, the proportion of the "irreligious" of some townships, Bayham for one,²¹ reputedly reached fifty per cent.

Certain denominations, nonetheless, were clearly more identifiable with the Duncombe insurgents than were others. The author located 196 of the rebels and fifty-six of their accomplices by collecting their confessions of their involvement in the revolt, and has attempted to identify their religious ties. The difficulty lies, however, in establishing the precise affiliations of particular individuals, not only because the relevant church records have seldom survived but also because many people did not belong formally to any congregation, although they might well have attended the services of a certain sect or group on a regular or an irregular basis. It was generally accepted at that time that the ratio of these "hearers" to members for the several Protestant denominations was in the order of four or five to one. Unfortunately, the "hearers" entirely escaped the notice of the church clerks, and their names thus do not appear in those congregational records still in existence. Moreover, the first nominal religious census occurred only in 1841-42, and was found to be of little use in this study, because in the 1830s, except for the members of the several pietistic sects,

¹⁸ *Canada Baptist Magazine and Missionary Register*, Vol. II, No. 3 (August, 1838), p. 59.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, No. 4 (January, 1838), pp. 75-76. An Anglican itinerant insisted that all of the sixty or so persons lodged in Hamilton jail after the revolt were either Dissenters or disciples of Tom Paine. Public Archives of Canada (hereafter referred to as P.A.C.), MG17 B1, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Series X7, (microfilm), p. 120, Mr. O'Neill's Journal, August, 1837, No. 5.

²⁰ *Canadian Christian Examiner and Presbyterian Review*, Vol. II, No. 4 (April, 1838), p. 119, letter from the Rev. Daniel Allan, London, January 8, 1838.

²¹ U.W.O., Proudfoot Family Papers, Rev. Wm. Proudfoot Diary, (typed copy), p. 24. In 1839 six of the sixteen townships dealt with in this paper reported high percentages of people professing no religious persuasions. In descending order they were: Malahide 60%, North and West Oxford combined 51%, Yarmouth 51%, Burford 32%, Bayham 23%, and Dumfries 11%. See *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Assembly, Session 1839-40*, Vol. I Part I, pp. 148-151.

adherents of the various churches crossed denominational lines with some frequency. Hence it would be unwise to conclude that a man who was, for example, a Wesleyan Methodist in 1842 had necessarily been one in 1837.

Accordingly, the religious data collected on those discussed in this work is meagre indeed, since it was necessary to rely largely on the various congregational records unearthed for the relevant information. In a few instances other source material, such as depositions, proved to be of use in discovering a particular individual's religious loyalties.²² By and large, however, the raw data presented on the religious affiliations of those dealt with is woefully inadequate for quantitative study, and qualitative, impressionistic evidence must be used to support the tentative conclusions that have been reached in regard to the religious alignments existing among the rebels.

The Society of Friends, an "American" sect, constituted one of the two religious groups within the area directly affected by the western rebellion which can be most readily identified with the insurgents. Of the forty-two insurrectionists whose denominational loyalties are known, twelve were Friends. Of these, five were Hicksites, one a Conservative, and the remaining six were simply found to have been "Quakers." Unlike those Methodists discussed, and to some extent the Baptists, the Friends who joined Duncombe's men were concentrated in a very small area — ten were from Yarmouth, one from Norwich, and one from Dereham. These figures might suggest that, while the Friends of Yarmouth were relatively disaffected, those of Norwich were not, an impression that is strengthened by the fact that on December 13, 1837 the Norwich women of the Hicksite Friends and the men and women of the Norwich Conservative Quakers met as usual in separate meetings without making any reference to the revolt.²³ In January of 1838, the Conservative Quakers of Norwich recorded that only three of their brethren had participated in the "war," that is, in the promotion or in the suppression of the rebellion.²⁴

While one might conclude that the Norwich Quakers stood apart from the insurrection, one should be aware that *no* Quaker community would countenance an uprising, imbued as the Friends were with pacifist principles. In addition, most of the rebel Quakers identified stood in relation to the Friends' Societies as did the "hearers" of the other denominations to the communicants or members of those sects; and it may well be that significant numbers of the Norwich insurgents were indeed only casually aligned with the Societies and were thus beneath the official notice of their records. Of the thirteen people who aided the rebels whose religious affiliations are known, nine were Quakers — five from Yarmouth and four from Norwich. This, too, suggests a greater degree of involvement in the revolt

²² If a young man was living at home with his father and the latter demonstrably belonged to a specific denomination, I assumed that the former did as well.

²³ U.W.O., Quaker Records, Norwich Monthly Meeting, Women, 1819-49, entry for December 13, 1837. Norwich Monthly Meeting, Men, 1834-52, entry for December 13, 1837. Norwich Monthly Meeting, Women, 1828-43, entry for December 13, 1837.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Norwich Monthly Meeting, Men, 1834-52, entry for January 10, 1838.

for the Norwich Quakers than initial appearances imply, and it is worth noting that the Anglican missionary, Thomas Green, insisted that "not a few" of the Norwich Friends were suspected of having taken up arms.²⁵

While no fully satisfactory explanation can be adduced to account for the heavy involvement of members of the Quaker communities in the revolt, the ties of kinship do provide a partial one. Elias Moore, a Quaker and one of Middlesex County's two reform representatives in the assembly, actively urged those of south Yarmouth and area to rebel. Significantly, no less than five Moores from the lakefront are known to have taken up arms, while four others, including Elias' two brothers, Enoch and John, did all they could, short of shouldering muskets themselves, to incite rebellion. Moreover, several members of other prominent Quaker families — of the Doans of Yarmouth, and of the Delongs and Lossings of Norwich, for example, — were also deeply implicated in the insurrection.

The Congregationalists, a "deviant" British group, were the second denomination whose members were linked frequently with the insurgents' cause. Of the forty-two insurrectionists whose religious affiliations have been discovered, fifteen were Congregationalists. All of them came from the townships of Oakland and of Burford — eight from the former, seven from the latter. Of these fifteen people, six were Malcolms and three were Kellys; thus here, too, family ties may be important in explaining the involvement in the rebellion of some of these Congregationalists. No evidence has been unearthed to suggest that members of the Brantford, Dumfries or Southwold congregations were disloyal, although the latter body was rent by dissension over the revolt.

The assertion by the parent Colonial Missionary Society in Great Britain that no Congregational minister in Upper Canada, "nor a single member of their churches," nor one of their "hearers," were "in the least degree involved in the uprising,²⁶ did not dispell suspicions that the Congregationalists were implicated deeply. Two Congregational ministers, Roaf and Wilkes, explained that,

our body being well known to entertain liberal opinions on all subjects relating to liberty, religion and education; when some in the Colonies who push these sentiments to dangerous and violent extremes, broke out into actual rebellion, odium, and suspicion fell on our friends as holding, though in a just and moderate form, the same general views with the insurgents.²⁷

Although the two were wrong in insisting upon the Congregationalists' complete innocence, they do perhaps provide the key for explaining why at least some members of their church took up arms. It was not the presence of special grievances which impelled such men towards rebellion, but rath-

²⁵ Rev. W.J.D. WADDILOVE, *The Stewart Missions: A Series of Letters and Journals calculated to exhibit to British Christians the spiritual destitution of the Emigrants settled in the remote parts of Upper Canada* (London: J. Hatchard and Son, 1838), p. 248, eighth letter from Rev. Thomas Green to Rev. W.J.D. Waddilove, London, February 19, 1838.

²⁶ *Second Annual Report of the Colonial Missionary Society, in Connexion With The Congregational Union of England and Wales; With a List of Subscribers*, 1838, p. 22.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

er the existence of shared values and attitudes with the rebels, for example, a belief in voluntarism among both groupings and an insistence upon the liberty of individual congregations on the part of the one, and of political man on the part of the other.

In spite of their strong position in the area from which Duncombe raised his men, few Baptists — only seven Closed and two Open Communionists — are known to have mustered at Oakland. Of the two known Baptists who aided the cause of insurrection, one was a Regular Baptist, the second was of undetermined affiliation. The eleven disaffected Baptists came from throughout the region — four were from Norwich, two from Malahide, and one each from the townships of Bayham, Oakland, Southwold, and West Oxford. Another lived in “the Oxfords.” The locations of the Baptist churches in the “rebel” townships do not correlate with the locales of insurgent strength. The congregations of Blenheim, Oakland, Norwich, West Oxford, Malahide, Windham, northern Townsend, southern Yarmouth, and possibly of Brantford town and of Burford township could be judged to be within the rebel domain, but those of Dumfries, Southwold, East Oxford, Bayham, southern Townsend and of St. Thomas could not be so considered.

After the abortive uprising, there were widespread accusations against the Baptists, sparked in part, no doubt, by the reluctance of many of them who were adherents of non-violence to serve in the militia, and in part by the fact that some Baptists had certainly been among Duncombe’s men. Most of the charges, however, appear to have been founded on fantasy. Thomas Green, the itinerant Anglican minister, insisted that “many *professed* baptists” had been found in arms in the London District.²⁸ This drew an angry retort from the *Canada Baptist Magazine and Missionary Register*, which said that it was unaware of any Baptist insurgents in the London District. If any existed, Green was assured, “they are as widely recreant from our principles as from those of our Episcopal brethren.” Noting that the Baptists’ teachings were similar to those of the other Evangelical denominations and included the doctrine of the necessity of obedience to civil authorities, the *Magazine* asserted that “Baptism as a profession of faith has surely no very peculiar tendency to make men rebels.”²⁹

Although only one member of the Yarmouth Regular Baptist church apparently marched to Oakland and although he was obliged to recant his desertion of pacifist tenets before his assembled brethren,³⁰ it was later claimed that the Baptists of Yarmouth and area had met in the house of one Black and had “determined systematically to oppose the Government or

²⁸ WADDILOVE, *The Stewart Missions*, p. 248, eighth letter from Rev. Thomas Green to Rev. W.J.D. Waddilove, London, February 19, 1838.

²⁹ *Canada Baptist Magazine and Missionary Register*, Vol. II, No. 3 (August, 1838), p. 59.

³⁰ Baptist Archives, First Yarmouth Church, Minutes 1832-1852, entry for April 7, 1838.

stand neutral in 1837.”³¹ An Anglican missionary also impugned the loyalty of the Regular Baptist preacher at St. George in south Dumfries by saying that at the outbreak of the insurrection he had fled the district.³² Nothing can be found in the records of the St. George Church, however, to support this accusation.³³

Not all Baptists found their loyalty questioned. The Regular Baptist minister, Rev. William Rees of Brantford, the President of the Canadian Missionary Society, and “the large and influential body” he represented, reportedly took “an active part” in the rebellion “in favour of Her Majesty’s Government.”³⁴ In 1838 Mahlon Burwell of Port Talbot, a member of the provincial assembly for the town of London and an ardent Anglican as well as a red-hot Tory, felt obliged to pay the minister of the Regular Baptist Church of Bayham, Shook McConnell, a grudging compliment. McConnell, he said, “though deficient in point of intelligence is a very loyal man.”³⁵ This accolade, such as it was, was not won lightly from Burwell. The Baptist churches all condemned the insurrection, and the Regular Baptist Church of Bayham excluded one of its members merely “for signing the political union with those opposed to the British Government” and for “other misconduct.”³⁶ Both the Montreal-published *Canada Baptist Magazine and Missionary Register* and the Toronto-based *Baptist Missionary Magazine* roundly damned the rebels.³⁷

Even though the Methodists were quite likely the largest single denomination in the insurgent area, only five of the forty-two insurrectionists whose religious affiliations are known were Methodists. The precise sectarian loyalties of four of these have gone undiscovered, while the fifth was an Episcopal Methodist. Of the thirteen individuals who provided the rebels with aid whose religious ties have been ascertained, only one was a Methodist, an adherent of the Wesleyans. These six “known” Methodists

³¹ P.A.O., Upper Canada State Papers, Vol. 9 (microfilm), p. 74, Wm. Killican to J.B. Harrison, St. Thomas, October 6, 1840.

³² P.A.C., MG17 B1, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Series X7, Journals of proceedings sent by the missionaries, 1836-45, (microfilm), p. 118, Mr. O’Neill’s Journal, August, 1837, No. 5.

³³ The recorded transactions of the meetings of the St. George Church of December 9, 1837 and of January 13, 1838 are completely devoid of mention of the revolt, as are the vast majority of church records examined. Baptist Archives, St. George Church, Church Records, Vol. 1, July 14, 1825 to January 12, 1861, p. 154.

³⁴ P.A.O., C. O. 42, Vol. 454, (microfilm), p. 67, Rev. Charles Carpenter to Glenelg, June 2, 1838.

³⁵ P.A.C., RG5 A1, Upper Canada Sundries, Vol. 212, Col. M. Burwell to the Hon. John Macaulay, Port Talbot, December 29, 1838. In December of 1838 George Ryerse of Woodhouse claimed that he knew of a “at least 16 Regular Baptist Ministers this side of Toronto who are strictly loyal [;] there are 8 or 10 others whose political principles I am not acquainted with, but have never heard of any thing to be relied upon against any of them.” *Ibid.* Vol. 211, George J. Ryerse to Hon. John Macaulay, Woodhouse, Ryerse’s Creek, December 15, 1838.

³⁶ Baptist Archives, Port Burwell Baptist Church, Church Minute Book, January 19, 1819 to July 6, 1872, (typed copy), p. 11.

³⁷ *Canada Baptist Magazine and Missionary Register* Vol. 1, No. 8 (January, 1838), p. 192. *Upper Canada Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. II, No. 4 (January, 1838), pp. 73-74, 77.

involved in the revolt were drawn from three townships, three from Norwich, two from Brantford township, and one from Oakland. Although the lack of records available for the Methodists generally should be kept in mind, as should the consequent possibility that many of them who took up arms may have escaped detection, one should observe that they as a group were by no means infested with disaffection. Nor were they completely innocent of it, of course.

The Episcopal Methodists do not appear to have been involved in the Duncombe uprising to any great extent as participants. It is possible, however, that at least one of their ministers played a part in promoting it. Two Norwich rebels testified that a Methodist preacher had spoken to the insurgents assembled at Sodom. Abraham Sackrider, for instance, related that the minister in question, named Bird, had "preached politics as well as Gospel" and had "encouraged them to go on as he thought they were doing well."³⁸ Sackrider later recalled that Bird had indeed attempted "to encourage the people to take up arms and fight for their freedom." Sackrider "never saw this Preacher before," but "has heard that he had preached at Sodom once or twice before."³⁹ What truth there was in Sackrider's assertions cannot be determined, for the examining magistrates evidently did not push the matter further. Still, the observation can be made that in 1837 there was an Episcopal Methodist preacher named Francis Bird on the Long Point Circuit.⁴⁰ In 1838 he was transferred to the Nelson Circuit.⁴¹

Throughout the province, the Episcopalians were accused of involvement in the revolt, particularly by their rivals, the Wesleyan Methodists — for example, by Egerton Ryerson⁴² and by the Wesleyan Conference President, William Harvard.⁴³ Evidently in the province as a whole, though not in the western peninsula, a good many Episcopalians found themselves in jail on charges of treason. In 1838 the conference of the Episcopal Methodists recorded that "numerous are the instances in which those who seek our hurt have endeavoured to blast our character, and cause us to be deprived of personal liberty, by false accusations and unfounded rumours."⁴⁴

However much the Wesleyans might have enjoyed and contributed to the discomfiture of their Episcopal brethren, they themselves were not immune from accusation. The Roman Catholic Archbishop, Alexander Macdonnell, was not prepared to make fine sectarian distinctions in condemning the "Methodists & Presbyterians" for forming, as he said, the majority

³⁸ P.A.C., RG5 B36, Records of the London District Magistrates, Vol. 1, p. 88, Examination of Abraham Sackrider, January 17, 1838. See Also the Examination of Uriah Emmons of the same day.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, Deposition of Abraham Sackrider, January 27, 1838.

⁴⁰ United Church Archives, "Minutes Taken At The Annual Conference Of The Methodist Episcopal Church In Canada for The Year 1837," p. 5.

⁴¹ United Church Archives, "Minutes Taken At The Annual Conference Of The Methodist Episcopal Church. In Upper Canada: Held At Trafalgar, June 1, 1838," p. 4.

⁴² J. G. HODGINS, editor, *The Story of My Life* (Toronto: Wm. Briggs, 1883), p. 178.

⁴³ United Church Archives, Methodist Missionary Correspondence, Canada West, 1830-50, (microfilm), W.M. Harvard to Rev. Robert Alder, Toronto, December 15, 1837.

⁴⁴ United Church Archives, "Minutes Taken At The Annual Conference Of The Methodist Episcopal Church. In Upper Canada: Held at Trafalgar, June 1, 1838" p. 5.

of the rebels.⁴⁵ A British Presbyterian settler from Dereham insisted that "several Americans in communion with the British Wesleyan's [sic] turned out and joined Duncombe."⁴⁶ The annual conference of the Wesleyan Methodists in 1838, while it praised the general loyalty of its members in the revolt, did find it necessary to regret publicly the treasonable activities of some of them.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, in the London District at least the Wesleyans had generally supported the government in the insurrection. That arch-critic of the various sects, Thomas Green, could find no quarrel with the allegiance of the Wesleyans to the provincial administration, saying that, insofar as he could divine, all those Methodists connected with the British Wesleyans had rallied against the insurgents.⁴⁸

There were a number of other denominations, both large and small, active in the "rebel" townships, for example, the Presbyterian elements that included the Church of Scotland, the United Synod, the United Secession Church, the Associate Reformed Church, and the United Associate Synod. There were as well the Roman Catholics, the Christians, and the Mormons. No members of any of these bodies are known to have been involved in the Oakland uprising. Despite the fact that several persons of the United Secession congregation at London were jailed on suspicion of treason, as were members of Rev. Robert Thornton's United Secession Pickering congregation,⁴⁹ and that various adherents of the Niagara Presbytery churches in and about Hamilton and the Niagara District were suspected (with apparently good reason) of being involved in treasonable activities,⁵⁰ the members of these churches within the "rebel" area do not seem to have compromised their loyalty, nor to have been accused in the immediate aftermath of the revolt of having done so.

Even the Mormons escaped censure, although one of them, Moses Chapman Nickerson of Woodhouse, was thought to have been implicated in the rebellion. He was subsequently active with those seeking to invade the province from Navy Island in the Niagara River, and was indicted and attainted as a traitor. As for the Roman Catholics, by the account of one of their priests, at least five of them were embroiled in the Duncombe uprising or in associated activities.⁵¹ Moreover, as Bishop Macdonell noted, else-

⁴⁵ P.A.O., Bishop Alexander Macdonnell Papers, Alexander Macdonnell to Lord Durham, June 14, 1838.

⁴⁶ P.A.C., RG5 A1, U.C. Sundries, Vol. 199, p. 110453, John Burn to, Dereham, July 19, 1838.

⁴⁷ United Church Archives, *The Minutes of the Wesleyan-Methodist Church In Canada, From 1824 to 1845*, p. 197, "The Annual Address of the Conference To The Members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada."

⁴⁸ WADDILOVE, *The Stewart Missions*, p. 248, eighth letter from Rev. Thos. Green to Rev. W.J.D. Waddilove, London, February 19, 1838.

⁴⁹ *Quarterly Record of the Missions in Connexion With The United Secession Church*, Vol. II (April, 1838), p. 382, extract of a letter of Rev. Robert Thornton, Whitby, April 28, 1838.

⁵⁰ United Church Archives, American Home Missionary Society Congregational, (microfilm), Rev'd G. Mor [mutilated] to Rev'd A. Peters, Beamsville, December 8, 1837. R.H. Close to Milton Badger, St. Catharines, January 13, 1838.

⁵¹ P.A.O., Catholic Archdiocesan Archives (Toronto) Collection, (microfilm), ABO5, Burke, Reverend Joseph Maria O.S.F., Rev. Joseph Maria Burke to Right Rev. Alexander McDonnell, February 29, 1838.

where there were "a few vagabonds of our people" associated with the insurgents⁵² — notably about Lloydtown in the Home District.⁵³ Still, the loyalty of the province's Catholic population was commonly accepted.

The Church of England probably formed the third largest denomination in the "rebel" townships; yet of the forty-two insurgents and of their thirteen accomplices whose religious affiliations have been discovered, only one, Ben Page of Yarmouth who marched to Oakland, was an Anglican. Thus Thomas Green could assert (with pardonable pride) that "*I know not of one member of the Church of England, nor have I heard of any... being detected in aiding or abetting this unnatural and unwarrantable outbreak*" in the western peninsula.⁵⁴

The settled Church of England congregations and the homes of their resident ministers clustered about the periphery of the rebel area at Ingersoll, Beachville, in the northern section of East Oxford, at Galt, Brantford, Waterford, Port Stanley, St. Thomas, and at various places in Woodhouse. The one apparent exception was Bayham, but here the Anglican catechist laboured in the southern parts of the township where none of Duncombe's men were evidently to be found. The "interior" insurgent townships of Dereham, Burford, Norwich, Oakland, Windham, and Malahide had no established Anglican congregations.⁵⁵ This situation was not lost on a Church of England itinerant, Reverend O'Neill, who took the opportunity to observe that "a comparatively inexpensive establishment of peaceful Missionaries of the Church, adequate to the wants of the Country would have altogether prevented" the revolt.⁵⁶ Notwithstanding the one or two spiteful assertions that members of the Anglican Church were deeply implicated in the uprising,⁵⁷ the Church of England ministers and their flocks throughout the province, as O'Neil said,⁵⁸ did demonstrate their loyalty to a unique degree during the turmoil of the attempted insurrection.

In summary, then, though accusations were levelled at the members of various religious denominations and sects of being involved in the Duncombe rising, members of only two groups — the Quakers (an "American" sect) and the Congregationalists (a "deviant British" one) — were involved in the rebellion to any appreciable degree, though perhaps some Episcopal

⁵² P.A.O., Bishop Alexander Macdonnell Papers, Alexander Macdonnell to A. Mahan, Esq., M.P.P., Kingston, February 24, 1838.

⁵³ P.A.O., Catholic Archdiocesan Archives (Toronto) Collection, (microfilm), AB19, Rev'd H. Fitzpatrick, Rev'd H. Fitzpatrick to the Hon. and Rt. Rev. A. McDonnell, Adjala, June 11, 1838.

⁵⁴ WADDILOVE, *The Stewart Missions*, p. 248, eight letter from Rev. Thos. Green to Rev. W.J.D. Waddilove, London, February 19, 1838.

⁵⁵ This was also the case with Southwold on the "fringe" of the rebel area.

⁵⁶ P.A.C., MG17 B1, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Series X7, Journals of proceedings sent in by missionaries, 1836-1845, (microfilm), Mr. O'Neill's Journal, No. 7, Toronto, April 1, 1838, p. 118.

⁵⁷ See for example, P.A.O., Bishop Alexander Macdonnell Papers, Alexander Macdonnell to Lord Durham, June 14, 1838.

⁵⁸ P.A.C., MG17 B1, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Series X7, Journals of proceedings sent in by missionaries, 1836-1845, (microfilm), Mr. O'Neill's Journal, No. 5, Toronto, April 1, 1838.

Methodists were also deeply implicated. Nonetheless, the aftermath of the revolt, which saw the loyalists triumphant, produced considerable disorganization among the religious groups of the rebel area, as with the passage of time ever more sects fell under increasing suspicion of being disloyal. Also, with emigration from the province accelerating in 1838 many religious groups found the numbers of their adherents reduced and their own influence declining.

Doubtless all of the churches and sects in the rebel region were affected adversely to some extent by the rising and its repercussions since people, particularly the young men of the area, began emigrating to the United States. For example, in the summer of 1838 a Dereham settler declared that "the sons of most of the Americans for miles are left & gone to the States,"⁵⁹ while another report had it that many inhabitants of Norfolk County had crossed over into the republic.⁶⁰ Too, residents were said to be every day leaving the "neighbourhood of Oakland & Scotland," heading for the border.⁶¹

Settlers quit the province for a variety of reasons. Some tried to flee the continuing commercial depression which had only deepened with the resort to armed rebellion, while others escaped the authorities who had inaugurated a hunt for rebels. Some, despairing of peace ever returning to the colony, emigrated, while yet others fled the growing tide of anti-Americanism, a tide originally set in motion by the conviction that Americans, both within and without the province, had been instrumental in producing the revolts of December, 1837, and a tide which ran ever higher with each patriot raid of 1837-38. Inevitably, as Canadian refugees and their American sympathizers, seeking to "liberate" the colony from the supposed thralldom of Great Britain, descended upon a beleaguered Upper Canada, all things American within the province — including religious groups — became increasingly suspect.

Perhaps extreme are the statements of a Burford settler who was a member of the Church of England and who insisted in 1839 that the various American missionaries,

were paid as spies; and at the breaking out of the Rebellion it was distinctly proved, that all these Yankee teachers, and others of the same stamp, from England and elsewhere who had appeared... were neither more or less than "Wolves in Sheep's clothing" — that they had been *purposefully* sent, and were paid by the United States, in order to spy out the Land, and ripen the British settlers for Rebellion.⁶²

⁵⁹ P.A.C., RG5 A1, U.C. Sundries, Vol. 199, p. 110454, John Burn to —, Dereham, July 19, 1838.

⁶⁰ P.A.C., RG8 1 C Series A1, Correspondence of the Military Secretary of the Commander of the Forces, 1768-1870, Vol. 608, Deposition of Col. Salmon, n.d., filed with Deposition of Dr. Crowse, April 20, 1838.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 608, Major Magrath to Colonel Halkett, Brantford, May 11, 1839.

⁶² P.K. HANSHAW, *The Late Bishop of Quebec's Upper Canadian Travelling Mission Fund — Reminiscences of the Late Hon. & Rt. Rev. C.H. James Stewart, Lord Bishop of Quebec* (Hexam: Hatchard & Son, [1840?]), p. 99, George Petrie to the Rev. W.J.D. Waddilove, Burford, December 23, 1839.

Still, other loyalists shared these opinions, and insisted that the various American sects be hounded from the province. One North Oxford resident, an Anglican, declared, for example, that,

the Methodists, and Baptists, ranters, mucklatonians and American iterats [sic] who every season pervade and disturb the country parts with their revivals, wood preaching and folly, and those periodically visiting, [sic] us from the United States to corrupt the morals of the people, and instill [sic] secret disaffection to the Government, should all be prohibited their nocturnal orgies, and put down with a strong hand with fine and imprisonment by act of Parliament.⁶³

A number of the smaller American sects were hit particularly hard, as some of their adherents, perhaps intimidated by the vehemence with which their presence was denounced by various loyalists, fled the colony. The Christians in 1839 declared that they had "suffered greatly in consequence of the late disturbances in this Province."⁶⁴ and in September of 1838 two Mormon wagon trains reportedly crossed the Detroit frontier into the United States.⁶⁵ Most spectacular, however, was the collapse of the Niagara Presbytery — an organization which had been in financial difficulty and thus in a weakened condition before the revolt. In 1837 the Presbytery had fifteen churches in the province and 807 members.⁶⁶ On July 5, 1838, in St. Thomas, a minister of the Presbytery, Rev. J. Marr, formally of Beamsville, recorded that, as far as he knew, he was the last minister of the denomination left in Upper Canada. Aside from the endeavours of the Church of England and of Scotland, there was little evangelizing done in the colony, he said, because "many are afraid to preach and indeed some would not be allowed the privilege." He added that he himself had never been placed "under restraint" but that he was regarded with suspicion and had often been called a rebel.⁶⁷ In September the parent society in the United States removed his name from its rolls,⁶⁸ thereby abandoning entirely the cause in Upper Canada.

Other sects considered by some to be American or American-derived, if only in part, were adversely affected by the tumult following the revolt. In 1838 a report circulated in the west that some "Yankee" settlers aligned with the Wesleyan Methodists had fled the province,⁶⁹ while that summer the Wesleyan Methodist ministers of the Ancaster circuit protested the fact "that laboured efforts to create suspicion" in Lieutenant-Governor Arthur's mind about the loyalty of their followers "should have been in the least degree attended with success."⁷⁰ The records of the church for 1838

⁶³ P.A.O., Wm. (Rev.) Bettridge Papers, Bettridge Manuscript, (typed copy), p. 31.

⁶⁴ United Church Archives, Christian Connection Records, Upper Canada Conference, 1839.

⁶⁵ Mrs. Phelps, Miss Margaret Smythe Collection, excerpt of a letter from J. Melville to Dr. Fred Landon, Corruna, Warwick, Ont., Box 16.

⁶⁶ United Church Archives, American Home Missionary Society Congregational, (microfilm), Rev. W.F. Curry to Rev. Milton Badge, Montreal, September 27, 1837.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, J. Marr to Rd Absalom Peters, St. Thomas, U.C., July 5, 1838.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, J. Marr to Rd Absalom Peters, St. Thomas, September 7, 1838.

⁶⁹ P.A.C., RG5 A1, U.C. Sundries, Vol. 199, p. 110453, John Burn to, Dereham, July 19, 1838.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 212, Address to Sir George Arthur from Ministers & officials of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Ancaster Circuit, n.d.

show a slight decrease in membership, though not as great as that which had occurred in 1837.⁷¹ Oddly enough, the Episcopal Methodists registered a considerable increase in their numbers in 1838 and 1839, even though the President of the Conference found it necessary in the latter year to regret "the removal of many of our old and influential members" to the United States.⁷²

For some sects, such as the Quakers and the Regular Baptists, most of whose followers were North American in Origin, complete census records are not available. Consequently, it is difficult to tell if their memberships declined after the rebellion, but it is unlikely that either the Friends or the Closed Communion Baptists escaped entirely unscathed. The Quaker settlers of Norwich and Yarmouth, for example, were frequently harassed in 1838, while the First Regular Baptist Church in Norwich, which held very few meetings in 1838, was almost completely prostrated by the turmoil in the west.⁷³ Similarly, some of the denominations whose adherents were largely British in origin but whose teachings deviated markedly from the Church of England-Church of Scotland norm were suspected of harbouring both traitors and treasonable sentiments and seem to have suffered accordingly. The Free Communion Baptist Church of Blenheim, for instance, was described in 1838 as having "been greatly injured by the rebellion."⁷⁴

The charges of the United Secession Church were hit particularly hard. In August of 1838, Rev. William Proudfoot of London, himself suspected of being a rebel sympathizer, glumly noted that,

our Churches being all known to be voluntary, have been the object of particular dislike to the Tory party, and as that vile faction has gained for the present the ascendancy, they have in this district particularly done every thing in their power to hurt our cause — some members have left the Church on political grounds — and almost all occasional hearers have left.⁷⁵

The minister tending to the Union Road appointment in Southwold, James Skinner, recorded that the United Secession flocks were in decline, since

⁷¹ United Church Archives, *The Minutes Of The Annual Conference Of The Wesleyan-Methodist Church In Canada, From 1824 to 1845* (Toronto: 1846), pp. 150, 192.

⁷² United Church Archives, "Minutes Taken At The Annual Conference Of The Methodist Episcopal Church. In Upper Canada: Held At Trafalgar, June, 1838," p. 4. "Minutes Of The Annual Conference Of The Methodist Episcopal Church, In Canada, Held At Wessel's Chapel, Sophiasburg; Commencing Wednesday 4th, Sept. 1839," pp. 3-4-5; Address of the President to the Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, September 10, 1839.

⁷³ Baptist Archives, Records of the First Regular Baptist Church In the Town of Norwich.

⁷⁴ *Canada Baptist Magazine and Missionary Register*, Vol. II, No. 5 (October, 1838), p. 14, letter from Brother Tapscott, Colborne, August 30, 1838.

⁷⁵ Knox College, Proudfoot Papers, (microfilm), Petition of members of the Presbyterian Congregation of London to the Presbytery of the Canadas, London, June 11, 1838. P.A.O., Proudfoot Papers, (microfilm), Proudfoot to. August 14, 1838, Draft letter. This passage has a single diagonal line struck through it.

quite a number of church members had gone to the United States. He concluded gloomily that "unless the present political discord shall speedily be diminished... the Congregations will yet be more reduced and may eventually be broken down."⁷⁶ His fears were not, however, realized, and by 1840 the United Secession churches were once more in full flower.⁷⁷

Given the association of some Congregationalists with the Duncombe rising, it is not surprising that the Congregational Churches too, were severely troubled by the aftermath of the rebellion. In 1838 reportedly the endeavours of the Congregationalists were injured by "the prevalence of confusion, alarm and exasperated feelings," while "the brethren at Toronto, Hamilton, Westminster, Burford, and Kingston, appear to have been most exposed to the consequences of the conflict raging around them."⁷⁸ The *Toronto Examiner*, referring to the Congregational minister who served London and Westminster, charged that "the persecuting spirit of the high church magistracy... could not allow him to exercise his sacred calling in peace."⁷⁹ The yearly report of the Congregationalists declared in 1838 that this minister had been "afflicted and discouraged," but hoped "that the mischief will be but temporary."⁸⁰ The church in Southwold was shattered by the events of 1837 and 1838, as the pastor and his flock were sorely divided over the loyalty issue.⁸¹ In 1838 the minister at Brantford left his charge when "the unhappy rebellion occasioned uneasiness and discord among his people."⁸² Rev. James Nall continued to labour in Oakland and Burford, although "this cause, and another in the same neighbourhood, have suffered most severely from our public calamities."⁸³ Further, "in consequence of the jealousies and distractions occasioned by the insurrection, many of his [Nall's] supporters have withdrawn into the United States."⁸⁴

Still, if loyalists could harass "rebels," the reverse was also true. On October 2, 1838 the Anglican rector of Woodhouse, Rev. Francis Evans, who had in December, 1837 helped alert the authorities to the existence of the insurgents in Oakland, and who had testified as well for the prosecution at the "state" trials in Hamilton in March, 1838, was scheduled to speak in the Congregationalist Church at Burford. Not only did Nall refuse to let

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Statement for Year 1838 [?] of the Union Road Congregation by James Skinner of Southwold.

⁷⁷ Knox College, Proudfoot Papers, (microfilm), "Tabular View of the Missionary Presbytery of the Canadas for 1840."

⁷⁸ *Second Annual Report Of The Colonial Missionary Society, In Connexion With The Congregational Union of England And Wales; With A List of Subscribers*, (1838), p. 22.

⁷⁹ P.A.O., *Mackenzie-Lindsey Clippings*, Item 6188, *Examiner* (Toronto), December 26, 1838.

⁸⁰ *Second Annual Report Of The Colonial Missionary Society, In Connexion With The Congregational Union Of England And Wales; With A List of Subscribers*, (1838), p. 14.

⁸¹ United Church Archives, Church Histories, W.H. ALLWORTH, "Congregational Church At Southwold, Ontario," *Canadian Independent*, (October, 1867), pp. 161-63.

⁸² *Second Annual Report Of The Colonial Missionary Society, In Connexion With The Congregational Union Of England And Wales; With A List of Subscribers*, (1838), p. 18.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

⁸⁴ *Fourth Annual Report of The Colonial Missionary Society, In Connexion With The Congregational Union Of England And Wales; With A List of Subscribers*, (1840), p. 11.

him use the building,⁸⁵ but also a mob occupied the church to ensure that Evans did not gain admittance to it.⁸⁶ Yet, it may be true that the Church of England did benefit, in some measure at least, by the revolt and its aftermath by receiving new converts who were seeking, primarily, to establish their loyalty to the Crown by joining the "Established" church. Significantly, in August of 1838 one of the rebels confined in the Kingston penitentiary, John Tidey of Norwich, attempted to gain his release from prison by writing Archdeacon Strachan to say that he had been raised an Anglican and had strayed from the Church but was now disposed to return to her folds.⁸⁷ Though Tidey, who was not released until October of 1838, did remain a Methodist, others perhaps may have signified their loyalty by becoming Churchmen. (In 1838 the Anglicans opened a new station in Richmond, a rebel center in Bayham township.⁸⁸)

In conclusion, the setbacks suffered by the various churches from the rebellion and its repercussions differed considerably in degree. Doubtless the endeavours of all were hindered to some extent by the turmoil and tumult produced, but those settlers fleeing the rebel area were primarily American in ethnicity, and their exodus seems not to have eroded, in any appreciable measure, the bases of support of the Churches of England and Scotland. "American" groups such as the Regular Baptists who had a firm base of support in the west probably survived the rebellion period without experiencing too much harm. Those sects, however, most closely identified with the rebels — primarily the Congregationalists and the Quakers — did suffer, for a time at least, as did certain small "deviant British" sects — notably the United Secession Presbyterians. Finally, other "deviant" bodies were hit particularly hard — especially the Mormons and the Niagara Presbyterians, sects which, though demonstrably American in personnel and inspiration, had not originally been linked in any fashion with the Duncombe rising. On balance, then, one could say that the smaller (and, in semi-official terms, "aberrant") sects, particularly the "American" ones were those most adversely affected by the western insurrection, a revolt raised by Charles Duncombe and his largely American-born or — descended followers.

⁸⁵ *Church* (Coburg), November 3, 1839, quoting a letter of Francis Evans, Rectory, Woodhouse, October 29, 1838 to the *Examiner*.




⁸⁶ P.A.C., RG9 I B1, Adjutant General's Office, Correspondence, Vol. 45, Geo. W. Whitehead to Col. James Winniett, Brantford, October 19, 1838, enclosed in James Winniett to Col. Bullock, Brantford, October 22, 1838.

⁸⁷ P.A.C., RG5 A1, U.C. Sundries, Vol. 203, John A. Tidey to John Strachan Kingston, August 8, 1838.

⁸⁸ P.A.C., MG17 B1, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Series C, section 496 (microfilm), John W. Kerr to the Right RevD, The Lord Bishop, of Montreal, Port Burwell, July 18, 1838.

Map 1

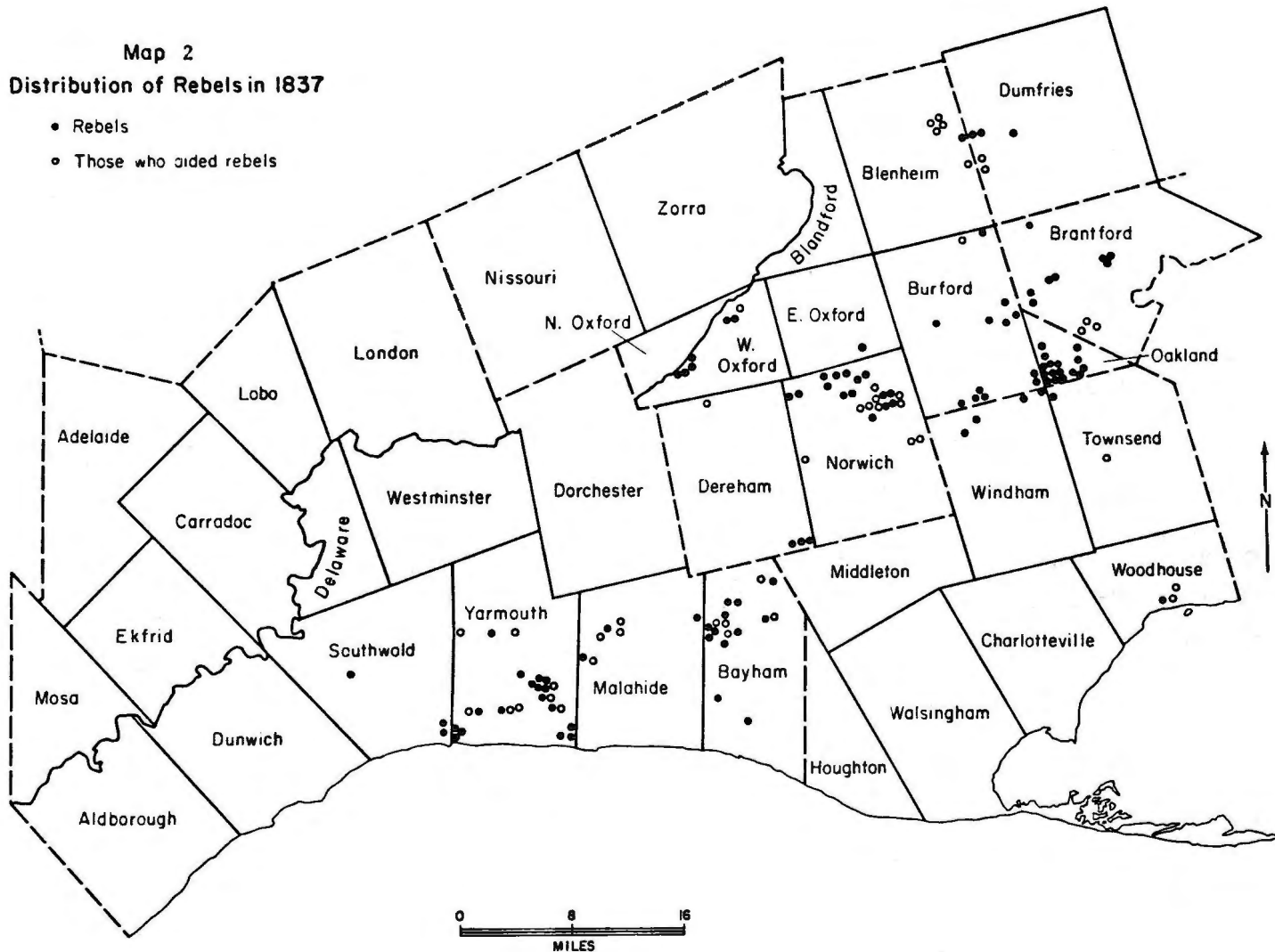
Reference Map

-  District boundaries
-  County boundaries
-  Township boundaries

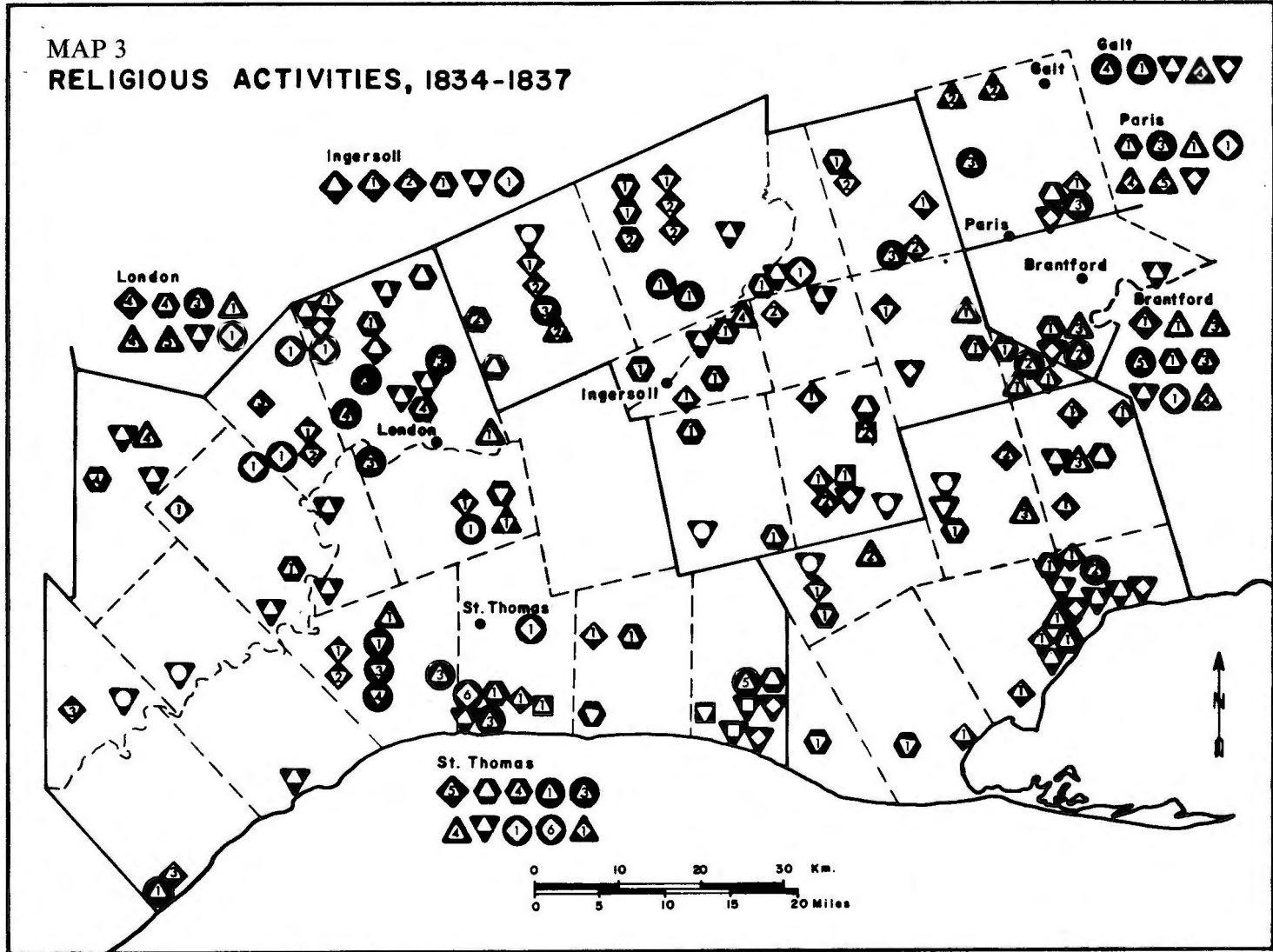


Map 2
Distribution of Rebels in 1837

- Rebels
- Those who aided rebels



MAP 3
RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES, 1834-1837



Map 3
LEGEND

Explanation of symbols denoting type of activity

- △ Established congregation with regular preaching
- ▽ Established congregation with regular preaching, but its precise location in the township is unknown
- Established congregation served by a trained catechist
- ◇ Place where an itinerant preached
- Itinerant preached in the township, but the precise location is unknown

Explanation of symbols and numbers denoting religious affiliation

Note: symbols without numbers indicates sect unknown

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| ◆ | Baptist | ⊙ | Presbyterian |
| ⬆ | Regular or Closed Communion | ⊙ | Church of Scotland |
| ⬆ | Open Communion | ⊙ | United Synod |
| ⬆ | Scotch | ⊙ | United Secession Church |
| ⬆ | Freewill | ⊙ | United Associate Synod |
| ⬆ | Regular, African | ⊙ | Niagara Presbytery |
| | | ⊙ | Associate Reformed Church |
| ▲ | Quaker | ▲ | Congregational |
| ▲ | Hicksite | ▲ | Christian |
| ▲ | Conservative | ▲ | Mormon |
| ⬆ | Methodist | ▲ | Roman Catholic |
| ⬆ | Wesleyan | ▲ | Universalist |
| ⬆ | Episcopal | ▽ | Church of England |
| ⬆ | Coloured | | |
| ⬆ | Ryanite or Canadian Wesleyan | | |