

Motley Crowds and Splendid Assemblies: Press Depictions of Election Culture in Mid-Victorian Toronto

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This article explores how local newspapers depicted the election culture of parliamentary campaigns in mid-Victorian Toronto. Here “election culture” refers to the practices, performances, and often ritualized behaviour of people in the public sphere who attended meetings and gathered in streets during and immediately after election campaigns. The city’s highly partisan newspapers glowingly represented favoured candidates’ campaigns while denigrating those of their opponents, and the press often presented elections as fiercely contested clashes in streets and meeting halls. Newspapers, elsewhere presented as constitutive of deliberative democracy, are here seen to have reinforced models of unrestrained, hot-headed masculine behaviour in the public sphere.

Comment les journaux locaux dépeignaient-ils les mœurs électorales durant les campagnes parlementaires à Toronto au milieu de l’époque victorienne ? Tel est l’objet du présent article. Par « mœurs électorales », on entend les pratiques, les conduites et le comportement souvent ritualisé du public qui assistait aux réunions et se rassemblait dans les rues pendant les campagnes électorales et immédiatement après. Hautement partisans, les journaux de la ville encensaient la campagne de leurs candidats favoris tout en dénigrant celle de leurs adversaires, et la presse décrivait souvent les élections comme des affrontements brutaux dans les rues et les salles de réunion. Généralement présentés ailleurs comme des éléments constitutifs de la démocratie délibérative, les journaux paraissent ici avoir nourri des modèles de comportement masculin impétueux et débridé dans la sphère publique.

THIS ARTICLE EXPLORES how local newspapers depicted the election culture of parliamentary campaigns in mid-Victorian Toronto. By “election culture” I mean the practices, performances, and often ritualized behaviour of people in the public sphere who attended meetings and gathered in streets during and immediately after election campaigns. This political culture was structured by election law and its reform, and expressed through a limited but rich repertoire of crowd behaviours.

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By documenting how newspapers expressed partisanship we deepen knowledge of its meaning and role in elections. The city's highly partisan newspapers glowingly represented favoured candidates' campaigns while denigrating those of their opponents, and the press often presented elections as fiercely contested and characterized by masculine aggression in streets and meeting halls. If the newspapers are to be believed, election campaigns were hot-tempered encounters between rival factions, marked by heckling, bribery, intimidation at the polls, and occasional violence.

In *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada*, Jeffrey McNairn presents newspapers as crucial to the emergence of a public sphere, one that pursued deliberative democracy.¹ Certainly, in mid-Victorian Upper Canada the pursuit of rational, informed debate was a powerful ideal in politics, and democracy was understood to properly derive from public opinion and the free choices of independent electors. Yet politics had other dimensions, too. Toronto's lively, partisan journalism represented politics in the streets as being boisterous and combative, made so by aggressive masculine behaviour that could thwart the independent choices of electors. Indeed, newspaper evidence on electioneering reinforces my finding about the frequent physical confrontations over a hot-button issue of the period, the Rebellion Losses controversy of 1849.² On many occasions newspapers noted the participation in electioneering of non-electors, men and boys who lacked the property qualifications for voting or were too young to vote, which points to the wide, if gender-exclusive dimensions of electioneering. Newspapers that reported on election campaigns in mid-Victorian Toronto repeatedly deplored violence and urged decorous, restrained male behaviour. By giving so much attention to the bad behaviour of opponents' campaigns, however, newspapers ironically publicized models of masculinity that were anything but restrained.

This article examines election campaigns during the period from 1841, when the first provincial contest was held in the new United Province of Canada, to the dominion election of 1874, the last of the elections held under the voice-vote method and the year in which Canada introduced the secret ballot for Ontario and dominion elections. This timeframe provides a substantial run of campaigns, twelve in total, and enough to see practices frequently repeated and occasionally altered. Although it is noted where municipal practices impinged upon the parliamentary campaigns, there is not space here to deal with the thirty-three municipal campaigns held during this period. Upper Canadian provincial elections prior to 1841, which have been studied by others, provide some points of

1 Jeffrey L. McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791-1850* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2000). To be sure, McNairn briefly acknowledges this combative aspect in his book, and he expands on the dimensions of political expression in his more recent "'The Common Sympathies of Our Nature': Moral Sentiments, Emotional Economies, and Imprisonment for Debt," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, vol. 49, no. 98 (May 2016), pp. 50-71. On democracy and notions of independence, see Allan Greer, "The Historical Roots of Canadian Democracy," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 34, no.1 (Spring 1999), pp. 7-26.

2 Ian Radforth, "Political Demonstrations and Spectacles during the Rebellion Losses Controversy in Upper Canada," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 92, no. 1 (Mar. 2011), pp. 1-41.

comparison. It is notable, for instance, that the scrappiness that characterized the contests of our period is evident in the 1834 and 1836 campaigns too.³

When the Act of Union (1840) created the new United Province of Canada, Toronto was a single riding with two seats. In the 1841 election, a pair of candidates stood as high Tories resistant to all reforms and another pair stood with the highly interventionist governor, Lord Sydenham, who took a moderate reform position.⁴ Subsequently, newspapers identified pairs of candidates either as Conservatives or Reformers, although the odd individual asserted his independence. Party formation remained very much underway in the 1840s and 1850s, but journalists nevertheless generally represented candidates as being Reformers or Conservatives.⁵ For the first time in the 1861 election, Toronto electors voted for one candidate in either the Eastern or Western Division, and in 1872 and 1874 also in a third division, Toronto Centre. The increasing division of the city reflects its growth, and yet throughout the period, it remained a sufficiently compact place for crowds to conveniently gather in its core and to create a volatile mass.⁶

Electoral culture as described by newspapers in mid-Victorian Toronto can usefully be examined from the perspective of crowd behaviour. Charles Tilly, who coined the term “contentious performances,” argues that crowds have long expressed themselves with a limited and only slowly evolving repertoire of behaviour.⁷ Throughout the mid-century period, Toronto election crowds performed in the streets and meeting halls in ritualized ways that gave expression to masculinities that ranged from gentlemanly to aggressive. Moreover, because elections were often tight contests, some of the performances detailed in the press were not only interesting rituals; they might well have determined electoral results.

As Canada West/Ontario’s largest and fastest growing city, a commercial hub, an emerging industrial centre, and sometimes a provincial capital, Toronto had a large and lively press. The most useful newspaper for this study is the *Globe*, edited and published in Toronto from 1844 by the prominent Reform politician George Brown.⁸ It had the financial resources to put reporters in the streets during election campaigns, as did its main rival, the *Leader*, published in Toronto from 1852 by James Beaty, soon a staunch supporter of the Conservatives and later an

3 On the 1834 and 1836 elections, see Carol Wilton, *Popular Politics and Political Culture in Upper Canada, 1800-1850* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press 2000), pp. 156-63, 179-83; Sean T. Cadigan, “Paternalism and Politics: Sir Francis Bond Head, the Orange Order, and the Election of 1836,” *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 72, no. 3 (Sept. 1991), pp. 319-47; Graeme Hazlewood Patterson, “Studies in Elections and Public Opinion in Upper Canada” (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1969).

4 Irving Martin Abella, “The ‘Sydenham Election’ of 1841,” *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 47, no. 4 (Dec. 1966), pp. 326-43.

5 Paul G. Cornell, *The Alignment of Political Groups in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962); Gordon T. Stewart, *The Origins of Canadian Politics: A Comparative Approach* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986).

6 The City of Toronto’s population was reported as 14,249 in 1841; 30,775 in 1851; 44,821 in 1861; 56,092 in 1871; and 86,415 in 1881. George A. Nader, *Cities of Canada*, vol. 2 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), pp. 198, 203.

7 Charles Tilly, *Contentious Performances* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). See also, Christian Borch, *Politics of Crowds: An Alternative Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

8 J.M.S. Careless, *Brown of the Globe*, 2 vols. (Toronto: Macmillan, 1959, 1963).

elected Conservative politician.⁹ Other newspapers provided less coverage of the campaigns in the streets and meeting halls, no doubt because of their more limited resources.¹⁰ All editors presented a sharply partisan perspective on elections—a black-and-white view of candidates and issues—intended to pique readers’ interest, create partisan communities, and engage them in the race to victory. As was typical of Victorian journalists’ coverage of crowds, few if any individuals were ever identified beyond the candidates and those speaking at meetings. No on-the-street interviews were undertaken, and even characterizations of the make-up of crowds were few. Regrettably, I have found no mention of women or girls in the city’s election crowds. To be sure, political life was firmly gendered male in mid-Victorian Toronto, but women’s absence from reports must result from male journalists’ erasures rather than women’s actual absence from the scene. After all, many women could be found daily in the streets going about their business, and it is hard to imagine that when electioneering brought excitement to the streets they disappeared entirely from the scene.¹¹

For many years historians have been writing about Canadian elections, including ones in Toronto, and yet remarkably little has been said about what happened during campaigns on the streets and in meeting halls. Political biographies explain the triumphs and disappointments of their subjects, introducing examples of electoral culture mainly as enlivening asides.¹² A book-length study of elections in Nova Scotia to 1848 concentrates on relating the biographies of the 437 candidates and presenting the results of their campaigns.¹³ On a different tack, elections have been studied for voting patterns as revealed in poll books and other data that show the identities and preferences of electors, but such a focus takes the authors even further away from the rough-and-tumble of the campaigns.¹⁴

9 *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, s.v. “Beaty, James,” by Douglas McCalla, accessed August 11, 2016, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/beaty_james_12E.html.

10 Other Toronto newspapers read for the duration of parliamentary election campaigns are the *Banner* (1843-1848, Reform), *British Colonist* (1838-1854, Conservative), *Canadian Freeman* (1858-1873, Irish Catholic, Reform to 1860, Conservative subsequently), *Examiner* (1838-1855, Reform), *Mirror* (1837-1865, Irish Catholic, Reform) and *Patriot* (1834-1854, Conservative). Additional newspapers (the *Commercial Herald*, *Independent*, and *North American*) were consulted, but scattered surviving issues had no coverage of electioneering. Nor did the *Christian Guardian* cover the details of election campaigns. On Toronto newspapers, see Juliana M. Stabile, “Toronto Newspapers, 1798-1845: A Case Study in Print Culture” (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2002); and Edith Firth, *Early Toronto Newspapers, 1793-1867* (Toronto: Baxter Publishing & Toronto Public Library, 1961).

11 On women’s keen involvement in elections, see Bettina Bradbury, “Women at the Hustings: Gender, Citizenship, and the Montreal By-Elections of 1832,” in Mona Gleason and Adele Perry, eds., *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women’s History*, 5th ed. (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 73-94; and Mary P. Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

12 Donald Creighton, *John A. Macdonald: The Young Politician* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1952); Careless, *Brown of the Globe*. More recent works have more to say about election culture; see Michael S. Cross, *A Biography of Robert Baldwin: The Morning-Star of Memory* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 128-29, 164-65, 233-34; Ged Martin, *Favourite Son? John A. Macdonald and the Voters of Kingston, 1841-1891* (Kingston, ON: Kingston Historical Society, 2010).

13 Brian Cuthbertson, *Johnny Bluenose at the Polls: Epic Nova Scotia Election Battles* (Halifax: Formac 1994).

14 David De Brou, “Mass Political Behaviour in Upper-Town Quebec, 1792-1836” (PhD dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1989); Paul Romney, “On the Eve of the Rebellion: Nationality, Religion and Class in the Toronto Election of 1836,” in David Keane and Colin Read eds., *Old Ontario: Essay in Honour of*

Three local studies of British North American elections do have more to say about electioneering. Scott See's "Polling Crowds and Patronage," which draws on an international literature on crowds, focuses on the highly contentious 1842-43 provincial election campaign in a rural New Brunswick riding where a distinctive geography and the dominance of two rival employers contributed to extraordinary levels of intimidation and violence.¹⁵ In his study of crowd events in Montreal during the 1840s, Dan Horner undertakes a case study of the 1844 Montreal by-election that turned on the contentious issue of responsible government, sparked a riot, and prompted a debate in the press about election behaviour, mob rule, and democracy.¹⁶ George Emery's study of thirty-eight elections in Oxford County, Canada West, during the mid-nineteenth century details the rules, candidates, issues, conduct of the campaigns and results to determine whether they contributed to the growth of democracy. Because the core of the book is organized chronologically, taking each election in turn, briefly discussed examples of election culture are scattered throughout the study. Moreover, in comparison with Toronto, this rural riding had far fewer examples of election violence, perhaps because the massing of people was less extensive and frequent in Oxford. Street pageants were also infrequent and modest there. Emery notes that the Orange Order played almost no role in Oxford's elections, which is in sharp contrast to what newspapers had to say about Toronto elections.¹⁷

The only work that focuses on central Canadian newspapers and early elections is Duncan Koerber's study of the newspaper coverage of Upper Canadian elections prior to our period. He argues that newspapers, rather than focusing on issues or "substance," instead emphasised "style," that is, the candidates' identities and their relative success as public speakers.¹⁸ He touches briefly on features that later characterized Toronto elections: newspapers' pleas for supporters of favoured candidates to come out and vote, partisan heckling at public meetings, and street pageantry.

Two studies of England and one of the United States focus on election culture and provide useful points of comparison with Toronto. Frank O'Gorman's work on England's election campaigns from 1780 to 1860 highlights their elaborate rituals, especially prior to 1832, which he argues were an amalgam of official election processes and customary electioneering behaviour. Included in the latter were candidates' impressive entries into their constituencies, extravagant nomination-day public breakfasts, and charring ceremonies, where supporters

J.M.S. Careless (Toronto: Dundurn, 1990), pp. 192-206.

15 Scott W. See, "Polling Crowds and Patronage: New Brunswick's 'Fighting Election' of 1842-3," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 72, no. 2 (June 1991), pp. 127-56.

16 Dan Horner, "Taking to the Streets: Crowds, Politics and Identity in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Montreal" (PhD dissertation, York University, 2010), pp. 209-29. The election riot of 1844 was not an unusual occurrence in Lower-Canadian elections, a topic thoughtfully explored by Renaud Séguin, "Pour une nouvelle synthèse sur les processus électoraux du XIX^e siècle Québécois," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2005), pp. 57-100.

17 George Emery, *Elections in Oxford County, 1837-1875: A Case Study of Democracy in Canada West and Early Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

18 Duncan Koerber, "Style over Substance: Newspaper Coverage of Early Election Campaigns in Canada, 1820-1841," *Canadian Journal of Communication*, vol. 36, no. 3 (2011), pp. 435-53.

carried victorious candidates in festooned chairs through the streets. The transfer of election laws and the migration of people from Britain to Canada meant that mid-Victorian parliamentary elections in Toronto had many similar processes and practices—nomination meetings, canvassing, and valedictory celebrations—but electioneering in Toronto lacked the more elaborate rituals of Hanoverian England. James Vernon's examination of mid-nineteenth-century English elections bolsters his broader point that disenfranchised men and women were nevertheless incorporated into the political nation, and as we will see, evidence from Toronto suggests this might have been true here, too. Similarly, Michael E. McGerr's study of nineteenth-century elections in the American North argues that the masses were spurred to action by partisan newspapers and spectacular campaign practices that included daily parades with floats and evening torchlight processions. Toronto's newspapers were also intensely partisan, but the city's election-time spectacles pale next to the elaborate, choreographed parading in the United States.¹⁹

Toronto's election campaigns resembled those in many places, but newspaper coverage of them shows that the partisan conflicts were extraordinarily intense. The *Globe* and the *Leader*, edited by politicians of deep and opposed political convictions, framed all electioneering behaviour in partisan ways and frequently sparred with one another. Moreover, the combative election culture gained bite from the exceptional strength of Orangeism in the city. Toronto, "the Belfast of Canada," was home to large numbers of Orangemen, and its municipal elections were hard fought by Orangemen determined to maintain their grip on the corporation, which gave them access to contracts, licenses, and jobs.²⁰ Some Orangemen honed their skills as hecklers and intimidators in annual municipal elections, and they lent their services to the parliamentary campaigns, generally of Tory candidates.

The article is organized to follow the process of election campaigns from the selection of candidates, through the rough and tumble of the campaigns, to polling and victory celebrations. This structure exposes the phases of campaigns and the cultural practices associated with each one.

The Campaign Gets Underway

Toronto's election campaigns began, not with grand, formal entries to the constituencies as in Hanoverian England, but with public discussions of possible

19 Frank O'Gorman, "Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies: The Social Meaning of Elections in England, 1780-1860," *Past and Present*, Issue 135, (May 1992), pp. 79-115; see also his *Voters, Patrons, and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England, 1734-1832* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, c. 1851-1867* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), especially pp. 80-102; Michael E. McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865-1928* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). See also, Mary P. Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 94-180.

20 William J. Smyth, *Toronto, the Belfast of Canada: The Orange Order and the Shaping of Municipal Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015); Gregory S. Kealey, "Orangemen and the Corporation: The Politics of Class during the Union of the Canadas," and Barry Dyster, "Captain Bob and the Noble Ward," in Victor L. Russell, ed., *Forging a Consensus: Historical Essays on Toronto*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), pp. 87-115.

candidates. Even before the governor issued a writ for the election, individuals jockeyed for candidacy in Toronto and elsewhere in the province.²¹ Sometimes a man came forward to offer himself, but doing so opened him to criticism that he was thrusting himself on the electorate for personal gain. Things went more smoothly when a large group of men or a political party met to select a candidate.²² Even so, there could be difficulties. In 1844, the *British Colonist*, fearing a split of the Tory vote, gave extensive coverage to a confusing series of public meetings that resulted in three rather than two Conservative candidates running.²³ Instead of holding meetings to select candidates, “friends,” i.e. supporters of a potential candidate, could get up a requisition—a petition with many signatures—urging the man to declare his candidacy. Press involvement came at every turn: in reporting on meetings, printing requisitions with their ever-growing list of signatories, and in commenting on the wisdom of selections.

In the 1857 campaign, the requisition got up by George Brown’s friends and printed in the *Globe* was extraordinarily large and controversial. By mid-December, the petitioners numbered 1,716, thus making a powerful plea for Brown to run in the city and not just in the rural seat of North Oxford.²⁴ The requisition included many names of Orangemen, including masters of lodges. In his declaration, Brown acknowledged that it was a “pleasure to see the names of many who differed from me in the past,” and to curry their favour he made a point of referring to “the entire subserviency of the Government to the Roman Hierarchy.”²⁵ The *Leader*, which supported the Conservatives, charged that Brown’s requisition included the names of many non-electors, that the *Globe* “monstrously” exaggerated the number of Orangemen’s names on the list, and that in any event these signatories were not sincere or authentic Orangemen. The *Globe*, of course, answered back. The *Leader*’s charge that non-electors signed the requisition, if it can be believed, raises the possibility that such people played a role in election campaigns even though they were barred from voting.²⁶

By the 1870s, candidate selection meetings were often so large that the odds of unruliness and confrontations increased. This was the case, for instance, at the Reformers’ Toronto East meeting in St. Lawrence Hall that chose John O’Donohoe as candidate in 1874. The *Leader*’s coverage, printed with the headline “Rowdyism Rampant,” claimed that when “a gentleman” tried to speak in favour of the Conservative candidate he was shoved off the platform and injured so badly he had to be carried home. The *Globe*’s version said that when the chairman asked the man to leave the platform he refused to do so until two or three from the audience persuaded him to make “a hasty flight.”²⁷ Given that rival newspapers covered the incident, we can accept that some kind of confrontation arose but we cannot be sure exactly what transpired.

21 For examples, see Emery, *Elections in Oxford*, pp. 28, 91; Martin, *Favourite Son*, p. 28.

22 *North American*, Dec. 4, 1851.

23 *British Colonist*, Oct. 11 & 18, 1844.

24 *Globe*, Dec. 10, 1857; Careless, *Brown of the Globe*, vol. 1, pp. 243-44.

25 *Globe*, Dec. 9, 1857.

26 *Leader*, Dec. 5, 1857; *Globe*, Dec. 7, 1857.

27 *Leader*, Jan. 14, 1874; *Globe*, Jan. 23, 1874.

Once a man became a candidate he issued an address that local newspapers ran repeatedly throughout the campaign, whether the editor endorsed the candidate or not. Addresses conveyed a gentlemanly masculinity, with modesty being a key feature. In his 1847 address, Donald Bethune expressed himself with elaborate modesty by saying he hoped someone more qualified might be found, or that people would overlook his deficiencies, but then he thanked the people for having faith in him.²⁸ In 1841, John Dunn similarly appeared modest, but then touted his advantages as a merchant and a Canadian-born, long-time resident of Toronto. While positioning himself as a staunch conservative, he sought to widen his appeal by saying he was “a strong advocate for the rights and liberties of the subject.”²⁹

Once in the running, candidates began their door-to-door canvass. In England, the candidate undertaking the canvass of electors was often accompanied by a large musical band and a retinue of notables compelled to submit to public mockery. In Toronto, candidates and their friends canvassed in a business-like way, knocking on doors and talking face to face with electors. Reports inevitably said that the canvass for a favoured candidate was going well. On George Brown’s canvass in 1857 the *Globe* reported, “Mr. Brown’s friends are pursuing their work vigorously, and at every step in their canvass meet with fresh encouragement.” As for the rival candidate, he had been reduced to paying canvassers. “Mr. Robinson,” the *Globe* reported, “has a good many hired canvassers, but they have up-hill work everywhere.”³⁰ In 1861, in a virtually unique reference to women in connection with mid-century Toronto elections, the *Leader* reported that two women were taking an active role in the canvassing. Conforming to gender conventions of the time, the *Leader* admiringly, if patronizingly, commented that the wives of two of the Conservative candidates with their “winning ways made many electors warm up in the cause and work with redoubled zeal.”³¹ Reports on canvassing were consistently slanted for partisan purposes.

Nominations

In Hanoverian England, nomination day was a grand occasion, with colourful processions and an extravagant public breakfast. In Toronto, nomination day activity centred on the meeting, a civic spectacle that drew crowds as large as six thousand people; celebrations and treating appeared on its fringes. Once the governor issued the writ and a returning officer was appointed for all ridings, returning officers were obliged to announce the exact time and place of the nomination meeting, which had to be held about midday in a prominent location. With the crown footing the bill, hustings, which by law had to be “in the open air,” were raised in advance so the crowd could better see and hear the business of the meeting, and so the returning officer could count hands when the time came to do so.³² Moreover, as James Vernon has argued about similar requirements in

28 *Banner*, Dec. 24, 1847. Such posturing was typical of addresses of the era. Vernon, *Politics and the People*, pp. 80-81.

29 *Patriot*, Mar. 9, 1841.

30 *Globe*, Dec. 17, 1857.

31 *Leader*, July 5, 1861.

32 *Consolidated Elections Act*, SC 1849 (12 Vict), c. 27.

England, the hustings crammed with officials and candidates helped the public to associate the elevated leaders with political authority.³³

As master of ceremonies of the nomination meeting, the returning officer ceremoniously read the election writ and then invited nominations. By convention, if the sitting member was up for nomination, his nominator went first. Nominators praised their candidates, and if present the nominee spoke to his own strengths. When there was more than one nomination (and in Toronto there always was), then the returning officer asked for a show-of-hands. The officer then announced which candidate had won the election, and if no poll was demanded by a losing candidate, then the victor took his seat in the legislature. While such elections occasionally took place in the province, in Toronto during the Union period defeated candidates always called for a poll, knowing that polling might overturn the show of hands. Unlike at the polls, at nomination meetings no attempt was made to determine whether the men who voted had the franchise. Newspapers contended when it came to rival candidates that many participants voted who were under twenty-one, lacked the property qualification, or were brought from outside the riding to swell the vote. The show of hands provided an opportunity for nonvoters to participate in the campaign and to feel part of the political process.³⁴ Notwithstanding the unreliability of the nomination vote, candidates wanted to win it because doing so signalled strength. Legislation in 1866 eliminated the show of hands as a method of election, and polling was required thereafter.³⁵ A justification for eliminating the show of hands was that it was “the cause of very great trouble,” and gathered “together a large number of people, in reality only for eating, drinking and parading.”³⁶ Public nominations continued without the show of hands, as did some of the unconstrained behaviour.

On nomination day, once it was determined a poll would be required, the returning officer announced the location of polls and when polling would take place, by law within six to ten days. Further business required nominees to prove to the returning office that they met the property qualification for Assemblymen.³⁷ Nomination day was not only about business, however. Free houses (where the candidates paid the bar bill) did a booming trade and public drunkenness was prevalent. In this context, the gentlemanly tone of the public addresses gave way to far less restrained expressions of masculinity.

The 1840 Act of Union assigned the governor authority to select returning officers, which reformers believed disadvantaged them, and so the Reform government introduced legislation in 1849 that gave sheriffs priority as returning officers.³⁸ In Toronto, William Botsford Jarvis, sheriff of the Home District (1827-

33 Vernon, *Politics and the People*, p. 89.

34 Ged Martin makes a similar point in *Favourite Son*, p. 31. Emery cites newspaper reports of nonvoters, including boys, participating in the show of hands; see, *Elections in Oxford*, pp 95-96, 116.

35 *Amendment to Elections Act*, SC 1866 (29 Vict), c. 13.

36 The Hon. A. A. Dorion when introducing the 1874 electoral reforms. Canada, *House of Commons Debates* (April 21, 1874), p. 160.

37 Until 1874, the high qualification of £500, the unpaid position of a Member of Provincial Parliament, and the costs of campaigning and living in the capital (when not Toronto) ensured only the well-to-do stood for office. Emery, *Elections in Oxford*, pp. 14-15.

38 *Consolidated Elections Act*, c. 27; Emery, *Elections in Oxford County*, p. 16.

1856), often served in one of Toronto's ridings, as did Robert Stanton, collector of customs for the port of Toronto. Sometimes newspapers commended the returning officer for conducting the nominations with authority, but complaints arose on occasion, too. The *Globe* alleged in 1861 that although a strong majority of those at the noon-hour nomination meeting in Toronto East raised their hands in support of George Brown, the returning officer decided for his opponent, John Crawford, which was scarcely surprising given that the returning officer had been the chairman of Crawford's central election committee.³⁹ The *Leader*, by contrast, reported that two-thirds of the meeting had favoured Crawford, notwithstanding the fact that Brown's friends had brought in several wagon loads of supporters from the countryside. Moreover, Crawford's dominance would have been far greater had the Reformers not spun out their speeches, knowing that many working-class Tories would have to return to work following their midday break.⁴⁰ It is impossible to sort out what actually occurred given the conflicting reports, but both the partisanship of the newspapers and the combativeness of the occasion are perfectly clear.

At these meetings, the nominator spoke of the candidate's admirable qualities—his business acumen, patrician status, unselfish motives, or Protestant militancy—as did the candidate in his own speech. Nomination meetings ran to a few hours and often grew tedious. The *Banner* judged candidate Donald Bethune's speech in December 1847 as "able and well delivered" but "too long for this cold weather." At the December 1851 nomination meeting, the crowd became restless listening to long speeches in wintery weather. The reporter for the *Examiner* wrote that he was unable to take notes on one speech because his hand was so cold. Eventually the audience refused to listen any longer and created a ruckus so that the meeting was adjourned.⁴¹

Nomination meetings were often enlivened by hecklers who taunted the speakers. According to the *Globe*, when a speaker at an 1863 nomination meeting dismissed a candidate as "a mere cat's paw," "A Voice" called out, "He will give your man a good scratching anyhow!" At the Toronto East nomination meeting in 1874, the *Leader* reported that "the seething mass of non-electors who lent their aid for the occasion kept bellowing like a set of escaped lunatics." The *Globe* said that at one point a Conservative became so frustrated at hecklers that he lost his temper and, singling out a man, called him "a contemptible hound and a brute." While a reader might sympathize with the candidate's plight, the *Globe's* point was that in terms of restrained masculinity, the candidate had fallen short.⁴²

Some nomination meetings descended into turmoil. According to the *Globe*, when George Brown was about to be nominated in 1863, "rowdies hired for the occasion commenced to howl and scream their loudest," and the nominator could not be heard. Minutes later Richard Reynolds, when denouncing Tory candidate

39 *Globe*, June 29, 1861.

40 *Leader*, July 2, 1861.

41 *Banner*, Dec. 24, 1847; *Examiner*, Dec. 2, 1851.

42 *Globe*, June 15, 1863; *Leader*, Jan. 23, 1874; *Globe*, Jan. 22, 1874. Hecklers were said to have disrupted George Brown's 1857 nomination in North Oxford. Emery, *Elections in Oxford*, p. 94.

John Crawford and calling him the pawn of the Roman Catholic bishop, raised a glass of water to his lips. The *Globe* reported that the Irish Catholic rowdies in front of the platform asked for him to give them a drink. Reynolds dipped his finger in his glass and threw some drops of water toward them. Thinking he was mimicking “the act of the priest when sprinkling holy water,” the Catholic “rascals” rushed the platform, and someone hurled an old boot on the end of a stick at the stage, hitting a journalist. Only with “strenuous exertions” was the returning officer able to restore some order.⁴³ Historian Frank O’Gorman refers both to the decorum characterizing nomination meetings in England and to the magnanimity nominees showed one another while addressing these meetings.⁴⁴ In Toronto’s nomination meetings, by contrast, the gloves came off. These were indeed contentious performances where aggressive masculinity often prevailed.

Campaigning in Earnest

Once nominations were complete, the pace of the campaign quickened. Although the law did not require it, candidates held frequent public meetings. “It was important for candidates to be seen,” comments James Vernon on electioneering in England.⁴⁵ In Toronto, as in other places, candidates appeared at meetings in the wards of their riding, generally at taverns where treating was convenient, and ideally the crowd spilled impressively into the street.⁴⁶ This grassroots, street-level politicking kept many electors involved and, it was hoped, loyal to the party, and for each meeting the newspapers carefully noted the chairmen and secretaries elected, giving ward bosses and activists their moment in the limelight. Treating had long been a widely practiced ritual of male social bonding.⁴⁷ It took on particular meaning when ward bosses and candidates did the treating in the expectation that the drinkers would feel obliged to vote appropriately on polling day. At the ward meetings, the candidate’s strategy was to engage with as many friends as possible, encourage them with partisan remarks, and build momentum both on the scene and more widely thanks to coverage in sympathetic newspapers. Such papers presented the meetings as impressive shows of the candidate’s popularity, but newspapers backing rivals usually cast the same meetings in a starkly different light.

So contrary are press reports of many of candidate meetings that it is impossible to tell what actually happened. In 1857, the *Leader* dismissed the meeting called by George Brown at the Temperance Hall, saying it came off like its predecessors as being “remarkable for the amount of noise and confusion which prevailed.” Brown’s own supporters, it alleged, had smashed the seats and pulled down stovepipes. Brown could only speak in “snatches as he got the opportunity in the abuse of the present Government and the Roman Catholic body, particularly the Clergy of that denomination, whom he always designated by the

43 *Globe*, June 15, 1863.

44 O’Gorman, “Campaign Rituals,” pp. 86-88.

45 Vernon, *Politics and the People*, p. 87.

46 On ward meetings in Kingston, see Martin, *Favourite Son*, p. 69.

47 Julia Roberts, *In Mixed Company: Taverns and Public Life in Upper Canada* (Vancouver and Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2009), pp. 86-88.

name of ‘Petticoated Gentlemen.’” According to the *Globe*, a similar meeting called by Brown was yet “another triumphant meeting!” The large bowling alley in Terauley Street “was crammed by a respectable and intelligent assemblage” who heard Brown speak about government extravagance and high taxation, the Hudson’s Bay Territory, “rep by pop,” and sectarian schools.⁴⁸ In effect, the reports seesawed between depictions of aggressive masculinity and gentlemanly self-restraint.

Candidates were, of course, aware of what was being said by newspapers supporting their rivals. At one ward meeting in 1861, Crawford complained about “the gross misstatements in the *Globe* with reference to himself and his meetings.”⁴⁹ Of course, journalists did not intend their reports to be accurate but rather to boost a candidate or party.

The newspapers touted the enormity and respectability of the crowd supporting their preferred candidate. According to the *Leader*, the Conservative candidates holding ward meetings in the city’s two divisions in 1861 regularly drew crowds in the thousands—3,000 in St David’s Ward, 1,200 to 1,500 in St James and the same in St Lawrence—but the *Globe* reported numbers much smaller at these same meetings, 300 to 500 at one, at another “four cabloads” (implying they had to be brought from outside the ward), and just 62 at one meeting in St James. Meanwhile, the *Globe* boasted that the Reform crowds were “immense” and “influential,” whereas the *Leader* reported that at one of Brown’s meetings, of the 200 to 300 present many were supporters of his rival, as indicated by the cheering.⁵⁰ The *Leader* also said the hall at one of Brown’s meetings had been packed with “young men and boys,” implying organizers, lacking sufficient support, brought out immature lads lacking good judgement and the right to vote. If it were true that many in attendance were nonvoters because they were underage, then such males gained a significant role in elections, notwithstanding their official exclusion from polling.

Both parties often sent hecklers and bullies to their rivals’ meetings. During the December 1851 election campaign, the *Examiner* reported that a Reformers’ meeting held at Darby’s schoolhouse, “50 or 60 rowdies, retainers of the tory party,” shouted so the speakers could not be heard, while others armed with clubs “put out the lights ... knocked down the stove-pipe and kicked it out of doors.” (A lit woodstove without a stovepipe belched smoke into the room, further disrupting the meeting.) A second Reform meeting scheduled for later that evening near St Patrick’s Market failed to come off because Tory enforcers arrived early and bullied all comers, including Clement Cape, a merchant, who was knocked down, kicked in the face, and injured so badly he was thought to be dead.⁵¹ On another occasion, the *Leader* commended the Conservatives for having silenced Brown at a meeting at Leary’s tavern. “Brown,” the *Leader* reported, “had finally to stop speaking and go into the house with about a dozen of his supporters, where they

48 *Leader*, Dec. 1, 1857; *Globe*, Dec. 18, 1857.

49 *Leader*, June 22, 1861.

50 *Leader*, June 21, 22, 27, July 2, 1861; *Globe*, July 3, 4, 1861.

51 *Examiner*, Dec. 16, 1851.

gathered themselves around a table and kept ‘their spirits up by pouring spirits down.’”⁵² In the heat of the 1858 campaign, the *Globe* condemned the bullying methods of John Hillyard Cameron and the Conservatives. Particularly offensive was Cameron’s own undignified conduct, “telling a man in a public meeting to keep quiet or he will make him, d___d quick, and offer to ‘settle’ any half-dozen in the room.”⁵³ Nevertheless, Cameron, a distinguished lawyer and blueblood, built a working-class following by such manly talk and by his adroit manoeuvring within the Orange Order.⁵⁴

When Brown was riding the Protestant horse, the *Globe* characterized Catholics supporting his rivals by appealing to popular stereotypes, representing them as slovenly and all muscle, no brains.⁵⁵ “A more motley assembly was scarcely ever seen,” began the 1857 *Globe* report of an Eastern Division meeting of one thousand friends of the Conservative candidate. Close to the platform stood “about fifty of the unwashed *primed* and ready for any work their leaders might require of them.... Their tall forms, broad shoulders, heavy muscles and huge fists” made them “specimens of the ‘animal’ man.”⁵⁶ On another occasion, the *Mirror*, as usual, leapt to the defence of Catholics, insisting that the Catholic voters of east Toronto were “not confined to the mean and vulgar class announced by the *Colonist* and *Globe*, and their numbers, their influence, their respectability would cast far into the shade the whole brood of their malignant revilers.”⁵⁷

In the 1857, 1858, 1861, and 1863 campaigns, both parties pursued the four hundred or so votes of the city’s African Canadians, whose numbers could tip the balance in a contest. Moreover, African Canadians took the initiative in convening public meetings and expressing their political preferences. According to the *Globe*, after the *Colonist* carried a statement by African Canadian electors supporting the Conservatives in 1857, African Canadian Reformers called a meeting in Bob Moodie’s tavern and endorsed George Brown, who they declared had “helped the people of colour and stands for equality.” Meanwhile, the *Leader* insisted that “all the leading and influential colored voters go against Brown because they are satisfied of his insincerity,” and attributed Brown’s involvement in the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada to his cynical bid to get its printing contracts.⁵⁸ In 1858, according to the *Globe*, a meeting of African Canadian Reformers was broken up by “a dozen of [Conservative candidate] Cameron’s coloured rowdies” and a half-dozen “whisky-primed white roughs.” A second meeting, however, endorsed Brown, noting his “long advocacy of the rights and liberties of all nations, and especially those of the down-trodden sons of Africa.”⁵⁹ In their coverage of African

52 *Leader*, June 27, 1861; *Leader*, 4 July 1861.

53 *Globe*, Aug. 17, 1858.

54 *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, s.v. “Cameron, John Hillyard,” by Donald Swainson, accessed October 12, 2017, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/cameron_john_hillyard_10E.html.

55 On stereotypes, see William Jenkins, “Poverty and Place: Documenting and Representing Toronto’s Catholic Irish, 1845-1890” in Patrick J. Duffy and William Nolan, eds., *At the Anvil: Essays in Honour of William J. Smyth* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 2014), pp. 477-511.

56 *Globe*, June 15, 1863.

57 *Mirror*, July 14, 1854.

58 *Globe*, Dec. 19, 21, 1857; *Leader*, Dec. 21, 1857.

59 *Globe*, Aug. 17, 1858.

Canadian involvement in the campaigns the newspapers thus represented Blacks as expressing, along with white men, both respectable and rowdy masculinity.

Politicians occasionally called all-candidates meetings to challenge each other directly—at least that was the idea. The all-candidates meeting held during the 1857 campaign was a fiasco. Reformers petitioned the mayor for a meeting to be held at city hall and chaired by the mayor.⁶⁰ According to the *Globe*, the *Colonist*, championing as ever the Conservative cause, threatened “hot work” for Brown and the Reformers. Over 1,200 people turned up for the meeting, including a large and noisy contingent of Conservatives who drowned out Brown, even as his supporters belted out his campaign song, “The People’s Champion.” As the *Globe* explained derisively, “the ‘dogans’ of St. Patrick’s Ward were out in force, and even a much smaller number could have prevented any one from being heard.” Because of the heckling, the mayor decided to dissolve the meeting. Amid uproar and confusion, Brown’s supporters tried to carry him by chair out of the hall, but their way was blocked. Then, according to the *Leader*, “a regular fight ensued. Sticks and umbrellas were used on all sides.” The police tried to rein in the crowd, but failed. Rioters smashed furnishings and people were trampled. Brown succeeded at last in exiting, and at that point a Conservative candidate managed to say a few words, boasting how he would beat Brown in the election and drive him out of town, words the *Leader* said got “tremendous cheering,” and the *Globe* said got “groans and hisses.”⁶¹ The 1861 campaign saw a replay of the event, except that this time Michael Murphy, the city’s most prominent Irish nationalist, was charged with assault for clubbing Brown over the head from behind.⁶² The repetition illustrates well that the participants drew from a repertoire of masculine behaviours in their contentious performances.

The press never condoned rowdy behaviour, however frequently it occurred and however helpful it might have been in winning elections. Particularly prominent in newspaper coverage were references to “Tory rowdies” said to be Orangemen close to the corporation, retainers of Tory politicians. The Orange Order provided both a convenient institutional base for recruiting such men and a militant ideological position (ultra-loyal and militantly Protestant) that assisted mobilization. Moreover, the Tories of the corporation had patronage positions to dispense among grateful supporters, notably licensed cabmen, tavern owners, and carters, who might willingly reciprocate by providing service at elections. Reformers lacked an equivalent power base in municipal politics. Disappointed by the election of two High Tories in 1847, the *Banner* complained, “All the retainers and toadies of the Corporation were marched up at the word of command. The Reformers have no such discipline.”⁶³

60 The mayor was obliged to call public meetings, preside over them, and ensure order under the terms of Reform legislation. *An Act to provide for the calling and orderly holding of Public Meetings*, SC 1843 (7 Vict), c.7.

61 *Leader*, Dec. 10, 1857; *Globe*, Dec. 9, 10, 1857.

62 *Globe*, June 20, 29, 1861; *Leader*, June 20, 1861; David A. Wilson, *Thomas D’Arcy McGee*, vol. 2, *The Extreme Moderate, 1857-1868*, (Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2013), pp. 124-25.

63 *Banner*, Dec. 30, 1847.

In every election, tensions mounted as partisans made final demonstrations. “The eve of the election was marked with great excitement,” reported the *Leader* in July 1861, “the streets being crowded with the electors of both parties up till a late hour.” According to the *Leader*, two thousand people in East Market Square cheered Crawford, the Tory candidate, drowning out the proceedings of Brown’s meeting in St Lawrence Hall, where just one thousand “young men and boys” had gathered to be “harangued” by Brown.⁶⁴ (Here again the possibility is raised that boisterous underage males had a part to play in election campaigns.) While the *Globe* agreed that the excitement was intensifying, it reported by contrast that the Reformers at Brown’s meeting crammed St Lawrence Hall “to its utmost capacity, forming a striking contrast to the motley gathering of a few hundreds who assembled outside to listen to Mr. Crawford.”⁶⁵ Clearly people gathered to support their candidates, but in what numbers we cannot now determine.

On the eve of the 1872 vote in Toronto, local Conservatives staged a grand rally, the climax of its campaign to urge workingmen to vote for the Tories. Star attractions were Sir John A. Macdonald, party leader and prime minister, and Henry Buckham Witton, Parliament’s “first working man,” fresh from his electoral victory in Hamilton.⁶⁶ The *Leader* described an “immense crowd” of ten thousand people in front of city hall and a torchlight procession headed by the band of the 10th Royals Regiment. Near the front of the procession, men carried a British ensign and a large transparency welcoming Witton to Toronto and urging Toronto workingmen to “Rally Round the Standard of Union and Progress,” the party’s slogan. When Sir John A.’s carriage arrived at city hall, men carried him into the hall on their shoulders, as the band played “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow.” Partisan speeches dealt with workingmen’s issues and touted Macdonald’s labour policies. At the end of the meeting, about thirty men pulled Sir John A.’s carriage through the densely lined streets, past the *Leader* office, which was cheered, to the Queen’s Hotel. Sir John was carried up the steps, from where he gave a speech, quipping to the appreciative crowd that he belonged to “the Cabinet-makers’ union ... but he was no ‘turner.’”⁶⁷ Supporters were now primed to get out the vote.

To the Polls

In 1841, polling took place at a single polling place in urban ridings and violence was extensive, and so Reformer Robert Baldwin sought to promote order by introducing legislation in 1842 that required a polling station in each ward in cities, including in Toronto.⁶⁸ Thereafter, polling took place at locations selected and announced by the returning officer, with expenses paid by the crown. In 1841, polling occurred over the course of six days, but the 1842 electoral reforms

⁶⁴ *Leader*, July 5, 1861.

⁶⁵ *Globe*, July 5, 1861.

⁶⁶ On Witton, see Bryan D. Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860-1919* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1979), pp. 145-49. On courting working-class votes in the 1872 campaign, see Gregory S. Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 135-38.

⁶⁷ *Leader*, Aug. 17, 1872.

⁶⁸ Cross, *Biography of Robert Baldwin*, pp. 53-54, 128.

specified that subsequently in all riding polls were to be open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on two consecutive days.⁶⁹ (Two-day polls continued for a few weeks across the province following a schedule set by the administration in hope of a bandwagon effect triggered by victories in safe seats.⁷⁰) Polling places, each under the charge of a deputy returning officer, were mostly located at taverns, until 1849 legislation aimed at discouraging treating pushed them out to shops, schools, the courthouse, and other locations.⁷¹ Under the voice-vote system, an elector appeared before the deputy returning officer at the polling place and said his name, the location of the property that entitled him to vote, his occupation, and his favoured candidate's name. The poll clerk recorded these declarations in the poll book. In the mid-1850s, provincial legislation introduced the requirement of voters' lists based on municipal property assessments, but difficulties occurred in implementing the measure. From 1861, the use of voters' lists became standard practice, though manipulation of them occurred, perhaps frequently.⁷²

Partisan newspapers urged supporters to arrive early for the polling in the hope that an early lead would encourage undecided electors to support the lead candidate. In 1857, the *Globe* advised supporters of Reform to "VOTE EARLY. One vote before noon on Monday is worth two afterwards." It conceded that there would be congestion, but opined, "Our friends must not mind a little squeezing. If they do, the enemy will be in before them."⁷³ Apparently, the advice was taken because the *Leader* was soon complaining that Brown's supporters had rushed to the polls before nine o'clock and "took forcible possession of them and for a full hour hardly any votes could be polled for Robinson and Boulton." Conservatives were advised to arrive early the next day.⁷⁴ In this exchange, both sides used military metaphors (the "enemy" and "took forcible possession") that deepened the force of aggressive masculinity more generally in play.

Posters of all descriptions crowded the streets near the polling stations, entreating electors to vote in certain ways. Because each elector could vote for two candidates or "plump" for just one, possibilities were many. In 1851, the *Patriot* reported:

The walls were placarded as usual with posters of all shapes and sizes, some calling on Conservatives to vote for Sherwood and Boulton—some advising Orangemen to desert Sherwood and vote for Boulton and Ridout—others invoking the aid of Reformers to settle the Clergy Reserve question by going unanimously to the

69 *An Act to Provide for the Freedom of Elections*, SC 1842 (6 Vict), c. 1. Polling was reduced to one day in 1871 for Dominion elections. See Emery, *Elections in Oxford*, pp. 136-37.

70 D.G.G. Kerr, "The 1867 Elections in Ontario," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 51, no. 4 (Dec. 1970), pp. 379-80.

71 *Consolidated Elections Act*, SC 1849 (12 Vict), c. 27. On the importance of taverns as public space, see Roberts, *In Mixed Company*, pp. 56-76.

72 *Act to extend the Elective Franchise, and better to define the qualification of Voters*, SC 1853 (16 Vict), c. 153; *An Act to define the Elective Franchise, to provide for the Registration of Voters, and for other purposes therein mentioned*, SC 1858 (22 Vict), c. 82; John Garner, *The Franchise and Politics in British North America, 1877-1867* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 108-13; Kerr, "The 1867 Elections," 372-77.

73 *Globe*, Dec. 19, 1851.

74 *Leader*, Dec. 22, 1857.

polls for O'Neill and Capreol—and last and most absurd of all, huge bills advising Conservatives either to give plumpers for Ridout, or cast their second vote for a Reformer, rather than to Sherwood and Boulton.⁷⁵

Many electors must have been puzzled about how best to proceed.

In Toronto, as elsewhere, friends of the weaker candidates took advantage of regulations to slow down the voting so that the results would not immediately affect ongoing tallies.⁷⁶ In 1857, St John's Ward was expected to vote strongly for Brown, and so, according to the *Globe*, Robinson's scrutineer sought to delay the result by asking "ridiculous and annoying questions of respectable citizens."⁷⁷ Four years later, the *Leader* charged that Brown's friends exercised their right to challenge voters they knew to be Conservative, insisting that the returning officer ask each of them to swear that he had the right to vote and that he had not taken a bribe. This ate up time, which meant, alleged the *Leader*, that a ward that was overwhelmingly Conservative was prevented from registering its preference promptly.⁷⁸

Confusion and conflict often occurred at the polls as supporters of one candidate tried to press forward and vote early, while rivals tried to block them and push themselves ahead. According to the *Globe*, in 1857 Tories blocked Brown's voters' from accessing the St. Patrick's Ward poll, beat some of them, destroyed placards bearing Brown's name, and assaulted drivers of vehicles bringing up his electors.⁷⁹ By contrast, the *Leader* contended that in various wards Brown's supporters blocking passageways so delayed Conservative electors that they had no opportunity to vote. "Hot-headed champions of Brown" failed to intimidate voters, but some of them pelted Tories with snowballs and stones and screeched out "'Vote for Brown!'"⁸⁰ Blocking and intimidating voters was a role that could be played by nonvoters as well as voters. Newspapers always blamed opponents for the trouble.

Maintaining order at the poll was the responsibility of the returning officer and his deputies, police and special constables, and any justices of the peace asked by the returning officer to intervene. At least before Toronto's police reforms of 1859, the small police force was widely understood to be highly partisan, favouring Orange and Conservative candidates.⁸¹ The 1842 Elections Act empowered returning officers to swear in special constables as needed to maintain the peace, and required them to do so on the written request of a candidate, his agent or any two electors. The returning officer or deputy returning officers had the power to disarm people during the election and to ban any armed nonresidents coming

75 *Patriot*, Dec. 10, 1851. A "plumper" is a vote given exclusively to one candidate in ridings where voting for more than one candidate is possible.

76 Emery cites 1857 examples from South Oxford; *Elections in Oxford*, pp. 100-101.

77 *Globe*, Dec. 22, 1857.

78 *Leader*, July 5, 1861. Garner, *Franchise and Politics*, p. 235n33, notes that 1858 legislation required a voter to make these sworn declarations.

79 *Globe*, Dec. 22, 1857.

80 *Leader*, Dec. 23, 1857.

81 William Jenkins, "Patrolmen and Peelers: Immigration, Urban Culture, and 'The Irish Police' in Canada and the United States," *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 28/29 (Oct. 2002), pp. 10-29.

within two miles of polling places.⁸² These arrangements notwithstanding, the state of peacefulness at the polls varied from campaign to campaign.

The 1841 election saw the most outrageous show of police bias and polling irregularities. According to the *Mirror*, the constables placed themselves at the head of the poll and voted for the Tory candidates, and then “secretly handed their staves to the Tory voters so that they might force their way to the hustings.” In the morning some thirty or forty Tory electors filled the cellar of the building where the poll took place, and once the poll opened they were admitted through a trap door built so that they could vote early. Reformers were pleased when the returning officer blocked up the “Rat’s Hole.”⁸³

In 1857, when the *Globe* charged that Conservative bullies rioted to prevent Brown’s voters from reaching the polls in St Patrick’s Ward, it maintained that “it is freely asserted that most of [the police], as well as their chief, sympathized with the rioters.”⁸⁴ By contrast, the *Colonist* alleged that the special constables had been chosen by the mayor, a friend of Reform candidate George Brown. Calling this a “gross fabrication,” the *Globe* retorted that the specials had been chosen by the chief of police, “no friend of Mr. Brown,” and insisted that the *Colonist* was deliberately stirring the pot to encourage a breach of the peace.⁸⁵ In 1841 and 1857, passions ran especially high, partly because much appeared at stake: loyalty and the Sydenham reforms in 1841, and sectarian issues in 1857 when Brown sought to wrest the Orange vote from the Tories.

In other years, such as 1847, 1851, 1858, and 1861, the police and specials maintained order effectively. At the end of the 1847 campaign, all the candidates praised the absence of violence, a development the *Banner* attributed to “the excellent Election Law of Mr. Baldwin, which divides the City into different wards.” The *Leader* reported in 1861 that people were saying that there had never been such a peaceful election in Toronto. It was unusual that “no drunken men were seen in the streets; no parties of bludgeon men way-laying individual opponents as they left, or approached the polling booths; no racing of medical men hither and thither to repair the damages inflicted by sling-shot or axe-handles.”⁸⁶ Peacefulness, or restrained masculine behaviour, thus got comment in the press, but battles for the polls and police shortcomings received more attention from newspapers eager both to denounce the electioneering of rival candidates and to enhance the excitement of the campaign.

Assessing the Results

Throughout the polling, throngs of people collected outside newspaper offices, where vote tallies were continually updated on bulletin boards.⁸⁷ In the days before the secret ballot, the moment the polls closed the tallies were known. Interest in

82 *An Act to Provide for the Freedom of Elections*, SC 1842 (6 Vict), c. 1; Blake R. Brown, *Arming and Disarming: A History of Gun Control in Canada* (Toronto: Osgoode Society, 2012), pp. 25-26.

83 *Mirror*, Mar. 20, 1841.

84 *Globe*, Dec. 22, 1857.

85 *Globe*, Dec. 21, 1857.

86 *Banner*, Dec. 31 [30?], 1847; *Leader*, Aug. 28, 1858; July 8, 1861.

87 *Leader*, July 5, 1861.

elections can only have increased when candidates with opposing positions ran neck and neck, as they often did. In 1841, Governor Sydenham's two candidates beat the two Tories by just eighty-five votes. In 1854, the two Conservatives won by just ninety-five votes in total. George Brown edged out the leading Conservative in 1857 by a paltry fifty-one votes. Even in the post-Confederation elections, votes could still be excitingly close. In 1872, just twenty-eight votes separated the victorious Reformer from the Conservative in Toronto Centre, and the Reformer won by just ninety-seven votes in Toronto East.⁸⁸

As soon as newspapers knew the results, they interpreted them in ways that denigrated their opponents. In 1841, the *Mirror* charged that the poll books proved that the Tories got the votes of people that the corporation controlled through jobs or licenses, "A vast majority of the tavern keepers and grog shop, and grocery and beer shop keepers, carters and labouring men," the *Mirror* claimed, "dependent upon the corporation for their daily bread."⁸⁹ As for the opposing side, Governor Sydenham had threatened provincial government employees with dismissal if they voted for his opponents, and early in the campaign he fired one civil servant to set an example.⁹⁰ To reduce such intimidation, 1843 legislation disenfranchised various categories of provincial government employees.⁹¹ According to the press, however, many electors were still unable to vote with their conscience. The *Globe* maintained in 1861 that Tory candidate John Crawford had won because the Roman Catholic clergy "exercised all their powerful influence on his behalf," every government official "was compelled to vote at the risk of losing his situation," and the Grand Trunk Railway intimidated its employees.⁹² For Reformers, these sorts of infringements on the independence of the elector challenged the very basis of freedom and democracy.⁹³ Moreover, it was sometimes said that officials intentionally left names off the electoral lists to ensure a victory. In 1861, when municipal tax records first became the basis for the electors' lists, the *Leader* maintained that "at least 600 voters must have been disfranchised in the city by a scandalous manipulation of the election lists."⁹⁴ It was also possible for partisan or bribed municipal assessors to manipulate the property assessments to disfranchise some individuals.⁹⁵

Bribery explained many results, or so newspapers on the losing side claimed both in Toronto and elsewhere in the province.⁹⁶ In 1844, Reformers complained that the Tories had triumphed thanks to bribery, a biased returning officer, and electors disqualified from voting.⁹⁷ In 1854, the *Grit North American*, dismayed

88 *Patriot*, March 3, 1841; *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada*, vol. 13, App. N. (Quebec: R. Campbell, 1855); vol. 16 (Toronto: R. Campbell, 1858); Elections Canada, *History of Federal Ridings since 1867*, <https://lop.parl.ca/About/Parliament/FederalRidingsHistory/HFER.asp>

89 *Mirror*, April 9, 1841.

90 Abella, "Sydenham Election," pp. 337-38.

91 Garner, *Franchise and Politics*, p. 104.

92 *Globe*, July 8, 1861.

93 Greer, "Historical Roots of Canadian Democracy."

94 *Leader*, July 11, 1861.

95 Garner, *Franchise and Politics*, p. 108; *Leader*, Sept. 16, 1878.

96 Emery, *Elections in Oxford*, pp. 99-100, 115-16.

97 Cross, *Biography of Robert Baldwin*, p. 172.

by the Tory victories, charged that the party had a campaign fund of £4000 “set apart for the ‘gratification’ of the constituency.” Both the *Colonist* and the *Leader* maintained that Brown’s 1857 victory was the result of his supporters having bought men’s votes, mainly with funds provided by the Great Western Railway Company, which favoured Brown.⁹⁸ In 1858, the *Leader* explained Brown’s victory by claiming that near St. David’s poll, money funnelled from Montreal had been passed in handshakes from Brown’s agents who “trafficked in votes as openly as men buy and sell vegetables in St Lawrence market.” The *Leader* commented on the Reformers’ 1863 victory, saying, “Elections in this city have almost reached the point when the man with the largest purse is sure to carry the day.”⁹⁹ The *Globe* explained the Conservatives’ 1864 victory thus: “Taverns and stores were opened all day, and liquor was circulated in great abundance. Few paid for it—the keepers of the shebeens saying the account was settled. Money circulated like water, and votes were purchased at from one to fifty dollars each.”¹⁰⁰ Hard evidence of bribery in Toronto was seldom presented, however, thus making assessing the conflicting claims impossible.

Legislation, not well enforced, defined and outlawed unfair practices in elections, proscribing bribery, fraud, intimidation, and the treating of electors with food and drink, and later, prohibitions were tightened up and penalties increased. The preamble to the province’s Corrupt Practices Prevention Act (1860) justified tighter measures because present laws were ineffective against “corrupt and demoralizing practices.”¹⁰¹ Afterwards, tolerance of illegal treating remained pervasive probably because electors insisted they were owed this traditional reward. Supporters of defeated candidates who charged corrupt practices had the option of petitioning the legislature to void the result.¹⁰² In Toronto, newspapers carried frequent threats to petition, but only in 1841 was a petition presented (and denied).¹⁰³ Hard evidence of corruption may have been difficult to obtain; moreover, it was widely believed that the legislature was reluctant to pursue corruption.¹⁰⁴ In 1857, the *Colonist* declared, “Parliament has become a sort of court for the acquittal of wrongdoers. Its majorities systematically sanctify rascality.”¹⁰⁵

Victory Processions

The moment the polls closed on the second day of voting, newspaper offices announced the unofficial results, which triggered victory celebrations. In England, after a formal declaration of the results, valedictory rituals included the victor’s triumphal “chaining” and magnanimous speeches intended to heal and unite the

98 *Leader*, Dec. 25, 1857.

99 *Leader*, Aug. 30, 1858; June 24, 1863.

100 *North American*, July 5 & Aug. 2, 1854; *Globe*, April 27, 1864.

101 *An Act for the more effectual prevention of corrupt practices at Elections*, SC 1860 (23 Vict), c. 17.

102 Garner, *Franchise in British North America*, p. 202, reports that fewer than ten percent of contests were contested, but in the hotly fought 1857 campaign the percentage rose to twenty-seven.

103 Province of Canada, *Debates of the Legislative Assembly* (June 28, 1841), vol. 1, pp. 156-57, 291 (Petition of Henry Sherwood).

104 Emery, *Elections in Oxford*, pp. 170-71; Garner, *Franchise and Politics*, 210-13; Séguin, “Pour une nouvelle synthèse,” pp. 75-100.

105 *British Colonist*, 19 Jan. 1857.

community behind its elected member. Toronto, had its victory processions, but the rivalry continued. In comparison with many other processions seen in Toronto and elsewhere, including in US election campaigns, the city's election parades were generally a simple ritual that involved little planning and preparation, but arrangements were occasionally more elaborate.¹⁰⁶ In June 1861, the *Leader* glowingly reported on the successful Tory candidates' "grand triumphal procession through the city, with British flags and bands of music." The victors gave speeches to their happy supporters. John Crawford headed for his committee rooms at the Masonic Hall, arriving nearly blinded by dust because he came in an open carriage drawn not by horses but by men "whose hurrahs were absolutely deafening." Speaking from the hall's balcony, he thanked the electors and assured them in true partisan spirit that he had no personal agenda, but was "actuated by the single desire of serving my country by putting down forever Brownism and Clear Gritism in this city." Elsewhere the other victorious Tory candidate, Robinson, thanked the Protestant and Catholic "Sons of St. Patrick," and mocked Brown for his failure to gain enough support from his appeal to "his brother Scotchmen," such ethnic references intensifying the partisan rivalries. Once the victors' speeches were completed, each had a procession of many cabs and wagons headed by a band. The two processions met at Yonge Street, where the candidates and a few key supporters boarded a float: a boat sitting atop a wagon. The *Globe* downplayed and mocked the Tory victory celebrations, saying that once the oars were shouldered, the horses lurched forward so that everyone aboard fell, much to the delight of the onlookers.¹⁰⁷

In 1863, once again large and enthusiastic processions formed behind the victorious Reform candidates, one of whom said that he hoped the victory would not "be marred by an improper act." In fact, newspaper accounts differed as to whether there was violence. The *Leader* reported that a cab carrying John Mulvey, a ward boss in St Patrick's, was forced out of the procession by his "enraged Catholic brethren," but police intervened and prevented further trouble. By contrast, the *Globe* reported several skirmishes. The carriages carrying victorious candidates and their committees were decorated with Union Jacks, which supporters of the defeated candidates tried to remove as an insult and gesture of disapproval. Near the foot of Church Street, when "a miscreant" attempted to tear down a flag, a large crowd gathered and hurled stones at the processionists, hitting several people. A carriage carrying Mulvey and others from St Patrick's Ward, being "specially marked out for vengeance," was forced out of the procession and chased away by men "howling like so many demons."¹⁰⁸ At least some of the

¹⁰⁶ Peter G. Goheen, "Symbols in the Streets: Parades in Victorian Urban Canada," *Urban History Review*, vol. 18, no. 3 (Feb. 1990), pp. 237-43; Craig Heron and Steve Penfold, "The Craftsmen's Spectacle: Labour Day Parades in Canada, The Early Years," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, vol. 29, no. 58 (1996), pp. 357-89; Ian Radforth, *Royal Spectacle: The 1860 Visit of the Prince of Wales to Canada and the United States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Brooks McNamara, *Day of Jubilee: The Great Age of Public Celebrations in New York, 1788-1909* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997); Ryan, *Civic Wars*, pp. 58-93.

¹⁰⁷ *Leader*, July 8, 1861; *Globe*, July 8, 1861.

¹⁰⁸ *Leader*, June 24, 1863; *Globe*, June 24, 1863.

trouble was confirmed in a police court report concerning three men with the last name of Sheehan who were charged with disorderly conduct for throwing stones at the victory procession. Court testimony confirmed that attempts had been made to pull Union Jacks off the heads of horses in the procession.¹⁰⁹

The 1874 clean sweep by the three Reform candidates occasioned both celebrations and angry demonstrations. Thousands of jubilant Reformers celebrated outside the *Globe* office at the close of the polls, and a procession appeared with men “bearing those emblems of complete victory—brooms.” Shortly afterwards, four hundred angry lads marched on victorious John O’Donohoe’s committee rooms on King Street East, gave three cheers for the defeated Conservative candidate, demolished all the windows of the building, and repeated the protest at the Reformers’ central committee rooms. The men then strode to the *Globe* office, where they smashed valuable plate-glass windows. Police finally arrived on the scene and dispersed the mob. The protesters returned later that evening to howl in the street, until baton-wielding police drove them away.¹¹⁰

Election results only became official a day or two after the polling, when the returning officer made a public declaration, mandated by law, usually to crowds that gathered in the street. In December 1851, Sheriff Jarvis formally declared from the steps of the courthouse that Ridout and Boulton were elected. Shifting to the warmer but crammed courtroom, the newly elected men were invited to speak, Ridout going first because he had gained the highest number of votes. He thanked his Conservative supporters, as well as those Reformers who had voted for him. Boulton spoke next and thanked especially the Orange Order, the *Patriot* quoting him as saying its members “were constantly stigmatized as Orange rowdies and Bullies, but they were the bone and sinew of Conservatism.” The *British Colonist* had Boulton chortling at his victory despite what he called “the abuses of his character, the misrepresentation of him by the press, the opposition of the mercantile interests and the opposition of the lawyers.” As depicted by the *Patriot*, a range of masculine behaviours were displayed by the losing candidates who acknowledged their failures—Sherwood “gracefully” and O’Neill speaking bitterly of his friends’ desertion.¹¹¹

Toronto’s most serious post-election disturbances occurred following the fraught campaign of 1841. Things began auspiciously as both parties marched through the streets immediately after the results were announced. “Great taste and profuse expenditure have been displayed in the various banners, devices, and ornamented vehicles,” observed the *Patriot*. Yet violence was anticipated and carried out two days later in response to the victorious candidates’ procession. Disappointed and angry Tory supporters, many of them Orangemen, first attacked a bagpiper wearing the victors’ colours as he walked past Allan’s Coleraine Tavern, a meeting place of Orangemen. Later they threw stones at the procession, but they were routed by the far larger numbers of their rivals and sought shelter in the

¹⁰⁹ *Globe*, 26 June 1863.

¹¹⁰ *Globe*, Jan. 30, 1874; see also police court testimony, *Globe*, Feb. 5, 1874.

¹¹¹ *Patriot*, Dec. 16, 1851; *British Colonist*, Dec. 16, 1851.

Coleraine Tavern. When the procession reached the tavern, a riot erupted during which shots were fired from inside the tavern at the crowd outside. A bystander was killed, and three others injured, including a constable. Troops were called out to quell the riot.

Peter Way uses newspaper reports and the findings of a commission of inquiry into the riot to reconstruct the events and to argue that it was an example of combative street politics in which working men played an important but contested role, one attacked by middle-class reformers who sought firmer control over electoral behaviour and more peaceful electoral politics. Yet the class dynamics of election contests are exceedingly difficult to perceive, given the newspapers' propensity to represent their own supporters as respectable and opponents as the opposite. Tory supporters, many of them Orangemen, certainly demonstrated in a way that elsewhere I have dubbed "muscular conservatism," engaging in rough, manly displays of directed violence.¹¹²

Newspaper reports of the victory riot sharply differed as to what had occurred and who had perpetrated the violence. The *Patriot*, defending the Tory demonstrators, insisted that "terrible provocation had been given to the unfortunate inmates of Allan's tavern before they resorted to the use of fire-arms." The *Examiner* and the *Colonist* disputed this version of events, prompting the *Patriot* to insist disingenuously "not one word of our remarks savors in the least of party bias, or animosity." In turn, it attacked its rival journals who would cry "'PEACE, PEACE,' but instead of the open hand of conciliation we behold them extending the sword of eager vengeance and the gauntlet of defiance."¹¹³

A provincial inquiry eventually laid the blame for the Toronto riot on the mayor, the corporation, and Orangeism. In response, municipal politicians and the Tory press charged that the inquiry was biased. Nevertheless, the report assisted Robert Baldwin when in 1842 he introduced legislation to discourage election riots by reducing crowding at the poll and by banning party colours, carrying weapons, bribery, and treating voters.¹¹⁴ Baldwin and the Reformers also succeeded in passing legislation aimed at disabling Orangeism by banning its parades, although enforcing that measure proved elusive.¹¹⁵

Reforms that did change the electoral culture came in mid-1874, when the Liberal government brought in the secret ballot and eliminated the requirement for nomination meetings, those large gatherings of opponents where trouble often erupted.¹¹⁶ The minister who introduced the bill observed that the government was both following recent initiatives on balloting in England and Australia and responding to the 1873 Pacific Scandal revelations of widespread bribery in the dominion election of the previous year. With the secret ballot, the minister declared, a candidate would be less likely to bribe an elector because he could not

112 Peter Way, "Street Politics: Orangemen, Tories, and the 1841 Election Riot in Toronto," *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1991), pp. 275-303; "Radforth, "Political Demonstrations and Spectacles," p. 4.

113 *Patriot*, Mar. 26, 1841.

114 *An Act to Provide for the Freedom of Elections*, SC 1842 (6 Vict), c. 1.

115 Cross, *Biography of Robert Baldwin*, pp. 142-46.

116 *An Act Respecting Elections of Members of the House of Commons*, SC 1874 (37 Vict), c. 9.

know whether doing so actually resulted in a bought vote.¹¹⁷ Opponents of the bill, including Toronto's J. H. Cameron, maintained for that reason the ballot would encourage dishonesty among electors (!), and, moreover, it was "a sneaking, un-British mode of voting." During the first election after its introduction, the *Nation*, published in Toronto, observed that it made the campaign dull because "an early rush to the polls is incapable of producing any inspiring effect."¹¹⁸ While the reform significantly changed the rules of the game and moderated the conduct of elections, it did not eliminate intense partisanship, dirty tricks, or the occasional violent confrontation in the streets.

Conclusion

When local newspapers described and commented on what happened during election campaigns in mid-Victorian Toronto, they did so in highly partisan ways and presented the campaigns as lively and combative. Documenting their language illuminates how the press expressed partisanship. The evidence is so abundant that at every turn, newspapers, particularly the better financed ones, glowingly represented the campaigns of candidates while denigrating the illegitimate electioneering of rival candidates by relating stories of heckling, intimidation, dirty tricks, and violence. They describe a scrappy democracy where participants drew from a repertoire of behaviours that we can call contentious performances.

Journalists reported on real developments, but often in exaggerated and distorted ways. The real basis for reports is verified by the fact that newspaper reports across the partisan divide often corroborated each other when describing public meetings that degenerated into brawls—although they disagreed who the instigators were. We know from various attempts to reform electoral practices, and from evidence given in contested election hearings outside Toronto, that elections were widely believed to be marred by public drunkenness resulting from treating, by intimidation at the polls, and by outbreaks of violence.¹¹⁹ And such attempts to reform as adding polling places, outlawing guns, and eliminating the show of hands, demonstrate that legislators perceived an ongoing need to discipline and clean up election practices.

Yet for most of our period, electoral structures put in place by the state helped to foster the lively and combative election culture that Toronto newspapers burnished. The show of hands, mandated by law until 1866, brought large crowds in an outdoor public place, created an opportunity for treating and drunkenness, and pitted rival candidates against one another as they jostled to dominate the show of hands by fair means or foul. Voicing a vote on the hustings, mandated by law to 1874, encouraged a rush to the polls to dominate early voting, the blocking of electors supporting rival candidates, and intimidation by hired bullies and by employers. Declaration day, legally required until 1866, brought people into the streets who were pumped by victory or angry in defeat. Newspapers reported on

117 Canada, *House of Commons Debates* (April 21, 1874), pp. 161-62 (A. A. Dorian). See also Peter B. Waite, *Canada, 1874-1896: Arduous Destiny* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), pp. 24-25.

118 Canada, *House of Commons Debates* (April 21, 1874), p. 166 (J. H. Cameron); *Nation*, Jan. 22, 1875.

119 Séguin, "Pour une nouvelle synthèse."

the proceedings of these potentially volatile occasions that offered opportunities for praising the performances of their candidates and supporters and for deploring the shenanigans of their opponents.

From the stark partisan journalism, it is obvious that journalists wanted to provoke readers into supporting favoured candidates at public events and at the polls. McGerr's study of elections in the American North argues quite persuasively that partisan newspapers were crucial in mobilizing the public and getting out the vote.¹²⁰ For Toronto, however, it is impossible to say categorically how readers responded to newspaper messages. No systematic inquiries into voter behaviour were conducted, and the introduction of public opinion surveys were a century in the future. The impact made by alternative influences, such as partisan placards and word-of-mouth networks—far more elusive sources for the historian—is even harder to assess. There are indications the press probably had some effect on voter behaviour when, for example, electors were urged to vote early for certain candidates and reports in rival newspapers reported they did so. Moreover, candidates who advertised their public meetings in the press, and newspapers that added their voices to pleas for public involvement, were behaving as though doing so mattered.

In representing electioneering, the mid-Victorian Toronto press depicted a masculine world where women almost entirely absent but competing masculinities were very much in play. Newspapers endorsed masculine restraint. According to this ideal, cool heads should prevail even when the contest heated up. Rather like upper-middle class Victorian notions of sportsmanship, the campaign could be a vigorous contest but one where conflicts stopped short of fisticuffs.¹²¹ That ideal fit neatly with a commitment to deliberative democracy, a pursuit of best policies through rational debate among men with “the capacity to judge.” It fit too with attempts by the legislature to reform election practices and provide a legal framework to enforce restrained behaviour. Yet the press simultaneously depicted the campaigns of rivals in ways that showed them falling far short of the ideal of restrained masculinity. Stories about persistent heckling that prevented views being heard, intimidation at the polls, vote-buying, and drunkenness reinforced a competing masculinity, one more muscular and passionate and less respectable. The press denigrated rivals who exhibited such behaviour during elections, calling them “rogues” and “rowdies,” but gave little indication of who they actually were. Some of them may have been, as was sometimes asserted, non-electors too young to vote or unable to meet the property qualifications. Their participation seems to indicate that election campaigns were more broadly inclusive than the limited franchise would suggest. Yet, while acts of intimidation brought the intimidators into the campaigns, thus involving them in the democratic process, intimidation undercut democracy by constraining the rights of its targets. What is clear is that election reform involved ongoing negotiations over the shape and extent of democratic practices.

¹²⁰ McGerr, *Decline of Popular Politics*, pp. 94-180

¹²¹ Nancy Bouchier, “Idealized Middle-Class Sport for a Young Nation: Lacrosse in Nineteenth-Century Ontario Towns, 1871-1891,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 29, no. 2 (Summer 1994), pp. 89-111.