

# Historical Pageantry and the ‘Fusion of the Races’ at the Tercentenary of Quebec, 1908

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*Complex political and circumstantial forces worked to transform a modest municipal celebration of the 300th anniversary of Champlain’s founding of his habitation at Quebec into the Tercentenary of the Founding of Canada. The centrepiece of the spectacle was the series of historical pageants produced by a British pageant director with the advice of members of the Comité d’histoire et d’archéologie of Quebec. In a combination of careful selection, deft balancing, and misrepresentation of fact, the powerful and lavish theatre of the pageants displayed a view of Canadian history designed to serve explicit contemporary political goals.*

*Des forces politiques et circonstanciennes complexes se sont conjuguées pour transformer une modeste fête municipale du 300<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la fondation de Québec par Champlain en tricentenaire de la fondation du Canada. Le clou du spectacle fut la série de spectacles historiques produits par un directeur de reconstitutions historiques avec les conseils des membres du Comité d’histoire et d’archéologie de Québec. Alliant un choix judicieux, un habile équilibre et une présentation erronée des faits, le théâtre puissant et somptueux des reconstitutions brossait un tableau de l’histoire canadienne conçu explicitement à des fins politiques contemporaines.*

THE IDEA OF CELEBRATING the 300th anniversary of Champlain’s founding of Quebec in 1608 originated amongst the irrepressible members of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste of Quebec as yet another festival of survival and *nationaliste* emergence.<sup>1</sup> Ambitious city councillors and civic

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<sup>1</sup> H. J. J. B. Chouinard, secretary of the Quebec City Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, man of letters and clerk (*greffier*) of the City Council, contributed an article to the Christmas number of the *Daily Telegraph* (December 24, 1904) proposing a celebration honouring the tercentenary of Champlain’s founding of Quebec. The society picked up his suggestion as one of several projects of national revitalization, the most notable other one being the funding of a statue of Laval to be unveiled on

boosters saw the tourist, commercial, and political potential of broadening the event beyond these municipal and provincial origins into a national (pan-Canadian) celebration of the founding of Canada.<sup>2</sup> A meddling and intriguing Governor General, Earl Grey, seized the opportunity as an occasion for an elaborately staged festival to give fractious Canadians a nobler image of themselves as a new nation, fused from two races, united within a grand empire.<sup>3</sup>

Local politicians led by Quebec City's Mayor Garneau thought mainly of using tourism as one way of arresting the economic decline of Quebec that had been going on for a generation. Earl Grey had another agenda. If he were to have his way the 300th anniversary of Champlain's arrival would be celebrated with a national and imperial festival uniting governments, voluntary organizations, and a mass movement of citizens in a campaign to consecrate the Plains of Abraham. This would be accomplished by the removal of the monstrous jail and munitions factory that in his mind disfigured the sites of heroic battles, and the creation of a suitably landscaped historic park adorned by a massive Statue to Peace — larger than the Statue of Liberty — to symbolize the subsequent harmonious union of two peoples in one country under the Imperial Crown.<sup>4</sup> He inherited the Quebec “em-

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the 200th anniversary of his death, coincidentally in 1908. Early in 1906 the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste (SSJB) successfully lobbied the city to take on this responsibility. See H. J. J. B. Chouinard, *Troisième Centenaire de la Fondation de Québec Berceau du Canada par Champlain, 1608–1908* (Quebec: Laflamme & Proulx, 1908), pp. 1–21, for documents and letters; see also Archives du Séminaire de Québec (hereafter ASQ), Fonds Chouinard.

2 Archives de la Ville de Québec (hereafter AVQ), Préliminaires de la célébration du 3<sup>e</sup> centenaire de la fondation de Québec (Comité Centenaire), *Procès-verbaux*, Comité exécutif, Comité d'action, 1906–1908, contain the minutes of the municipal body that took over planning the celebration. Many of these documents are reprinted in Chouinard, *Troisième Centenaire*. Right from the start this committee thought in terms of provincial and federal funding to give “un cachet national de la Fête” (October 24, 1906). See also Archives nationales du Québec (hereafter ANQ), Fonds Sir Georges Garneau, AP.G. 90/1–8, *boîte* 5, for additional material.

3 Mary Elizabeth Hallet, “The 4th Earl Grey as Governor General of Canada, 1904–1911” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1966), p. 134. Chapter 5 of this thesis provides an excellent account of Earl Grey's involvement in the Tercentenary. See also her research note, “The Quebec Tercentennial: Earl Grey's Imperial Birthday Party”, *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 54 (1973), pp. 341–352. Grey formulated his plan for a battlefields national park — based loosely on the model of Gettysburg — in a series of conversations and an exchange of memoranda beginning in 1906 with the recently appointed Dominion Archivist, Arthur Doughty. See National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), National Battlefields Papers, vol. 1, Arthur Doughty to Earl Grey, June 15, 1906. See also NAC, Doughty Papers, M2244, for correspondence with Grey. Early in 1908 Doughty helped draft a plan for the Battlefields Park after consulting with Gettysburg authorities.

4 Earl Grey set forth his proposal in a series of speeches which he had printed and widely distributed, most notably to the Women's Canadian Club of Montreal on December 12, 1907, and the Canadian Club of Ottawa on January 15, 1908. He appealed to the women of Canada to help in the campaign to restore the site of battles “in which the contending races were alternately victorious, and in both of which the victor and the vanquished were entitled to equal honour, will be fittingly commemorated”. The texts of both these addresses in pamphlet form are to be found with related material in

bellishments” project from his predecessors, Dufferin and Minto. The fixation with the Plains of Abraham was his contribution. In his mind the consecration of the historic battlefields as a national park would contribute mightily to the project of “race fusion”, bringing French and English Canadians together in terms of mutual respect, that he believed to be the guiding principle of Wilfrid Laurier’s public life. Grey convinced himself of this but found Laurier at first curiously unmoved.

The wily and reticent Prime Minister, all too familiar with the explosive potential of French-Canadian nationalism and British imperialism, and justifiably wary of the Governor General’s not entirely innocent enthusiasms, dragged his feet. Alert to the snares of history, Laurier suggested combining Champlain’s anniversary with a more neutral celebration of progress and technology — the opening of the Quebec Bridge scheduled for 1909. Amidst such forward-looking festivities Quebecers might transcend their all-too-troublesome past. According to the frustrated and impatient Governor General, Laurier was haunted by the “mischievous movements” of “ambitious Ultramontanes” whose intrigues he believed would “eventually lead to another abortive Papineau trouble”.<sup>5</sup> Laurier hoped to avoid playing their game — as well as the Governor General’s.

However, when the bridge collapsed ignominiously in the fall of 1907, so too did the Prime Minister’s resolve. With pressure mounting for a major celebration of Champlain’s 300th anniversary within his own Liberal organization in Quebec City and the Governor General building a grassroots Historic Battlefields network in the provinces, inspiring the newly formed

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NAC, National Battlefields Commission Records, RG90, vol 1. He expanded on his plans, in particular the Angel of Peace, in an extensive correspondence with Colonial Office officials, Canadian political figures, and friends. See Hallett, “The 4th Earl Grey”, pp. 136–178; NAC, Grey of Howick Papers, MG27 II B2, vols. 1, 2, 8, 14, 28, 30, 31; NAC, Quebec Battlefields Association Papers, MG28 I 38, vol. 1, part 2 (portions of which were obviously transferred from Earl Grey’s files), which contains correspondence between Grey, Garneau, and others. By 1907 Earl Grey and Mayor Garneau were working hand in glove on Laurier; see ANQ, Fonds Garneau, *boîtes* 1 and 4, for Grey correspondence and *boîtes* 3 and 5 for Laurier letters.

5 NAC, Grey Papers, vol. 14, 4001, Grey to Lord Crewe, May 18, 1908. Understanding tensions between *nationalistes* and Liberals within the province of Quebec was a central preoccupation for at least two generations of Canadian historians. See, *inter alia*, Robert Rumilly, *Henri Bourassa* (Montreal: Chanteclerc, 1953); Pierre Savard, *Jules-Paul Tardivel* (Quebec: Laval, 1967); Mathieu Girard, “La pensée politique de Jules-Paul Tardivel”, *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique française*, vol. 21 (1967), p. 397; A. I. Silver, Introduction to J.-P. Tardivel, *For My Country* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975); Mason Wade, *The French Canadians* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), vol. 2; H. Blair Neatby, *Laurier and a Liberal Quebec* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973); Joseph Schull, *Laurier* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1965); Ramsay Cook, *Canada and the French Canadian Question* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1966); Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, *The Dream of Nation* (Toronto: Gage, 1983). Denis Monière recast some of these sources in a cultural Marxist garb in *Le développement des idéologies au Québec* (Montreal: Éditions Québec/Amérique, 1977). Patrice Dutil’s estimable *Devil’s Advocate: Godfroy Langlois and the Politics of Liberal Progressivism in Laurier’s Quebec* (Montreal and Toronto: Robert Davies, 1994) is the most recent contribution.

Canadian Club organization with his enthusiasm, the Prime Minister gave in — though he waited until virtually the eleventh hour to do so. Quebec needed something to take its mind off the twisted wreckage in the St. Lawrence, and, if the rest of the country was forcing him to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in Quebec on the eve of an election, well, so be it.

A modest municipal celebration of the 300th anniversary of Champlain's founding of his habitation at Quebec became transformed, then, by these complex and sometimes contradictory forces into the Tercentenary of the Founding of Canada with its object the consecration of the Plains of Abraham as an Historic Park — something quite different from the originators' intentions. In March 1908 the Canadian government established the National Battlefields Commission, endowed it with \$300,000, empowered it to receive additional sums raised through voluntary efforts, and authorized it to expend those funds initially on a festival celebrating the Tercentenary of the founding of Canada/Quebec and subsequently on the purchase of lands and construction of works necessary to create a permanent memorial park marking the sites of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759 and the Battle of Ste. Foy in 1760.<sup>6</sup>

Publicly funded and infused with the zeal of voluntarism, an ambitious programme unfolded in late July 1908 that gathered warships from three navies to the river below Quebec and featured processions, illuminations, fireworks, parades, reconstructions, a massed military tattoo, regatta, sail-pasts, Canada's first set of commemorative historical stamps, concerts, a gathering of learned societies, performances of the symphonic ode "Christophe Colombe", a solemn open-air mass, church services, state dinners, balls, garden parties, and, crowning the occasion, the presence of the heir to the throne, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The centrepiece of this extravaganza would be a magnificent Historical Pageant in which the citizens of Quebec would recreate before their soon-to-be sovereign and thousands of spectators scenes from their past.

The Tercentenary of Quebec in 1908 was thus the Canadian counterpart of those elaborately staged festivals of national invention that have been the subject of much recent scholarly investigation,<sup>7</sup> but its lineage extends back

6 *Statutes of Canada, 1907–1908*, 7–8 Edw. VII, chaps. 57 and 58, Acts Respecting the National Battlefields at Quebec. For the debate on these bills, see *House of Commons Debates*, 1908, vol. 3, March 5 (4376–4401) and March 6 (4497–4536); vol. 7, July 18 (13496–13506). For a lavishly illustrated history of the National Battlefields, see Jacques Mathieu and Eugen Kedl, *The Plains of Abraham: The Search for the Ideal* (Quebec: Septentrion, 1993), in English; for a brief account of the relationship of the National Battlefields Commission to the broader historical landmarks movement, see C. J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), pp. 3–25.

7 See, for example, Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in Twentieth Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

to the spectacles of Renaissance princes and medieval royal entries, tournaments, and fêtes.<sup>8</sup> The state-sponsored Historical Pageant at the centre of the Tercentenary provides a fascinating glimpse into the contested world of public memory in a divided community. Through careful selection and deft balancing and by either avoiding or wilfully misrepresenting the unmentionable, history could be made to serve various present purposes.

It was a strange logic that deemed it appropriate to honour the founding of Quebec with a memorial park to its fall, but seen from a certain perspective it did make sense. Scholars have become accustomed to the “contested” character of ceremonial events. One now expects to find divided objectives and multiple interpretations embedded in such socially constructed rituals. Antagonists could, on occasion, co-operate for different purposes. Earl Grey learned that to celebrate imperial triumph he must also commemorate a British defeat. Laurier cleverly used the fact that “Champlain has not been without honour in the city he founded” — he already had a magnificent statue — to justify doing something novel: celebrating the history of Quebec with a festival and a national historic park.<sup>9</sup> As well, it must be remembered that the ultra-nationalist Armand Lavergne, though he objected to the imperialist packaging, in the end found enough substance in the proposal to vote in the House of Commons in favour of the National Battlefields Commission. Hegemony and resistance can be acted out in the same public space, and there is room for quite a lot of dissonant activity in between. Celebrating the past is never completely straightforward, particularly in a divided polity. In this instance the issue of contention extended to what in fact was being celebrated: the founding of Quebec or its conquest? If the object was “race fusion”, who were the races?

On another occasion the contending political divisions could be examined in all their baroque splendour. There are many other aspects of this event, having to do with the issues of representation, “ocularity”, participation, and opposition, that also warrant attention. Here, however, the focus will be upon theatre, more particularly upon the ideology of historical pageantry, the nature of the “imagined past” put on display, the social structure of performance, and the unanticipated way in which the agenda of “race fusion” was both represented and subverted in spectacle.

### **The Grand Design**

The Historical Pageant presented during the Tercentenary of Quebec held in July 1908 was designed to establish and to broaden the middle ground of understanding between English and French Canadians and, in the minds of

<sup>8</sup> Roy Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals, 1450–1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), and *Splendour at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and Illusion* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973); more recently see Barbara Hanawalt and Kathryn Reyerson, eds., *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 1908, vol. 3, March 5, 1908, p. 4377.

some of the more enthusiastic celebrants, inspire a new consciousness of shared nationhood. The pageants displayed, in the most powerful dramatic form available, a view of Canadian history designed to serve explicit political goals. In the spectacle of the Historical Pageants power summoned art to help consolidate the state. Directed by one of the leaders of the contemporary British historical pageant movement and lavishly funded, Quebec's Tercentenary was in a real sense the "Ur" pageant in North America and was recognized as such by contemporaries. Its importance lies not only in its theatrical but also in its recognition as one of the most ambitious attempts at the theatre of social transformation, whereby "history could be made into a dramatic public ritual through which the residents of the town, by acting out the right version of their past, could bring about some kind of future social and political transformation."<sup>10</sup>

Louis Napoleon Parker, a musician, actor, playwright, and ardent Wagnerian, invented modern English historical pageantry in 1905. In his hands the twelfth centenary of the founding of Sherbourne, where he had formerly been music master at the school, grew into an open air "folk play" acted out by students, teachers, and townspeople on the lawns in front of the village's ruined abbey. The Sherbourne Pageant — the use of the word to cover this new form was also his invention — was an immediate if unlikely success, drawing overflow audiences. For a time Parker built a career as pageant master as did numerous imitators, whom he naturally scorned. Although he seems to have made up the rules as he went along, with a sense of proprietorial *amour propre* he later codified his art in 12 imperious commandments.

After insisting first upon what a pageant was not (a street procession, gala, wayzgoose, fête, beanfest, pageant wagon, or *tableau vivant*), he pronounced upon what a proper pageant should be: a "festival of brotherhood" in which social divisions are dissolved in a common effort to recreate scenes from a glorious past.<sup>11</sup> In essence Parker insisted upon the local, democratic, and participatory nature of these events. He took great delight in the social mixing and status inversions his "folk plays" produced onstage. The pageant should be presented not for tourists or for money but

10 David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1990). See also Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory* (New York: Vintage, 1991), pp. 279–280. The standard work on the subject, Robert Withington's *English Pageantry: An Historical Outline* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1918, reprinted 1963), vol. 2, pp. 240–241 and 262–264, comments on the "historical importance" of the Quebec pageant in the chapter on the transfer of pageantry to the United States. See also the contemporary guide to pageant making, Ester Willard Bates, *Pageants and Pageantry* (New York: Ginn, 1912), pp. 5, 6, 14, 15, 19. The "grand effects" of the massed armies were thought to be especially striking. The local legacy is dealt with in Rémi Tourangeau, *Fêtes et spectacles du Québec* (Quebec: Nuit Blanche, 1992).

11 Louis Napoleon Parker, *Several of My Lives* (London: Chapman Hall, 1928), p. 278 and following. He also contributed an essay on the principles of historical pageantry to the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, vol. 54 (1905), which Glassberg and Withington quote.

to brighten and enoble the lives of the citizens of the community, ‘to re-awaken civic pride’ and ‘increase self respect’. There were to be no sets; the antiquity (preferably ruined) of the community itself was the stage. Self-reliance, local initiative, and learning together were to take the place of store-bought goods. The pageant was intended to serve as a mass school of arts and crafts: participants had to make their own costumes and properties, research their past, write the script, compose the music, organize the event, and serve as both actors and audience. Here Parker’s pageantry joined with the contemporary arts and crafts movement to reawaken pre-industrial skills, revive the ‘moral principles associated with the past’, and thereby rekindle a sense of historical organic community.

Above all, a proper historical pageant in Parker’s formulation had explicit anti-modern impulses. The aim, apart from community education and entertainment, was to combat the spirit of the age: ‘This modernising spirit, which destroys all loveliness and has no loveliness of its own to put in its place, is the negation of poetry, the negation of romance.... This is just precisely the kind of spirit which a properly organized and properly conducted pageant is designed to kill.’<sup>12</sup> Reason had literally disenchanting society; historical pageantry aimed at nothing less than the re-enchantment of daily life.

In 1906 the London *Times* index contained no references to pageants of any kind. By 1908 it required a full column to itemize articles dealing with a score or more English pageants, and more than two columns to index the Quebec Tercentenary including its pageant.<sup>13</sup> There is no evidence, however, that in the planning stages the promoters of the Champlain Tercentenary knew much if anything of the development of historical pageantry in England before January 1908. Influenced by recent examples in the United States and their own experience, they tended to think in terms of formal ceremonies, buildings, reconstructions, and costumed processions. The World’s Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893 seems to have been the inspiration for some of the early thinking about reconstruction of Champlain’s habitation and his ship the *Don de Dieu*, as well as a parade of people dressed up as historical figures. By stages, as various committees worked over the idea and as the possibilities of federal money provided more scope for the imagination, the notion of ‘un grand cortège historique’ evolved towards a theatrical spectacle representing, in the words of the municipal Comité d’Histoire et d’Archéologie, ‘des grandes scènes dramatiques prises dans les plus belles pages de notre histoire’. According to this group of historians, charged by the city council with the task of determining

12 See Withington, *English Pageantry*, vol. 2, p. 195 and following, for a full chapter on the Parkerian pageant; see also Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, p. 44, for a perceptive commentary. Parker’s aims are spelled out along with a bemused account of his harried life as pageant master in his autobiography, *Several of My Lives*.

13 *The Times Annual Index*, 1908, pp. 803–804, 915–916.

what might be celebrated and how, those scenes ought to include Jacques Cartier claiming possession of Canada for France, Champlain's return to Quebec in 1633, Dollard's exploits at the Long Sault, Mademoiselle de Verchères with the Iroquois, and Guy Carleton repelling the American invaders in 1775.<sup>14</sup>

As politicians, businessmen, and men of letters had been working themselves towards a more theatrical and spectacular means of representing the past before a mass audience during 1907, those more familiar with the contemporary British cultural milieu had become aware of the current metropolitan fashion, historical pageantry. The good offices of the Governor General, who may well have planted some of the articles about pageantry in the Canadian press, brought these two currents together at Quebec. Louis Napoleon Parker was unavailable because of other commitments; however, late in February the local organizing committee announced that Frank Lascelles, producer of the Oxford Pageant, had accepted an invitation to direct a pageant at Quebec.<sup>15</sup>

When Lascelles arrived in the city in March, after having spent a weekend in Ottawa being briefed by the Governor General, he entered a community divided, though by far the dominant consensus of the city favoured the full-blown Tercentenary. The Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste had withdrawn to the sidelines. Having seen "its" festival inflated into this gargantuan and in some respects grotesque caricature, the SSJB refused to accommodate the Tercentenary by moving its own unveiling of the Laval Statue from the national day of June 24 to late July, when it would be swallowed up in the larger event. In this the Society was fully supported by the hierarchy of the Church. In St. Roch, the working class and commercial district north of the old city, public meetings denounced the celebration. Jules-Paul Tardivel the younger and Omer Heroux directed the *nationaliste* attack against the transformation of the tercentennial into an imperial festival in *La Vérité*, a newspaper whose 3,000 copies circulated weekly primarily amongst the clergy, religious orders, and devout lay Catholics of the province. Tardivel and Heroux put aside their fevered campaigns against conspiracies of Jews,

14 ANQ, Fonds Garneau, boîte 5, *Premier Rapport de la Commission d'Histoire et d'Archéologie nommée par son honneur le maire de Québec* (Quebec, 1907). It fell to the Commission d'Histoire et d'Archéologie, consisting of the Sheriff, Mr. Charles Langelier, a former mayor, scholar and professor of law, E. E. Taché, the provincial Minister of Lands and Forests and a noted architect and designer, and Col. W. Wood, author, specialist in the Seven Years' War, and chairman of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, to focus effort on a particular objective. The core of this report on the best means of celebrating Champlain's tercentennial is a detailed account of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham! A municipal subcommittee of historians identified particular scenes for re-enactment in January 1908; see Chouinard, *Troisième Centenaire*, Rapport du sous comité d'histoire et d'archéologie, January 23, 1908, p. 183–196.

15 AVQ, Comité Centenaire, *Procès-verbaux*, February 19 and 24, 1908. Although the word "pageant" is of French origin it was not understood by French Canadians. The term was always placed in quotation marks as an Anglicism. There would be irritation in some quarters that a more suitable French word could not be found to describe the form.



Freemasons, Orangists, Odd Fellows, immigrants, trade unions, anarchists, liberals, and socialists of all stripes to expose the imperialist plot to take over the celebration and the hidden agenda of “race fusion”.<sup>16</sup> For them the concept meant race suicide for French Canadians.

Lascelles began an intensive round of discussions with Mayor Garneau, H. J. J. B. Chouinard, the city clerk, who had proposed the celebration in the first place and served as the behind-the-scenes organizer and go-between with the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, and the Comité d’Histoire et d’Archéologie, guardians of a past of which Lascelles knew virtually nothing. In effect, the local committee had by this stage produced a “book” from which he could design a pageant.<sup>17</sup> With the full backing of the National Battlefields Commission, the pageants went into production under Lascelles’s guiding hand and with a budget of \$155,000. The Dominion Archivist, Arthur Doughty, was commissioned to compose a brief history of Canada to provide context for the pageants and authoritative historical continuity for each of the scenes. Ernest Myrand, a member of the Comité d’Histoire et d’Archéologie, a historian and musicologist, set about writing dialogue for each of the scenes and producing appropriate and authentic music. The locally famous artist Charles Huot was engaged to design the costumes for the historical procession and the pageants. Charles Vézina and the Symphonic Society were recruited to perform the music. Lascelles went shopping for an exotic list of properties not readily fabricated locally (wigs, hats, muskets, swords, halberds, bows and arrows, cannon, drums, bugles). Architects and contractors threw together plans for a temporary stadium seating 15,000 spectators to be built on the site of the race track.

The new celebrity, Frank Lascelles, offered a preview of his art as the guest speaker for the first meeting of the newly formed Quebec City Canadian Club at a luncheon in the Empire Room of the Château Frontenac on Saturday, April 11. A strikingly handsome man with the dramatic flair of a trained actor, Lascelles held the 110-member audience in a thrall with his flowing, melifluous cadences describing the wonders that would unfold in the midsummer eve. He assured his audience he had not come all of this way to put on “a mere theatrical or spectacular show”. Rather he came to help the city, the country, and the world learn about Quebec’s glorious history but in a new way through a new art form. “Things seen were mightier than things heard,” he reminded his hearers, as he invited them to:

Imagine that you dream a dream on a summer’s day and see passing before you in quick succession visions of the great heroes who have gone, the peasants, the great founders, the soldiers, the martyrs, and the saints. And you wake up to find that it is really true, there in the flesh and blood before you

<sup>16</sup> *La Vérité*, December 21, 1907; February 1, 8, 15, and 27, 1908.

<sup>17</sup> AVQ, Comité Centenaire, *Procès-verbaux*, January 17, 1907, and January 23, 1908.

are their prototypes, living, moving, walking, talking as they used to do and you can hardly believe that you are not dreaming still.

The process of bringing the past to life would in turn transform people's lives, draw rich and poor into a closer, working relationship, promote mutual understanding, and inspire "greater sympathy and a greater pride in your common heritage". History linked Quebec as no other place on the continent to "all that is noblest and best in the days of old France, the days of romance and chivalry, when that fair country was in the zenith of her religious and artistic life". Lascelles offered a lyrical hint in the form of a plot synopsis of the splendour that would unfold on the grass of the Plains of Abraham, with the sky overhead, the sweep of the historic countryside in full view, and the river flowing majestically in the background. Then with all of the eloquence he could command he summoned the city to action with the biblical injunction "let us now praise famous men and the fathers who begat us."<sup>18</sup>

### **The Pageant Unfolds**

The story of the recruitment of the cast and the way in which opposition to the Tercentenary and its pageants was overcome must be told another time. Suffice it to say here that the women's movement in Quebec City, the organized business elites, and finally the Church hierarchy, all for quite different reasons and with varying degrees of enthusiasm, eventually threw their support behind the festival. For some the Tercentenary had positive attractions. For others the all-too-likely consequences of failure were too great to contemplate. These interventions by the social hierarchy and the bishops changed the atmosphere dramatically. The *nationalistes* became comparatively subdued. *Le Soleil* reported with some relief: "Il nous fait plaisir de constater que pour l'organisation en particulier des pageants des spectacles historiques l'apathie manifestée dans les premiers temps surtout de la part des Canadiens-français disparaît peu à peu."<sup>19</sup>

Gradually the massive grandstand began to rise from a pile of lumber at the race course, a wonder (and a fire hazard) to be viewed on a spring evening. Decorations festooned the streets. The reconstructed Habitation took shape in Lower Town. When the costumes were distributed families

18 The Quebec *Chronicle* on April 13, 1908, printed a verbatim transcript. *Le Soleil* on the same date provided a front-page translation of the speech, which was given in English, with this comment: "il était beau de voir cet étranger de distinction véritablement 'British to the core', prononcer avec un si bel accent les noms français de tous nos illustres ancêtres, les grands noms de Laval, Jacques Cartier, Champlain, Montcalm, Dollard et les Frontenac, les Veudreuil, les Lévis, sans omettre la mère 'Mary of the Incarnation' et tant d'autres de nos gloires nationales. M. Lascelles possède une belle éloquence et son programme si bien coordonné a soulevé à divers reprises des applaudissements prolongés." On Lascelles's visit to Toronto, *Saturday Night* offered a profile as well of his acting career (June 20, 1908).

19 *Le Soleil*, June 10, 1908. At this point the papers had daily bulletins on Tercentenary progress.

rushed out to have their pictures taken by Quebec's portrait photographers. The militia had begun to assemble in their camps; hotels and boarding houses filled up; a tented city received the overflow. Naval squadrons were reported cruising up the river, and of course HRH the Prince of Wales was aboard one of those ships.

Nothing quickened excitement more than the arrival of the Indians. Native people had figured in the planning for the festival from an early date, inspired by memories, or more likely photographic images, of the Chicago World's Fair. Chouinard originally hoped to include a settlement of Native people as welcoming parties for Champlain. Mayor Garneau's 1907 proposal to Laurier also allowed for an Indian encampment of several tribes along with their Catholic and Protestant missionaries.<sup>20</sup>

Indians with their costumes added necessary "colour" to the programme. Obviously there was a certain carnivalesque dimension to all of this, the mingled excitement and fear of having the exotic "other" represented across the reassuring separation of the stage. Identities in the process of formation were better recognized in the presence of the people with visibly different identities. Of course the representation of Native identity, too, would be largely constructed by the observers.<sup>21</sup> Here the Quebecers were attempting to replicate the dramatic effect of the ethnographic villages of the World's Columbian Exposition in which the status hierarchy of the human race was on display on the Midway Plaisance.<sup>22</sup> Quebec culture at this point was in what might be called the twilight of the "fearsome savage" interpretive period. Indians brought to the celebration a sense of implicit but contained danger.<sup>23</sup> Native people, represented in villages, tents, costumes, and ritual performances at the Tercentenary, would reinforce progressive symbolism, showing explicitly the measure of civilization's advance. The addition of missionaries and the domesticated encampment of families framed the scene as both past and pastorate.

The Native people themselves, recruited by agents of the Canadian Pacific Railway, L. O. Armstrong and J. R. Blaney, consisted of Iroquois from Caughnawaga near Montreal, Ojibway from Sault Ste. Marie, and local Native people from nearby Ancien Lorette. The Native people's camp of upwards of 100 families, located on the Plains close to the pageant ground, attracted a steady stream of curious townsfolk. Genevra in the women's page of *Le Soleil* devoted a column to the local Native people: "Chez les

20 AVQ, *Rapport du Comité spécial du programme au Comité exécutif*, October 9 and 11, 1907.

21 Here I am following Robert Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian* (New York: Knopf, 1978), and the more recent Canadian counterpart, Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian* (Vancouver: Arsenal, 1992).

22 Robert Rydell, *All the World's a Fair* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984), pp. 48–71; Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1985), pp. 122–140; Julie K. Brown, *Contesting Images: Photography and the World's Columbian Exposition* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994), pp. 49–55, 107–113.

23 Don Smith, *Le Sauvage: The Native People in Quebec Historical Writing on the Heroic Period (1534–1663) of New France* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1974).

derniers Hurons''.<sup>24</sup> The presence of the Natives energized the rehearsals, especially the Dollard scene. American Horse, a veteran of several Wild West Shows, directed the Native people in theatrical technique. Decked out at public expense in gaudy Plains Indian headresses and leather-fringed clothing, brandishing tomahawks and shouting war whoops, American Horse and his colleagues determined to act the part expected of them.

By the end of the dress rehearsals the city and its visitors could not only sense the mounting excitement, but also see with their own eyes the evanescent enchantment of historical pageantry:

Emperors and princes, court ladies and lords of high degree, explorers and adventurers, pages, soldiers and Indians, the flower of chivalry and the pride of court and castle, the heroes of fort and log cabin, and the hardy campaigners of a bye-gone age, all clad in striking costumes of three hundred years ago, mingled yesterday with the soberly clad citizens of the present day, and rode democratically on street cars, or wagons, or walked to the Plains of Abraham.

On the same day *Le Soleil* commented: "Le public de Québec a commencé à revivre cette époque séduisante d'il y a trois siècles à l'âge d'or de la chevalerie ou la fine fleur de la société française avait son complet épanouissement, plein de grâce, plein de charme, plein de dignité."<sup>25</sup>

The Tercentenary celebrations opened on July 21 with the ceremonial arrival of Champlain, his tiny *Don de Dieu* in full sail overwhelmed by the monstrous fuming warships anchored in midstream. For our purposes we need not be distracted by the events of the Tercentenary save the grand historical procession, the *cortège historique*, in which the characters from the pageants marched through the streets of Quebec up to Champlain's monument by the Château where they paid their simultaneous respects to the founder of Canada and their future King. The history of Canada and much of that of France were thus drawn under the British imperial yoke. Two small matters about this parade warrant comment before we move to the pageants proper. First of all, the procession was not complete. The ecclesiastical characters did not march; thus it was an entirely secular affair. Secondly, when the procession passed the Ursuline Convent, Montcalm's army halted and gave a moving salute to the remains of its deceased commander interred within.<sup>26</sup>

24 Quebec *Chronicle*, June 29, July 13 and 14, 1908; *Le Soleil*, July 14 and 18, 1908. Some of the Native people were veterans of the Nile Voyageurs. Mr. Armstrong claimed to possess a peace pipe "wrought from the same red stone as Hiawatha obtained his".

25 *Le Soleil*, July 17, 1908; Quebec *Chronicle*, July 17, 1908.

26 The procession is fully covered in the various photograph and stereoscopic slide collections in AVQ, ANQ, and the York University Archives. The salute of the army is noted in the Ursulines' *Journal*. Archives Ursulines, *Journal*, 1908, pp. 84–85: "Par une bienveillante permission de l'autorité ecclésiastique il nous est donné de contempler du haut de nos fenêtres garnies de rideaux du dentelle et d'oriflammes, cette merveilleuse procession de Pageants (mot anglais-français au pays qui veut dire triomphe ou pompe) qui fait halte devant notre chapelle pour y rendre hommage aux restes mortels de l'illustre Montcalm." The cloistered orders had been given a dispensation to attend the Laval unveiling, but not the Tercentenary.

For six evenings from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. — to provide cool, dramatic gloaming and more practically to allow actors to assemble after their day's work — the magic of the pageants unfolded. The sky stayed blue, the temperatures moderate; the sunsets were glorious, and the rain on one day held off until the end of the last scene. The pageants overcame sceptics with a narcotic combination of music, a mass cast, colour, staging, a dramatic setting, and a stirring finale. As a measure of his theatrical success, it might be noted that Lascelles went considerably over budget and the sale of tickets provided much less revenue than expected, yet there were no complaints from the notably tightfisted Commissioners. To the contrary, Lascelles was hailed as a genius and voted a special silver sculpture of the *Don de Dieu* as an honorarium. It is quite likely, then, that the pageants as spectacle exceeded even Lascelles's extravagant expectations.

How did the history of Canada unfold under his direction? The show begins with an empty field. A solitary Indian spots a French ship in the distance. The village gathers to welcome the strangers with songs and greetings. Cartier and his crew offer bread and wine and lay hands on the halt and lame; a great cross of wood is planted, prayers given, speeches made, and gifts exchanged. Amidst cries of jubilation from the Native people, the newcomers withdraw to their ship taking Donnacona with them.

Cartier and Donnacona reappear in the gardens at Fontainebleau to be presented to Francis I. Courtiers emerge from the forest on horseback. The King rides under a canopy on a horse draped in gold. Fauns and satyrs dance through the gardens. Cartier kneels; Donnacona falls prostrate before the King, then rises to tell his wondrous tale of the New World.

The second pageant takes place at the court of Henry IV in the throne room of the Louvre. Champlain is presented to the King and the glittering court by Sieur de Monts and receives his commission, following which members of the court form up for a stately pavane or peacock dance. In the next scene Champlain leads his young bride to her simple home in "rock bound" Quebec. They are greeted by the entire population of 80 people; the young bride charms the assembly. Native people gather, smoke the calumet, present her with gifts of clubs and war trophies, then dance their welcome as a cask of wine is broken open.

Rustic sociability gives way to the civilizing power of women and faith in the third pageant. Mother Marie de l'Incarnation, the Ursulines, and the Jesuits are welcomed to New France by the Governor, Sieur de Montmagny. The nuns and priests kneel and kiss the soil, rise, and form a procession to a little church to thank God for their safe arrival. En route, Madame de la Peltrie kisses Indian children while Marie de l'Incarnation gathers a crowd of settlers' children about her for instruction.

Civilization hangs on the brink in the exciting fourth pageant in which the stalwart Dollard and his 16 colleagues hold out bravely against the murderous onslaught of the Iroquois. Then, after a stirring war dance, a massed attack of Indians overruns the paltry fort. "To the beat of drums the train

moves off uttering plaintive and mournful sounds and bearing the bodies of the dead in procession, with their trophies elevated on poles.”

Order is restored and civilization secured by the Church, reinforced by the secular power of the state. In the fifth pageant M<sup>gr</sup> Laval, under a glittering canopy, surrounded by a splendid entourage, “ceremonially receives” the representative of the King, Marquis de Tracy, as New France becomes a Royal Colony in 1665. Cannon roar their welcome to the new Governor and his regiment, the Carignans-Salières. Twelve Indian Chieftains lay bows and arrows at the Governor’s feet to symbolize peace. The church bells peel out their welcome, and a *Te Deum* is sung.

Taking possession of *le pays d’en haut* is the subject of the sixth pageant. Saint Lusson sets out for the west accompanied by *voyageurs*. The party is greeted by a succession of Indian tribes to mark progression along the way. Jesuits bless a cross and pray. Saint Lusson, sword raised and with a volley of muskets, claims the territory for France. A eulogy to the King is pronounced and the assembly concludes with a *Te Deum* “to thank God on behalf of these rude savages that they are now the subjects of so great and powerful a Monarch”.

It is an hour before dawn on Monday, October 16, 1690, as the seventh pageant begins. Phips’s English fleet of 34 vessels is reported to be three leagues from the city. A messenger from Phips arrives imperiously demanding the capitulation of Quebec. Governor Frontenac jauntily rejects this arrogant request with his memorable retort: “Je vais répondre à votre maître par la bouche de mes canons!” Thus thwarted, Phips’s squadron retreats in disarray.

Then comes the climax. In the French-language programme, written by Ernest Myrand, the eighth pageant is simply described as a “Grande parade d’honneur”, in which

Montcalm et Wolfe, Lévis et Murray, Carleton et Salaberry, à la tête de leurs régiments respectifs, défilent au bruit du canon et des fanfares. Salut général des troupes auquel répondent les salves des vaisseaux de guerre ancrés en rade.

Groupement de tous les personnages du Cortège Historique et des Pageants.

Chant des deux hymnes nationaux : O Canada! et Dieu Sauve Le Roi!

Salut au Drapeau.<sup>27</sup>

By contrast the official programme, written by the Dominion Archivist, Arthur Doughty, devotes four tightly printed pages of text to describing in detail the military engagements of 1759–1760.

The drama does not end in a mock battle, although the guns of the ships give the effect of the bombardment of the city. Instead, the armies of Wolfe and Montcalm form up and manoeuvre side by side. The two generals exchange honours, and jointly, at the head of a unified army, they march across the field to the strains of “O Canada” and “God Save the King”. Who would

27 Ernest Myrand, *Pageants du Tricentenaire de Québec* (Quebec: Laflamme & Proulx, 1908), p. 36.

notice that Carleton's loyal French-Canadian militia of 1775 and de Salaberry's Voltigeurs of 1812 had joined the throng? As a climax, all the pageant participants gather as the children release a flock of white doves of peace.<sup>28</sup>

According to *Le Soleil* the crowd watched the simple opening scene "en religieux silence". Excitement mounted during the frenzy of the Dollard scene (which occupied a disproportionate amount of space in all the newspaper accounts). For Laval "les cloches chantent gaiement". Following Frontenac's boldness: "Un frisson d'admiration secoue les rangs des milliers de spectateurs." Then, in a moment of heightened apprehension, the glorious finale unfolded:

Et après un intermède de quelques instants, arrivent les armées anglaises et françaises défilant côte-à-côte et fraternisant dans la paix. Les drapeaux flottent, la brise entremêle leurs plis et à côté du grenadier anglais marche le grenadier français. Les bataillons défilent, salués par les acclamations de la multitude et ils quittent le terrain laissant encore tous imprégnés des émotions diverses, les dix mille personnes ... qui quittent à regretter cette scène ou viennent de revivre dans toute leur authenticité et leur couleur locale les trois siècles de l'existence du peuple canadien.<sup>29</sup>

### Reading the Pageants

Like most mysteries this one dissolves on close examination. The pageants at the Quebec Tercentenary fulfilled some of Louis Napoleon Parker's conditions. They brought back to life a distant, romantic, chivalrous age. They recovered mystical elements — fauns and satyrs — and thereby brought a natural spirituality to the surface of bourgeois regimentation. Dance, music, and drama were united. The costumes were sumptuous; the staging breathtaking. Roles brought forth new or hitherto distinguished talents in doctors, lawyers, wives, and merchants. Past and present mingled in the streets. Above all the physical setting was sensational, drawing attention to the dictum that the site itself be the subject celebrated. A visiting pageant enthusiast, Ellis Oberholzer, believed the pageant field at Quebec the most beautiful he had ever witnessed.<sup>30</sup>

28 The full text of the pageants is provided in the Quebec *Telegraph's* commemorative volume: Frank Carrel, Louis Feiczewicz, E. T. D. Chambers, and Arthur Doughty, *The Quebec Tercentenary Commemorative History* (Quebec: Daily Telegraph Printing House, 1908), pp. 130–162; see also Myrand, *Pageants*, and the National Battlefields Commission's official *Historical Souvenir Book of the Pageants* (Montreal: Cambridge Corporation, 1908), the text of which appears to have been written by Doughty. The corrected proofs are in his papers in the National Archives of Canada. The newspapers contain lengthy accounts of the pageants as well, which have been used to double-check the printed text.

29 *Le Soleil*, July 22, 1908; *Quebec Chronicle*, August 1, 1908.

30 "On the Plains of Abraham, with the St. Lawrence's silver surfaces beyond, and the green, fir-clad hills of Canada piled high above the stream, in the fading lights of the far Northern summer evening, the scene was incomparably beautiful." Quoted in Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, p. 279.

On the other hand the pageants were put on by a national commission as a festival of national identity with a view to entertaining and instructing royalty, visiting dignitaries, tourists, and locals. Admission was charged and it was not cheap, leading to some grouching that more performances ought to have been arranged to allow orphans and others without means access. Lascelles unashamedly aimed for and attained spectacular effects. Properties were purchased and the costuming aspect of the affair generated an enormous business amongst the civil and military tailors, seamstresses, milliners, dry goods dealers, and merchants of the city. The aim of mixing the classes succeeded in part but was confounded somewhat by recruitment processes that depended upon existing social networks, clubs, organizations, and business or religious associations. Rather than subvert social distinctions, to a certain extent Lascelles's pageant put them on display.

What did the audience make of what it saw? It would be relatively easy to pile up self-congratulatory effusions from anglophones who thought it a wonderful coming together of two peoples into one. Earl Grey was specially commended by the Colonial Office for "the faculty you have of bringing into harmony elements which might be discordant". The Prince of Wales loved the pageants — so he said in a Marconigram from the *Indomitable* received at Quebec. He enthused about them later to his wife as well.<sup>31</sup> The English press, of course, was ecstatic.

But what of French Canada? Amidst its fulsome denunciations of the imperialist fête, the grudging one-sentence evaluation of the pageants by Tardivel's *La Vérité* speaks volumes: "Les représentations historiques ont été généralement goûtées." The weekly Catholic publication, *La Semaine Religieuse de Québec*, went considerably further:

Les « pageants » — mot anglais que nous n'avons pas tardé, dans tous les milieux, à prononcer à la française — ont été parmi tant d'autres articles grandioses du programme de nos fêtes, la pièce de résistance de la célébration. Nous avouons sans détour que nous sommes absolument incapable d'exprimer les fortes et grandes émotions que nous avons éprouvées à ces représentations de l'incomparable période française de notre histoire.

The pageants were particularly important, seen from this author's perspective, in precisely the terms Lascelles described: things seen are more powerful than things heard.

Nous voyons dans ces « pageants » la partie principale des fêtes, parce que les masses populaires, au lieu des notions très vagues qu'elles avaient auparavant, ont pris là, par la méthode intuitive, la connaissance exacte des plus

31 NAC, Grey Papers, vol. 14, p. 4092, Crewe to Grey, September 23, 1908. Vols. 38 and 31 contain his exchange of correspondence with the Prince of Wales and the King.



grands faits de notre histoire; parce que nos compatriotes de race anglaise de toutes les Provinces, et la foule des visiteurs étrangers, surtout des États-Unis, ont vu, de leurs yeux, la noblesse et l'héroïsme des fondateurs de notre race canadienne-française. Tous ces Anglais et Américains ont contemplé et applaudi nos gloires françaises et catholiques! Qui dira qu'il n'y a pas là un grand événement, et qu'il n'en restera pas des effets considérables?<sup>32</sup>

Genevra, the women's columnist for *Le Soleil*, agreed with this assessment. She insisted that the pageants had recruited participants from all social ranks; women had neglected their duties and homes, businessmen had neglected their affairs to bring a distant and noble past to life. English and French had worked together in a theatrical enterprise certain to have lasting effects:

Dans chacune de ces scènes, exclusivement françaises et catholiques, les Anglais ont été les premiers à accepter des rôles, en nous laissant cependant ceux des plus grands personnages, qui nous appartenait de droit, mais que nous négligions de prendre. Ils n'ont jamais eu un sourire de dédain pour nos costumes religieuses et l'emblèmes de notre culture, ils ont prouvé qu'ils respectent les convictions sincères. Nous pourrions tirer un très bon parti dans la vie ordinaire, d'une plus exacte connaissance de la mentalité de nos concitoyens de langue anglaise et sans jamais sacrifier les intérêts de la langue ou ceux de notre foi; sans jamais faire des concessions qui nous diminuent dans l'esprit même de ceux à qui nous les faisons et dépouiller un antagonisme aussi vieux que la conquête et qui n'a plus raison d'être.<sup>33</sup>

From this perspective pageants taught French Canadians about themselves and delivered a message to English Canada that it would otherwise not hear.

Lascelles and the social organization that formed around the pageants influenced the way in which these scenes would be presented. Dramatic necessity as well as social imperatives drove production values. The view of history depicted in the pageant was constructed in a particular social and political matrix. The English were still numerous and powerful in the city. The French-Canadian intelligentsia was still attached to empire. The Liberal party provided the power structure at the local, provincial, and federal levels. The route to status, position, and honour ran through collaboration. Within that context several aspects of the pageants deserve comment: time, language, the cast, the role of women, the Native contribution, and the version of history put on display.

32 Archives de l'Archidiocèse de Québec, l'abbé V.-A. Huard, directeur, *La Semaine Religieuse de Québec*, vol. 20 (1908), pp. 804–807.

33 *Le Soleil*, August 8, 1908.

The pageants presented scenes from the “heroic” period of New France. But for the fleeting sighting of de Salaberry the nineteenth century was essentially invisible. So too, for that matter, was most of the eighteenth century. The pageants dramatized a few selected vignettes from the seventeenth century. Time leapt forward from scene to scene without any intervening continuity. The marchpast at the end encompassed three separate events covering more than a half a century. So as to diffuse the impression that the conquest was the object of celebration or the end of Canadian history, two costumed groups also marched in the procession and joined the armies of Wolfe and Montcalm in the eighth pageant: Guy Carleton and the defenders of Quebec in 1775, and de Salaberry and a contingent of Voltigeurs, French-Canadian heroes of another defence against the Americans in 1812. The historical committee chose the time frame, included and excluded as it saw fit, and did its utmost to ensure that the closing bracket of time did not correspond to 1759–1760, but for all practical purposes that is where Lascelles, for dramatic effect, brought things to a close.

Theatre had a way of spilling out into the streets, however. Costumed soldiers from Montcalm’s army marched in the *nationaliste* Catholic Youth parade.<sup>34</sup> At one of the last pageants the two armies marched out of the stadium to the nearby Monument to General Wolfe, where they paid their respects. Usually the soldiers from the last scene maintained ranks and marched back through the crowds of the Grande Allée to their dispersal points. On at least one occasion Montcalm’s army marched triumphally through the gaily decorated *nationaliste* district of St. Roch, prompting requests from anglophone quarters that Wolfe’s army do the same thing there. In the streets it was possible to invert meaning. In this sense the pageants did not end at the conquest.

As befits the subject, the language of the pageant was entirely French. However logical a decision this might have been, it was nevertheless a bold move in view of the number of anglophone tourists anticipated. The organizers concluded that the inconvenience to unilingual English speakers was vastly outweighed by the offence that might be given if the past were rendered to French-speaking Quebecers in another language. The English members of the community and the tourists — duly provided with programmes and translations of the text if they were interested — registered no complaint. The only exception to the all-French dialogue came in the seventh pageant in which Phips’s delegate delivers his written ultimatum in English. Frontenac responds: “Je n’ai jamais été familier avec l’anglais, aussi, M. de Bienville, vous seriez fort aimable de me traduire ce document.” Later in the scene, when the agitated English delegate bursts out into French, Frontenac interjects: “Monsieur parle le français et bon français, l’aimable surprise! J’en suis ravi. Vous savez encore mieux notre histoire

34 *L’Événement*, July 20, 1908.

**Table 1 Anglophone and Francophone Participation**

Scene	Total	Leading roles		Other parts	
		Ang	Fr	Ang	Fr
Cartier	285	25%	75%	13%	87%
Francis I	456	0%	100%	33%	67%
Henry IV	624	29%	71%	43%	57%
Champlain	259	5%	95%	19%	81%
Ursulines	241	0%	100%	7%	93%
Dollard	100	6%	94%		
Laval	683	7%	93%	14%	86%
Lusson	185	0%	100%	18%	82%
Frontenac	767	0%	100%	19%	81%
Armies					
Wolfe	632	100%	0%	86%	14%
Montcalm	539	0%	100%	3%	97%
Totals	4,771	14%	86%	31%	69%
Quebec population	73,475	14%	85%	14%	85%

Sources: See note 36.

que notre langue. Bravo. Votre geste est charmant.” Language was a serious business, but it could also be a laughing matter.<sup>35</sup>

The director did indeed seek out a cast for his script, but by the same token the volunteers made a script for themselves; they determined to a certain extent the balance of representation through the casting. It is also the case that the process of social conscription by which the recruiting for this labour-intensive production was done worked somewhat in opposition to the objective of social mixing.

The accompanying tables offer a dim and none too reliable reflection of a social phenomenon. Names are not a very good indicator of cultural origins. In an extensively exogamous, bilingual, and bicultural setting cultures change even though names stay the same. Classification of the personnel by type of name, gender, and scene does offer some insight, however, into the social processes that underlay the pageant.<sup>36</sup> In round numbers anglophone Quebecers provided 15 per cent of the starring roles and 33 per cent of the extras; francophones occupied 85 per cent of the principal roles and made up 67 per cent of the extras in the roughly 3,000-member cast, almost a mirror reflection of the general population of the city of approxi-

35 Myrand, *Pageants*, p. 33; *Le Soleil*, July 9, 1908.

36 The names of the individual participants are listed in Carrel *et al.*, *The Quebec Tercentenary*, pp. 130–162. The list is obviously not complete; whole groups of participants are missing from the roster. The most obvious omissions are the names of the Natives (with the exception of American Horse) and the orphans. Data for the city are the means of the 1901 and 1911 census counts. *Census of Canada*, 1901, vol. 1, pp. 380–381, and 1911, vol. 2, p. 372.

**Table 2** Men and Women in the Cast

Scene	Total	Leading roles		Other parts	
		Women	Men	Women	Men
Cartier	120	0%	100%	0%	100%
Francis I	291	25%	75%	66%	34%
Henry IV	459	25%	75%	49%	51%
Champlain	94	5%	95%	19%	81%
Ursulines	76	89%	11%	57%	43%
Dollard	17	0%	100%		
Laval	518	57%	43%	22%	78%
Lusson	20	0%	100%	0%	100%
Frontenac	602	0%	100%	18%	82%
Armies	841	0%	100%	0%	100%
Totals	3,038	31%	69%	23%	77%
Civilian parts only	2,197	33%	67%	42%	58%

*Sources:* See note 36.

**Table 3** Anglophone and Francophone Casting

Segment	Total	Anglophone	Francophone
Francis I court	134	48%	52%
Henry IV noblemen	111	39%	61%
Henry IV noblewomen	200	62%	39%
Laval: merchants' wives	33	58%	42%
Laval: peasants	66	52%	48%
Laval: regiment	99	1%	99%
Frontenac: court ladies	75	99%	1%
Frontenac: court men	101	17%	83%
Wolfe's army	463	86%	14%
Montcalm's army	369	3%	97%

*Sources:* See note 36.

mately 85 per cent francophones and 14 per cent anglophones. Although the two cultural groups were mixed in most scenes, some exceptions warrant notice: the principal parts in the Laval and the Ursuline scenes were played exclusively by francophones. It also would seem to be the case that francophones made up the ranks of Montcalm's army, anglophones that of Wolfe — though there was more intermixing in the latter. The casting of certain segments provides a better indication of greater anglophone enthusiasm for pageantry. Compared to the general population, anglophone women were significantly overrepresented in the court scenes.

Several forces seem to have been at work in the selection process: fantasy, identification, inversion, and, in all likelihood, coercion. English

women in particular fulfilled an overwhelming desire to play at being French royalty, princesses, courtiers, and women of quality. Many of them appeared on horseback in the Francis I scene. On the other hand, some groups sought to identify themselves with their peers or their organizations in the past. Soldiers from the militia and the garrison made up large parts of the armies; sailors from the Yacht Club manned the *Don de Dieu*; businessmen and their wives, families, and children played at being merchants and bourgeois. Priests filled all of the ecclesiastical roles. The same was not the case, however, for nuns. The cloistered orders could not participate. The Ursulines did make the costumes for this scene, however; they took pains to ensure that the costumes were treated with due respect and were delighted when young women from good families, graduates of their convent school, were chosen to play the roles of Marie de l'Incarnation and Madame de la Peltrie. They kept in contact through friends and gathered a huge postcard collection of the pageant scenes.<sup>37</sup>

There seems to have been some inversion of roles, too: bourgeois English women took on the role of French-Canadian peasants. There was also a good deal of straightforward conscription into ranks — an orphanage provided the children of New France. Some participants sought to live out fantasies; others sought their own identities in the past.

The numbers available swelled the ranks of some scenes and left others thinly populated. The court scenes were much larger than might otherwise have been the case on account of the willingness of women in particular to volunteer. These scenes, though not the most dramatic, were the most colourful and popular. Thus women were not invisible in this history; 42 per cent of the civilian participants were female. Moreover women played starring roles in many of the scenes and left a lasting impression with the colourful mass of their costumes. This reflected the power of women as organizers and their greater interest in the theatrical aspects of the Tercentenary.

It may have been true that the actors were drawn from many ranks of society; however, the pageant made stars of lawyers, doctors, their wives and daughters, prelates, and politicians. Mr. Moise Raymond as Cartier received universal praise. The notary Boilly made a striking impression as Francis I; the advocate Antonio Couillard and his Queen, M<sup>me</sup> L. A. Carrier, carried off their roles with panache. Sheriff Charles Langelier as Champlain and M<sup>lle</sup> Yvonne de Lery as his young wife formed a heroic couple. Male members of the clergy were allowed to participate. L'abbé Vachon recreated the saintly and powerful Laval with grace and authority. The reviewer in the *Chronicle* singled out Frontenac as one of the most outstanding performances.

37 Archives Ursulines, *Journal*, 1908, pp. 85–86. See also pp. 90–91: “Tous ces dialogues et discours étaient l'oeuvre de M. Ernest Myrand, de Québec, qui a fait connaître et aimer d'avantage l'histoire de son pays[;] de concert avec M. Lascelles (protestant) il montre à tous la noblesse et l'héroïsme des fondateurs de notre race.”

The professional bourgeoisie of the city seems to have supplied the leading actors of this pageant if the impression of casual empiricism bears up under closer scrutiny. Acting in the pageants fed their sense of self-importance between other powerful social hierarchies, and it drew upon their special communication skills. Business people stayed safely in the background. It has not been possible at this stage to determine the extent to which figures associated with the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste became involved. The initial indications are that the two festivals for Laval and the Tercentenary involved substantially separate casts. As a working hypothesis it might be ventured that this was not the full range of Quebec's social structure on display, but rather the Liberal Party in costume.

Everyone had played a key part in the success of the pageants, it was affirmed on all sides in the glow of self-congratulation that followed. But all agreed, English and French, and *Le Soleil* in particular, that the Native people stood out. This is somewhat surprising since, as originally designed, Native people were to be supporting actors at most. As it turned out they starred in most of the scenes. The Native people had a great deal of artistic leeway; they largely directed their own scenes. Moreover, they showed themselves to be extremely pleased with the roles they had been given and could make for themselves. Afterwards, in an elaborate ceremony, American Horse and his colleagues invested Lascelles as an Indian Chief. Even though he was an actor among actors on this occasion, Lascelles was deeply moved by the event and took the whole thing very seriously. His obituary noted that he bore the name Tehonikonraka (man of Infinite Resources) as a chief of the Iroquois nation.<sup>38</sup>

From another perspective it is not at all surprising that the Natives made the deepest dramatic impression. They had the most energetic roles and great costumes. They fulfilled all expectations for nobility as well as savagery. Some of them were, after all, trained actors who knew how to work the crowd. The Native participants had reason to think well of Lascelles and the pageant. In this Wild West Show they got to win — in the Dollard scene. More to the point, they had key roles in most of the scenes. They did not just greet the European explorers and quietly disappear. They welcomed, guided, resisted, and showed different aspects of their characters. Their cultural differences were not only displayed to the extent that this was possible, but also used to indicate the passage up-country through different national territories. The Indians of the pageants greatly pleased the spectators. Similarly, the Native people who played these parts, with the approval of the director, made their own statement, and that obviously pleased them.

For Lascelles, working within the pageant tradition, Native peoples represented the natural, elemental spirits of the land. Native people were more

38 *Who Was Who*, vol. 3, 1929–1940 (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1941), p. 781.

effective assassins of modernism than wood sprites, sylphs, satyrs, and fairies. Moreover, they were multi-purpose elements of the drama. They could be used in Christian symbolic terms as terrible foes bringing God's retribution. They could bring a genuine tremor of fear to the play; at the same time, they could be menials, functioning as the stage crew sweeping the huge carpet onto the field for the Henry IV court scene. Their wild dancing counter-balanced the measured civility of the pavane. Their presence, singing, dancing, smoking, looking after children, hunting, and guiding, served like a Greek chorus as a mordant commentary on the drama being enacted. Their continuing presence mediated cultural difference. Here was a third force interspersed between English and French, and, within the theatrical conventions, they were able to present themselves as peoples with a history and a claim to the future deserving of consideration too. It is also clear that "race fusion" as seen by Earl Grey and "pan-Canadian nationalism" as seen by the moderate French-Canadian nationalists did not include Native people. The pageant, in its own way, said they should. In that respect the Indians stole the show.<sup>39</sup>

The past on display in the pageants was, of course, a highly selective, even idiosyncratic representation. One could go through each scene showing how issues were slanted or distorted. The selection of scenes itself emphasized heroism, nobility, grandeur, paternalism, community harmony, Christian sacrifice, mission, loyalty, survival, providential destiny, and transcendence. Royal involvement in the history of New France was greatly exaggerated by the selection and casting. The recently invented Dollard martyrdom was played to the hilt. The romantic aspects of the past were emphasized at the expense of the quotidian. The Church appeared not only a central force in history, but also was seen through an ultramontane lens; it rivaled the state in both majesty and power. The music (Mendelssohn's "War March of the Priests") and the gorgeous costumes and glittery canopy made this point.

But it must be said that the dramatic representation of the past in the pageants was not significantly unfaithful to the spirit of contemporary historiography. Parkman laid out the grand sweep of this view of the past. Thomas Chapais (who was active on the Historical Committee) and Benjamin Sulte, writing in French, carried on the heroic tradition, clericalizing it and heightening the notion of the organic unity of the collectivity. George

39 At Quebec Lascelles found a theatrical device that would serve him well in other commissions. He would go on to produce similar pageants in England, at various World Expositions on behalf of Great Britain, in other divided polities such as South Africa, and at the great Imperial Durbar in India. He would direct another pageant in Calcutta before this same Prince, then King, and there, too, he would divide and unite Hindu and Islam by interspersing between the two a mythological people of warlike and pacific capacities. See *The Historical Record of the Imperial Visit to India, 1911* (London: John Murray, 1914), pp. 256–258 for details of the Calcutta Pageant. See also Hon. John Fortescue, *Narrative of the Visit to India of Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary and of the Coronation Durbar held at Delhi, 12th December, 1911* (London: Macmillan, 1912), pp. 236–241.

Wrong published *A Canadian Manor and its Seigneurs* that year. Arthur Doughty was hard at work turning the history of New France into the dramatic and stirring origins of a distinctly Canadian nation. His *Cradle of New France* was composed in 1907; he actually wrote the preface in Quebec during March 1908 while he was working on the pageants and the Battlefields plan. That the pageants bore this mark is not surprising given the direct hand both Chapais and Doughty took in the script. The notion of a romantic past, conceived as the biography of heroes, with New France as the beginning of Canadian civilization, in which priests and nuns shared honours with generals, governors, and *voyageurs* and the Native people were alternately friends and foes, a vision of history in which two peoples — once worthy adversaries — were joined in a common project, was a dominant theme of historiography in both English and French at the time.<sup>40</sup>

Most obviously history was altered in this representation to be made more palatable. There was an ongoing struggle between the local francophone script writers on the one side and Earl Grey's forces, including the English director, on the other, over when the pageants would end. The battle for Quebec in 1759 is, in the local committee's version, melded into a military action in which the French-Canadian population is loyal to the crown in 1775 and again in 1812. For imperialists like Earl Grey history ended and began in 1759; battlefield commemoration was what this was all about. For Lascelles too, though for theatrical reasons, the natural climax and conclusion unfolded on the Plains of Abraham in 1759. The imperialist forces, supported by the director, won out on the pageant ground. However, soldiers might dress up, but they could not fight; they could only express fraternity. The Battle of Ste. Foy was amplified in importance and made to represent an act of triumphant self-defence in which French Canadians preserved for all time enjoyment of their language, culture, and Church. Historians might demur (interestingly, on this occasion they did not), but what actually happened was beside the point. In 1908 both sides won and all the gunpowder, marching, and shouting on the Plains celebrated a century and a half of peaceful cohabitation in mutual respect. This, of course, was history as someone wanted it to be, not the way it was.

Performance reflects power. In this instance power was divided, and art offered some openings for the powerless. Overall, historical pageantry at the Tercentenary reflected the balance of power in Quebec City between the overlapping categories of social class, English and French, *nationaliste* and Liberal, Church and state, men and women, historians and dramatists. The conflicted origins of the festival, its multiple purposes, the ability of participants to make a show of their own, and a culturally divided audience all

40 On this subject see Serge Gagnon, *Le Québec et ses historiens de 1840–1920* (Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1978), pp. 123–208; Smith, *Le Sauvage*, pp. 43–54; Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History* (Toronto: Oxford, 1976), pp. 1–21.



worked against hegemonic messages from one side or the other, or subverted them when they occurred. The past as “re-presented” had multiple meanings; even the disagreeable could be confronted if appropriately costumed and choreographed. Some things were more acceptable as theatre than history, and more agreeable as theatre in the form of comedy rather than tragedy.

In the detumescent glow of the theatrical experience, we can see that the “race fusion” objectives momentarily succeeded at a sentimental level. Sentiment, as Laurier famously observed, bore a unique relation to politics in Quebec. It nevertheless had its limits. Excitement over the fleet did not have much bearing upon the subsequent Naval Debate although it was undoubtedly intended to do so. Another “race” crowded onto the stage at Quebec, but that did not necessarily put it in the picture. As for theatre and its influence over politics, a turbulent and violent history could be made to teach tolerance, but what actors and audiences chose to remember is another matter.