

FROM THE ASHES:
THE NIAGARA DISTRICT IN THE WAR OF 1812

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by
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ABSTRACT

FROM THE ASHES: THE NIAGARA DISTRICT IN THE WAR OF 1812

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This thesis is an investigation of the socio-economic effect of the War of 1812 on the Niagara District, Upper Canada. An analysis of the Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society, and the Records of the War Claims Commission that sat from 1823-1826, provides a detailed breakdown of the damages inflicted by His Majesty's Troops and Militia, American troops, and Natives attached to both armies, based on township, gender, year claimed, goods claimed, and amounts claimed versus those granted, as well as a breakdown of claims based on the population of the District. This study shows that the damages to the Niagara District are localized and related to geographic location and to specific troop movements and occupation and therefore clarifies the extent of the damages, and provides a greater understanding of the experiences of the District as a result of the War.

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INTRODUCTION – FROM THE ASHES

The seeds of this paper grew out of an earlier attempt to identify and to establish the women of the War of 1812 and their role in the conflict. Laura Secord is a household name – due in large part to the chocolate store that bears her name and the Canada Post commercials that recount her harrowing trek to deliver news of invading Americans to Fitzgibbon and the British High Command. Colin Coates and Cecilia Morgan deal with Secord's story and rise to prominence in Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine de Verchères and Laura Secord.¹ I had wanted to avoid researching an already well-researched woman precisely because Secord is a household name, and because of the number of texts written about her. More importantly, after reading Katherine McKenna's book A Life of Propriety: Anne Murray Powell and Her Family, 1755-1849, I was encouraged to provide recognition for otherwise un-recognized women: I wanted to uncover the experiences of women who survived the War of 1812; women who were not members of the ruling elite like Anne Murray Powell; women who, unlike Laura Secord, did not receive recognition for bravery – but those everyday women who watched their husbands go to war, watched their houses burn and watched their poultry and gardens get plundered.² Unfortunately, it soon became apparent that primary documentation about these women was either never created or just did not survive history.

¹ Colin Coates and Cecilia Morgan, Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine de Verchères and Laura Secord (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

² Katherine M. J. McKenna, A Life of Propriety: Anne Murray Powell and Her Family, 1755-1849 (Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1994).

However, two sources did provide a means of understanding the female experience: the Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society, a charitable organization founded at York in 1812, and the Records of the War Claims Commission, left by two Boards that met from 1815-1816, and from 1823 to 1825, to provide compensation to His Majesty's Subjects.³ The Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the Records of the War Claims Commission provide a fairly thorough account of the damages experienced throughout Upper Canada as a result of the war with the United States and provide a means of identifying on whom and by whom the damages were inflicted, as well as their estimated extent. The Loyal and Patriotic Society served as an immediate response to the distress occasioned by the war and therefore provides a "social" context to the war experience: widows are well-represented in the Report, as are orphaned children, and the degree of the distress experienced by a Petitioner often related directly to the amount of relief granted. As an official government institution, the War Claims Commission deliberated on claims for losses at the hands of the Enemy, British troops and Natives attached to either army. Petitioners to this Commission were specific in listing the items lost and their values, and therefore, due to the nature of these claims, the Commission Records provide an economic outlook on the results of the war. Thus, while these two sources do provide a means of understanding the female experience, more importantly they demonstrate the experiences of everyone living in the path of the war. Together, the two provide a fairly balanced portrait – both social and economic – of the extent of the war in Canada.

³Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society (Montreal: William Gray, 1817; also, Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a) Volume: Volumes 3728-3764, 4356.

The Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the Records of the War Claims Commission provide a means to understand the effect the war had on the Niagara District: the information about the numbers of claims made, by whom and when, provided by these two sources meant that I could then understand how the settlers of the District lived through the war. Thus, the following thesis presents an investigation into the socio-economic effect of the War of 1812 on the Niagara District, Upper Canada. An analysis of the Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society, and the Records of the War Claims Commission that sat from 1823-1826, provides a detailed breakdown of the damages inflicted by His Majesty's Troops and Militia, American troops, and Natives attached to both armies, as well as a breakdown of claims in relation to the population of the District. This study shows that the damages to the Niagara District were localized and related to geographic location and to specific troop movements and occupation. It therefore clarifies the extent of the damages, and provides a greater, and more specific, understanding of the experiences of the District as a result of the War and thus, an alternative to the existing historiography that focuses on military maneuvers, troop movements, and the great atrocities inflicted by the invading Americans.

Not all of 1812 Canada experienced the war in the same way: located as it is at the border with the United States, on the road to the capital at York, and situated directly on the shores of Lake Ontario (a main water transportation route for both British and American troops and supplies), the Niagara District, Upper Canada, bore the brunt of the hostilities of the War of 1812. Crossed and re-crossed by British and American regulars, militia, and Amerindian volunteers, the District was the scene of almost continuous

occupation during the war years, and therefore provides a large number of the claims to both the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission.

The lack of primary source material about anything other than military matters is rather daunting to any historian. The Champlain Society released three volumes of Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812 – the majority of which are concerned with the military although some, like a letter from Riall to Drummond in July 1814 mentioned the burning of St. David's and "several of the neighbouring houses ... [and] the whole of the Houses between Queenston & the Falls..."⁴ Cruikshank published a similar collection in his volumes of The First American Frontier: The Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier. Similarly to that published by the Champlain Society, Cruikshank's volumes include mainly military documents, but he also provided returns of resources of the Niagara and London Districts, Loyal and Patriotic Society meeting information, and the odd letter from private citizens.⁵

A few texts, like William Kirby's Annals of Niagara, Janet Powell's Annals of the Forty, and Janet Carnochan's History of Niagara, provide an historiographical examination of the Niagara District prior to and during the war.⁶ As will be seen in Chapter One, these texts bring a degree of Loyalist bias to their accounts and indicate that

⁴William Wood, ed. Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812, Volume 3, Part 1. (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1926), 138. See also, Volume 1, published in 1920; Volume 2, 1923; and Volume 3, Part 2, 1928.

⁵Ernest Cruikshank, ed., The First American Frontier: The Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier, 1814, Volume 3 (United States, Arno Press, 1971), 12-13, 293-95, 230-32. See also Volumes 1 through 4, all reprinted in 1971 by Arno Press.

⁶William Kirby, Annals of Niagara (Toronto: MacMillan Co, 1927). Janet R. Powell, Annals of the Forty 1783-1818, No. 1 (Grimsby: Grimsby Historical Society, 1950). Janet Carnochan, History of Niagara (Toronto: William Briggs, 1914).

the entire Niagara District was destroyed to such a degree by the war, that it lost its place as the “pearl” of Upper Canada to muddy and under-developed York. Similar accounts, like that of William Dunlop, asserted that Queenston and “all the rest of the frontier, [had] been wantonly destroyed by the enemy.”⁷ What all these texts stress is the great damage inflicted by the Enemy and the great suffering of the inhabitants of the District. Even a recently published text like George Sheppard’s Plunder, Profit and Parole, while providing one view of the social effects of the war on the Province as a whole, fails to really explore the real extent of the war on the one area, the Niagara District, which experienced the most conflict.⁸

Thus, in order to really understand the extent of the damages and destruction of the war in the Niagara District – and to answer the question posed by existing historiography: was the Niagara District truly destroyed in its entirety as a result of the War of 1812 – the following paper provides a detailed examination and quantitative analysis of the Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the Records of the War Claims Commission. Chapter One consists of a discussion of the methods and findings of Janice Potter-MacKinnon, Alison Prentice and Mary Beth Norton, among others, whose studies have provided the framework for this paper.⁹ Chapter One will also provide an historiographical examination of the Niagara District prior to and during the

⁷William Dunlop, Tiger Dunlop’s Upper Canada, ed. Malcolm Ross (Canada: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 55.

⁸George Sheppard, Plunder, Profit and Paroles: A Social History of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada (Montreal and Kingston: McGill/Queen’s UP, 1994).

⁹Janice Potter, “Patriarchy and Paternalism: The Case of the Eastern Ontario Loyalist Women” (57-69) in Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clare Fellman, eds., Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women’s History (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1997). Janice Potter-MacKinnon, While the Women Only Wept (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s UP, 1993). Alison Prentice, et. al., Canadian Women: A History (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988). Mary Beth Norton, “Eighteenth-Century American Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists” William & Mary Quarterly 33(3) 1976: 386-409.

war as found in the texts mentioned above by Kirby, Carnochan and others, to provide an understanding not only of the society and economy of the Niagara District at the outbreak of hostilities in 1812, but to also track major battles and British and American troop movements across the District. Chapters Two and Three provide a deeper understanding of the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission respectively. The sources are examined in more detail, and a breakdown and discussion of the claims based on factors such as gender and geographic location provide a means of understanding specific experiences. Chapter Four analyzes the findings of Chapters Two and Three in an attempt to identify the larger picture in relation to the Niagara District and to answer the question posed earlier: was the entire District ravaged and destroyed as a result of the War? These findings should thus provide a picture of a post-war Niagara that compares dramatically to the Niagara presented in Chapter One and to the accounts of the damages presented therein. Chapter Five sums up the findings of Chapters Two through Four, and places these findings into historical context: a more specific understanding of the War of 1812 in relation to the Niagara District is explored.

From the beginning as an intent to identify the women of the War of 1812, to the present quantitative and qualitative socio-economic study of the War of 1812 in the Niagara District, the research and writing that have gone into the following paper have been an almost constant source of interest and pleasure. When few studies have been conducted on the primary sources relied on, specifically the Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the Records of the War Claims Commission, the resulting analysis

provided a few historical surprises. The paper and its conclusions presented below, thus serve as a reminder that history is always new.

CHAPTER ONE – HISTORIOGRAPHY AND PRE-WAR NIAGARA

Historiography:

The earliest Canadian studies of the War of 1812 focused almost exclusively on the various battles, paid great attention to the burning of Newark and St. David's, and lionized the heroics of Brock and Drummond. For example, Mary Agnes Fitzgibbon focused specifically on the bravery, courage and military know-how of Colonel Fitzgibbon – especially after winning at the battle of Beaver Dams.¹⁰ William Kirby's Annals of Niagara examined the sacrifices and great loyalty of the Niagara settlers.¹¹ The Incredible War of 1812 by J. Mackay Hitsman and Richardson's War of 1812 by Alexander Casselman, focus primarily on troop movements and the military battles that took place during the War.¹² Collections of primary documents like those by Cruikshank and by the Champlain Society, provide an almost exclusively military view of the war – understandably as the military administration produced an enormous amount of orders, reports and letters.¹³ What these “military” texts fail to identify is the war time situation of those not directly involved in the hostilities – for example, those with farms overlooking a battlefield, or the family burned out of their home by retreating Americans.

¹⁰Mary Agnes Fitzgibbon, A Veteran of 1812: The Life of James Fitzgibbon (Toronto: William Briggs, 1894); also McKenzie, Ruth, “Fitzgibbon, James.” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 14 Volumes. Volume IX. CD-ROM. (Toronto: University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2000.)

¹¹Kirby, Annals of Niagara.

¹²J. Mackay Hitsman, The Incredible War of 1812: A Military History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) and Alexander Clark Casselman, Richardson's War of 1812 (Toronto: Historical Publishing Co., 1902).

¹³For example, see E. Cruikshank, ed., Documents Relating to the Invasion of the Niagara Peninsula by the United States Army, Commanded by General Jacob Brown, in July & August 1814 #33 (Niagara-on-the-Lake: Niagara Historical Society, 1920(?)), or William Wood, ed., Select British Documents Volume I.

This paper thus serves as a means of providing these unheard stories a chance to be heard within the historical record.

Norman Knowles, in his book Inventing the Loyalists, notes that the rise of nationalistic sentiment in the idea of Upper Canada as a result of economic growth and “expansionist tensions” at mid-nineteenth century – when the first of these books was written – led to the “transformation of Loyalists into heroic founding fathers.” Moreover, by the end of the nineteenth century, he feels the “filio-pietistic descendants and status-conscious members of the middle class recast the Loyalists into a principled and cultured elite” thereby stressing their commitment to the Empire.¹⁴ It appears that this “recasting” extended both to the Upper Canadian militia during the War of 1812 and to the early settlers who faced a “barbarous enemy” with perseverance and unending loyalty to Britain. This recasting is seen within the large number of studies available on the War of 1812: some of the more notable “loyal” texts include Emma Currie’s The Story of Laura Secord and Canadian Reminiscences and William Dunlop’s Tiger Dunlop’s Upper Canada.¹⁵ Each of these focuses on identifying early Canadian loyalty: the language used was chosen specifically – Currie noted that the burning of Newark in December 1813 produced a “hatred long cherished” and promised “retaliation swift and vindictive.”¹⁶ Words and themes of women’s courage are used repeatedly throughout the text, for example, Currie writes that Harriet Jenoway had the “*courage* to make them [some Indians] understand that I was an officer’s lady” and of Laura Secord she wrote: “when

¹⁴Norman Knowles, Inventing the Loyalists (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 5.

¹⁵Emma A. Currie, The Story of Laura Secord and Canadian Reminiscences (St. Catharines, 1913) or Dunlop, Tiger Dunlop’s Upper Canada.

¹⁶Currie, The Story of Laura Secord, 129.

St. David's was burned, she... succeeded in *saving* one of her buildings from the flames, and *with her own hands helped to rebuild* another."¹⁷ William Dunlop also focused on the destruction faced by the Niagara settlers, writing "Queenston, though in ruins, having, like all the rest of the frontier, been wantonly destroyed by the enemy, was then, as it is now, a very prettily-situated village."¹⁸ The language used by Dunlop, specifically "wantonly destroyed," serves to remind his readers of the many trials and tribulations faced by those loyal to the crown.

Morgan in " 'Of Slender Frame and Delicate Appearance:' The Placing of Laura Secord in the Narratives of Canadian Loyalist History" feels these narratives were of critical importance in understanding the imperial link between Canada and Britain's political, social and cultural traditions by creating the heroes who symbolized loyalty and the preservation of this very link.¹⁹ She also notes the importance of keeping these stories in historical perspective: they are examples of early Canadian patriotism and their "authors see locally based stories as having a much wider emotional and moral significance in the narratives of the nation."²⁰ Moreover, stories emphasizing heroes, like Laura Secord, written primarily by female historians, served to "domesticate" the image of male suffering and sacrifice, and to provide a context and symbol of "Canadian patriotism" – essentially the images created in these loyalist-exalting texts came to

¹⁷Currie, *The Story of Laura Secord*, 169-70, 75, italics mine.

¹⁸Dunlop, *Tiger Dunlop's Upper Canada*, 55.

¹⁹Cecilia Morgan, "Of Slender Frame and Delicate Appearance: The Placing of Laura Secord in the Narratives of Canadian Loyalist History" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 1994 (5): 197.

²⁰Morgan, "Of Slender Frame and Delicate Appearance", 206.

symbolize not only Morgan's "pioneer womanish experience in Canadian history" but all pioneer experiences.²¹

The lack of recent historiography – with the exception of works by George Sheppard and Cecilia Morgan – is less daunting when the large body of information concerning United Empire Loyalists is considered. The American Revolution and the influx of Loyalists into British colonies provide a wealth of information upon which this study is based. A space of less than forty years separates the two events and the large number of the primary sources regarding the Revolution, notably the Damage Claims, has resulted in an extensive amount of historiography surrounding the Loyalist experience. As will be shown, the methods used and questions asked of the Loyalist sources are of immediate importance and relevance to the questions at hand here.

Mary Beth Norton, in her article "Eighteenth-Century American Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists," examines 468 claims by American women out of a total of 3 225 Loyalist claims for damages as a result of the Revolutionary War, in an effort to discover the varieties of the female experience in eighteenth century America. The Loyalist War Claims, which consist not only of grants but also formal memorials, private letters and loss schedules, provide information not only about the personal losses and experiences of over 3 000 Americans but also, she feels, "about the modes of life the war interrupted."²² More important is the fact that the War Losses Claims are not restricted to the upper classes but they provide a "history from below" in that the claims

²¹Morgan, "Of Slender Frame and Delicate Appearance", 197, 206-8.

²²Norton, "Eighteenth-Century American Women in Peace and War": 388.

include those from men and women from every social class, every economic class and every education level. Similarly, in Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800, Norton argues that although her study is not based upon a "representative cross section of the American female populace," she is able to depict many aspects of the lives of all eighteenth century American women through indirect sources.²³ Janice Potter-MacKinnon's article "Patriarchy and Paternalism: The Case of the Eastern Ontario Loyalist Women," uses memoirs, letters and postwar claims for compensation to "bring to life a vaguely known or shadowy group." What she discovers is a lessening of the sexual division of labour as women occupy the roles on the farm or estate or in the business left vacant by men at war.²⁴ Extending her study of the Loyalist petitions to the British, in While the Women Only Wept Potter-MacKinnon notes the "rigidly defined hierarchy" that Loyalist refugees discovered upon reaching British lines and she argues that women were especially subordinated. Studying the language used within these petitions, Potter-MacKinnon identifies a very obvious sex difference: while female petitions for aid stress their weakness, dependence, and suffering, male petitions focus on their decision-making, action, service and sacrifice.²⁵

In Wives and Mothers, School Mistresses and Scullery Maids: Working Women in Upper Canada 1790-1840, Elizabeth Jane Errington notes that key words and phrases are used repeatedly in historical documents and provide insight into the roles expected of both men and women, loyalist or not. In the obituary section of newspapers, the only

²³ Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women 1750-1800 (Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1980).

²⁴ Strong-Boag and Fellman, Rethinking Canada, 58.

²⁵ Potter-MacKinnon, While the Women Only Wept, 103-104.

section at this time to mention women with some degree of regularity, women were described as “virtuous and affectionate,” “kind and indulgent;” they had good manners, “Christian commitment,” and were intelligent, industrious and frugal.²⁶ Understanding that such language patterns existed – and existed during this period of study in the primary documents produced – is essential to decoding the sources to be examined – not only in reference to the War Claims Commission or to the Loyal and Patriotic Society, but even with things as seemingly transparent as letters and military general orders.

For the purposes of this study, the methods to be used belong primarily to the realm of the social historian, but Chapter Four also relies heavily on the work and methods of quantitative historians. With social history comes the attempt to explore “new perspectives” on the War of 1812, and in this case the event will be examined from the perspective of those affected by the occupation and fighting in the Niagara region. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie based his book Montaillou solely on the Inquisitorial Records of the Bishop of Poitiers in an effort to better understand the role of religion and daily life in a medieval French peasant community. Although the analysis is in much greater detail than the analysis found below, Burke notes that Ladurie feels the use of official records to identify the “mental and material world of past generations” is completely valid.²⁷

Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, editors of On the Case: Explorations in Social History, agree with Ladurie. They define case files as “records generated by

²⁶Elizabeth Jane Errington, Wives and Mothers, School Mistresses and Scullery Maids: Working Women in Upper Canada 1790-1840 (Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1995), xi-xii.

²⁷Peter Burke, ed., New Perspectives on Historical Writing, 2nd Ed., (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania UP, 2001), 26-30; also, Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village, 1294-1324 (London: Scholar, 1978).

political, social, legal and other institutions entrusted with the task of categorizing and assessing certain populations, usually with the purpose of supervising, treating, punishing, servicing and/or reforming individuals or groups deemed in some way deviants or victims.”²⁸ Such is the case with both the Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the Records of the War Claims Commission. The Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society lists the hundreds of grants made by the Society to the needy of the province and details the amounts given, the date the relief was granted and, in some instances, the location of the petitioner and the reason the grant was made. Furthermore, the Report was published in 1817 to specifically treat a group of individuals labeled “victims.” The Records of the Commission served a similar function: in this case, the government assessed the losses of the “victims” of the war in order to determine their degree of loss. Iacovetta and Mitchinson further argue that the use of case files provides a means of “recover[ing] the lives of the less powerful” as well as understanding “the differential impact of economic transformations on women, workers and families.”²⁹ Recalling Errington’s work on key words, Iacovetta and Mitchinson warn that social historians relying on case files need to understand how “the institution producing the records ... exercised its power” in imposing “conformity” in the records and in encouraging “citizens to censor voluntarily their actions.”³⁰ The documents produced by both the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission will be examined in greater detail in Chapters Two and Three respectively but it is important to stress here that both institutions were quite specific regarding the methods and wording used in

²⁸Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson, eds. On the Case: Explorations in Social History, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 3.

²⁹Iacovetta and Mitchinson, eds., On the Case, 4, 7.

³⁰Iacovetta and Mitchinson, eds., On the Case, 9.

submitting claims – as will be seen, those records deviating from the norm were either returned, pending a proper submission, or were flatly denied.

The quantitative study conducted in Chapter Four analyzes the Loyal and Patriotic Society Report and the War Claims Commission Records based on gender, year claimed (if applicable), location claimed (if applicable), amount claimed, amount granted and type of claim (for relief, goods, etc.). The results provide a picture of the immediate (and possibly long-term) difficulties experienced by those closest to the action as well as an interpretive framework in relation to the history of the area and the historiography of the war.

The Niagara Region:

Of a total of almost 46 000 people living in Upper Canada in 1805-06, the majority – sixty percent Sheppard asserts – were of American descent.³¹ Of these 46 000, less than five percent lived in the colony's three "urban" centres: Kingston is estimated to have had a population of 1 000; York, the new capital, had 600; and Newark, the old capital and the "pearl" of the province of Upper Canada, had a population of just less than 1 000.³² The remaining population lived in scattered villages and farms across the province.

The population itself was generally described as having "a hardy and robust constitution" and was hardworking and industrious of character as "the most of the ir

³¹Douglas McCalla, Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada 1784-1870 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 253; and Sheppard, Plunder, Profit and Paroles, 18-22.

³²Sheppard, Plunder, Profit and Paroles, 35-36.

clothing is of their own manufacturing.”³³ Moreover, it was noted by one traveler to the area that “Drunkenness [sic] and dissipation are seldom seen among the people ... there appears to be but little time or temptation to frequent taverns for that purpose.”³⁴ Robert Gourlay’s accounts do not necessarily agree: he makes note of a few “idle and vicious persons, who hang loose upon society” but argues that the “main body of the inhabitants may be characterized as industrious.” Further, he notes “the habit of smoking is very common among all classes” and cites an 1810 report of approximately 100 000 pounds of legally imported tobacco entering the region. As for drunkenness, he acknowledges the “too free use of ardent spirits” and the “facility with which distilled liquors could be procured” but goes on to say that “instances of occasional excess and habitual intemperance are becoming less frequent” and hopes that “the rising generation... will complete the reformation thus begun.”³⁵ A large part of the population of Upper Canada was not well educated, nor were there many opportunities for them to remedy this situation. In 1807, the Province enacted the School Act which provided for £100/year for grammar schools in each district, but due to restrictions (several years of prior schooling was required for admission) and distance, few families took advantage of the opportunity. Craig does insist that as the population continued to increase, so too did the interest in learning.³⁶ These were the people that would bear the brunt of the American invasion and British defense.

³³J. A. MacDonell, Sketches Illustrating the Early Settlement and History of Glengarry in Canada (Montreal: Wm Foster, Brown, 1893), 66 and Gerald M. Craig, Early Travellers in the Canadas 1791-1867 (Toronto: MacMillan, 1955), 42.

³⁴Craig, Early Travellers in the Canadas, 42.

³⁵Robert Gourlay, Statistical Account of Upper Canada (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), 116-17.

³⁶Craig, Early Travellers in the Canadas, 39; Sheppard, Plunder, Profit and Paroles, 33).

The history of English settlement in the Niagara region begins in 1782 when Colonel Butler of Butler's Rangers and of Revolutionary War fame, made an official survey of the Niagara settlement. At that time, it appears that only two families were currently settled in the Stamford area: Philip Bender and his family of five, and Thomas "McMicken's [sic – McMicking] family of six and a slave."³⁷ By 1783, Stamford had 10 established settlers and the Province was officially opened to "orderly settlement."³⁸ The area quickly gained popularity as a safe harbour and wharves were built by the 1790s and storehouses and docks were built at both Queenston (the lower landing), along the Portage Road, and at the mouth of the Chippawa (the upper landing). The first stagecoach began leaving Newark three days a week in 1798 along the Portage Road for Chippawa and there are estimates that, by the turn of the century, approximately 60 wagons per day were loaded at Queenston for the trip to the upper landing.³⁹ Robert Gourlay's Statistical Account of Upper Canada provides further information regarding the early days of settlement in Niagara. His map, found in the Introduction to his Statistical Account, is reproduced in Appendix 1 and illustrates the township boundaries, major creeks and, of interest later, the places of major battles during the War of 1812. Gourlay notes that many of the early settlers to the District were of American descent: Loyalists (or others) attracted to the land, to the point that, by 1817, "the whole district, about seventy miles... by forty, is now generally cleared, inhabited, and cultivated."⁴⁰ Gourlay's general survey found a variety of trees – including fruit – grew both wild and in cultivation, that the principal fruit was the apple, and that wheat was the staple of the

³⁷Forest, River, Early Settlers: A Little History of Early Settlement of the Area Now Within the City of Niagara Falls, Ontario, to the Year 1800 (Niagara Falls: Niagara Falls Public Library, 1984), 7.

³⁸Forest, River, Early Settlers, 9.

³⁹Forest, River, Early Settlers, 11.

⁴⁰Gourlay, Statistical Account, 93.

District.⁴¹ The principal exports of the District included lumber, wheat (generally in the form of flour), peas, potash, “furs and peltries,” pork, beef and butter.⁴² Of interest is his assertion that although purchases were frequently made by barter, it was also common for “farmers [to] frequently anticipate their crops” but that in 1817, “*the inhabitants are generally less indebted than they were before the war.*”⁴³ What this seems to indicate is that, perhaps, the ravages of war were not quite as bad as other reports and some existing historiography seem to assert. This idea is pursued further in Chapters Four and Five.

Of the 46 000 people who lived in Upper Canada at the beginning of the nineteenth century, 24% or 11 000 people, lived in the Niagara District.⁴⁴ Newark, the former capital of Upper Canada and the centre of both the province and the district, was described by one traveler in 1792-93 as “a poor wretched straggling village, with a few scattered cottages erected here and there as chance, convenience or caprice dictated.”⁴⁵ Early settlers to the area may have built “a small log hut with but a bark roof and a chimney made of sticks and clay, the chinks between the logs stuffed with moss, and a ladder up to a loft above, and only ten acres cleared.”⁴⁶ By the outbreak of the war, the former capital of Newark had grown to quite the bustling town and “many of the buildings are handsome, composed of brick and stone.” More importantly, at least for the more “civilized” of the inhabitants, Newark was also home to “several Churches, an

⁴¹Gourlay, Statistical Account, 97-99.

⁴²Gourlay, Statistical Account, 101, 107.

⁴³Gourlay, Statistical Account, 108, italics mine.

⁴⁴McCalla, Planting the Province, 253.

⁴⁵Craig, Early Travellers in the Canadas 1791-1867, 7.

⁴⁶Mary Warren Breakenridge, History of the Arrival of the Baldwin Family in Canada in 1798 (1859) As told to daughter Maria Murney in 1859, 6.

Academy, six Taverns and about twenty [stores].”⁴⁷ Merchants provided a wide selection of goods but a number of essentials were also made right in the District: “Salt is made here... hats, shoes, boots, and tin and crockery ware are manufactured here in great plenty ... linen and woolen cloth are made in abundance ... whiskey, and apple and peach brandy are also made in considerable quantities.”⁴⁸

Agriculture was key in the region and Niagara farmers did quite well for themselves. Cruikshank, based on an 1812 “Return of Resources for the District,” estimates that farmers had available a variety of crops and animals, as seen in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Crops and Animals Available to Niagara Farmers, 1812⁴⁹

Flour	3 571 cwt
Wheat	40 621 bushels
Rye	3 854 bushels
Oats	12 008 bushels
Corn	1719 bushels
Barley	53 bushels
Peas	1768 bushels
Cattle	11 718
Sheep	16 545
Hogs	9 907
Horses	3152

Newark was the centre of trade in Western Upper Canada – all goods went through the town and influenced the merchants and traders who established shops in the area, as well as greatly influencing the population.⁵⁰ Newark was the centre of trade for the simple reason of geographic location – situated as it was on the Niagara

⁴⁷Wilcomb Washburn, ed., Narratives of North American Indian Captivities, Volume 37 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978), 53.

⁴⁸Craig, Early Travellers in the Canadas, 43.

⁴⁹Cruikshank, The First American Frontier, 12-13.

⁵⁰Kirby, Annals of Niagara, 216.

Peninsula, bordered by Lakes Erie and Ontario, and on the road to United States – Newark, and the Niagara District as a whole, was also the centre of the war as invading armies marched west through the plentiful fields and orchards towards York and defending armies marched east to the border at the Niagara River. F. C. Drake, in his essay concerning the naval aspect of the War, notes that of the five major defensive points of Canada at the outbreak of the war, only the Eastern and Western portions of the Niagara Peninsula and the Western District were ever seriously threatened. Kingston, Montreal and the Lower St. Lawrence all escaped the majority of both fighting and occupation, and for the most part, benefited from the war.⁵¹

After months of building tensions, on June 18, 1812, the United States declared war on England. The Americans resented the Orders-in-Council issued by England against France during the Napoleonic Wars and they also took issue with the “cursed practice of impressments” and their “right” to search ships suspected of carrying trade goods to France. Apparently, a “great number of American vessels became victims of this perfidious order.”⁵² The theatre of war was to be North America – and the Niagara District lay right in the middle of the building storm. A number of studies examine the military aspects of the War in great detail and serve to highlight some of the more relevant aspects here. Drake and Stanley agree that the Niagara region was never considered an area of great interest to the Americans: as mentioned by Drake, Montreal and Kingston were considered by the British to be the most valuable for the Americans,

⁵¹F. C. Drake, “The Niagara Peninsula and Naval Aspects of the War of 1812,” Wesley B. Turner, ed. *The Military in the Niagara Peninsula: Eighth Annual Niagara Peninsula History Conference* (St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishing, 1986), 20.

⁵²Samuel Brown, *An Authentic History of the Second War for Independence*, Volume 1 (Auburn: J. G. Hathaway, 1815), 7 and Kirby, *Annals of Niagara*, 180.

as were, possibly, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.⁵³ George Stanley noted that the American Major General Dearborn never took military action in Niagara seriously but rather, saw it as a diversion to keep pressure off Major General Hull at Detroit.⁵⁴

British forces occupied much of the region throughout the war: they were stationed at Forts Erie and George, Queenston, Burlington Heights, Stoney Creek, Forty Mile, Twenty and 12 Mile Creeks, St. David's and Beaver Dams, and everywhere along the roads in between each town during the war. While the Americans made frequent forays and brief occupations of the District, the British maintained control of these areas for the much of the conflict. In August 1812, Stephen Van Rensselaer took command of 1 000 American militiamen on the Niagara Frontier after Hull's failed invasion in July of 1812.⁵⁵ Altogether, the American force at the border numbered 1 350 regulars and over 2 500 militia. On October 12, 600 combined American forces crossed the Niagara River on their way to Queenston – the battle that occurred on October 13 saw the death of the British Commander Isaac Brock and, after a long battle, the retreat of the Americans. Stanley points out that all the wounded were taken to makeshift hospitals in Niagara at St. Mark's Church, to Government House, and to the Indian Council House.⁵⁶ The armistice that followed the battle allowed both the British and the Americans time to re-supply and to strengthen their forces, but did not last long. While the British were stationed at Fort George, the towns of Queenston and Newark remained at risk. In late November, the British and Americans began exchanging a heavy bombardment across the river and the

⁵³Hitsman, The Incredible War of 1812, 39-40.

⁵⁴George F. G. Stanley, The War of 1812 Land Operations (Toronto: Macmillan & National Museum of Man, 1983), 117.

⁵⁵Stanley, The War of 1812 Land Operations, 117, and Table 1.2.

⁵⁶Stanley, The War of 1812 Land Operations, 121-131.

town of Newark apparently suffered from “the enemy’s use of hot shot.” Another attempted American invasion came on the 28th of November when they embarked at Black Rock and Fort Erie, were opposed by the British, and retreated back across the river. Fort Erie sustained artillery fire in early March and members of the Canadian militia were deserting at a high rate – unknown to the Americans who held off crossing the Niagara River until May of 1813 when they landed in Grantham Township. The British, under Brigadier General Vincent, evacuated Fort George to avoid losses and marched towards Queenston and Beaver Dams. In his hurry to flee, Vincent impressed all available wagons in the area and urged all the remaining militia to return to their homes. Vincent retreated to 40 Mile Creek and then to Burlington Heights – leaving most of the District at the mercy of the Americans who quickly occupied both Forts Erie and George. The Americans waited until the beginning of June to start their advance up the Peninsula – on June 5 they had reached Stoney Creek which was only a short march to Burlington Heights: an essential British post and the central road point between York and the Western frontier. On the evening of June 5-6, in a “noisy and confusing” surprise attack, 700 British under Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey, ousted the Americans from Stoney Creek and sent them retreating past Forty Mile Creek to Fort George; from where they burned Fort Erie and abandoned Chippawa and Queenston. The British, under Vincent, began moving on Fort George. At the end of June, an increasingly nervous American Brigadier General John Boyd attempted to oust Major General Fitzgibbon from St. David’s and Queenston but after a brief struggle at Beaver Dams on the 23rd of June they retreated to Fort George.⁵⁷ In December 1813, retreating Americans burned Newark on their way across the river.

⁵⁷ Stanley, The War of 1812 Land Operations, 136-37, 180-84, 186-90, 193-97.

It was at this point, Stanley argues, that the Americans decided to turn their main focus away from the Niagara frontier – Montreal and Kingston were to be the main objectives for 1814 however, due to a misunderstanding, it did not quite happen that way. Early in July, the Americans landed on the Canadian shore, found no resistance at Fort Erie and moved on to Chippawa, Queenston and Newark. The battle at Chippawa on July 5 left almost every house a make-shift hospital: Stanley cites 148 British killed and 221 wounded.⁵⁸ The Americans occupied Queenston from where they marched on and burned St. David's, before moving on to Chippawa and the battle at Lundy's Lane on the 25th and 26th of July, 1814: a battle that saw almost 200 killed, over 1 000 wounded and

Table 1.2: Important Dates Relating to the Niagara District During the War of 1812

1812	July 12	Brigadier General William Hull invades Upper Canada
	October 13	Battle of Queenston Heights and Brock's death
	November 28-30	Brigadier General Alexander Smyth attempts invasion across the Niagara River
1813	May 25-27	Dearborn's forces capture Fort George; Brigadier General John Vincent and the British retreat to Burlington Heights
	June 6	Battle of Stoney Creek
	June 24	Battle of Beaver Dam
	December 10	Newark burned by Americans who retreat to Fort Niagara
1814	July 5	Battle of Chippawa
	July 19	St. David's burned by Americans
	July 25	Battle of Lundy's Lane

approximately 350 missing from both sides. In mid-August, the seizure of Fort Erie began but the British – sick, cold and injured – withdrew to Chippawa on September 21, destroying bridges and burning fodder on the way. The Americans, for their part,

⁵⁸Stanley, *The War of 1812 Land Operations*, 308-313.

destroyed several bushels of wheat at Cook's Mills.⁵⁹ This ended the 1814 campaign in Niagara and, with peace in sight, it ended any further hostilities in Niagara. With approximately ten major military engagements in the Niagara District from 1812-14, the American and British armies effectively laid waste to the countryside they fought in and marched through. It is important to note that the damages were not all the result of the razing of towns or the erecting of batteries in orchards but continuous occupation, foraging and the impressments of goods for the cause resulted in equally extensive damages.

Early in the war, it was recognized by both the Americans and the British that the Niagara District was the ideal arena for battles and occupation not only because of its geographic position, but also because of its natural abundance. In November of 1813, the British General de Rottenburg, based at Kingston, wrote to Brigadier General Vincent who was then in the District that:

... It is a great consolation ... that you still occupy a country [Niagara] so abundant as that Neighbourhood including the Long Point District – it would be as before observed highly desirable that *constant occupations should be undertaken* in concert with the Indians towards the Niagara Frontier *if only for the purpose of sharing with the Enemy the Supplies of that abundant District.*⁶⁰

And share they did. Foraging, it appears, was a necessary and unceasing activity for those in the military. William McKay, a British officer, kept a diary of his time in Upper Canada. Typical of both armies throughout the District, he wrote in August of 1812 that “we landed about two miles below the town, and then scampered off to the orchards with

⁵⁹Stanley, *The War of 1812 Land Operations*, 326-332.

⁶⁰Wood, *Select British Documents*, Volume 2, 330, italics mine.

our haversacks, where we got apples and pears as many as we could wish.”⁶¹ Thomas Ridout, at this time a temporary clerk in the Commissariat Department, wrote to his father at York while camped near Niagara in September 1813 specifically about foraging:

To-night our dragoon is to make a grand attack upon the onions. The nests are kept very nice and clean from eggs... We feed a turkey every day at the door, which is doomed for our Sunday dinner. Sometimes a cow happens to get milked over night, for the old lady is getting to be very stingy of the milk.

To his brother, George, he wrote: “we burn rails, steal apples, pears and peaches at a great rate.”⁶²

When British supplies ran low and foraging ceased to be an option for provisioning the army and militia, the Commissariat turned to the issuing of General Orders.

Drummond, in August 1814, issued a General Order to the Lincoln Militia (of the Niagara District) in which the commanding officers were “particularly enjoined to ... enforce, if required, from five to twelve bushels of wheat from each inhabitant... .”

Drummond did ensure the farmers who did contribute were rewarded; the General Order goes on to state that they would “receive for the same the very liberal price [really, the going rate] of two and a half dollars per bushel... It is hoped that the voluntary compliance of every individual will render coercion unnecessary.”⁶³ By 1814, it appears that the region was running short of “abundant” supplies. Lt. General Drummond wrote to Sir George Prevost from the Fort Erie area in September 1814 that “... I have no depot

⁶¹Wood, ed., Select British Documents, Volume 2, 549.

⁶²Matilda Edgar, Ten Years of Upper Canada in Peace and War... Being the Ridout Letters (Toronto: William Briggs, 1890), 225, 227. Robert J. Burns, “Ridout, Thomas Gibbs,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume IX. Also, Sheppard, Plunder, Profit and Paroles, 100.

⁶³Cruikshank, Documents Relating to the Invasion of the Niagara Peninsula by the United States Army, 187.

of provisions or of any other description of supplies nearer than Fort George, that the forage of the surrounding country to the distance of upwards of ten miles has been exhausted.’⁶⁴

While foraging seemed to be restricted to firewood, fodder and food-stuffs, pillaging was not – and the residents of the Niagara District were not safe from either. Charles Askin recalled one incident in his journal of August 20, 1812:

we were still at Breakfast when a message came to us from Mrs. Anderson begging that we would go and prevent the Indians from plundering her house... we found the Indians had taken a number of things – and were taking everything valuable they could get hold of. they [sic] paid no attention to us whatever when we tried to make them desist... from this house they went to several other houses and plundered them.⁶⁵

As mentioned, the British were not alone in foraging, nor unfortunately, in pillaging – they “shared” the resources of the District with the invading Americans. In order to assuage the fears of the inhabitants regarding “unlawful” foraging and pillaging, the American military administration issued Proclamations outlining upon whom and how pillaging would occur. The American Secretary of War, Armstrong, warned Major-General Brown that upon entering Canada in June 1814, “the laws of war will govern. Men found in arms or otherwise engaged in the service of the Enemy will be treated as Enemies. Those behaving peaceably... will be treated as Friends. Private property must in all cases be held sacred...”⁶⁶ Dearborn assured the inhabitants of Niagara, that “all

⁶⁴Cruikshank, *The First American Frontier*, Volume 4, 200.

⁶⁵Wood, ed., *Select British Documents*, Volume 2, 540.

⁶⁶Cruikshank, *The First American Frontier*, Volume 4, 25, see also R. Janet Powell, *Annals of the Forty: 1783-1818* (Grimsby: Grimsby Historical Society, 1950), 65.

who would come forward and voluntarily enroll their names... and claim the protection of the United States shall have their property and personal rights secured to them.”⁶⁷

While these assurances and orders were made, they were not always followed. American General George McClure admitted that “illegal, unauthorized and forbidden pillage has been committed by a few, who are lost to all honour and insensible to the obligations of a soldier” despite his pledge to “protect the innocent, the unfortunate and the distressed.” The large number of the documents that have survived focus on the wanton destruction committed by the Americans on the residents of the Niagara District.⁶⁸ American documents provide insight into this destruction along the entire frontier. The American commander Sinclair wrote in May 1814 that:

I hear near Long Point they have a considerable quantity of flour deposited in five or six manufacturing mills... Those mills supply all the Upper part of the Province with bread stuff. I have proposed... that I will transport as many of the Troops... as can be embarked on board small vessels... and that we will want a favourable opportunity, touch on the shore, land before daylight, and by a rapid move destroy these mills...⁶⁹

The opinion that Drummond expressed to Prevost in May 1814 that “the force of the enemy has since been computed to consist of about 800 men, whose conduct has been disgraced during their short stay ashore by every act of barbarity and of illiberal and unjustifiable outrage” was shared by many Niagara residents.⁷⁰ Major MacFarland of the 23rd United States Infantry wrote to his wife shortly after the burning of St. David’s of July 1814 that “the whole population is against us; not a foraging party is but fired on,

⁶⁷Powell, *Annals of the Forty*, 65.

⁶⁸George McClure, *Address to the Inhabitants of the Upper Province of Canada* (Headquarters, Fort George: October 16, 1813).

⁶⁹Cruikshank, *The First American Frontier*, 18.

⁷⁰Cruikshank, *The First American Frontier*, 15.

and not infrequently returns with missing numbers.”⁷¹ This situation was to be expected – and MacFarland acknowledged this to be the case, explaining “the Militia have burnt several private dwelling houses, and on the 19^{inst.} burnt the village of St. David’s, consisting of thirty or forty houses... My God, what a service! I never witnessed such a scene, and had not the commanding officer of the party... been disgraced and sent out of the army, I would have resigned.”⁷²

General Riall reported to Drummond in July 1814 that the Americans had indeed burnt the village of St. David’s and “several of the neighbouring houses” but also “burnt the whole of the houses between Queenston and the Falls.”⁷³ MacFarland was not the only American to be appalled at the sight of a village reduced to ashes: Alexander McMillan, a private in the United States Army described the actual burning of Dover – while not within the Niagara District, it is likely that the scenario was quite similar: “A scene of destruction and plunder now ensued, which beggars all description. In a short time the houses, mills and barns were all consumed, and a beautiful village... was before two o’clock a heap of smoking ruins.”⁷⁴

On this note, it should be remembered that total destruction was not a specifically American practice. In retaliation for the burning of Newark, Riall crossed the Niagara river and “the village of Lewiston was at once set on fire and totally consumed” and “all

⁷¹Cruikshank, Documents Relating to the Invasion of the Niagara Peninsula by the United States Army, 73.

⁷²Cruikshank, Documents Relating to the Invasion of the Niagara Peninsula by the United States Army, 73.

⁷³Cruikshank, Documents Relating to the Invasion of the Niagara Peninsula by the United States Army, 72, also Cruikshank, The First American Frontier, 72.

⁷⁴Morris Zaslow, The Defended Border: Upper Canada and the War of 1812 (Toronto: MacMillan, 1964), 234.

the mills and stores between Lewiston and the Lake shore as far as Oak Orchard were burnt.”⁷⁵ The United States House of Representatives undertook a survey and released a report that noted “the testimony collected ... shews [sic] that the property of unarmed citizens has been pillaged by the officers and crews of the British vessels of war... their houses burnt, and places of public worship mutilated and defiled.”⁷⁶ Perhaps the ultimate example of British vindictiveness after the ravaging of the Niagara frontier was the capture of Washington and the burning of the public buildings – including what is now the White House.

The towns of the Niagara District provided the stores and supplies needed by the British and thereby ensured the “wrath” of the Americans for defying orders to “live peaceably.” The settlement at the Forty Mile Creek, now Grimsby, hosted the British headquarters during 1813 and the whole community was impressed for service by the British: houses, barns and farms were occupied, supplies were eaten, and mills were used.⁷⁷ Queenston experienced the horrors of battle first hand not far from its streets. British Lieutenant John Le Couteur of the 104th Foot kept a war journal and described what was left of the town a year after the close of hostilities, in September of 1815:

A lovely day, but shining dismally on that lovely village – it will be long before it is restored to its peaceable attractions. It is melancholy to see such wanton destruction as the broom of war has made in it, it is a palace [sic] of desolation. We are in quiet possession of Colonel Dickson’s fine large house, ... it being the only one with windows left in it.⁷⁸

⁷⁵Kirby, Annals of Niagara, 226.

⁷⁶Barbarities of the Enemy, Exposed in a Report of the Committee of the House of Representatives of the United States (Troy: Francis Adancourt, 1813), 7.

⁷⁷Marjorie Griffen Cohen, Women’s Work, Markets and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 65.

⁷⁸Donald E. Graves, ed., Merry Hearts Make Light Days. The War of 1812 Journal of Lieutenant John Le Couteur, 104th Foot (Ottawa: Carleton UP, 1994), 204.

The burning of Newark served as a major morale boost for the British army and the Canadian militia, and roused feelings of despair amongst settlers for years to come.

Kirby, almost a century later, evoked the horror of the burning village, emptied of everyone except “women and children, and some old men” in his Annals of Niagara:

The order came like the stroke of doom upon the wretched inhabitants, most of whom were women, children and old, feeble men. Some would not believe that such an order would be executed, and failed to remove their furniture into the street. Many did so, and the streets were piled up with furniture and other effects, while the poor people stood or sat among them in the snow... At one o'clock noon the burning party ... of soldiers marched from Fort George, with torches and lanterns lit, to set the houses on fire as they proceeded through the town... In half an hour the town was a sea of fire. The furniture in the streets was most of it burnt up – government house, the churches, schools, court house, shops, private dwellings – all went up together in fire and smoke.⁷⁹

MacDonell wrote “he [General McClure] set fire, on the tenth of December, to the village of Newark, ... whereby over a hundred and fifty houses were laid in ashes, and four hundred and fifty women and children were exposed to the inclemency of a Canadian winter at half an hour's notice to the defenceless [sic] inhabitants.”⁸⁰ According to Kirby, “The sight of the smoking ruins of the beautiful town, and the terrible distress of the inhabitants, drew tears from the eyes of many of the rough soldiers of the British troops.”⁸¹

It was not just early twentieth century historians who felt the burning of Newark was a travesty: Colonel Murray sent troops to Newark and wrote to Major General Vincent immediately following the incident that “I trust the indefatigable exertions of this

⁷⁹Kirby, Annals of Niagara, 175, 181.

⁸⁰MacDonell, Sketches Illustrating the Early Settlement and History of Glengarry in Canada, 247.

⁸¹Kirby, Annals of Niagara, 219.

handful of men [sent to aid the inhabitants] ... have rendered an essential service to the country by rescuing from a merciless Enemy the inhabitants of an extensive & highly cultivated tract of land, stored with Cattle, Grain, and provisions of every description.”⁸² It is possible that Murray was more interested in saving the “cattle, grain and provisions,” than in rescuing the inhabitants. Regardless, the presence of British troops may have provided enough of a deterrent to further marauding by Americans to allow the townspeople a chance to regroup and recover from the attack. Moreover, a traveler through the area in 1819 noted, upon arriving at Newark, that the town “was burnt by the Americans during the late war, not one house being spared, so that all the present Town has been built since that period.”⁸³ In fact, the fire remained at the forefront of Niagaran minds, even until the mid-twentieth century when, in 1945, the Niagara Post War Planning Commission in a study entitled “Architectural and Cultural Values of the Town of Niagara” mentioned the “disastrous fire of 1813 which destroyed nearly all the buildings erected during Simcoe’s reign.”⁸⁴

With towns burned at irregular intervals and stores “foraged” across the District, it was not surprising that individual Niagarans became despondent at the situation before them and attempted to move out of the direct line of fire or main occupation zone of the District. Reverend C. C. Cotton wrote to his sister Anna in July 1814 that “From a list of the inhabitants of Dunham [possibly Dunham Flats in Lower Canada], which I have

⁸²Wood, Select British Documents, Volume 2, 482.

⁸³John Goldie, Diary of a Journey Through Upper Canada and Some of the New England States (1819), 19.

⁸⁴J. Lloyd Hughes, Niagara Preserved and Restored: A Brief for the Realization of the Historical, Architectural and Cultural Values of the Town of Niagara in Ontario (Niagara: Niagara Post-War Planning Commission, 1945), 11.

lately seen, more than a hundred of the inhabitants have quitted the Township since the declaration of war, and there has been so much depopulation in several other Townships. This has been owing to disaffection to our excellent Government in many and to the dread of being drafted into the standing militia, in many others..."⁸⁵ Further, Cruikshank noted the impact of the loss of able-bodied men to the militia in his study of Norfolk County in the Western District: "The internal peace of the country had not been disturbed, but the absence of so large a proportion of the young men must have seriously affected agriculture and other industries."⁸⁶

Whether Cruikshank was right, or because of the increasing need for supplies or both, the prices of both goods and services in the Niagara region, and throughout the Province, did rise dramatically and comments on this are found scattered throughout letters, and orders. In April 1812, Charles Askin wrote to his father from Queenston that "flour is got up to eight dollars here, we have a Rumour of an Embargo being laid by Congress, ... this will perhaps raise it a little more."⁸⁷ MacDonell, using primary sources, writes of the "militia ... drilling in their naked feet, while Brock was ... without money enough to buy provisions, blankets or even shoes for the militia."⁸⁸ By 1815, the Government was forced to establish a price cap for a number of goods. Abraham Nelles wrote that "The very exorbitant prices demanded by the farmers for every article of Provisions... induces... Drummond, with a view to prevent extortion, and to establish at

⁸⁵ Cotton Papers, letter July, 1814 from Rev. C. C. Cotton in Dunham to his sister Anna; National Archives MG 24 J47. Thomas R. Millman, "Cotton, Charles Caleb," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VII.

⁸⁶ Zaslow, The Defended Border, 229.

⁸⁷ Askin Papers, letter 16 April, 1812 from John Askin in Queenston to his father Charles, Volume 5, National Archives MG 19 A3.

⁸⁸ MacDonell, Sketches Illustrating the Early Settlement and History of Glengarry in Canada, 165.

the same time a liberal, just and equitable scale of Prices of those Articles, to call upon the Magistrates of the District for that function.”⁸⁹ Thus, if the British army was hard-pressed to provide for itself, it can be expected that the inhabitants of the District had an equally hard time in supplying their own needs.

Not everyone was adversely affected by the war however. Skilled residents of Niagara gained as a result of the war. In Barton Township, blacksmith William Sherman made axes for the British for between six and eight dollars a day at Burlington Heights – a fair wage even if his costs did rise.⁹⁰ It can be imagined that other skilled workers had similar experiences, if not for the duration of the war, then for the period that the British army was camped in the area. In general however, the feeling was that the Niagara region was devastated.

The historiography of the battles and the effects of the war thus seem to illustrate the great destruction and the economic upheaval experienced in the District as a result of the War of 1812. It appears that the entire region – especially the areas around Forts Erie and George, Queenston, Burlington Heights, Stoney Creek, 40 Mile, 20 Mile and 12 Mile Creeks, St. David’s and Beaver Dams – was occupied by both the British and, at irregular intervals, by the Americans. The historiographical methods discussed earlier, when applied to the Records of the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission, will allow for a better understanding and perhaps a clarification, of the impact the war had on the District of Niagara.

⁸⁹ Abraham Nelles Papers, letter 20 August, 1814, Camp before Fort Erie, Series B, Ontario Archives, MS502.

⁹⁰ Sheppard, Plunder, Profit and Paroles, 135.

CHAPTER TWO – THE LOYAL AND PATRIOTIC SOCIETY

In order to provide relief to a Canadian militia unprepared for the coming winter, the Loyal and Patriotic Society was founded through the “personal labour of the young Ladies” of York in November of 1812: they would provide “flannel shirts, to the companies doing duty on the lines between Niagara and Fort Erie.” The progression of the War and the resulting devastation throughout the Niagara Peninsula soon drew the attention of the Society and it vowed “to meet, in some degree, and to alleviate such distress.”⁹¹ The Directors of the Society, all from York, were William Campbell, a Supreme Court Judge; John Strachan, the Rector of York; John Small, the clerk of the Executive Council; William Chewett, a Justice of the Peace, Captain in the 3rd York Militia, and later the negotiator of the capitulation of York to the Americans in 1813; John Beverley Robinson, an officer in the York Militia and the acting Attorney General of the Province from 1812-1814; William Allan, a Justice of the Peace, a paroled Major in the 3rd York Militia, and a storekeeper at York who sold the Commissary over £12 000 worth of supplies; Grant Powell, the acting surgeon to the Provincial Marine at York and, with Strachan, a civilian negotiator of the capitulation of York; and Alexander Wood, a Lieutenant in the York Militia, a magistrate, and shopkeeper who supplied the York Garrison.⁹² These members of the colonial elite thus determined to whom and to what

⁹¹ Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 3-4.

⁹² R. J. Morgan and Robert Lochiel Fraser, “Campbell, Sir William,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI; G. M. Craig, “Strachan, John,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume IX; S. R. Mealing, “Small, John,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI; Richard J. Simpson, “Chewett, (Chewitt) William,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VII; Robert E. Saunders, “Robinson, Sir John Beverley,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume IX; in collaboration “Allan, William,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VIII; S. R. Mealing, “Powell, William Dummer,”

degree immediate aid was granted. Funds were to be collected on a yearly subscription basis throughout the Province and were supplemented by monetary contributions which arrived from a similar institution established at Quebec for the relief of those in distress in Lower Canada, and from patrons as far away as England and Jamaica.⁹³ Aid was granted to “relieve the widows and orphans of soldiers of the Provincial Corps,” and to “anticipate the legal aids voted by the Legislature... in case [of] official delays, or other circumstances,” or in “particular cases of distress, occasioned by the invasion of the enemy.” A sum was also set aside to reward “distinguished” service: medals were struck in anticipation of feats of great loyalty, but as shall be seen, were never actually distributed.⁹⁴

Such a brief overview hardly gives such a complex institution the attention it deserves. In order to better understand the function the Loyal and Patriotic Society played in Upper Canadian society, a closer examination is required. Unfortunately, very little research has been conducted into the establishment of the Society and the role it played during and immediately following the War, but two recent works, George Sheppard’s Plunder, Profit and Parole and Cecilia Morgan’s Public Men & Virtuous Women do address the activities of the Society.

Sheppard feels that the activities of the Society were “one of the many causes of post war discontent” among western Upper Canadians who felt eastern Upper Canadians

Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VII; Edith G. Firth, “Wood, Alexander,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VII.

⁹³Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 3-4.

⁹⁴Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 6,7,9.

grew rich from the war as a result of their suffering. Sheppard notes that the Society granted no money during the first months of operation; that of the total amount promised to petitioners in 1813, seventy per cent of the funds were granted within the Home District; and that by March 1815, only forty-seven people had actually received assistance, for a total of £945.7. Of these 47 people, the Niagara District had received only eleven per cent of the total, or just over £100.⁹⁵ The numbers compiled in Table 2.1 and Appendix 4, Table A, while they agree that only thirty-five claims were granted by the Society between 1813 and 1814 in the Niagara District, show another 238 were granted after March of 1815 and a further 126 in 1816. Thus, while Sheppard may argue that the Society was a little slow in beginning its efforts to provide aid, the Society obviously did not shirk its professed duty to provide relief to those areas in the most

Table 2.1: Loyal and Patriotic Society Claims in the Niagara District, Broken Down by Year Claimed

District	Total Claims	Percentage of Whole	Year Claimed	Number Claims
Niagara	399	48.9%	1813	2
			1814	33
			1815	238
			1816	126
			1817	0
All Other	416	51.1%	1813	34
			1814	131
			1815	62
			1816	144
			1817	45

distress as a result of the war. In the figures he cites for the Home District, it does appear that the Home District was over-represented in 1813 with thirteen claims, by 1817 the District represented only 3.9% of the total number of requests granted. Furthermore, the

⁹⁵Sheppard, *Plunder, Profit and Paroles*, 130-31.

Society recognized its virtual impotence in its first year of existence: the Report notes that in the first year, 1813, the Society granted £1 931.13.5 and in 1814, another £2 486.2.2. The Directors felt that the situation in the Province was “so critical, and the difficulty of communications so great that with the utmost exertions on their part, the Directors on several occasions, failed in procuring safe conveyances, or persons whom they could entrust, or who would take the trouble to seek out objects in distress.”⁹⁶ Sheppard, in support of his arguments regarding the ineffectiveness of the Society, quotes Robert Nichol who, concerned about the potential cost of government payments to war sufferers in 1823, accused William Baldwin, a Legislative Member for York and Simcoe, and the Loyal and Patriotic Society of “[misappropriating] funds destined for war sufferers to build a hospital in Little York.”⁹⁷ The Society, as seen by Sheppard, was a grossly corrupt institution whose members sought personal gain. Further evidence of this opinion is seen in Sheppard’s article “Deeds Speak: Militiamen, Medals and the Invented Traditions of 1812” in which he argues the Society allowed the otherwise uninvolved (i.e. not on the front line) colonial establishment to claim an “active part in the war,” a sentiment echoed in Plunder, Profit and Parole.⁹⁸ However, he goes on to note that “avoidance of militia duty was the norm for Upper Canadian males throughout the struggle.”⁹⁹ In light of the fact that many failed to take an active part in the War, the fact that the Directors of the Society focused their energies on charity means that records are now available to allow for a better understanding of how the war affected the Province.

⁹⁶Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 191-92.

⁹⁷Sheppard, Plunder, Profit and Paroles, 215. The DCB notes that Nichol was “bitter” about his war losses. Robert Lochiel Fraser, “Nichol, Robert,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI.

⁹⁸George Sheppard, ““Deeds Speak:” Militiamen, Medals and the Invented Traditions of 1812” Ontario History 1990 83(2): 212.

⁹⁹Sheppard, Plunder, Profit and Paroles, 67.

Cecilia Morgan acknowledges the failure of the Loyal and Patriotic Society to meet its long-term goals, mainly to reward patriotism and loyalty with Canada Preserved medals, but feels that its efforts to relieve sufferers were a successful combination of patriotism and philanthropy.¹⁰⁰ Morgan further argues that the Report published by the Society “continued the patriotic discourse of the press and the government by defining women and children as objects of male protection” because it was the male elite of York society that determined who received money, how much they received and the reasons they were granted money. Furthermore, Morgan notes that the Society “insist[ed] women establish [a] claim on its benevolence through patriotism of a male relative and their loss of his protection, not only on the grounds of their own loyal service, nor merely because of their own poverty” – a sentiment to be examined below.¹⁰¹

The Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society has only recently begun to be the subject of intense scrutiny and for reason: it is long and confusing, double- and even triple-entries abound, some names are excluded on lists but included on others, entries are often incomplete and spelling inconsistent. For the purposes of this study, it will be assumed that all grants were paid to their intended recipients; while some entries do indicate a draft was made on the Treasurer, Directors of the Society regularly visited the Districts to distribute funds in a somewhat less-formal manner. Finally, it should be noted that the Districts indicate only where the petitions were heard and granted, not necessarily where the petitioners lived. Of course, it is unlikely that petitioners “much

¹⁰⁰Cecilia Morgan, Public Men and Virtuous Women (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 45-46.

¹⁰¹Morgan, Public Men and Virtuous Women, 47.

distressed” would travel too far outside their Districts (especially considering the presence of Directors in each District), but the possibility exists. For example, Sheppard quoted Robert Nichol who complained: “If a man had a claim not of generosity but of justice and applied to the board at York, they would tell him your claim is not good, you don’t belong to little York, go to the Western or Niagara District, or go to the Devil.”¹⁰² Similarly, there is at least one entry that notes a particular petitioner had already been granted funds at York and had “deceived” the Society in order to receive more in another District. Whether instances such as these were typical is unknown. It should also be noted that the petitions were counted by grant made, not by person – there are instances, for example with the Widow Grass or Gross, where an individual received relief on more than one or two occasions – these grants are counted as separate acts of relief.

Unfortunately, not all of the grants were easily grouped into categories based on District or gender. There were a number of grants that fell into a default “unknown” or “group” category. The “unknowns” fall into their own separate category: some entries are incomplete and the District and/or sex of the individual is unknown, and unless a clue to their existence is evident in the comments that accompany some entries, their record falls into the “unknown” category. The “group” category is another entity unto itself. As mentioned, the Directors sometimes traveled and distributed funds in a fairly informal manner. In the case where records exist as to their distribution, they have been incorporated into the Report. However, it is sometimes the case that funds were distributed to “*various objects* in the District in distress.” In this case, it is all but impossible to determine who (and sometimes where) the funds ended up – for the

¹⁰²Sheppard, Plunder, Profit and Paroles, 215.

purposes of this study, the “group” category has been overlooked – not because it is not worthy of study, but because the sources do not exist to allow for a deeper understanding of exactly where and to whom these funds were distributed. Furthermore, there are not enough of these “group” entries – 44 or 5.4% – to represent a considerable difference in the final analysis.

It is necessary however, before analyzing the petitions and grants of the Loyal and Patriotic Society, to understand the formation and existence of the Society in question.

The introduction to the Report, published in 1817, read:

Utterly unprepared for war, the militia of the Province was suddenly called to the frontier to oppose invasion – It had neither arms nor cloathing. [sic]

The first attention of their gallant leader, after arming them at the expense of the enemy, which had invaded our shores, was to provide cloathing [sic] suitable to the severity of the then approaching season.

From some causes not explained, the actual relief was so long delayed, that individual sympathy was excited, and the inhabitants of York, by a private subscription, aided by the personal labour of the young Ladies of the place, afforded a supply of the first necessity, in flannel shirts, to the companies doing duty on the lines, between Niagara and Fort Erie.

It was soon discovered, that great distress must unavoidably in many cases, result to families, deprived of their sole support, the labour of fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers, employed in arms.

To meet, in some degree, and to alleviate such distress, the Association now distinguished as the Loyal and Patriotic Society of Upper Canada, was projected, and instantly adopted, with a zeal creditable to the inhabitants of York.¹⁰³

On the evening of November 22, 1812, the “principal inhabitants” of York met, and as mentioned in the introduction of the Report, agreed to help alleviate the “miserable camp conditions” that Sheppard identifies as a major factor in the large

¹⁰³Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, Introduction.

number of desertions from the colonial militia.¹⁰⁴ In the face of the oncoming Canadian winter, flannel shirts were an excellent choice; Henderson in, "Not Merely an Article of Comfort: British Infantry Greatcoats During the War of 1812" acknowledges that all British army greatcoats in the Canada were of "questionable" quality and moreover that those of the Canadian militia were "inferior in quality and lined with green baize instead of white serge."¹⁰⁵ Henderson notes that it was the policy of the British army that their regulars were provided with the better quality greatcoats – marked S¹G somewhere inside the coat – while the seconds were allotted to the militia – marked S²G.¹⁰⁶

According to the Reverend Dr. John Strachan, the Treasurer of the Society in 1814, the "beneficial institution was first suggested by Mr. Selby, who gave the credit of it to his excellent daughter."¹⁰⁷ Neither did he attempt to hide his own involvement: in a private letter he confided that "I encouraged and brought to Maturity the Loyal and Patriotic Society subscribing one tenth of my Income which has done so much good & relieving all kinds of distress occasioned by the War. I have continued the Treasurer of the Society since a little after its commencement the duties of which have taken up a large portion of my time but it was the cause of humanity."¹⁰⁸

The Society was originally founded to assist Canadian militiamen in active duty and to offer relief to disabled men and their families as well as to award medals to men

¹⁰⁴Sheppard, "Deeds Speak," 212.

¹⁰⁵Robert Henderson, "'Not Merely an Article of Comfort': British Infantry Greatcoats During the War of 1812" Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research 1997 75(301): 26.

¹⁰⁶Henderson, "Not Merely an Article of Comfort," 33.

¹⁰⁷George W. Spragge, ed., The John Strachan Letter Book 1812-1834 (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1946), 55. Letter from Strachan to Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore, January 1814.

¹⁰⁸Spragge, The John Strachan Letter Book, 108. Letter from Strachan to "Clifford," April, 1816.

who had distinguished themselves in service. The literature that exists speaks more of the medal issue than of the destitute families the Society had meant to help. Regardless, the discussion surrounding the medals helps one to understand the patriarchal structure of the society and process for providing relief. The issue of medals for service encompasses a major part of the allegations of incompetence directed against them: the medals, purchased using the funds donated from across the country and the Empire, were never awarded. William Chewett and John Beverley Robinson, both directors of the Loyal and Patriotic Society and members of the two-man committee to oversee the distribution of the medals, apparently felt that the list of deserving men submitted by General Drummond was “too general and did not include specific instances of personal courage beyond stating that all of the nominees had been ‘assiduous in their exertions’.”¹⁰⁹

By 1819 the medals had still not been distributed. In February 1820, William Campbell suggested that rather than alienate those to whom medals would not be given, they be melted and the proceeds given to the Hospital Fund. The issue of the Loyal and Patriotic Society medals surfaced again in 1840 when the Provincial Assembly resolved the medals “should be distributed according to the original intention” of the Society and that a list of recipients should be prepared as soon as possible. As Sheppard writes, the founders of the Society had originally intended for themselves and their close friends to be awarded the medals and they were reluctant to see them distributed to others. The remaining members of the Society, with the exception of those like William Baldwin who would have supported the Assembly’s decision to distribute the medals, called an emergency meeting in July 1840. As a result of the meeting, the “Canada Preserved”

¹⁰⁹Sheppard, “Deeds Speak,” 221.

medals were “smashed on the anvil with a large hammer,” the scraps were sold to two local watchmakers, and the proceeds, £393, deposited in the Toronto General Hospital fund.¹¹⁰ Thus, faced with the prospect of awarding those deserving of the medals, the members of the Loyal and Patriotic Society destroyed them thereby ensuring that no one would receive recognition.

In terms of awarding funds for distress, the Directors of the Society were more generous. As mentioned, the Society was originally intended to support the Canadian militia but by December of 1812, it had fully developed into the Loyal and Patriotic Society of Upper Canada under the leadership of Thomas Scott, the Chief Justice of the Province and President of the Society. Any person subscribing £10 annually became a Director and the names of other notables such as Dr. Baldwin, D’Arcy Boulton, the Attorney General in December of 1814; and Thomas Ridout, an Assembly member for York and Simcoe, are also found throughout the Report.¹¹¹ Each District had two or more Directors to oversee the collection of requests for aid and the disbursement of funds. For example, in June 1813, it was resolved that “the Secretary be requested to place the said sum of one thousand dollars in the hands of the Reverend Mr. Addison, William and Thomas Dickson, Esquires, two of whom making a Quorum, who will have the goodness to apply the same, according to the known intentions of this Society, and to Report the same.” The Niagara District thus had its own Directors and the first sum had

¹¹⁰Sheppard, “Deeds Speak,” 222-224.

¹¹¹ Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 43; John Lownsbrough, “Boulton, D’Arcy,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI, Robert J. Burns, “Ridout, Thomas,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI.

been allocated specifically for their use¹¹². The Reverend Mr. Addison was the rector of St. Mark's Church in Niagara; Thomas Dickson was a Justice of the Peace in the Niagara Township and a Lieutenant-Colonel in the 2nd Lincoln Militia; his brother William was taken prisoner in June of 1813 when Niagara was occupied by the Americans and was not released until January of 1814 – thus, his name is absent from many of the notations accompanying grants made to the Niagara District.¹¹³

Funds for the Society were collected primarily on a subscription basis – notices went out across the Province and donations poured in – from across the Province but a countryside devastated by war found sometimes more generous donors from throughout the British Empire. John Strachan, the Treasurer of the Society, wrote to Edinburgh in the winter of 1814 that “it has been suggested that something might be done for our sufferers in Edin^r & being Treasurer of the Society & Minister of York it becomes my duty to make the necessary application... We send the rules of the Society & a copy of our appeal to the British nation.”¹¹⁴ A similar Society was established at Quebec for the relief of the Lower Canadian militia and their Secretary, J. S. Plante, assured the Upper Canadian Directors that “we have not been unmindful of the just claims of our Loyal Brethren in your Province” and pledged two-fifths of their donations to the Upper Canadian Society. In April 1813, the Upper Canadian Society had over £3 000

¹¹²Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 53-54.

¹¹³H. E. Turner, “Addison, Robert,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI; Bruce G. Wilson, “Dickson, Thomas,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI; Bruce G. Wilson, “Dickson, William,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VII.

¹¹⁴Spragge, The John Strachan Letter Book, 58.

subscribed to them by the inhabitants of Montreal, and the Lord Bishop of Quebec was listed among their members.¹¹⁵

Private donations, like that of General Drummond, also helped the coffers of the Loyal and Patriotic Society. On the first of January, 1814, he wrote to the Society from Queenston:

When shortly after my being appointed to the command of this Province, on visiting the Niagara Frontier, I was shocked beyond measure, at beholding the desolation that had been spread over the once flourishing village of Niagara, by an atrocious and sacrilegious enemy. Every feeling of just resentment was exerted against a Government that could sanction such an act, so unprovoked and inhuman; and when I reflected that the innocent and unfortunate inhabitants were driven from their houses, to undergo all the severities of a most inclement winter, retributive justice demanded of me a speedy retaliation on the opposite shore of America, and you are not unacquainted with the result of my determination.

As a principal sharer in the immense scores that have been captured in the important fortress of Niagara, I beg leave, Sir, to subscribe my portion of the prize money, towards relieving the distress of those persons who inhabited the late village of Niagara, as well as the frontiers in its vicinity...¹¹⁶

The Loyal and Patriotic Society was, on paper at least, a fairly well-organized institution: the Board of Directors made "regular entries of their proceedings" for publication to Subscribers, and it met regularly to discuss petitions for aid and other relevant business. It appears that fairly strict rules governed the disbursement of funds: in March 1814, Mrs. McDonell's petition was denied because it did not meet the requirements of the Society "which does not apply its funds to compensate loss, but to relieve actual distress, occasioned by the war." Similarly, Polly Spareback's petition was

¹¹⁵Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 62-63.

¹¹⁶Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 151-52.

denied because she was “under the protection of her family, who appear to be able to support her.”¹¹⁷ Equally strict requirements appear to have existed for the formatting of petitions to the Society. The Directors were very specific about the format of the written petitions presented to the Society: “each Petition [shall] contain the name of the Petitioner, the Company he serves in, the township he lives in, the number, age and sex of his family, means of subsistence, which may most materially be wanted.”¹¹⁸ Female petitioners were also expected to conform to the format, as seen in the following admonition to one petitioner:

“... due attention will be paid to a petition properly addressed, and supported by evidence of respective facts... Every petition must be addressed to the Society. The Petition must be accompanied by evidence of the Identity of the Petitioner, as represented in this, viz. That she is the widow of the deceased. That the deceased was killed in service as a militiaman, or volunteering with the militia, the particular circumstances in which she is left.”¹¹⁹

The format required by the Society – language, structure and tone – helps to understand the goals of the Society: the Directors provided aid to those they considered “loyal and patriotic” and required proof of such from each claimant. The awarding of aid therefore depended only partially upon the circumstances of a claimant, but also on his or her character and actions. Furthermore, the definitions of “loyal” versus that of “traitor” depended somewhat upon the personal biases of those reporting to the Society: personal agendas were surely played out within the Society – sources denouncing claimants as disloyal were never identified within the Report and it is unknown whether any investigation was made regarding the truth of these claims of disloyalty. It was often

¹¹⁷Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 113, 104.

¹¹⁸Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 22.

¹¹⁹Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 155.

commented upon that a claimant, or her husband, like that of Mrs. Benedict, was a “faithful and deserving character.”¹²⁰ In addition to the strict format to be adhered to, it appears that petitioners had to go to some lengths to prove the truth of their applications. In February 1814, one list of applicants “with their situation and circumstances [was] certified and signed by Ts. Ball, J.P.” and militia petitions were to be “certified to be believed by the Officer commanding the company.”¹²¹ More than one petition was denied or held awaiting more evidence if it did not meet the requirements laid out above.

Simply following the guidelines established by the Directors and ensuring sufficient documentation to prove the truthfulness of an application did not automatically ensure success. In October 1813, the Committee resolved that they “think it expedient from the necessity of the times, that William Allan, Esqr. and the Revd. Dr. Strachan, enquire into the situation of those who might be disposed to apply, who have been driven from their homes by the Enemy, and give them such assistance as they may require, in the most delicate manner.”¹²² For loyal inhabitants, this did not prove to be an obstacle for obtaining aid, however those who were found to be traitors to the Crown found their petitions promptly dismissed. Nevertheless, hundreds of petitions from loyal claimants were approved and receipts for money granted are included throughout the Report. For example, in February 1814, Alexander Wood recorded that they “Gave orders on the Treasurer for fifty pounds, in favour of Mr. Justice Campbell, for the use of Mrs. Elizabeth Campbell; to Mrs. Ann Heward, for twelve pounds ten shillings, to her own use; to John Bonnett, for ten pounds, to his own use.” They also “Gave to Mrs. Elizabeth

¹²⁰Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 290-303.

¹²¹Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 104, 22.

¹²²Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 79.

Saunders, a draft on the Treasurer for twenty five pounds, being the sum voted to her on the 18th inst.”¹²³

As noted earlier, the Society sometimes voted large sums of money to be distributed by one or two Directors within a particular District: for the Niagara District, the Reverend Mr. Addison, rector of Niagara, and Thomas Dickson had the duty. Substantial sums were repeatedly granted to the two to distribute “according to their discretion” among the needy of the District. In January 1814, they were requested to “report as soon as may be, the names of such persons on the frontier of Niagara, who have suffered by the invasion of the enemy, and the quartering of troops for the defence, and to whom pecuniary aid... may in their opinion be more particularly useful.”¹²⁴ As a result, they were given £662.10 Halifax currency in March 1814, £500 in August 1814, £2 000 in May 1815, £750 in March 1816, and a final £500 in August 1816 in order to relieve sufferers on the Niagara frontier.¹²⁵ Approximately £1 600 was provided for male sufferers in Niagara, and almost £2 500 for women. Within the group category another £5 600 in large lump sums was distributed in twenty-one cases. In total, just over £9 775 of aid was distributed within the Niagara District.¹²⁶

The yearly figures for claims reflect the progress of the war to only a small degree; for example, the Niagara District entered two claims in 1813, twenty-two in 1814, 238 in 1815 and 126 in 1816. The greatest number and bloodiest of military battles

¹²³Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 110.

¹²⁴Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 94.

¹²⁵Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 111, 136, 167, 187, 193.

¹²⁶Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report.

took place in the Niagara District in 1813 and 1814 – the battle for Fort Meigs, Chippawa, and the burning of Newark all took place in this two-year period, and are mentioned throughout the Records. Since the wheels of relief turned slowly, it is to be expected that the number of requests for relief in the Niagara District skyrocketed in 1815 and 1816. Conversely, there are very few requests for the Eastern District except in 1817. The focus of the war had turned briefly towards this area and the requests for relief in 1817 identify the possible extent to which the presence of an Army can damage and distress an area. Claims from this period generally mention the experience of the American army in their midst. In introducing this section of petitions, the Report states the funds are “on account of the depredations committed on the inhabitants of that part of the Province, by the American army during the recent invasion...”¹²⁷ The lag between the distress and the granting of relief needs further explanation. It was possible that people did not believe the Society was a worthwhile service; that the Society simply did not have the funds before large donations came from outside the Province; or that the inhabitants did not experience pressure from their creditors before this time. It is possible that they had money in 1813, but none by 1815. Whatever the case, the lag between the damages or distress and the time the funds were actually granted by a Society intent on helping with “immediate distress,” seems to imply that perhaps the situation in the District was not as “immediately distressful” as first thought.

The Loyal and Patriotic Society records allow for analysis by year, District and gender. Morgan estimates that only in 1816 did female petitioners outnumber their male counterparts (by eleven to one) but the numbers compiled in Table 2.2, and in Appendix

¹²⁷Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 324.

4, Tables B through E, disagree with her figures.¹²⁸ It appears that the number of male to female claimants was fairly close in the period from 1813 to 1817. From 1814-1816, the number of female petitioners exceeded male petitioners but not to the extent that Morgan claims: in 1815 only approximately forty more women applied for relief, and in 1816, the difference was just under sixty. The District breakdown by gender in Appendix 4, Tables C to E, provides a more detailed picture and a more obvious difference in the number of male to female claims as seen in Table 2.2. The Niagara District, for example, had twenty-three female and ten male claims in 1814, 139 and 99 in 1815, and 92 and 34 in 1816. In contrast, as demonstrated in Appendix 4, Tables D and E, the Eastern District accounted for a ratio of 35 to 10 in 1817(male to female) and in London, in the two years

Table 2.2: Loyal and Patriotic Society Claims, Niagara District, by Gender and Year

District-Sex	Total Claims	Percentage	Year	Number Claims
Niagara - Women	254	69.0%	1813	0
			1814	23
			1815	139
			1816	92
			1817	0
Niagara - Men	145	32.4%	1813	2
			1814	10
			1815	99
			1816	34
			1817	0

that saw both male and female applicants, consistently saw higher ratios of men to women apply. Many reasons account for the increase in the number of female applicants in the Niagara region: some were widowed by the war, others had been widowed before the war, and some had husbands in the militia and experienced difficulties surviving

¹²⁸Morgan, Public Men and Virtuous Women, 45-47.

without their help. Some women, like the Widow Mary Grass, made at least eight applications to the Society throughout its existence and thus help to skew the figures represented here. As mentioned earlier, each grant was considered an individual case and these repeat claims, while they may indicate more individual women, for example, received aid, do not deny the obvious difficulties experienced by women during the war years in the Niagara District.

When the claims from the Niagara District are broken down by gender, it is apparent that female claims far out-numbered those made by their male counterparts by more than 100 individual petitions. It is not known how many requests were dismissed without being recorded, or were made and denied verbally. Some of the reasons these requests were denied were examined earlier – for example, if a petitioner (or a family member) was deemed disloyal, but claims may also have been rejected because of a lack of proof, because a petition was not made in the correct format, or because a claimant was deemed able to support him or herself. For example, Eleanor Berry was voted “immediate relief – but no more because her petition was not properly addressed.”¹²⁹

A number of petitions were accompanied by reasons for the grant. These reasons are compiled in Table 4.1 and provide a breakdown of the characteristic language used by successful claimants: those who specifically mentioned loyalty or great distress were generally awarded relief. When the rejected claims are compared to the list provided in Table 4.1, it is obvious that they lacked the required characteristics of a successful

¹²⁹Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 155.

petition. Table 4.1 will be reviewed in more detail in Chapter Four's detailed analysis of the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission.

The colonial elite – exempted from militia duty – thus involved themselves in a Loyal and Patriotic Society to offer relief to those experiencing difficulties that arose from the War. The breakdown provided indicates that, regardless of claims that York and the Home District were unfairly represented to the Society, the Niagara District submitted the highest percentage of successful claims, and accounted for grants totaling more than £5 000 of a total of almost £10 000 throughout the Province . Such a brief study of the Report of the Society therefore seems to indicate that the Niagara District was greatly affected by the War – but further study of the War Claims Commission and a more detailed analysis of the two combined, may help to provide a clearer understanding of the real extent of the war and the damages in Niagara.

CHAPTER THREE – THE BOARD OF CLAIMS FOR WAR LOSSES

As demonstrated in Chapter Two, the Loyal and Patriotic Society attempted to alleviate the immediate distress of those directly affected by the war. The aid offered by the Society was far from the amount required to return the Niagara Peninsula to its pre-war state. In an effort to address the devastation of the Niagara and Western Districts and throughout the Province, a number of official government-initiated Boards were established to deal with the losses in the Province. The first of these Boards was appointed by Roger Sheaffe in 1813: a number of militia officers examined outstanding claims against the Commissariat – this Board was organized to specifically examine claims for payment and *not* devastation or losses. Before the Board was able to submit its final report, the Americans invaded Niagara and burnt the home of James Crooks – where the documents were prepared – and only a “‘scroll memoranda’ of the proceedings” escaped the flames. None of these claims were paid.¹³⁰

The second Commission, appointed by Lieutenant-Governor Gore under pressure from within the Province, was also considered a military board, according to a letter from Thomas Scott to its Secretary William Kemble.¹³¹ The Commissioners of this Board included three civilian members and, similarly to the Loyal and Patriotic Society, consisted of members of the colonial elite: the Chief Justice, Thomas Scott, sat as the President of the Board, and the Commissioners included W. D. Powell, the Chief Justice in 1816; John Strachan, Lieutenant Colonel Battersby, and George Crookshank, attached

¹³⁰ Sheppard, Plunder, Profit and Paroles, 176.

¹³¹ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3730.1, Letter dated February 1816 from Thomas Scott to William Kemble.

to the Commissariat.¹³² Claimants petitioned officials at one of five regional boards: Amerherstburgh, Fort George, York, Kingston and Fort Wellington but these five men presided over the collection of over 1 200 claims and the allocation of funds from the beginning of January 1816 until the end of April 1816.

Approximately one fifth of the claims to the 1815-16 Board were rejected for one of several reasons. In late December of 1815, the Commissioners had released a set of fourteen "General Principles" against which each claim was judged. They established guidelines for both registering a claim and for receiving remuneration and they directed:

1. That no claim shall be taken up which does not express in direct terms, that the loss sustained was occasioned by the enemy, the Kings Troops or the Indians in the British Interest;
2. That such loss shall appear to have been sustained by no neglect to protect the property and no risk beyond the usual mode of enjoying it;
3. That the claims heretofore presented to the several Military Boards, whether considered or not, when received must be supported by evidence satisfactory to the present Commission;
4. That a distinct report upon each claim shall present the nature of the claim, the evidence and recommendations which weigh with the Board;
5. That a distinct class be formed of claims for occupation of premises, and injury sustained by the recognized act of any;
6. That the Evidence to be required be such as the Commissioners in any claim upon themselves would admit as proof altho' not strictly technical;
7. That as it can never be the intention of His Majesty's Government to submit to Parliament for compensation the claims of persons notoriously disaffected, the claims of such persons when sufficient evidence of their disloyalty appear before the Board be rejected;
8. That in all claims when it appears evident that the value of any article is grossly exaggerated the article or articles so exaggerated to be struck out;
9. That trifling losses not materially affecting the Individual be struck out;
10. That in estimating the losses of Individuals by the War, reference be made to their situation and the benefits they may have obtained by the War;

¹³² Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3732.1. S. R. Mealing, "Powell, William Dummer," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI; Frederick H. Armstrong, "Crookshank, George," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VIII.

11. That as it is the object of Government to make the people content and happy, the most liberal construction be given to the different claims;
12. That where the Evidence of loss appears defective the Board refer back to the Individual for further proof;
13. That in all points where there appears a difference of opinion the decision of the Majority be the opinion of the Board;
14. That the Debates and Decisions of the Board be not divulged.¹³³

For some reason, the £255 166.18.8 Halifax currency in remuneration awarded to the 1815 claimants was never distributed and it does not appear that any of the intended recipients received a single shilling. The 1815 Board had the original mandate to investigate and remunerate outstanding claims against the Commissariat but hundreds of claimants petitioned for remuneration for *all* damages resulting from the War. These petitions resulted in a third Commission being appointed in 1815: a civilian committee to examine all the losses. However, the British Government was reluctant to grant such a large sum of money to the Canadians, especially when charges of fraudulent claims began to make their way across the ocean – and so the Board was dismissed and no funds were distributed. Those affected by the War were forced to survive for another decade before another Board was convened: a fourth Committee, a Committee of Revision was appointed in 1823.¹³⁴

The fourth Board of Claims for War Losses was created by a Legislative Act which was passed on 19 March, 1823 under Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland. The preamble to the Act proclaimed that:

¹³³Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3732.1.

¹³⁴Sheppard, Plunder, Profit and Paroles 256.

Whereas during the late war with the United States of America, many of Your Majesty's faithful subjects, inhabitants of this Province, sustained much loss & damage by the plundering and burning their dwellings and other buildings and by the devastation of their estates by the Enemy, and by other causes incidental to a state of warfare... that a Commission should be appointed for the investigating the claims of the sufferers prior to any compensation being made for the same: and whereas it is expedient that a diligent and impartial inquiry should be made into the amount of such loss.¹³⁵

The "Commissioner's Report" published at the close of the Board of Claims in 1825, provides the necessary information to understand the daily activities of the Commissioners. The Board was again composed of members of the colonial elite: William Allair, James B. Macaulay, Justice of the Peace at York; Joseph Wells, who sat as a Director for the Bank of Upper Canada and the Welland Canal Company; C. L. L. Foster, the Adjutant General of the Upper Canadian Militia and later, to the Regular Forces; A. Baldwin, a Magistrate for the Home District; and Thomas Ridout.¹³⁶ Meetings of the Board were held on "Tuesday Thursday & Friday in each week until the necessity for that frequency no longer existed."¹³⁷ By January, 1825, the Board had examined 2 473 claims for a total amount of £449 877 – just over 40% or £193 038 was awarded.¹³⁸ The fourth Committee began its meetings in June of 1823. Joseph Wells wrote to Major Hillier, Maitland's Secretary, that:

¹³⁵ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3730.3, "An Act to provide for the appointment of Commissioners" – the entire text of the Act is provided in Appendix 5.

¹³⁶ Geoffrey Bilson, "Macaulay, James," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI; G. M. Craig, "Wells, Joseph," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VIII; O. A. Cooke, "Foster, Colley Lyons Lucas," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VII; Fredrick H. Armstrong, "Baldwin, Augustus Warren," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume IX.

¹³⁷ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.8, "Commissioner's Report, 1825."

¹³⁸ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.8, "Commissioner's Report, 1825."

I have the honour to acquaint you for the information of His Excellency the Lieut. Governor that a Quorum of the Commissioners for the investigation of the losses sustained by the Inhabitants of this Province during the late War assembled on Monday the 2nd June and having been sworn in according to the Provisions of the Act under which they are constituted they assumed their proceedings by appointing J. B. Macaulay Esqr their Secretary. Further engagements were made for meeting again on the following day. The second meeting took place accordingly where among other measures an advertisement was determined upon (of which a copy is herewith enclosed) to be circulated among various newspapers of the Province. The Board had its third meeting this day in the Office which they have hired for the purpose, and will continue their settings as notified in the advertisement in question.¹³⁹

Table 3.1: Breakdown of Total Claims by January 1825 to Fourth Board of Claims for War Losses¹⁴⁰

Claims	Amount Claimed (Halifax C'ry)	Amount Awarded (Halifax C'ry)
<i>2 473 total claims</i>	<i>449 877.11.7</i>	<i>193 038.14.0</i>
1 844 claims decided on	404 828.1.6	193 038.14.0
30 claims not decided	2 198.0.5	0
509 claims lacking proper documentation	25 818.5.1	0
90 claims requiring further evidence	17 033.4.7	0

Early decisions about claims were difficult to reach due to the confusion of the unpaid 1815-16 Board claims. In July, 1823, Wells again wrote to Major George Hillier to apprise him of the situation and to request a solution:

...the members of the present board (not knowing to whom, nor for what particular losses or demands the same was advanced) have experienced

¹³⁹Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.1, letter from Board of Commissioners dated York, 10 June 1823 to Major Hillier.

¹⁴⁰Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.8, “Commissioner’s Report, 1825.”

some difficulty in the investigation of several renewed claims already submitted to them and feel that it would very much facilitate their proceedings with respect to the persons alluded to, if you could oblige them with a statement of their payments shewing to whom and on what particular account they were respectively made.¹⁴¹

With these initial difficulties worked out, the Board proceeded to hear almost three thousand claims and to pass judgment, not only on the claims but, as will be seen, on the claimants themselves.

The Commissioners worried that the establishment of a general Board of Claims opened the doors to those less-than-honest citizens who sought to take advantage of the generosity of the Government. In order to discourage such blatant acts of treachery and fraud, the Commissioners relied on the same "General Principles" used by the 1815-16 Board. Despite these "Principles," a number of claims were presented to the Board which left the Commissioners with the problem of deciding appropriate compensation. In the "Commissioner's Report," released in 1825, the Commissioners acknowledged the difficulty they had in establishing "such a general scale of values... as would give to the moderate claimant, the same proportional remuneration, as to the individual who had estimated his loss by a too partial valuation of it in his own eyes..."¹⁴² A general scale of values, for example, a fixed price for a mare or a log house, was not provided within the documents left by the Board, but there is a list of claims deemed "inadmissible" and which includes claims for the loss of goods and vessels in transit, for the loss of property

¹⁴¹Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.1, letter from Board of Commissioners dated York, 4 July, 1823 to Alexander Wood.

¹⁴²Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.8, "Commissioner's Report, 1825."

within the United States, and for claims for losses by burglaries.¹⁴³ The entire list of inadmissible claims has been provided in Appendix 6. The items listed were used to reject almost twenty per cent of the claims submitted to the Board from the Niagara District.

The particulars of submitting a claim to the Board at York are found only within the voluminous correspondence left by the Commissioners. The members of the Board foresaw the difficulty of claimants presenting their claims personally and so, in July 1823, they wrote to Major Hillier that:

The commissioners of this board aware of the extreme public inconveniences that would attend a personal examination upon oath of the party and evidences in support of each claim that might be submitted to them as well as the very great length of time such a mode of investigation would require, conceived that in the spirit of the Act of Parliament under which they are acting the power of enforcing *viva voce* evidence was only to be requested when they should feel the necessity of availing themselves of this most satisfactory testimony having it to their own discretion always to call for it or not, as the amount, nature, or peculiar circumstances of particular claims might seem to require...¹⁴⁴

It is thus safe to assume that the majority of claims reached the Board on paper. Simply writing a letter to the Board did not, however, constitute a valid claim. Macaulay wrote to Alexander Wood in June, 1823 that "It will be necessary for you to prove by *viva voce* testimony, or regularly sworn affidavits, the fact of losses as stated, specifying the nature and quantity of the Real and Personal property, as well as the fair & just value as the

¹⁴³Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.8, "Commissioner's Report, 1825." The entire list of inadmissible claims is available in Appendix 10.

¹⁴⁴Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.1, letter from the Board dated York, 8 July 1823 to Major Hillier.

documents transmitted by you already are not sufficiently full or satisfactory.”¹⁴⁵

Similarly, Solomon Hyatt of Stamford was counseled by Macaulay in July, 1823, that “The commissioners of claims for losses require that you should transmit further testimony (to be made upon Oath by indifferent persons) as to the loss of the two horses, mentioned in your claim, not proved by Jan McKerlic in her affidavit of the 23rd of June last.”¹⁴⁶ Even the Reverend Dr. Addison, a Director in the Loyal and Patriotic Society, was requested to help “preserve uniformity” in the submission of his claim. Macaulay wrote to Dr. Addison in July, 1823 that:

The Commissioners for investigating claims for losses are perfectly satisfied in their own minds with the proofs already adduced in support of your claim, but to preserve uniformity in their proceedings they feel it essential that you should confirm the same upon oath. Will you therefore at your leisure make an affidavit before one of your Magistrates of the truth and fairness of your Claim, and if you please, insert also the value per acre of the land at the head of the Lake upon which depredations were committed.¹⁴⁷

It appears that the claimants, instead of presenting a claim before the Board in person, were able instead to present the claim to a local magistrate and to swear to its truth. Along with the testimony of one or two witnesses, also sworn to, the whole was submitted to the Board. A letter to Thomas Power of Niagara, in July 1823, indicates that the particulars for claiming were widely published: “The commissioners for investigating claims for losses have directed me to refer you to their Advertisement of the 3rd June last

¹⁴⁵Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.1, letter from the Board dated York, 14 June 1823 to Alexander Wood.

¹⁴⁶Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.1, letter from the Board dated York, 23 July, 1823 to Solomon Hyatt.

¹⁴⁷Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.1, letter from the Board dated York, 28 July, 1823 to Rev. Dr. Addison.

and to request that in compliance therewith you will transmit testimony upon Oath of one or more indifferent and respectable Witnesses as to the nature and Extent of your losses as nearly as they can prove them..."¹⁴⁸ Personal, *viva voce* testimony was resorted to only in the most difficult of cases, like that of Mr. Solomon Quick of St. David's: "Sir, The claim made by you before the former board and that now submitted, vary so extremely that the commissioners for investigating claims for losses require your personal attendance at York to explain the inconsistencies as well as other matters connected with your application."¹⁴⁹

When the claims were received in the proper format, and with the appropriate supporting documentation, the Commissioners assigned the claim to one of four classifications and three sub-classifications. Class 1 claims encompassed all those damages said to have been inflicted by the British army. Class 1 claims were divided into three Divisions, or sub-classifications: Division 1, damages done by His Majesty's Troops; Division 2, damages done by "Indians attached to His Majesty's Troops"; and Division 3, damages done in transporting His Majesty's Troops or goods – for example, the loss of horses, wagons, or bateaus. Class 2 claims consisted of all damages attributed to the enemy. Class 3 claims have been lost to history and are therefore not available. Class 4 claims belong exclusively to the Western District and consist of claims examined by the 1815-16 Board at Sandwich. There are also a number of claims that did not fall into any of the above classifications and that make up a Supplementary Claim category.

¹⁴⁸Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.1, letter from the Board dated York, 26 July, 1823 to Thomas Power.

¹⁴⁹Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.1, letter from the Board dated York, 23 July, 1823 to Solomon Quick.

Twenty of these 22 claims are for amounts less than £40: Thomas McCormie claimed for “Rent of a house at Queenston from 29 March 1813 to 1 May 1815 at £40 per annum” and Grant and Kirby claimed for “rent of different buildings at Queenston & Chippawa by Fort Erie” in the amount of £324.14.4.¹⁵⁰ The Supplemental Claims are made up of generally small claims on the Commissariat – either for rent or board owed by, or for work done for, the British military. For the most part, these claims were dismissed because of the lack of proof provided – just over £525 was awarded to six claimants (including £324 voted to Grant and Kirby). There is another group of claims that should be mentioned at this point: approximately 1 000 un-indexed claims are included in the Records of the Commission. These un-indexed claims are largely incomplete, unorganized and unnumbered. They are not included in the final statement of the Commissioners and do not appear to have been considered by the Board. For these reasons, they have been left out of the analysis of the Claims.

For the reasons explained in Chapter One, and because of the sheer number of claims made to the War Claims Commission, the claims of interest analyzed in this Chapter belong to the Niagara District. Appendix 7, Tables A through G, provide a detailed breakdown of these claims based on Township, Class of claim and gender of the claimant. While a more in-depth comparison of the claims to those grants made by the Loyal and Patriotic Society will come in Chapter Four, it is interesting to note the vast discrepancy between the numbers of male and female claimants within the War Claims versus the numbers presented by the Loyal and Patriotic Society. In only one case – in

¹⁵⁰Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses, Volumes 3735-36.2 Register of Supplementary Claims for Niagara District, Claim #11 and #7.

one township, Pelham, and one class, Class 1, Division 2 – do female claimants outnumber male, and in this case, it is only by one.

The petitioners to the Loyal and Patriotic Society were, as mentioned, those who qualified as both “loyal” and “patriotic” and who were experiencing immediate distress as a result of the war. Those petitioning the Government Commissioners also qualified as both “loyal” and “patriotic”, but were not necessarily hoping for immediate relief – as mentioned earlier, the process of claiming and receiving remuneration was spread over more than a decade after the end of the War. Business owners were well represented within the pages of the Records. Hugh Alexander of Stamford submitted a claim for a “store house and bake house at Erie, Merchandize furniture clothing && at Stamford & Fort Eire [sic] by the Enemy” among other things, and was awarded £2 500.¹⁵¹ Similarly, Benjamin Hardison, Senior, petitioned the Board for remuneration for a “Saw mill on French Mans Creek, [sic] destroyed by Indians” and included a “general certificate signed by two respectable witnesses” to support his claim.¹⁵² Messrs Clark and Street submitted a Class 2 claim for “a Bridge water Mills £5 000 burnt by the Enemy and other property plundered by them at Different times £1 345.5” and were awarded £6 314.¹⁵³ They also submitted a Class 1.1 Claim for a “store broken open and plundered by the 89th Reg under Cap Basden £98.19.4 - Do by the 19th Light Dragoons to amount £62.10 - coopers stuff & cordwood burnt and meadow destroyed etc £105” – the Board

¹⁵¹ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3733.6, Class 2 Claims, Claim #182.

¹⁵² Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3732.3, Class 1, Division 1 Claims, Claim #193.

¹⁵³ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3733.6, Class 2 Claims, Claim #205.

considered a great part of these and other goods overcharged and awarded £690 for the losses included in this claim.¹⁵⁴

Individuals – farmers, town-dwellers, or landlords – were by far the majority of claimants to the Commission and they claimed for damaged buildings, plundered goods, or lost crops. A typical entry is that of James Cusleman of Niagara who submitted a claim listing “280 bushels of wheat, 9 sheep, a calfe [sic], use of barn and meadow by HMTroops.”¹⁵⁵ The people submitting claims to the Commission did not belong exclusively to the ruling elite (although it would be interesting to determine the amount of remuneration granted based on social standing or position). While the names of the colonial elite in Niagara are found within the pages of the Records, there are also the names of the considerably less-important. The Hamiltons, Clenchs, Clarkes and Merritts are all well represented, but there are also claims submitted by George Keefer, John Kelly and George Lacy of Thorold, none of whom submitted a claim for over £33; and claims by Isaac Lowell, William Miller and Peter May of Barton whose claims all fell under £40.¹⁵⁶ A more detailed listing of the goods claimed is found in Table 4.2.

A total of 1 119 claims from the Niagara District were reviewed by the Commissioners: 108 claims, or 9.6%, belonged to women while 1 011, or 90.5%, were

¹⁵⁴Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3732.3, Class 1, Division 1 Claims, Claim #130.

¹⁵⁵Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3732.3, Class 1, Division 1 Claims, Claim #15.

¹⁵⁶Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3733.2, Class 1, Division 3 Claims, Claims #83-85 and Volume 3732.8, Class 1, Division 2 Claims, Claims #204-206.

submitted by men, as demonstrated in Table 3.2 – in contrast to the 64% of female claims to the Loyal and Patriotic Society. Table 3.3 demonstrates that of the 1 119 claims submitted from the Niagara District, 593 were Class 1 claims. While Class 1 claims accounted for 53% of the total claims submitted from the Niagara District, damages by the Enemy, Class 2 claims, accounted for 504 claims – or 45%. Sheppard examined 923 claims in his analysis of single-perpetrator claims and cites 49.6% of claims attributed to the British and 50.4% attributed to the Americans.¹⁵⁷ The minor differences between the figures may be because there were approximately one hundred more claims examined here, or may be because some of the 1 119 claims examined here attribute losses to more than one source – it may be that Sheppard eliminated these claims prior to analyzing

Table 3.2: Breakdown of Niagara District Claims Based on Gender¹⁵⁸

Class	Total	Male	% Total	Female	% Total
Class 1, Division 1	364	329	90.4	35	9.6
Class 1, Division 2	165	158	95.8	7	4.2
Class 1, Division 3	64	63	98.4	1	1.6
Class 2	504	441	87.5	63	12.5
Supplemental	22	20	90.9	2	9.1
Total	1119	1011	90.3	108	9.6

them. Regardless, the numbers do demonstrate that the British army was responsible for just as much of the damages as the invading Americans. The townships hit hardest by the Enemy were Niagara (179 Class 2 claims – 35.5%) and Stamford (105 Class 2 claims –

¹⁵⁷ Sheppard, *Plunder, Profit and Paroles*, 126.

¹⁵⁸ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volumes 3732-3737, Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims.

20.8%) – a breakdown illustrated in greater detail in Appendix 7, Table E. It should be noted here that Niagara and Stamford townships are home to the towns of Newark, Queenston, St. David's, and Niagara Falls – three of which were burned to the ground by the Enemy – claims from these townships very often mention the burning by the Americans. John Ball claimed for “damages by the enemy who burnt his house barn &” and the Reverend John Burns mentioned a “dwelling house burnt,” as did Samuel Boyd.¹⁵⁹ Almost 80 of the 504, or about 16%, of the Class 2 Claims made from the Niagara District specifically say the enemy “burnt” something: a house, a barn, an outbuilding. When just the townships of Niagara and Stamford are examined, the figures are closer to approximately 70 of 280 – or 25%.

Table 3.3: Breakdown of Niagara District Claims Based on Perpetrator¹⁶⁰

	Number Claims	Percentage of Total
Total Claims	1119	100 %
Class 1 (British Perpetrators)	593	53 %
Class 2 (American Perpetrators)	504	45%
Supplemental	22	2 %

Appendix 7, Tables A to G, provide a quantitative breakdown of the claims from Niagara made to the War Claims Commission. Appendix 8, Maps B, C, and E, provide a geographical and military breakdown of the claims. It is apparent that geography,

¹⁵⁹Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3733.6, Class 2, Claims #2, 4, 15.

¹⁶⁰Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volumes 3732-3737, Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims.

specifically in relation to proximity to the American border and the road to York, played a major role in determining the amount of damage experienced by settlers.

Similarly, military engagements and the simple issue of proximity to either army, were major factors in determining where damages were inflicted.

Table 3.4 examines rejected claims: claims were rejected based on the fourteen “General Principles” first used by the 1815-16 Board of Claims, and it appears, from the explanations that accompany each claim, that the General Principles were followed quite closely. Most of those claims were rejected because items were deemed to be

Table 3.4: Breakdown of Rejected Claims Submitted from the Niagara District¹⁶¹

	Total Claims	Total Rejected	Percentage of Total	Female	Male
<i>Class 1, Division 1</i>	364	63	17.3	5	58
<i>Class 1, Division 1</i>	165	26	15.8	0	26
<i>Class 1, Division 3</i>	64	12	18.8	1	11
TOTAL CLASS 1	593	101	17.0	6	95
Class 2	504	100	19.8	6	94
Supplemental	22	11	50.0	1	10
TOTAL	1119	212	19.0	13	199

overcharged, because the claimant’s character was deemed disloyal, or because there was not enough evidence to support the claim. Ebenezer Skinner’s claim was disallowed

¹⁶¹ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volumes 3732-3737, Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims.

because the rails he claimed were “charged at an enormous rate,”¹⁶² and Christian Shoup’s claim was rejected because of “exorbitant charges.”¹⁶³ Lydia Smith’s husband “joined the enemy” and her claim was rejected,¹⁶⁴ John Young received no remuneration for his claim because he was considered a “Disloyal Character [who] constantly avoided Militia Duty,”¹⁶⁵ and William Forsyth was at first dismissed without aid because he was a “disloyal and otherwise bad character.”¹⁶⁶ According to Thomas Clark, Forsyth was “a man not generally liked, and perhaps malice may have instigated the report [of disloyalty] – his neighbours... have no doubts about his loyalty - and further say that when the Enemy were in possession here, he did, and did naturally shape his Conduct as well as he could to save his property.” Forsyth appealed the decision of his claim and in 1824, after a review of the record, he was awarded £90.¹⁶⁷ As for those claims that lacked sufficient evidence, the claims of Baptiste Doute¹⁶⁸ and Thomas Davis,¹⁶⁹ both of Niagara Township, were rejected because they were “incomplete,” and the Supplemental Claims, like that of John Haffry who claimed for six cords of wood furnished to wounded officers in Stamford,¹⁷⁰ were generally rejected because of a lack of “proof.”

¹⁶² Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732.3, Class 1, Division 1 Claim #121.

¹⁶³ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3733.6, Class 2, Claim #325.

¹⁶⁴ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732.3, Class 1, Division 1 Claim #144.

¹⁶⁵ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3733.6, Class 2, Claim #175.

¹⁶⁶ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3733.6, Class 2, Claim #212.

¹⁶⁷ Robert L. Fraser, “Forsyth, William,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VII.

¹⁶⁸ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3733.6, Class 2, Claim #41.

¹⁶⁹ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3733.6, Class 2, Claim #44.

¹⁷⁰ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3735-36.2, Supplemental Claims #8.

The variety of claims and the number of claims seem to indicate that the Niagara District experienced a great amount of damage and distress as a result of the war. Unlike the Loyal and Patriotic Society, the claims made to the Commission consisted of much more detailed petitions, were for larger amounts, and were made by people from all walks of life – from the colonial elite to the smaller farmer. It appears that everyone was affected – and affected to a large degree – by damages inflicted by both the Americans and the British.

CHAPTER FOUR – THE WAR IN NIAGARA

The accounts of the devastation of the Niagara District by Lt. General Drummond, Charles Askin, Alexander McMillan, and later by historians like Kirby and Carnochan, which were presented in Chapter One, indicate that the entire District of Niagara was ravaged by the atrocities of the war. The large numbers of claims made to both the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission initially appear to support the conclusions reached by almost two hundred years of historiography. Upon closer examination however, it appears that total devastation was definitely not the case: in fact, the majority of the District experienced little, if any, damage at the hands of the British, the Americans, or the Natives attached to either army – at least no damages that were made known to either the Society or to the Commission. Equally important to understanding the true extent of the damages to the Niagara District is an inventory of what and who experienced the devastation. What follows is a detailed survey of how the claims made to the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission clarify the accepted theory that the entire Niagara region was laid waste during the course of the War of 1812.

Table 4.1 provides a detailed breakdown of the reason claims were made to the Loyal and Patriotic Society from the Niagara District. It is important to note that in many cases more than one “reason” was cited in each claim. For example, the Widow Layton received £6.5 in June 1815 because she was “much distressed and plundered by the enemy, but has been already assisted” or Mrs. Fry who received £7.10, also in June 1815,

because her “husband [was] killed by cannon shot; [her] house at Newark burnt, and her farm greatly damaged.”¹⁷¹ A charitable organization, the Society was meant to alleviate the immediate distresses of the war, and it is immediately apparent that claimants understood its purpose: a number of claims mentioned the death of a husband or the great want and distress of the family. Approximately 60% of the grants recorded by the Loyal and Patriotic Society were accompanied by one or more comment or reason – those categories mentioned in Table 4.1 – for providing relief, and 100 claims

Table 4.1: Reasons Cited for Grants by the Loyal and Patriotic Society to the Niagara District¹⁷²

Reason	Times Mentioned
Widow	52
Want/Distress	48
Large family	36
No means	32
Prisoner	31
Home burnt	26
Loyalty	23
Plundered	17
All property	10
Crops destroyed	10
Clothes/furniture	9
Force from home	6
Purchase necessities	6
Repair	1
No reason given	236

**Numbers may add to more than 399 because some grants listed more than one reason for each claim.

made for these two reasons – either the death of a husband or want and distress – represent a considerable number of those seeking relief. What is interesting in Table 4.1 is that the grants of relief for those forced from their homes or for those with all their property or crops destroyed constitute less than 5% of the total claims. Grants

¹⁷¹ Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, June 1815, 290-303.

¹⁷² Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report.

mentioning the burning of a home comprise 6.5% of the total grants. This is not to say that large amounts were not distributed to those at Newark in December. However, it is interesting to note that a factor like the burning of the town was not recorded by the Loyal and Patriotic Society, while such reasons make up the majority of claims to the War Claims Commission. Rather, factors like death, loyalty, and imprisonment appear to have been more important to the directors of the Society as they were recorded 106 times, or 35%, versus 201 times or 65% for all the other reasons. Regardless of the reasoning behind the granting of relief to the loyal needy of the District, the distribution of the grants says something in itself. Appendix 8, Maps B and C, plot the military maneuvers that affected the District during the war. Through dates and the few geographical clues provided in the Report, it is obvious that, regardless of the obvious bias of the Society Directors, the presence of an army or the waging of a battle did play a role in the granting of aid to those who made appeals to the Society.

A large number of people made multiple claims to one or both the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission. In fact, 180 repeat claims were granted by the Loyal and Patriotic Society – most, like the eight listed for the Widow Mary Grass, acknowledge that she had been “frequently assisted.”¹⁷³ It appears that, because the Society was primarily for *immediate* relief, a large number of people – male and female – relied quite heavily on the Society to provide them with financial assistance when suddenly widowed or injured or plundered of goods. The average amount of money provided to those in the Niagara District by the Loyal and Patriotic Society was

¹⁷³ Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 104, Feb 1814; 216, June 1815; 290-303, June 1815; 290-303, June 1815; 307, June 1815; 307, April 1816; 308, April 1816.

about £10.¹⁷⁴ In the Niagara District during the war years, £10 would have purchased a number of items, but hardly enough to survive over the long-term: potatoes cost 2.6s. per bushel in 1810 and 5s. in 1814; peas had increased in price from 4s. per bushel in 1812 to 10s. in 1814; hay from 48.5s in 1812 to 70s. in 1814; and pork from 90s. in 1812 to 150s. in 1815.¹⁷⁵ At the highest prices estimated, £10 would have purchased 40 bushels of potatoes or 20 of peas, 2 barrels of pork, or almost 3 tons of hay.

There are approximately 280 repeat claims in the War Claims Commission records – this includes only those claims made by the same person, for example John Rose of Bertie Township (1.1.206, 2.382) or Augustus Jones of Saltfleet Township (1.1.297, 2.475), and does not include claims made by, in one class a husband and in another class, his wife. The large majority of these repeat claims (143 or 84%) belong to different classes, for example, Barbara Overholt of Bertie Township submitted claims to Class 1.2 (1.2.215) and to Class 2 (2.378) and Francis Crooks from Grimsby Township submitted a Class 1.1 (1.1.262) and a Class 2 (2.433) claim. Only twenty-seven claimants submitted documentation for the same class – for example two Class 1.1 or Class 2 claims – and in these cases it appears that the claim may have been for two different properties. For example, Mary Clarke submitted two Class 2 claims – one in Niagara and the other in Bertie Township (2.29, 2.346). In some cases, these repeat claims within a specific Class were an attempt to cheat the system. These claims were generally discovered due, possibly, to the organizational skills of the Commissioners who frequently referred to their Records to determine if a claim had already been submitted

¹⁷⁴ Men received, on average, just over £11, while women received just over £10.

¹⁷⁵ McCalla, Planting the Province, 336-339.

and decided upon. Maria Thompson's claim for £150 was rejected because the goods were "considered under her husbands claim."¹⁷⁶ George and Jane Keefer received no remuneration for their claim when the Board found their claim was considered and granted with someone else's and James Crooks submitted two claims: one in Niagara and one in Binbrook, the latter was rejected because its "duplicate [was] considered in Niagara District."¹⁷⁷ For those who sought to exploit the generosity of the Government, the result was usually that all, or some, of their claim was rejected.

Despite the bias in the granting of aid by the Loyal and Patriotic Society, the results of their breakdown are supported by a similar breakdown of the 1 119 claims made to, and recorded by, the War Claims Commission and belonging to the Niagara District. With this breakdown, it is possible to have a better understanding of everyday life in the District. From the information presented in Table 4.2, it appears that the most important items to the Quartermaster's Department of both armies was transportation (specifically horses) and food (mainly hogs), both of which were mentioned in over twenty per cent of the claims. Fodder for the army's animals and vegetables for the men also rank among the highest numbers of items claimed, and it appears that a wide variety of crops was grown in the region: oats were mentioned 144 times, hay (113), potatoes (112), wheat (65), corn (58), peas (20), buckwheat (8), and even rye (6), and flax and barley (1 each) appear to have been attractive goods for the armies. Orchards also appear to have been fairly common throughout the District:

¹⁷⁶Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claim 2.153.

¹⁷⁷Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claims 1.137, 2.518.

Table 4.2: Goods Cited in Grants by the War Claims Commission¹⁷⁸

Reason	Times Mentioned	Percentage of Total	Reason	Times Mentioned	Percentage of Total
Horses	350	31.3	Buckwheat	18	1.6
Hogs	297	26.5	Spirits	18	1.6
Sundries	216	19.3	Flour	18	1.6
Fencing/rails/boards	206	18.4	Apples	15	1.3
Sheep	198	17.7	Cash	15	1.3
House	193	17.3	Gun	14 + holsters	1.2
Furniture/bedding	145	13.0	Leather	10	0.9
Oats	144	12.9	Store	9	0.8
Cattle	142	12.7	Bridge	9	0.8
Clothing/blankets	135	12.1	Watch	8	0.7
Harness/saddle/etc.	121	10.8	Staves/barrels	8	0.7
Barn	114	10.2	Charcoal	7	0.6
Hay	113	10.1	Rye	6	0.5
Potatoes	112	10.0	Turnip	4	0.4
Wagon/sleigh	79	7.1	potash	4	0.4
Outbuildings	74	6.6	Iron	3	0.3
Loss of work	66	6.0	Cider	2	0.2
Wheat	65	5.8	Salt	2	0.2
Trees	64	5.7	Straw	2	0.2
Corn	58	5.2	Cabbage	1	0.1
Tools	57	5.1	Flax	1	0.1
Fields/meadow	56	5.0	barley	1	0.1
Bees/hives	42	3.8	Sword	1	0.1
Wood/timber	35	3.1	Molasses	1	0.1
Boat/schooner	27	2.4	Printing press and type	1	0.1
Ox	27	2.4	Barrel vinegar	1	0.1
Poultry	26	2.3	Wool	1	0.1
Peas	20	1.8	Library	1	0.1
Garden	20	1.8	Church	1	0.1

¹⁷⁸Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812.

mentioned in almost seventy claims, apple, cherry and peach trees were specifically named, but “orchard” and “fruit” tree also indicate the extent of fruit growing. Honey production in the District appears to have flourished prior to the War, especially in Ancaster Township – bees and hives were mentioned in forty-two of the claims. Perhaps the most interesting however, are the large number of claims for furniture and bedding, including clocks and featherbeds, as well as the large number of claims for clothing and blankets. Do these types of luxury goods indicate the elite status of the claimant? Not necessarily: the combinations of goods, in the majority of cases, do not give insight into the social status or economic means of the claimant. Otherwise “ordinary” claims list, as seen in Table 4.2, a remarkably similar list of goods – animals, food, forage, housing, and in some cases, goods such as clocks and feather beds. The claims of the elite are generally recognizable, either because of their name or because their claim specifically mentions a store or a large number of properties, as in the case of Clark and Street who claimed for their “store broken open and plundered by the 89th Reg [sic] under Cap Basden ... [and by] the Light Dragoons.”¹⁷⁹

Unfortunately, a detailed inventory of the specific articles of clothing that was stolen by the armies is not available, but some claims do mention greatcoats or women’s or men’s wearing apparel. John Dorshimer of Stamford, submitted a claim asserting that the Enemy had taken a “great coat & saddle;” Andrew Pettit of Grimsby claimed for a

¹⁷⁹Department of Finance Papers– Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claim 1.1.130.

“cart harness great coat & body of a wagon [sic]...,” and Peter Trumby and Asa Waterhouse both listed “clothing && taken by the Enemy.”¹⁸⁰

Tools were also frequently listed in the claims – blacksmith’s, carpenter’s, and “coopers [sic] stuff,” indicate the presence of each of these trades in the District – not surprising considering the relative age and settlement of the community – but two sets of hatter’s tools and three sets of shoemaker’s tools, three looms and a couple of stills and brewing utensils also made it into the Records of the Commission. Appendix 9 provides a specific breakdown of various items listed in the claims to the Commission. The large range of items mentioned in the Records of the War Claims Commission indicate that the Niagara District was indeed the bustling and thriving District described in Chapter One. The houses claimed were generally not log houses – framed and stone houses are mentioned throughout the Records. For example, David and Catherine Harkman of Niagara claimed for a “frame house and a hewed log house burnt by the enemy.”¹⁸¹ James Crooks, also of Niagara, requested remuneration for a “frame house shop & store” and also for a “two story [sic] Brick house.”¹⁸² Further, George Forsyth, Jacob Lutz and Alexander McKee all had at least one frame house burnt by the enemy.¹⁸³ It also appears that houses were frequently rented to the British army and when they were torched by the Americans the owners made specific mention of their tenants. Joseph Brown claimed “remuneration for [a] dwelling house consumed by fire Dec 1813 when occupied as a

¹⁸⁰Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claims 2.208; 1.1.271, 2.275, 2.299

¹⁸¹Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claims 2.66, 2.67.

¹⁸²Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claim 2.18.

¹⁸³Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claims 2.52, 2.86, 2.103.

Barracks £470.2.10, rent of house previous to its being burnt £32.2.6...”¹⁸⁴ Similarly, Thomas Cummings from Willoughby recorded his claim for “a house destroyed by fire in 1813 when occupied as Barracks by militia, buildings burnt at Chippawa by order of General Riall 5th July 1814.”¹⁸⁵ It is doubtful that these rented houses and buildings were destroyed in an act of specific, targeted destruction, but were rather the result of wanton, indirect and general devastation. What is interesting in these cases is that the owners of these buildings ensured the Commission knew they had been rented to the British.

Finally, it should be mentioned that a poor and struggling District would possibly not have as many of the luxury goods that were claimed for by the inhabitants of the Niagara District and that were briefly mentioned above. Cash was available as seen from the fifteen claims that mention it; watches and clocks and a large number of books – even a “library” – seem to indicate that the District was, in support of previous documentation, a fairly successful and possibly wealthy region.

Thus, in contrast to the grants made by the Loyal and Patriotic Society, the War Claims Commission grants were less obviously based on service and loyalty although, as seen in Chapter Three, characters deemed disloyal did not receive any remuneration from the Commission. Lydia Smith’s claim, for example, that was for £27.2.6 was rejected because her husband had joined the enemy.¹⁸⁶ Further, Alexander Rogers’ claim was

¹⁸⁴Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claim 1.1.124.

¹⁸⁵Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claim 1.1.154.

¹⁸⁶Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claim 1.1.144.

rejected because it was: “sworn to by claimant who is notoriously disloyal having Joined the Enemy for a while.”¹⁸⁷ Whether or not the funds granted were distributed fairly is a question worth exploring but what is important is the number of claims, as well as the process of submitting those claims and the goods considered worthy of naming. Table 4.3 provides a breakdown of the Commission claims by class based on the mean, median and total amounts both claimed and estimated. The average amount awarded was approximately £131. However, claimants had received only 25% of their grants by June of 1824 and another 10% around the beginning of March 1825, which means that the average remuneration allotted to each claimant paid out just over £45.

Table 4.3: Median, Mean and Total Amounts Claimed and Estimated by the War Claims Commission¹⁸⁸

	Claimed by Inhabitants			Estimated by Commission		
	Median (£)	Mean (£)	Total (£)	Median (£)	Mean (£)	Total (£)
Class 1.1	62.5.0	165	64 145.11.9	39	107	39 434
Class 1.2	30.0.0	85	14 503.0.1	20	47	7 901.10.0
Class 1.3	21.5.0	24	1 565.1.10	15	15	936.7.6
Class 2	93.0.0	288	144 669.19.7	54	196	98 371.14.2
Supplemental	15.0.0	37	673.17.10	0	29	525.11.10
Total		200	225 557.11.1		131	147 169.2.8

Of course, the averages presented above do not reflect the great range between the highest and lowest of claims made to the War Claims Commission. Fifty-two of the 1

¹⁸⁷ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claim 2.125.

¹⁸⁸ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737.

119 claims submitted were for amounts less than £10. Female claimants represent approximately 10% of this number – 5 claims – two of which were rejected. Almost 200 claims, including those under £10, for amounts less than £20 were made to the Commission: of the 198 made, 102 received remuneration. These claims were generally rejected because the Board deemed there was a lack of evidence, for example, those of Nathan Hixon and Peter Trumby.¹⁸⁹ It is interesting that approximately half of these small claims were denied: perhaps the Commissioners could not bother themselves with such “trifling” sums. Regardless, the amounts represented some loss to the claimants.

At the opposite end of the scale are the eight claims for amounts over £3 000. The Honourable William Claus, a member of the Legislative Council and Executive Council, submitted £3 172.13.4 worth of damages; the Honourable William Dickson, £3 868.4.1; Mr. David Secord, a Justice of the Peace and a Major in the 2nd Lincoln Militia, £3 837.6; business partners Messrs. Clark (a member of the Legislative Council) and Street (Justice of the Peace) and Robert Randall, submitted competing claims in the amount of £6 345.5.5; George Hamilton claimed £3 255.15.7; Thomas Cummings claimed £3 600.13.11; Richard Beasley, a Justice of the Peace and a Lieutenant-Colonel in the West Riding Militia of York, claimed £3 007.2.5; and the lone woman to claim over £3 000, the Widow Douglas, claimed £3 374.3.¹⁹⁰ While these eight claims

¹⁸⁹ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claims 2.220, 2.275.

¹⁹⁰ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claims, 2.16, 2.51, 2.138, 2.205, 2.206, 1.1.32, 1.1.154, 1.1.328, 2.405. Robert S. Allen, “Claus, William,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI; Bruce G. Wilson, “Secord, David,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VII; Bruce A. Parker and Bruce G. Wilson, “Clark, (Clarke) Thomas,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI; Bruce A. Parker, “Street, Samuel,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VII; Paul Romney, “Randal, (Randall) Robert,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VI; Robert L. Fraser, “Beasley, Richard,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume VII.

requested over £30 000, only one (that of Robert Randall) was rejected, and together they were granted a total of £25 567 – approximately 84% of the amount they claimed.

Having two fairly large databases of claims available has allowed for a cross-referencing of names to determine if the information presented in the two coincides, namely through determining if people presented claims to both the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission. When the databases were examined, and allowing for minor variations in the spelling of surnames (for example Bastado, Bastador, Bastader, Bastads, Bastider, or Gesso, Gesse, Gesseau), there were 54 “double claims” as seen in Table 4.4, from the Niagara District. The distribution of the claims is very similar

Table 4.4: 54 “Double Claimants” to the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission

Adams	Fields	Holmes	Powers
Addison	Ferris, Ferish	Jones	Powis
Bastado, Bastador, Bastader, Bastads, Bastider		Kettle	Rose
Bellinger, Barringer	Firth	Knox	Secord
Benner, Bener	Forsyth	Law, Lawe	Shaw
Burch, Birch	Freel	Leighton, Layton	Skinner
Burns	Frey	Lee	Slingerland
Butler	Gesso, Gesse, Gesseau		Symington
Cain	Grass, Gross	May	Taylor
Clark, Clarke	Graham	McBride	Thompson
Clench	Hainer	McDonell	Waddle
Crooks	Hannah Hill	Muirhead	Warren
Dorval, Devil	Isabella Hill	Patterson	Weaver
Doute, Doult	Hilts, Hitts	Peer, Peers	Winterbottom

to the distribution presented by the War Claims Commission claims. These 54 cases provide a means of verifying details and records across the claims process and allow for insight into the reality faced by the claimants.

In general these “double claims” confirm one another and a number of variables are generally confirmed. For example, the Widow Leighton wrote to the Commission that she lost “four sheep, 15 hogs, 1 acre of potatoes and three of corn £39.10, a silver watch, fowling piece and oats taken by the enemy £23.15.”¹⁹¹ The Society records the reason for her £6.10 grant in June of 1815 as she was “harassed by the enemy.”¹⁹² Jane Jones’ claim to the War Claims Commission listed “2 dwelling houses destroyed with fencing of the same, clothing & furniture && taken by the enemy £1 147.3, an orchard destroyed by order of Major General Riall & other damages by H[is] M[ajesty’s] T[roops] £474.16.”¹⁹³ The Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society notes that in February 1814, she was a “widow of a prisoner; house burnt by [the] enemy and she [was] left destitute with one sickly child.”¹⁹⁴ James Secord prepared two claims for the Commission. The first was for “clothing taken by the Enemy” and the second for “damages by H[is] M[ajesty’s] T[roops] to his house, fence, two wagons destroyed and 6 months house rent.”¹⁹⁵ The statement in the Society Report supports the Commission records in that it states he was “twice plundered and lost almost all his property, all his clothes and furniture.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claim 1.1.40.

¹⁹² Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report 276-89, June 1815.

¹⁹³ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claim 2.77.

¹⁹⁴ Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report 105, Feb 1814.

¹⁹⁵ Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claims 2.490, 1.1.64.

¹⁹⁶ Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report 106.

Thus, these “double” claims allow for the conclusion that the Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the Records of the War Claims Commission are fairly accurate and, more importantly, they provide a measure of reassurance about the quality and character of the claims. The larger significance – and the larger question – of these “double” claims is the lack of more overlapping cases – it would be expected that more people experiencing immediate difficulty and making claims to the Loyal and Patriotic Society would have also presented their case to the War Claims Commission and vice versa. Perhaps the aid provided by the Loyal and Patriotic Society was enough to see claimants through their difficulties; perhaps the widows who had claimed to the Society had someone else claim to the Commission; perhaps those utterly destroyed by the War and helped by the Society moved out of the District, or the Province prior to the establishment of the District. Whatever the case, the “double” claims can be read as evidence of what happened in the District.

The above analysis, in conjunction with the information presented in Chapters Two and Three thus clarifies the accepted theory that the entire Niagara region was laid waste by both the British and American armies during the War of 1812 and instead identifies that the damages were overwhelmingly limited to specific and localized areas within the District. Specific areas were affected to a greater extent than others within the District and Chapter Five examines these particular findings in more detail.

CONCLUSION – THE WAR IN THE NIAGARA DISTRICT

While the preceding chapters have presented a detailed examination of the extent of the damages as a result of the War of 1812, they only begin to indicate the importance of this examination. Understanding the claims presented to both the Loyal and Patriotic Society and to the War Claims Commission, thus provides a means of understanding the effect of the War in the Niagara District and the extent of the damages as a result of the War.

As seen in Chapter One, military engagements within the District were fairly common: battles at Queenston Heights, Fort George, Stoney Creek, Beaver Dam, Chippawa, and Lundy's Lane meant that British and American forces constantly crossed and re-crossed the District. When both real and attempted invasions and the wholesale burning of villages like Newark are included with these battles and occupations, it is quite easy to believe that the entire District was indeed ravaged. Primary documents indicate major devastation and held little hope for recovery. The Americans acknowledged responsibility for what Drummond considered "act[s] of barbarity and of illiberal and unjustifiable outrage."¹⁹⁷ Attached to the 23rd United States Infantry, Major MacFarland admitted the "disgraceful" conduct of some members of the American militia.¹⁹⁸ Alexander McMillan agreed that such destruction "beggars all description."¹⁹⁹ John LeCouteur of the British 104th Foot asserted that, shortly after the war, Queenston

¹⁹⁷ Cruikshank, *The First American Frontier*, 15.

¹⁹⁸ Cruikshank, *The Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1814*, 73.

¹⁹⁹ Zaslow, *The Defended Border*, 234.

still had only one house with windows left in it.²⁰⁰ These primary documents, and the early historiography surrounding the war, all seem to indicate the general and widespread destruction of the District, and all of it at the hands of the invading Americans.

The Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society initially appears to support this conclusion: large numbers of settlers appealed to the Board for immediate aid to help with their “great distress” as a result of the War. As seen in Table 4.1, widows and those in want or distress made up twenty-five per cent of the claims. The Table also demonstrates the large variety of needs experienced by those living in the District at the time. Thus, it does initially appear that the Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society supports the historical theory that the entire District was devastated by the war. McCalla however, estimates that 11 000 people lived in the Niagara District prior to the war.²⁰¹ If this is the case, then only 4% of the population of the District made a claim to the Society. Moreover, 180 of the claims made to the Society were “repeat” claims – that is, claimants receiving funds on more than one occasion. For example, the Widow Mary Gross received £55 in eight grants.²⁰² When these repeat claims are removed from the total number of Society grants for the District, the number of grants to specific individuals falls to 219, which means that only 2% of the population of the Niagara District was helped by the Loyal and Patriotic Society. These numbers fall far short of representing the widespread devastation presented in Chapter One.

²⁰⁰ Graves, Merry Hearts Make Light Days, 204.

²⁰¹ McCalla, Planting the Province, 253.

²⁰² Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 104, Feb 1814; 216, June 1815; 290-303, June 1815; 290-303, June 1815; 307, June 1815; 307, April 1816; 308, April 1816.

The same situation is true in relation to the claims for the War Claims Commission. Table 4.2 presents the varied claims presented to the Board, and demonstrates the items considered of most importance to the population of the District. The specific listing of items provided by the Commission allows for a cross-referencing with Cruikshank's compilation of Niagara Resources in 1812, as presented in Table 1.1. This Table thus demonstrates the great discrepancy between what was available in 1812 – before the District was “ravaged” and the *total* of all claims submitted to the Board by its close in 1825. For example, for each of the six times rye was mentioned in the Commission claims, the claimants would have lost just over 640 bushels each, to equal the resources available in 1812. Similarly, for each of the 350 times horses were mentioned in the claims, each claim would have been for nine horses.

Table 5.1: Cruikshank's Niagara Resources, 1812, versus Items Claimed in War Claims Records²⁰³

	Available 1812 According to Cruikshank	Times Mentioned in Records
Flour	3571 cwt	18
Wheat	40 621 bushels	65
Rye	3 854 bushels	6
Oats	12 008 bushels	144
Corn	1 719 bushels	58
Barley	53 bushels	1
Peas	1 768 bushels	20
Cattle	11 718	142
Sheep	16 545	198
Hogs	9 907	297
Horses	3 152	350

²⁰³ Cruikshank, The First American Frontier, 12-13; Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volumes 3732-3737.

It should be mentioned that the claims submitted were reasonable: a claim for £20 for example, was for one horse, not twenty. Furthermore, there were still cows, horses, and sheep to be taken in 1814: all of the goods of the District were not taken the day after hostilities began in June 1812. For example, just over 1% of the cattle and sheep available in 1812 were claimed in the Commission Records, and just 3% of the hogs. Thus, it appears that a great proportion of the goods available – at least the goods mentioned above – were not stolen, burned, or plundered, thereby suggesting that damages less extensive than historians have claimed and that the idea of utter devastation may exaggerate reality.

The map presented in Appendix 8, Map E, supports this conclusion. The War Claims Commission included the township from which the claim originated, and when plotted on the map, it appears that only six of 20 townships experienced between 10- and 25% of the total damages, while 13 townships submitted fewer than 5%, 7 under 1%, and 2 townships submitted no claims at all. As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, and shown in Appendix 8, Map E, the largest numbers of claims originated along the Niagara River, focusing on Niagara Township (Niagara, Newark and Fort George) and in Ancaster and Barton Townships where the British were encamped at Burlington Heights, and along the Lake Ontario shoreline. This indicates a very definite geographic link to the occurrence of damages from the war. Of course, the number of claims submitted by the population depended also on the numbers of people living in those townships. As mentioned earlier, Gourlay's Statistical Account provides an estimate of the number of houses and the number of people living in the District in 1817 and these numbers have

been plotted on the map in Appendix 8, Map D. Only three townships submitted a greater number of claims than the number of established households – Niagara, Stamford and Willoughby – three of the four townships directly on the Niagara River and which saw the majority of battles and occupation by both armies. Furthermore, two towns in the Niagara District, St. David's and Newark, were burned by the Americans and help to account for the higher number of claims. With the exception of Bertie, Ancaster and Barton, the remaining townships all submitted less than 50% of claims per household. Table 5.2 presents this information in more detail and shows that widespread damages were localized in nature and were very dependent on where troops were quartered and where battles took place.

Table 5.2: Claims Submitted to the War Claims Commission versus Housing Estimates Presented by Gourlay

Township	Number of Claims	Number of Houses	Percentage of Claims to Houses
Ancaster	100	162	62%
Barton	66	130	51%
Bertie	132	200	66%
Binbrook	3	Not provided	n/a
Caistor	0	23	n/a
Clinton	29	119	24%
Crowland	22	84	26%
Gainsborough	1	119	1%
Glanford	4	Not provided	n/a
Grantham	78	200	39%
Grimsby	30	142	21%
Humberstone	3	75	4%
Louth	34	130	26%
Niagara	277	231	120%
Pelham	7	130	5%
Saltfleet	44	100	44%
Stamford	177	165	107%
Thorold	45	150	30%
Wainfleet	2	75	3%
Willoughby	65	63	103%
Total	1119	2298	49%

The numbers presented above and in Appendix 8, Map G, take into account the *total* number of claims made to the Commission but, in some cases, more than one claim was submitted to the Commission by one individual. There are 278 of these claims from specific individuals within specific townships and when they are accounted for, there are 143 fewer total claims, for a revised total of 976 individual claims within the District. When these revised numbers are compared to Gourlay's housing estimates, Niagara township is now the only township still presenting more individual claims than established households with a ratio of 245 claims to 231 houses – this revised total is seen in Appendix 8, Map H.

Table 5.3: “Revised Total” Claims Submitted to the War Claims Commission versus Housing Estimates Presented by Gourlay

Township	“Revised” Number of Claims	Number of Houses	Percentage of Claims to Houses
Ancaster	97	162	60%
Barton	65	130	50%
Bertie	102	200	51%
Binbrook	3	Not provided	n/a
Caistor	0	23	n/a
Clinton	26	119	22%
Crowland	20	84	24%
Gainsborough	1	119	1%
Glanford	4	Not provided	n/a
Grantham	70	200	35%
Grimsby	25	142	18%
Humberstone	3	75	4%
Louth	30	130	23%
Niagara	245	231	106%
Pelham	7	130	5%
Saltfleet	36	100	36%
Stamford	150	165	91%
Thorold	42	150	28%
Wainfleet	2	75	3%
Willoughby	48	63	76%
Total	976	2298	42%

What these figures seem to indicate is that the Niagara District experienced damages in specific, localized areas which saw battles, occupation by troops, or both; rather than the widespread damages indicated in Chapter One. These, arguably more accurate, numbers based on population further support the conclusion that the damages experienced by the District were not as widespread as previous historians have indicated. Moreover, it should be noted that the claims for damages by His Majesty's Troops outnumber those for damages by the invading Americans by over 100 individual claims, as seen in Appendix 7, although the 615 claims against the British accounted for approximately £78 700 in damages (and just over £49 100 granted in remuneration), while the 504 claims against the Americans accounted for more than £154 700 (and over £98 300 in remuneration). While history focuses on the atrocities inflicted by the Americans – they did burn towns – it is interesting to note that the British were responsible for more individual claims for compensation. The difference here, of course, is one of perception: the inhabitants did not begrudge the defending British a cow or a horse or their barn – at least, the loyal inhabitants in the histories did not – but invading Americans – and Americans who burned whole towns – were a whole different story.

Thus, while history asserts that the Niagara District in general was ravaged by the War of 1812, the information presented here demonstrates a more specific understanding of the damages and identifies a more localized breakdown of the real damages claimed in both the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission. Niagara and Stamford Townships, situated on the Niagara River at Lake Ontario experienced the most

damages. Grantham, Willoughby, Ancaster and Barton also experienced some damages. Bertie was affected by the war. For the most part, the other townships experienced little, if any, of the devastation of the war.

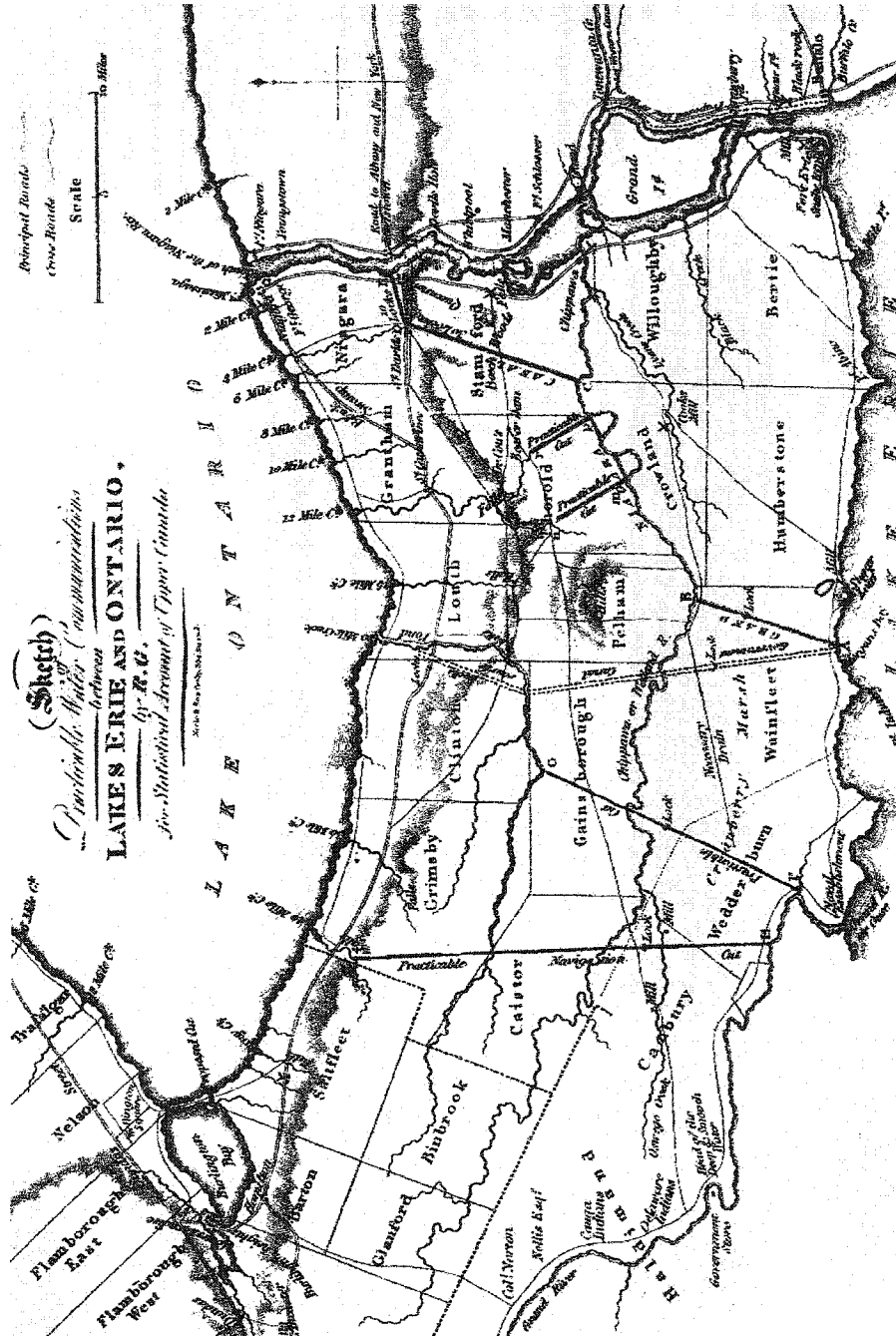
A study of this sort also allows for the un-heard stories of the War of 1812 to have a chance to be told within the historical record. The entries from both the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission allow for insight into the lives of those directly affected by the war. For example, Mary Grass or Gross, the widow who received numerous grants from the Loyal and Patriotic Society, lived in Grantham Township. The death of her husband left her with two children and no means of support as the Society Report noted that he “left no estate to support his family.” The family did keep some livestock: Mary’s claim to the Commission cited the loss of a cow, 3 sheep and 6 hogs taken by members of both armies. They may also have had or did have a horse as she also noted a “saddle [and] bridle ... taken by [the] enemy.”²⁰⁴ These types of details abound in the documents and provide innumerable instances to understand the effects of the war on individual people.

Regardless of the extent of the damages, the political notions and the loyalist stories that arose from the War of 1812 provide Canadians with a link to an important and great historical past. The stories of the sacrifices and loyalty of these early Canadians helped to shape the future of the country. The information presented here thus complements the existing historiography surrounding the war and its effects on the District by providing a very detailed and complex breakdown of the claims submitted to

²⁰⁴Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report, 104, Feb 1814; Department of Finance Papers— Board of Claims for War of 1812, Volume 3732-3737, Claim 1.1.236.

both the Loyal and Patriotic Society and the War Claims Commission. Through understanding the extent of the damages experienced by the Niagara District – the cultural and economic centre of the province at this time – a means is provided to explore the localization and distribution of the damages of other Districts, and of understanding the socioeconomic effects of the war on the province of Upper Canada as a whole.

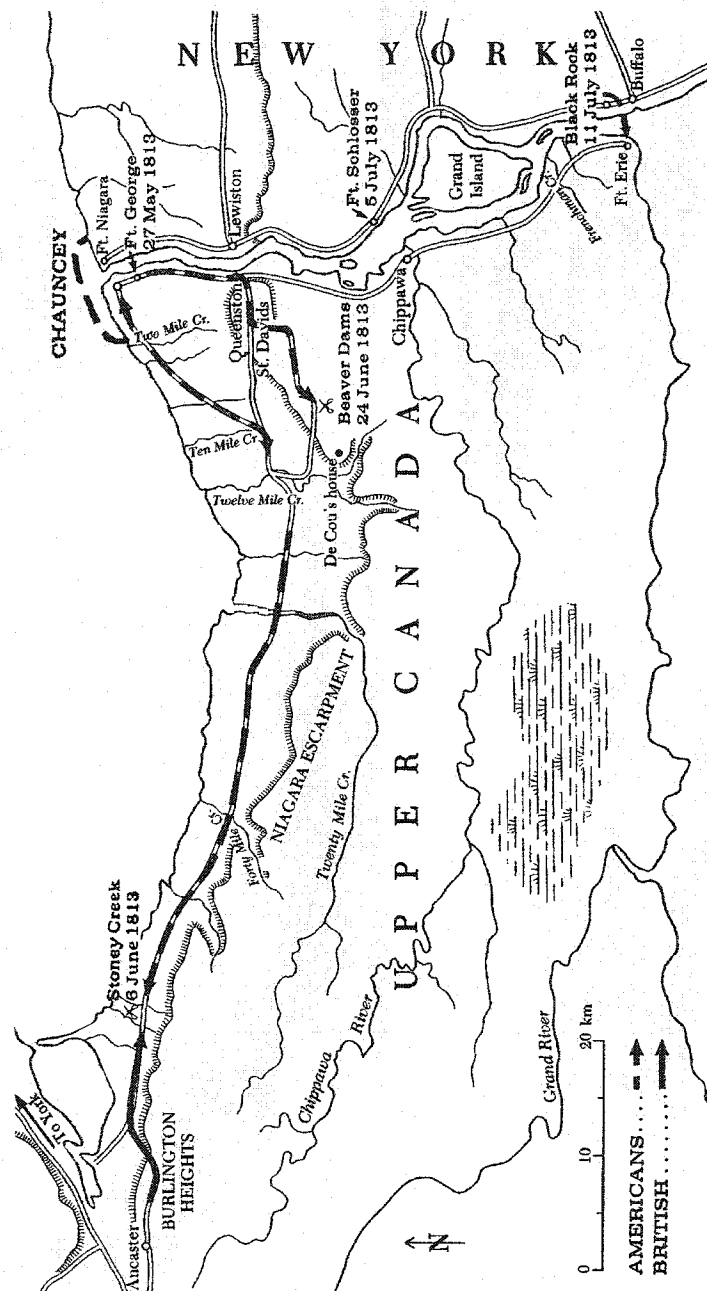
Appendix 1
Robert Gourlay's Map of the Niagara District



Source: Robert Gourlay, General Introduction to Statistical Account of Upper Canada. (London: Simpkin & Marshall and J. M. Richardson, 1822), map insert.

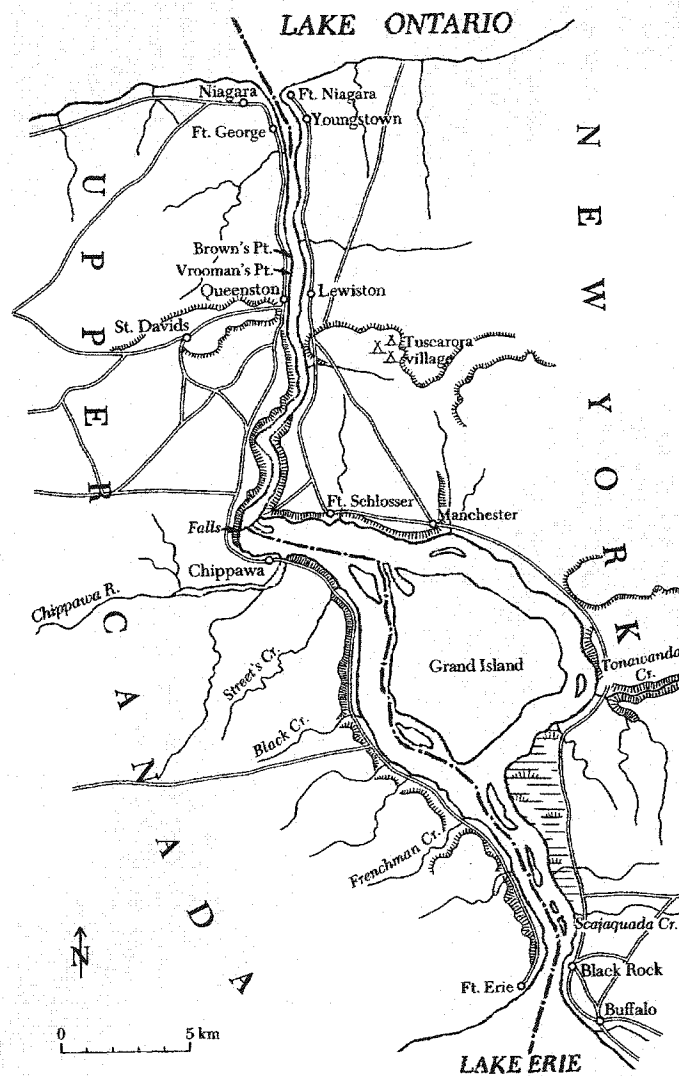
Appendix 2

Dearborn's Invasion of the Niagara Peninsula, 1813



Source: George F. G. Stanley, The War of 1812: Land Operations, Canadian War Museum Historical Publication No. 18 (Canada, MacMillan, 1983), 122.

Appendix 3
The Niagara Frontier



Source: George F. G. Stanley, *The War of 1812: Land Operations*, Canadian War Museum Historical Publication No. 18 (Canada, MacMillan, 1983), 181.

Appendix 4, Table A
Claims to the Loyal and Patriotic Society – Total Breakdown

	Total	% Total	Year	# Claims
Eastern	55	6.8%	1813	2
			1814	6
			1815	2
			1816	
			1817	45
Gore	2	0.25%	1813	1
			1814	
			1815	1
			1816	
			1817	
Home	32	3.9%	1813	20
			1814	4
			1815	4
			1816	4
			1817	
Johnstown	5	0.6%	1813	1
			1814	4
			1815	
			1816	
			1817	
London	104	12.8%	1813	
			1814	61
			1815	38
			1816	5
			1817	
Midland	87	10.7%	1813	3
			1814	
			1815	1
			1816	83
			1817	
Newcastle	2	0.3%	1813	
			1814	
			1815	2
			1816	
			1817	

Niagara	399	48.9%	1813	2
			1814	33
			1815	238
			1816	126
			1817	
Western	85	10.5%	1813	2
			1814	39
			1815	5
			1816	39
			1817	
Unknown	44	5.4%	1813	5
			1814	17
			1815	9
			1816	13
			1817	
Total	815		1813	36
			1814	164
			1815	300
			1816	270
			1817	45

Source: Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society (Montreal: William Gray, 1817).

Appendix 4, Table B
Claims to the Loyal and Patriotic Society – Gender and Year

Year	Male	Female
1813	25	11
1814	113	51
1815	141	159
1816	133	137
1817	35	10
Total	447	368

Source: Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society (Montreal: William Gray, 1817).

Appendix 4, Table C
Claims to the Loyal and Patriotic Society – Gender and District

District	Male	Female	Total
Eastern	44	11	55
Gore	2	0	2
Home	21	11	32
Johnstown	4	1	5
London	84	20	104
Midland	64	23	87
Newcastle	1	1	2
Niagara	145	254	399
Western	49	36	85
Unknown	33	11	44
Total	447	368	815

Source: Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society (Montreal: William Gray, 1817).

Appendix 4, Table D
Claims to the Loyal and Patriotic Society – Women

	Total	% Total	Year	# Claims
Eastern	11	3.0%	1813 1814 1815 1816 1817	1 10
Gore	0	0	1813 1814 1815 1816 1817	
Home	11	3.0%	1813 1814 1815 1816 1817	7 2 1 1
Johnstown	1	0.3%	1813 1814 1815 1816 1817	1
London	20	5.4%	1813 1814 1815 1816 1817	2 13 5
Midland	23	6.3%	1813 1814 1815 1816 1817	3 1 19
Newcastle	1	0.3%	1813 1814 1815 1816 1817	1

Niagara	254	69.0%	1813	
			1814	23
			1815	139
			1816	92
			1817	
Western	36	9.8%	1813	
			1814	18
			1815	1
			1816	17
			1817	
Unknown	11	3.0%	1813	1
			1814	5
			1815	2
			1816	3
			1817	
Total	368		1813	11
			1814	51
			1815	159
			1816	137
			1817	10

Source: Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society (Montreal: William Gray, 1817).

Appendix 4, Table E
Claims to the Loyal and Patriotic Society – Men

	Total	% Total	Year	# Claims
Eastern	44	9.8%	1813	2
			1814	6
			1815	1
			1816	0
			1817	35
Gore	2	0.4%	1813	1
			1814	0
			1815	1
			1816	0
			1817	0
Home	21	4.7%	1813	13
			1814	2
			1815	3
			1816	3
			1817	0
Johnstown	4	0.9%	1813	1
			1814	3
			1815	0
			1816	0
			1817	0
London	84	18.8%	1813	0
			1814	59
			1815	25
			1816	0
			1817	0
Midland	64	14.3%	1813	0
			1814	0
			1815	0
			1816	64
			1817	0
Newcastle	1	0.2%	1813	0
			1814	0
			1815	1
			1816	0
			1817	0

Niagara	145	32.4%	1813	2
			1814	10
			1815	99
			1816	34
			1817	0
Western	49	11.0%	1813	2
			1814	21
			1815	4
			1816	22
			1817	0
Unknown	33	7.4%	1813	4
			1814	12
			1815	7
			1816	10
			1817	0
Total	447		1813	25
			1814	113
			1815	141
			1816	133
			1817	35

Source: Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society (Montreal: William Gray, 1817).

Appendix 5

An Act to Provide for the Appointment of Commissioners to Investigate Claims

Passed 19 March 1823

Whereas during the late war with the United States of America many of Your Majesty's faithful subjects, inhabitants of this Province, sustained much loss and damage by the plundering and burning their dwellings and other buildings and by the devastation of their estates by the Enemy, and by other causes incidental to a state of warfare:

And whereas Your Majesty ? Your Royal pleasure in a dispatch from Your Majesty's principal Secretary of State for the Colonial Department to His Excellency Sir Peregrine Maitland, and Your Majesty's Lieutenant Governor of this Province, that a Commission should be appointed for the investigating the claims of the sufferers prior to any compensation being made for the same: and whereas it is expedient that a diligent and impartial inquiry should be made into the amount of such loss.

We Your Majesty's faithful subjects the commons of Upper Canada beseech Your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the Kings Most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Assembly etc etc and by the authority of the same. That it should and may be lawful for the Governor, Lieutenant Governor or Person Administering the Government of this Province, for the time being from time to time, by Commission under the Great Seal of this Province, to appoint Five persons, three of whom shall form a Quorum, who shall be and they are hereby constituted commissioners, to inquire into the losses respectively sustained by His Majesty's Subjects during the late War with the United States of America whether arising from the Act of the King's enemies, or of His Majesty's Generals or Troops or of the Indians serving with them.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that the said commissioners before the enter upon execution of the same shall take an oath before any on of His Majesty's Justices of the Court of King's Bench, which he is hereby authorized and required to administer in form following, that is to say

"I A B do swear, that according to the best of my skill and knowledge, I will faithfully, impartially and truly execute the several powers and trusts vested in my by an Act, entitled "An act for inquiring into the losses of persons who have suffered losses during the late War with the United States, according to the tenor and purpose of the said Act."

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said commissioners and they are hereby authorized, empowered and required upon oath all persons whom the said commissioners shall think fit to examine touching all such matters and things as shall be necessary for the execution of the powers vested in the commissioners by this Act, and all such persons are hereby directed and required punctually to attend the said commissioners at such time or place as they shall appoint.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that the said commissioners are hereby authorized to meet and sit, from time to time at such place or places at the Governor, Lieutenant Governor or person administering the Government of this Province may direct, with or without adjournment, and to ensure their precept of precepts under their hands and seals for any person or persons whatsoever, and for such Books papers writings or records they shall judge necessary for their information in the execution of the powers vested in such commissioners by this Act, and the said commissioners are hereby authorized to appoint and employ such clerks, messengers and officers as they shall think meet, which clerks and officers are hereby required faithfully to execute and perform the trust in them severally and respectively reposed, without taking any thing for such their service, other than such salary or reward as the said commissioners shall think fit to direct and appoint in that behalf.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that in case any person or persons upon examination upon oath before the said commissioners respectively as before mentioned, shall willfully and corruptly give false evidence, every such person so offending and being thereof duly convicted, shall be and is and are hereby declared to be subject and liable to such pains as penalties as by any Law now in being persons convicted of willful and corrupt perjury are subject and liable to.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the said commissioners shall from time to time at their discretion or as often as they shall be thereunto required, and as soon as possible after the determination of their examinations and proceedings by virtue of this Act, without any further requisition, give an account of their proceedings in writing to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor or Person administering the Government of this Province, and that a copy of such proceedings may be laid before the House of Assembly of this Province at their next ensuing Session thereof.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that it shall and may be lawful for the Governor, Lieutenant Governor or Person administering the Government of this Province, from time to time to issue his Warrant to the Receiver General of this Province for a sum or sums not exceeding one thousand Pounds for defraying the necessary charges and expences [sic] incurred under the authority of this Act, which sums shall be accounted for by the Receiver General of this Province through the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, in such manner and form as His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors shall direct.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that this Act shall be in force for three years and no longer.

Source: Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3730.3, “An Act to provide for the appointment of Commissioners.”

Appendix 6

List of Claims Deemed Inadmissible in the 1825 "Commissioner's Report"

1. loss of goods and vessels in transit
2. claims for property lost within the territory of the United States of America
3. claims for losses by Burglaries and other Felonies; these being considered misfortunes not necessarily confined to a state of warfare...
4. claims for losses of army bills, specie and watches... their being a description of property, which common precaution should have induced the owners to have placed beyond the reach of accidental plunder; ... [and] the proof of the amount of the actual loss of this description of property could scarcely ever be satisfactorily supported by any corroborating testimony...
5. claims for amounts unpaid by the commissariat or other military departments for teaming &c. these the commissioners could not contemplate as being embraced within the act for remuneration for loss of property
6. claims for rents for buildings. "In other cases, where the occupation continued so long as to occasion a palpable loss, reasonable allowances for rent have been made but in general very disproportioned to the amounts claimed..."
7. claims for loss of crops left ungathered, the owners being absent on military duty – two considerations influenced the commissioners in this decision... The first consideration adverted to, was the dangerous precedent it would furnish in future cases of a state of warfare, tending to slacken the exertions of those of the family left at home, in their endeavor to secure those crops... the second consideration was... that the claims under this head, scarcely embrace a twentieth part of the sufferers, similarly situated... have justly considered this discription [sic] of loss, as one of those unavoidable evils of a state of warfare...
8. claims by non commissioned officers and others in his Majesty's regular forces, for loss of property in garrisons or cantoonments [sic] in which they were quartered

Source: Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volume 3729.8, "Commissioner's Report, 1825."

Appendix 7, Table A

Class 1, Division 1 War Claims Commission – Total Breakdown

	Total	% Total	Female	Male
Ancaster	14	3.9	1	13
Barton	25	6.9		25
Bertie	45	12.4	1	44
Binbrook				
Caistor				
Clinton	5	1.4		5
Crowland	9	2.5	1	8
Gainsboro				
Glanford				
Grantham	37	10.2	9	28
Grimsby	11	3.0		11
Humberstone				
Louth	18	5.0		18
Niagara	77	21.2	10	67
Pelham	2	0.6	1	1
Saltfleet	18	5.0	2	16
Stamford	54	14.8	5	49
Thorold	16	4.4	3	13
Wainfleet				
Willoughby	33	9.1	2	31
TOTAL	364	100.4	35	329

Source: Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volumes 3732-37 – Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims.

Appendix 7, Table B

Class 1, Division 2 War Claims Commission – Total Breakdown

	Total	% Total	Female	Male
Ancaster	81	49.1	1	80
Barton	34	20.6		34
Bertie	6	3.6	1	5
Binbrook				
Caistor				
Clinton	1	0.6		1
Crowland				
Gainsboro				
Glanford	4	2.4	1	3
Grantham	4	2.4		4
Grimsby	4	2.4		4
Humberstone				
Louth	2	1.2		2
Niagara	6	3.6	1	5
Pelham	1	0.6	1	
Saltfleet	13	7.9		13
Stamford	5	3.0	2	3
Thorold	2	1.2		2
Wainfleet				
Willoughby	2	1.2		2
TOTAL	165	99.8	7	158

Source: Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volumes 3732-37 – Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims.

Appendix 7, Table C

Class 1, Division 3 War Claims Commission – Total Breakdown

	Total	% Total	Female	Male
Ancaster	4	6.3		4
Barton	4	6.3		4
Bertie	1	1.6		1
Binbrook				
Caistor				
Clinton	8	12.5		8
Crowland	1	1.6		1
Gainsboro	1	1.6		1
Glanford				
Grantham	5	7.8		5
Grimsby				
Humberstone	3	4.7		3
Louth	3	4.7		3
Niagara	7	10.9		7
Pelham	3	4.7		3
Saltfleet	4	6.3		4
Stamford	11	17.2		11
Thorold	7	10.9	1	6
Wainfleet				
Willoughby	2	3.1		2
TOTAL	64	100.2	1	63

Source: Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volumes 3732-37 – Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims.

Appendix 7, Table D

Total Class 1, War Claims Commission – Total Breakdown

	Total	% Total	Female	Male
Ancaster	99	16.7	2	97
Barton	63	10.6		63
Bertie	52	8.8	2	50
Binbrook				
Caistor				
Clinton	14	2.4		14
Crowland	10	1.7	1	9
Gainsboro	1	0.2		1
Glanford	4	0.7		4
Grantham	46	7.6	9	37
Grimsby	15	2.5		15
Humberstone	3	0.5		3
Louth	23	3.9		23
Niagara	90	15.2	11	79
Pelham	6	1.0	2	4
Saltfleet	35	5.9	2	33
Stamford	70	11.8	7	63
Thorold	25	4.2	4	21
Wainfleet				
Willoughby	37	6.2	2	35
TOTAL	593	99.9	42	551

Source: Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volumes 3732-37 – Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims.

Appendix 7, Table E

Class 2 War Claims Commission – Total Breakdown

	Total	% Total	Female	Male
Ancaster	1	0.2		1
Barton	3	0.6		3
Bertie	77	15.3	6	71
Binbrook	3	0.6		3
Caistor				
Clinton	15	3.0		15
Crowland	12	2.4		12
Gainsboro				
Glanford				
Grantham	25	5.0	3	22
Grimsby	15	3.0		15
Humberstone				
Louth	11	2.2		11
Niagara	179	35.5	26	153
Pelham	1	0.2		1
Saltfleet	9	1.8		9
Stamford	105	20.8	15	90
Thorold	18	3.6	2	16
Wainfleet	2	0.4		2
Willoughby	28	5.6	11	17
TOTAL	504	100.2	63	441

Source: Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volumes 3732-37 – Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims.

Appendix 7, Table F
Supplemental Claims, War Claims Commission – Total Breakdown

	Total	% Total	Female	Male
Ancaster				
Barton				
Bertie	3	13.6		3
Binbrook				
Caistor				
Clinton				
Crowland				
Gainsboro				
Glanford				
Grantham	7	31.8		7
Grimsby				
Humberstone				
Louth				
Niagara	8	36.4	2	6
Pelham				
Saltfleet				
Stamford	2	9.1		2
Thorold	2	9.1		2
Wainfleet				
Willoughby				
TOTAL	22	100	2	20

Source: Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volumes 3732-37 – Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims.

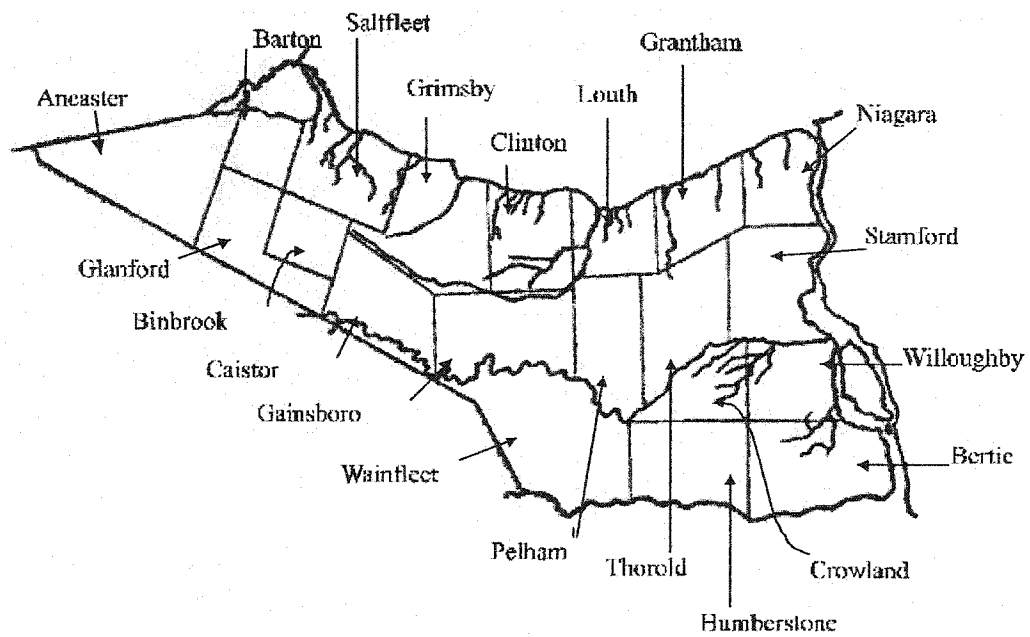
Appendix 7, Table G

All Claims, War Claims Commission – Total Breakdown

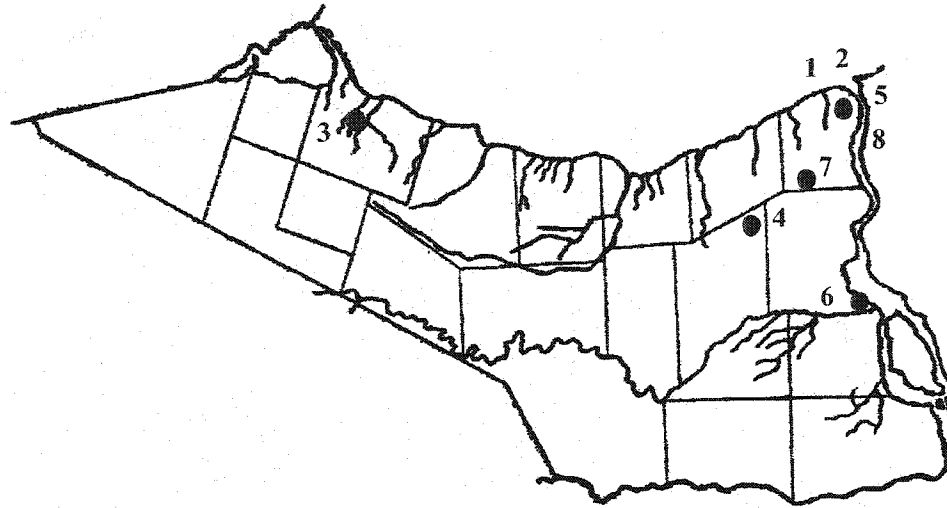
	Total	% Total	Female	Male
Ancaster	100	8.9	2	98
Barton	66	5.9		66
Bertie	132	11.8	8	124
Binbrook	3	0.3		3
Caistor				
Clinton	29	2.6		29
Crowland	22	2.0	1	21
Gainsboro	1	0.0		1
Glanford	4	0.4		4
Grantham	78	7.0	12	66
Grimsby	30	2.7		30
Humberstone	3	0.3		3
Louth	34	3.0		34
Niagara	277	24.8	39	238
Pelham	7	0.6	2	5
Saltfleet	44	3.9	2	42
Stamford	177	15.8	22	155
Thorold	45	4.0	6	39
Wainfleet	2	0.2		2
Willoughby	65	5.8	13	52
TOTAL	1119	100	107	1012

Source: Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volumes 3732-37 – Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims.

Appendix 8, Map A
The Townships of the Niagara District



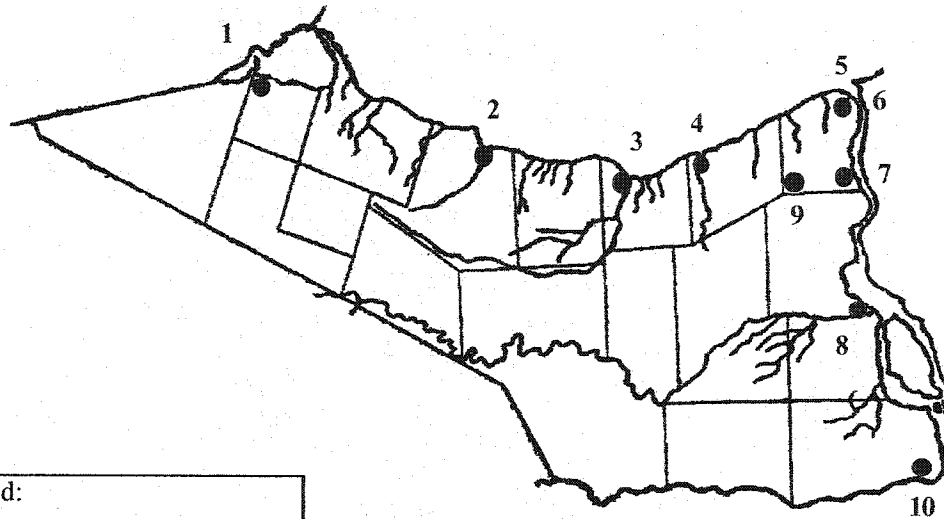
Appendix 8, Map B
Military Battles in the Niagara District



Legend:

1. Battle of Queenston Heights – October 13, 1812
2. Americans capture Fort George – May 25-27, 1813
3. Battle of Stoney Creek – June 6, 1813
4. Battle of Beaver Dams – June 24, 1813
5. Americans burn Newark – December 10, 1813
6. Battle of Chippawa – July 5, 1814
7. Americans burn St. David's – July 19, 1814
8. Battle of Lundy's Lane – July 25, 1814

Appendix 8, Map C
Military Occupations in the Niagara District

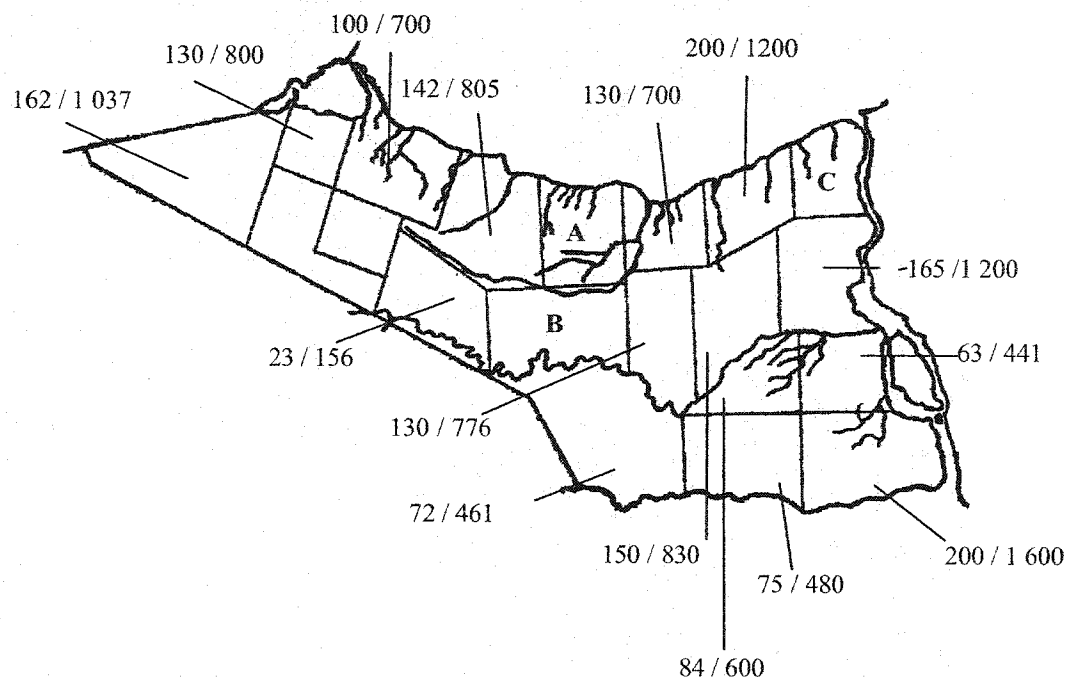


Legend:

1. Burlington Heights
2. 40 Mile Creek
3. 20 Mile Creek
4. 12 Mile Creek
5. Fort George
6. Newark (or Niagara)
7. Queenstown
8. Chippawa
9. St. David's
10. Fort Erie

Appendix 8, Map D

Housing and Population Figures for the Niagara District, 1817



Note: Figures = Number of Houses / Number of People

Also, Clinton (A), Gainsborough (B) and Niagara (C) did not report to Gourlay's questionnaire. Gourlay estimates 763 people lived in each township – which means there were 119 houses in each. However, Niagara township had two principal towns: Newark – with 85 houses and 680 people; and Queenston – with 27 houses and 216 people. Therefore, Gourlay estimates 231 houses in Niagara township, with 1 659 people.

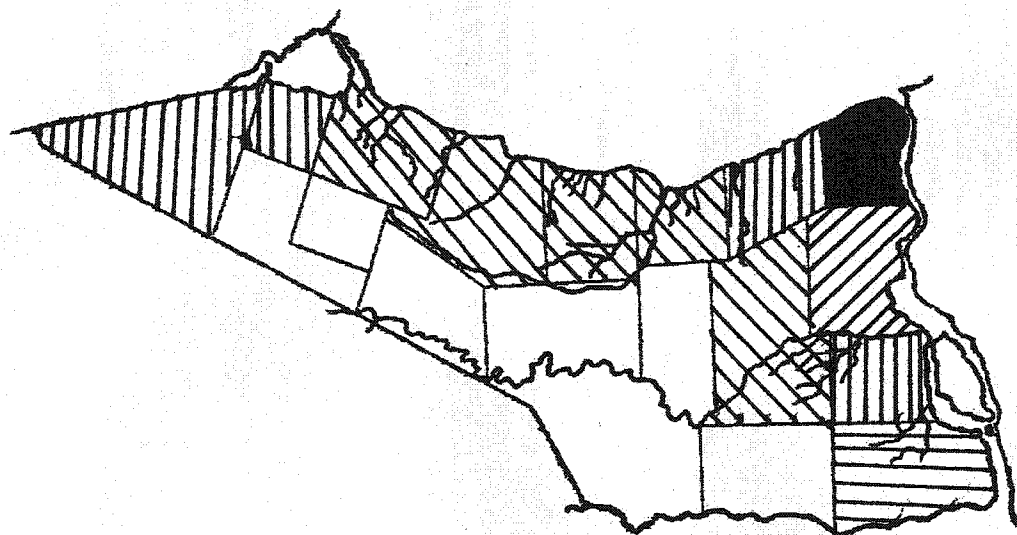
Clinton – 119 / 763

Gainsborough – 119 / 763

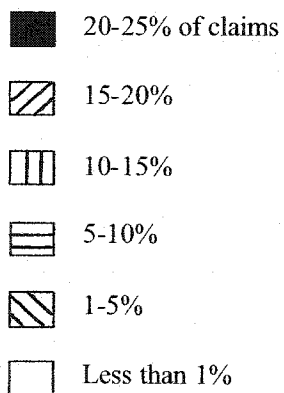
Niagara – 231 / 1 659

Source: Robert Gourlay, Statistical Account of Upper Canada, Ed. S. R. Mealing (Reprint) (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), 206-7, 237-9.

Appendix 8, Map E
Geographic Distribution of the Claims Submitted to the War Claims Commission

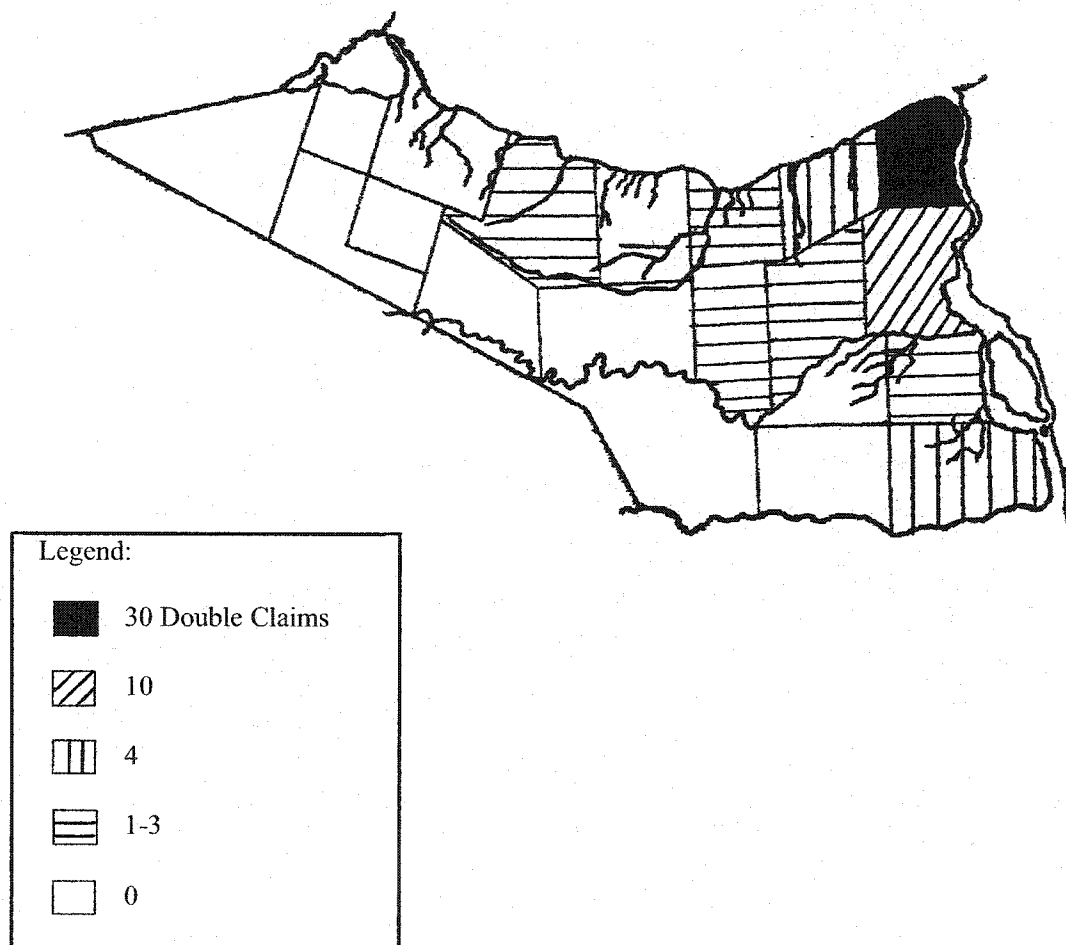


Legend:



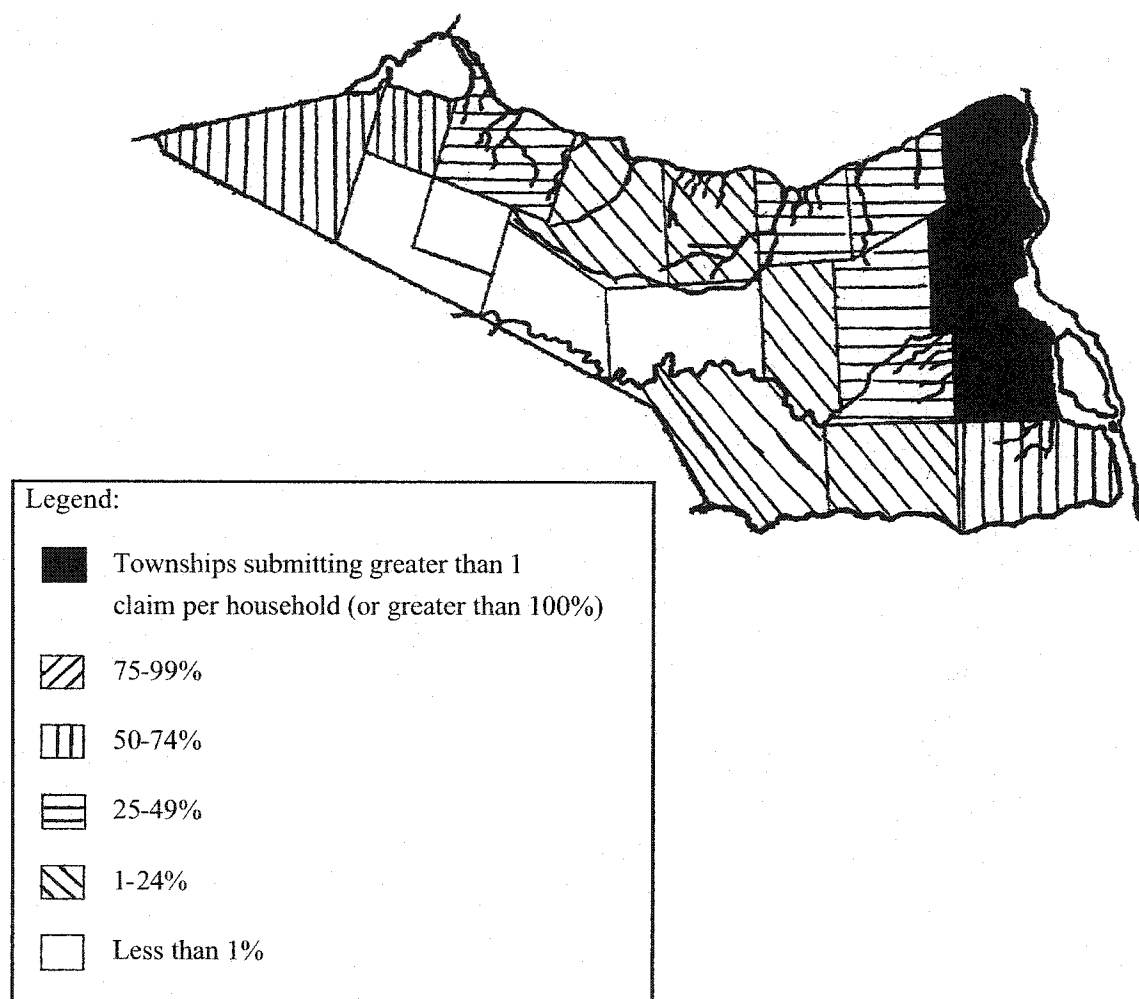
Source: Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volumes 3732-3737, Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims.

Appendix 8, Map F
Geographic Distribution of “Double” Claims



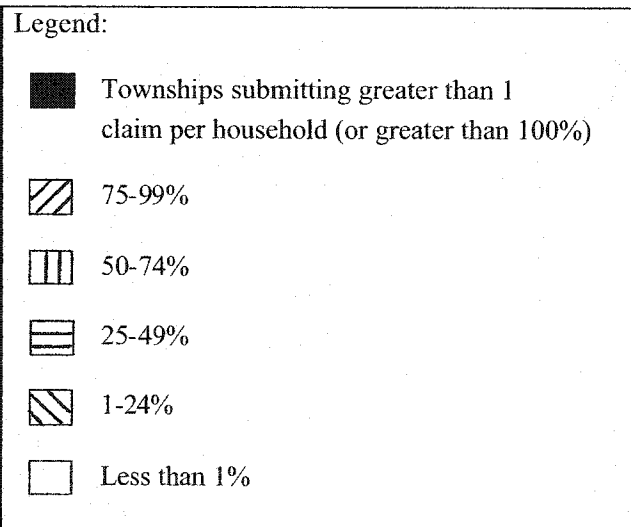
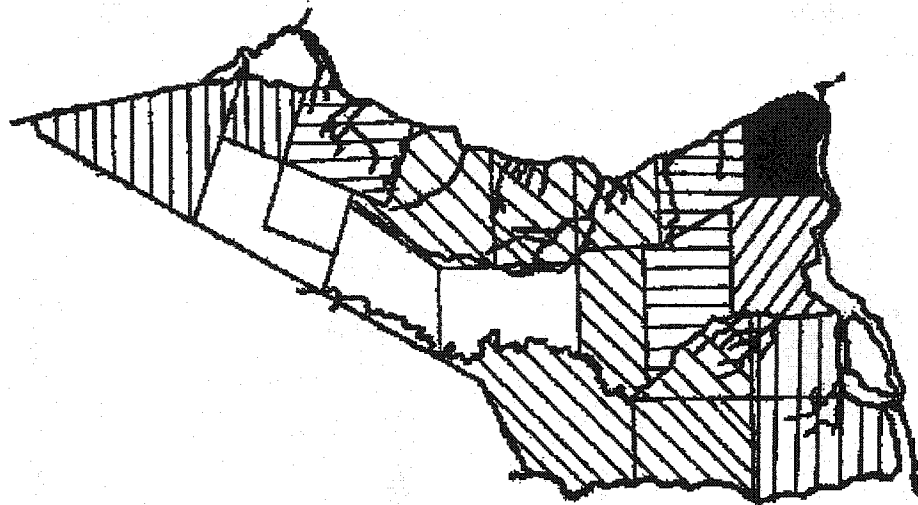
Source: Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volumes 3732-3737, Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims; also Loyal and Patriotic Society, Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society (Montreal: William Gray, 1817).

Appendix 8, Map G
Claims Submitted to the War Claims Commission versus Housing and Population
Estimates Presented by Gourlay



Note: Specific figures presented in Table 5.2. Also, housing and population estimates based on figures of Robert Gourlay presented in Appendix 8, Map D. The number of claims submitted is from Appendix 7, Table G.

Appendix 8, Map H
“Revised” Total Claims Submitted to the War Claims Commission versus Housing
and Population Estimates Presented by Gourlay



Note: Specific figures presented in Table 5.3. Also, housing and population estimates based on figures of Robert Gourlay presented in Appendix 8, Map D.

Appendix 9

Detailed Breakdown of Various Items Claimed in War Claims

Tree breakdown: 21 orchard 4 fruit 6 apple 2 cherry 2 peach 1 oak 28 "tree"	Furniture/bedding: Candlesticks 2 stoves 2 feather beds 2 clocks	Spirits breakdown: 7 spirits 2 liquor 1 brandy 2 beer 4 whiskey malt & hops barrels ginger
Tool breakdown: Ropes Large saw 2 spades nails 7 axes 12 farming tools/utensils 2 prs scales & weights 5 brewing utensils/stills 3 shoemakers tools 2 saddlers tools 5 joiners/carpenters tools 1 coopers stuff 5 blacksmiths tools 2 hatters tools 3 household/table utensils 3 looms 2 soap/candlemaking tools & tallow	Household: Generally burnt Groceries 2 Butter Barrel of smoked hams Barrel of pork 3000 lbs of bran beef cheese glass ware 3 – bricks books chimneys 2 – sugar	Outbuilding: 9 mills – grist & saw 2 distillery 1 Coach house 5 Back kitchen/bake/smoke/coal house 2 Blacksmith's shop 2 - Bricks Coopers shop House rent Forge Summer house 54 "outbuildings"

Source: Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a), Volumes 3732-3737, Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims.

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Abraham Nelles Papers, Series B MS502

- letter 20 August, 1814, Camp before Fort Erie

Robert Nelles Papers, MS503

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Ford Papers MG 24 B88

- Letter 9 October, 1814 from Nathan Ford in Morristown, New Jersey, to his brother

Stanton Papers MG 24 B91

- Letter 5 December, 1812 from Robert Stanton in York

Cotton Papers MG 24 J47

- Letter July, 1814 from Rev. C. C. Cotton in Dunham (Durham?) to his sister Anna

Askin Papers, Volume 5 MG 19 A3

- Letter 16 April, 1812 from John Askin in Queenston to his father Charles
- Letter 20 November, 1812 from John Askin in Chippawa to his father Charles

Department of Finance Papers – Board of Claims for War of 1812 Losses RG 19 E5(a)

- Volumes 3728-31 – Administration Records of Board
- 3732-37 – Indexes, Registers and Schedules of Claims
- 3738-59 – Claims
- 3760-63 – Vouchers for Payment
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