

## Placing Colonial Ornithology Imperial Ambiguities in Upper Canada, 1791- 1841

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Volume 31, Number 1-2, 2008

Natural Science in the New World: The Descriptive Enterprise

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/019756ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/019756ar>

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Publisher(s)

CSTHA/AHSTC

ISSN

0829-2507 (print)

1918-7750 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Greer, K. A. (2008). Placing Colonial Ornithology: Imperial Ambiguities in Upper Canada, 1791- 1841. *Scientia Canadensis*, 31(1-2), 85–112.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/019756ar>

Article abstract

This paper examines the emergence of colonial ornithology in Upper Canada, 1791-1841, to determine the impact of empire and local contexts on the natural history activity. I argue that colonial ornithology emerged as a by-product of British imperialism that helped to reinforce British, upper- and middle-class, gender-specific white identities through practices of sportsman-hunting, taxidermy, natural theology, and the romantic-aesthetic. However, as this paper reveals, British imperial practices and ideas of ornithology relied on the participation of First Nations and Métis peoples, whose knowledge and skills were instrumental to British naturalists. The First Nations and Métis peoples therefore exerted a real presence in colonial ornithology in Upper Canada—albeit a subservient one in the British ornithological texts—as they positioned themselves as part of the ornithological trade with the collection and trading of specimens. Furthermore, British military officers, settlers, and tourists tapped into American scientific networks and knowledge systems rather than focusing solely on Britain as an imperial centre of accumulation. British imperial ideas and practices of colonial ornithology in Upper Canada therefore remained ambiguous during the early nineteenth century.

# Placing Colonial Ornithology: Imperial Ambiguities in Upper Canada, 1791- 1841 <sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the emergence of colonial ornithology in Upper Canada, 1791-1841, to determine the impact of empire and local contexts on the natural history activity. I argue that colonial ornithology emerged as a by-product of British imperialism that helped to reinforce British, upper- and middle-class, gender-specific white identities through practices of sportsman-hunting, taxidermy, natural theology, and the romantic-aesthetic. However, as this paper reveals, British imperial practices and ideas of ornithology relied on the participation of First Nations and Métis peoples, whose knowledge and skills were instrumental to British naturalists. The First Nations and Métis peoples therefore exerted a real presence in colonial ornithology in Upper Canada—albeit a subservient one in the British ornithological texts—as they positioned themselves as part of the ornithological trade with the collection and trading of specimens. Furthermore, British military officers, settlers, and tourists tapped into American scientific networks and knowledge systems rather than focusing solely on Britain as an imperial centre of accumulation. British imperial ideas and practices of colonial ornithology in Upper Canada therefore remained ambiguous during the early nineteenth century.

**Résumé :** Cet article examine l'émergence de l'ornithologie coloniale dans le Haut-Canada entre 1791 et 1841 afin de déterminer l'influence des contextes locaux et impériaux sur la pratique de l'histoire naturelle. Je soutiens que l'ornithologie coloniale émerge comme un sous-produit de l'impérialisme britannique et aide ainsi à renforcer les identités blanches, britanniques, et genrées spécifiques aux classes moyennes et élevées par l'entremise de la chasse sportive, de la taxidermie, de la théologie naturelle et de l'esthétique romantique. Toutefois, les pratiques impériales britanniques et les conceptions de l'ornithologie dépendent de la participation des Premières Nations et des métis, dont les connaissances et les habiletés sont instrumentales aux naturalistes

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1. This paper is based on my master's work at the Waterloo-Laurier Graduate School of Geography. I would like to thank Jeanne Kay Guelke for feedback on earlier drafts, and David Lambert, Laura Cameron, and Emilie Cameron for comments on later versions. Thank you to Jeff Harrison for information on Sir Richard Bonnycastle, and Joan Schwartz for identifying the works of Sempronius Stretton at the Library and Archives of Canada. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers of *Scientia Canadensis* for their helpful feedback.

britanniques. Les Premières Nations et la population métis exercent donc une présence réelle — bien que subordonnée selon les textes ornithologiques britanniques — dans l'ornithologie coloniale du Haut-Canada, alors qu'elles se situent elles-mêmes comme partie intégrante du commerce ornithologique par la collecte et l'échange de spécimens. De plus, les officiers militaires, colons et voyageurs britanniques intègrent les réseaux scientifiques et les systèmes de connaissances américains au lieu de se concentrer uniquement sur la Grande-Bretagne comme centre impérial d'accumulation. Les idées et les pratiques britanniques impériales en matière d'ornithologie demeurent donc ambiguës au Haut-Canada durant la première partie du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle.

Anglo-Irish military surgeon Edward Walsh (1756-1832) positioned himself as an ideal scientific observer in the "British Dominions in America," serving with the 49<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> While stationed in the Niagara peninsula at Fort George, he attempted to compile a "Natural History of the country" by engaging the assistance of his "Friends" to document the most western part of the British Empire.<sup>3</sup> Walsh's unique military status provided access to remote places that rarely fell "to the lot of Travellers and Tourists," as well as a network of local informants to aid with his knowledge of the new colony.<sup>4</sup> His group included "friendly Indians" who "collected for him a menagerie" of wild animals including a "mocking-bird, a humming-bird, and sundry others."<sup>5</sup> In a letter to a fellow military officer at Fort St. Joseph, Walsh listed several natural history items he wished to acquire, including "Birds in order—with the Indian names," and the "history of the

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2. Although Edward Walsh never completed his "Natural History of Canada," his research was well known to fellow military and colonial officials. Edward Walsh was born in Waterford, Ireland, and studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh in 1778. He accepted a commission as surgeon with Royal Navy in the Gulf of Mexico. He later joined the military at Jamaica and helped officers affected by yellow fever. Walsh also served in Ireland, Holland, Denmark, Russia, Canada, Spain and Belgium. Walsh was in charge of vaccinating First Nations peoples for small pox while at Niagara. He was enlisted in the army as Assistant Surgeon to the 29<sup>th</sup> (Worcestershire) Regiment in England from 1797 to 1800, as Surgeon to the 49<sup>th</sup> (Hertshordshire) Regiment from 1800 to ca. 1806-1807, the 62<sup>nd</sup> (Wiltshire) Regiment from ca. 1806 to 1809, and the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Dragoon Guards from 1809-1814. He became a Physician in August 1813. His brother Reverend Robert Walsh was a well-known abolitionist. Anon., "Memoir of the late Edward Walsh, M.D.: Physician to his Majesty's Forces with Notices of the Canadian Indians, &c.," *The Dublin University Magazine: A Literary and Political Journal* 3, 13 (1834): 63-80; Charles A. Read, *The Cabinet Of Irish Literature Selections From The Works Of The Chief Poets, Orators, And Prose Writers Of Ireland. With Biographical Sketches And Literary Notices* (London: Blackie, 188-), 212-213; Ruth Phillips, "Jasper Grant and Edward Walsh: the Gentleman-Soldier as Early Collector of Great Lakes Indian Art," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 21, 4 (1986): 56-71.

3. Library and Archives of Canada, Edward Walsh Fonds, MG 19, F 10, Folder 3, 150.

4. *Ibid.*, 137.

5. Anon, "Memoir ...," 63-80.

most remarkable.”<sup>6</sup> Walsh insisted the “Indian names” be recorded using English language conventions of “writing down the words and syllables” and “making out the sound by combination of letters” as opposed to Alexander MacKenzie’s (1764-1820) “French Scotch pronunciation,” which was “unintelligible” in his book *Voyages* (1801).<sup>7</sup> In exchange for local knowledge, Walsh provided funds to complete the plan and to procure some “curious birds,” which included a “White Partridge” that was sent to the Chelsea Museum in London, England.<sup>8</sup>

By the time Edward Walsh served in Upper Canada, natural history had emerged as a distinct field of knowledge and a fashionable activity for many British elites who acquired curious natural objects from distant, travelled, and imagined places.<sup>9</sup> Gathering specimens, building up collections, and naming and classifying new species became the primary project of European naturalists prior to Darwin, and a medium for a predominantly Christian society to understand the workings of God through natural theology.<sup>10</sup> According to Carl Berger, naturalist-derived activities “reflec-

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6. LAC, Edward Walsh Fonds, MG 19, F 10, Folder 3, 151. The British purchased the island of St Joseph from the Ojibwe in 1798, in return for £1 200. Fort St. Joseph was an important British military and trading post on St. Mary's River, as well as most westerly outpost of the British Empire in the early nineteenth century. It would later become a staging ground for the initial attack in the War of 1812. Robert J. Surtees, “Land Cessions, 1763-1830,” in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*, eds. Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994), 109; Elizabeth Vincent, *Fort St. Joseph: A History* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1978); John Abbott et al., *The History of Fort St. Joseph* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2000).

7. LAC, Edward Walsh Fonds, MG 19, F 10, Folder 3, 152; Alexander MacKenzie’s *Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Laurence, through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans; in the Years, 1789 and 1793; with a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade of that Country*, [ed. William Combe] was published in London in 1801. A two-volume second edition was published in 1802.

8. LAC, Edward Walsh Fonds, MG 19, F 10, Folder 3, 154, 11; Phillips, “Jasper Grant and Edward Walsh....,” 56-71.

9. The Cook expeditions of the late eighteenth century fueled interest in collecting natural objects from far away places. David E. Allen, *The Naturalist in Britain: A Social History* (London: Allen Lane, 1976), 34-35; Katie Whitaker, “The Culture of Curiosity,” in *Cultures of Natural History*, eds. N. Jardine, J.A. Secord and E.C. Spary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 75-90; David P. Miller, “Joseph Banks, Empire, and ‘Centres of Calculation’ in the Late Hanoverian London,” in *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany, and Representations of Nature*, eds. D.P. Miller and P.H. Reill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 21-38; David MacKay, “Agents of Empire: the Bankian Collectors and Evaluation of New Lands,” in *Visions of Empire*, 38-57; P.L. Farber, *Finding Order in Nature* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 22-23.

10. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 27; Victoria Dickenson, *Drawn from Life: Science and Art in the Portrayal of the New World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 189-192.

ted and channelled some of the strongest drives in colonial culture.”<sup>11</sup> Field ornithology (the natural history of birds), in particular, ignited the interest of British amateur naturalists who classified, painted, and amassed collections of stuffed wild birds.<sup>12</sup> The increasing popularity of ornithology affected both the British at home, and the military officers and colonial administrators, wealthy tourists, and settlers in colonies overseas.

This paper critically examines the emergence of colonial ornithology in Upper Canada, 1791-1841, to determine the impact of empire and local contexts on the natural history activity. As British participants simultaneously engaged in military occupation, colonization, and exploitation of natural resources, how did the relationship between empire and local circumstances shape ideas and practices of ornithology in colonies such as Upper Canada? How did Indigenous knowledge of birds and an emerging American empire in North America shape colonial ornithology in Upper Canada? I argue that colonial ornithology emerged as a by-product of British imperialism that helped to reinforce British, upper- and middle-class, gender-specific white identities through the practices of sportsman-hunting, taxidermy, natural theology, and the romantic-aesthetic. However, as this paper reveals, British imperial practices and ideas of ornithology relied on the participation of First Nations and Métis peoples, whose knowledge and skills were instrumental to British naturalists. The First Nations and Métis peoples therefore exerted a real presence in colonial ornithology in Upper Canada—albeit a subservient one in the British ornithological texts—as they positioned themselves as part of the ornithological trade with the collection and trading of specimens.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, British military officers, settlers, and tourists tapped into American scientific networks and knowledge systems rather than focusing solely on Britain. This paper therefore demonstrates that British imperial

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11. Carl Berger, *Science, God, and Nature in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 47.

12. Marianne G. Ainley, “The Emergence of Canadian Ornithology: An Historical Overview to 1950,” in *Contributions to the History of North American Ornithology*, eds. W.E. Davis Jr. and J.A. Jackson (Cambridge, MA: The Nuttall Ornithological Club, 1995), 283-302; B. Mearns and R. Mearns, *The Bird Collectors* (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1998); Paul L. Farber, *Discovering Birds: the Emergence of Ornithology as a Scientific Discipline, 1760-1850* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1997).

13. In this study I use “First Nations people” to replace the European term of “Indian,” and “Métis” for the people of mixed First Nation and European ancestry. The Métis have a unique culture that draws on their diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, French, Ojibwe and Cree. See Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *Words First: An Evolving Terminology Relating to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2003); Steffi Retzlaff, “What’s in a Name? The Politics of Labelling and Native Identity Constructions,” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 25, 2 (2005): 609-626.

ideas and practices of colonial ornithology in Upper Canada remained ambiguous during the early nineteenth century. The following sections present an overview of the history of colonial ornithology, the importance of birds to First Nations peoples, and an examination of British military, settler, and tourist ornithologies in Upper Canada, 1791-1841, to provide a more nuanced approach to analyzing the impact of empire on natural history practices within the British imperial context.

### Placing Colonial Ornithology

Research on the history of ornithology has centred on the development of the field as a scientific pursuit, practices of ornithology, and the biographies of individuals who contributed significantly to it in Europe and North America.<sup>14</sup> As these studies reveal, European ornithology remained largely a colonial affair dependent on a metropolitan imperial core for scientific traditions, networks and practices particularly in British colonies. According to Marianne Ainley, colonial science in Canada involved a reliance on the metropole for scientific ideas, practices, and professional networks for guidance and collections such as the Royal Society in London.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, the emphasis on the periphery and metropole has been central to the historiography of colonial science and natural history, as colonies depended on the scientific traditions and practices of the metropole through networks of correspondents, assistants, and institutions through centres of calculation and accumulation.<sup>16</sup> As Suzanne Zeller and Barbara Gates demonstrate, British “culturally colonized collectors,” or “Gullivers” and “Crusoes,” were essential to the development of colonial

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14. Examples include: E.G. Allen, *The History of American Ornithology Before Audubon* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1951); E. Stresemann, *Ornithology from Aristotle to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975); B. Mearns and R. Mearns, *Biographies for Birdwatchers: The Lives of those Commemorated in Western Palearctic Bird Names* (London: Academy Press, 1988); B. Mearns and R. Mearns, *Audubon to Xantus: The Lives of those Commemorated in North American Bird Names* (Toronto: Academic Press, 1992); Mearns and Mearns, *The Bird Collectors*; Paul. L. Farber, *Discovering Birds*; M.V. Barrow Jr., *A Passion for Birds: American Ornithology After Audubon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Michael Waters, *A Concise History of Ornithology* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003); Peter Bircham, *A History of Ornithology* (London: Harper Collins, 2007).

15. Marianne G. Ainley, *From Natural History to Avian Biology: Canadian Ornithology, 1860-1950* (PhD diss., McGill University, 1985); Ainley, “Emergence of Canadian Ornithology,” 283-302. Her work was based on George Basalla’s linear model of the spread of western science into non-scientific nations or societies.

16. Roy MacLeod, “On Visiting the ‘Moving Metropolis’: Reflections on the Architecture of Imperial Science,” in *Scientific Colonialism: A Cross-Cultural Comparison*, eds. N. Reingold and M. Rotherberg (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), 217-249.

science at home and abroad, as they helped compile natural history data on the British Empire through scientific practices of collecting, illustrating, and publishing particularly in the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Mary Louise Pratt claims European natural history collecting extracted plants and animals from their ecological habitats, placed species into European classification systems, and removed them from “Indigenous” cultures into metropolitan centres of accumulation.<sup>18</sup>

According to Gascoigne, Miller, and MacKay, natural history exploration was instrumental to British imperialism.<sup>19</sup> Naturalists participated in explorations of distant places where they gathered as much information as possible. As naturalists brought information back from new lands, knowledge that had accumulated at the imperial centre was then reused by future voyagers to extend the boundaries of empire. These “cycles of accumulation” depended on the collection of “immutable mobiles” (ie. rocks, birds, plants, artifacts) and techniques of observation to render places “familiar with things, people and events which are distant.”<sup>20</sup>

As ornithology relied strongly on the contributions of amateur naturalists for ornithological collections and observations in colonial places, the participation of local Indigenous peoples was central to the emergence of ornithological knowledge production. Marianne Ainley highlights the importance of First Nations and Métis peoples in the collection and documentation of avifauna in the Hudson Bay Company territory. Ainley documents how some Métis women married HBC officers and contributed significantly to the ornithology of the region through collecting and taxidermy.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Jane Camerini examines the fieldwork of naturalist Alfred Russell and his interactions with local leaders, servants and assistants in the Malay Archipelago, which afforded him access to places uninhabited by Europeans to collect birds of

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17. Suzanne E. Zeller, “Nature’s Gullivers and Crusoes: the Scientific Exploration of British North America, 1800-1970,” in *North American Exploration: A Continent Comprehended*, ed. J.L. Allen (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 190-243; Barbara Gates, *Kindred Nature: Victorian and Edwardian Women Embrace the Living World* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 102-105.

18. Mary Louise Pratt uses Michel Foucault’s *Order of Things* (1970) for her analysis. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 31.

19. These ideas are based on Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987); Miller, 21-38; MacKay, “Agents of Empire,” 38-57; John Gascoigne, “The Ordering of Nature and the Ordering of Empire: a Commentary,” in *Visions of Empire*, 107-113.

20. Latour, 220.

21. Métis women often married Hudson Bay Company officials and contributed to the accumulation of natural history knowledge in the region. Marianne G. Ainley, “Last in the Field,” in *Despite the Odds: Essays on Canadian Women and Science*, ed. M.G. Ainley (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1990), 63-73.

paradise.<sup>22</sup> In colonial Africa, Nancy Jacobs demonstrates how European naturalists tapped into networks of local African informants but also mediated personal relationships through notions of European racial superiority.<sup>23</sup> These works shed light on the importance of focusing on the multiple human interactions in the field in order to understand the emergence of ornithology in the colonies.

This paper examines the different historical actors in the production, consumption and circulation of scientific knowledge, and their negotiations of identities and boundaries between different cultural traditions.<sup>24</sup> As historian Fa-Ti Fan states, “if we want to know how scientific imperialism unfolded in the colonies and other non-Western parts of the world, we cannot ignore the [I]ndigenous people, their motivations, and their actions.”<sup>25</sup> It concentrates on the interaction of *place* (imperial and local) as a mitigating factor in shaping ornithological practices and knowledge production in colonial spaces. Place is therefore crucial to the generation and practice of the making and remaking of scientific knowledge and colonial discourses. “As ideas circulate,” geographer David Livingstone writes, “they undergo translation and transformation because people encounter representations differently in different circumstances.”<sup>26</sup> With these considerations in mind, I view colonial ornithology as a cultural phenomenon subject to social norms, privileged knowledge, and rituals largely influenced by ideas of class, gender, and “race” in a particular time and place, which different imperial actors engaged in (ie. military officers, settlers, tourists).<sup>27</sup>

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22. Jane R. Camerini, “Wallace in the Field,” *Osiris* 11 (1996): 44-65.

23. Nancy J. Jacobs, “The Intimate Politics of Ornithology in Colonial Africa,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48, 3 (2006): 564-603.

24. Fa-Ti Fan, *British Naturalists in Qing China: Science, Empire, and Cultural Encounter* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 4; Sujit Sivasundaram, “Trading Knowledge: The East India Company's Elephants in India and Britain,” *Historical Journal* 48, 1 (2005): 27-63; Jayeeta Sharma, “British Science, Chinese Skill and Assam Tea: Making Empire's Garden,” *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 43, 4 (2006): 429-455. Richard White discusses the interactions between Indigenous peoples and European actors in the Great Lakes region in *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

25. Fa-Ti Fan, 4.

26. David N. Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 11. See also Diarmid A. Finnegan, “The Spatial Turn: Geographical Approaches in the History of Science,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 41, 2 (2008): 369-388.

27. This definition was derived by works on the cultures of natural history and geographies of science. See N. Jardine, J.A. Secord and E.C. Spary, eds., *Cultures of Natural History* and Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place*. I apply Adele Perry's concept of a “colonial project” to tease out the tensions and contradictions of the imperial



Upper Canada encompassed a colonial space where multiple ornithological knowledge systems and practices converged as part of a larger British Empire.<sup>28</sup> Prior to its founding in 1791, Upper Canada remained largely unoccupied by European settlers except for about 10,000 United Empire Loyalists who sought refuge from the hostilities of the American Revolution. Not until the establishment of formal land grants by First Nations peoples and Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806) did Upper Canada experience significant Amerindian, British, and American immigration, stretching west of the Ottawa River to the head of the Great Lakes.<sup>29</sup> The visionaries behind Upper Canada hoped the colony would become a little Britain, adopting British political, laws, and social systems. In a letter to his friend, Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), Simcoe positioned the new colony as a model in the British colonial enterprise “destined by nature, sooner or later to govern the interior world,” a neo-Britain.<sup>30</sup> Banks was President of the Royal Society and an eminent naturalist, enlisting numerous collectors and correspondents in the colonies to increase his extensive natural history collection.<sup>31</sup>

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and the local in the colonial setting. Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

28. Upper Canada is viewed as one site in the imperial network across the British Empire in the nineteenth century. Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth Century South Africa and Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1-8.

29. A number of Iroquois “Loyalists” were granted land in Upper Canada after the American Revolution. The original homelands of the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy centred on the region from Mohawk River to the Genesee River in what is now called New York State. Elizabeth Tooker, “The Five (later Six) Nations Confederacy, 1550-1784,” in *Aboriginal Ontario*, 79-91. Histories of Upper Canada include: G.M. Craig, *Upper Canada: the Formative Years 1784-1841* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963); Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987); D. McCalla, *Planting the Province: the Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); J.D. Wood, *Making Ontario: Agricultural Colonization and Landscape Re-Creation before the Railway* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000). For a detailed work on the history of aboriginal peoples of Canada in southern Ontario, see Edward S. Rogers and Donald Smith, eds., *Aboriginal Ontario*.

30. John Graves Simcoe, “Simcoe to Sir Joseph Banks, 8 January 1791,” *The Correspondence of Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe*, ed. E.A. Cruikshank (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1923-1931), as cited in Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada*, 13.

31. John Gascoigne examines Joseph Banks and his dual role as political advisor and naturalist on issues connected with both science and imperial interests. See John Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire: Joseph Banks, the British State and the Uses of Science in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Miller, 21-38.

However, notions of empire and Britishness were constantly shifting due to growing socio-political influences from the United States. Great Britain and the United States therefore provided colonists with competing influences and networks in their continued search for an identity. The expansion of the British Empire imparted the thrust and movement of people and ornithological ideas in colonies overseas, while colonies such as Upper Canada imparted a space to reproduce, contest, and redefine British imperial practices and ideas of empire.

### Colonial Ornithology in Upper Canada

The first birdwatchers in Upper Canada were the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada who inhabited the region prior to European occupation. For the Huron, Algonquin, and Cree nations, birds remained integral to their worldview, as experienced through subsistence hunting and ceremonial practices.<sup>32</sup> The Ojibwe relied upon birds as a means to predict “the changes of the world, the alterations of seasons, and the coming state of things.”<sup>33</sup> As Basil Johnston describes: “Eagles, geese, and robins knew of the advent of autumn and would leave for the south... Bluebirds and robins knew when to return to their summering grounds.”<sup>34</sup> The Iroquois also celebrated the American Robin’s return from the winter’s end through dances and songs.<sup>35</sup>

The Ojibwe were keen observers of bird behaviour in order to determine people’s totemic symbols. “Each animal symbolized an ideal to be sought, attained, and perpetuated,” which the Ojibwe endeavoured to emulate

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32. Stuart Houston, Mary Houston, and Arok Wolvengrey, “Cree Names for Natural History Species,” in *Eighteenth-Century Naturalists of Hudson Bay*, eds. S. Houston, T. Ball and M. Houston (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 203-251; Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), 52-53.

33. “Ojibwa” is an anglicized translation of “Ojibwe.” The Ojibwe belong to the Anishinaabeg, an Algonquian-speaking people. By the mid-eighteenth century, the Ojibwe occupied almost all of southern Ontario. They lived around the shores of Lake Huron and Superior, and traded with the French. The Anishinaabe First Nations people came from Mississagi River, which included the Mississauga people. Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage*, 52-53. See Leo A. Johnson, “The Mississauga-Lake Ontario Land Surrender of 1805,” *Ontario History* 83, 3 (1990): 233-253; Brian Osborne and M. Ripmeester, “The Mississaugas Between Two Worlds: Strategic Adjustments to Changing Landscapes of Power,” *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 17, 2 (1998): 259-291.

34. Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage*, 52-53.

35. Harriet M. Converse, *Myths and Legends of the New York State Iroquois* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1908), 110; National Museum of Canada, *Dance and Song Rituals of Six Nations Reserve, Ontario* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1968), 34. Please note that federal government departments published these sources.

with certain animal characteristics.<sup>36</sup> The eagle symbolized courage, the hawk embodied deliberation and foresight, and the loon signified fidelity.<sup>37</sup> As a result, “Indigenous” knowledge of birds and other wildlife was vital to European explorers’ understanding of the New World.<sup>38</sup> Aboriginal knowledge supplied Europeans with names of species, hunting techniques, and information on the life-histories of North American avifauna.<sup>39</sup> British imperial subjects were therefore not unique in their capability to comprehend the economy of nature.<sup>40</sup>

For the most part, bird life in Upper Canada remained relatively unknown to amateur European naturalists throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although French and British explorations and missionary work provided information on the region’s avifauna, Upper Canada claimed no institutions or naturalist networks dedicated to the study of natural history unlike its older, French-influenced neighbour, Lower Canada, where the Literary and Historical Society of Québec was established in 1823 and the Natural History Society of Montréal in 1827.<sup>41</sup> With the exception of Mrs. Sheppard’s article on Canadian songbirds in 1835, ornithology remained secondary to geological, meteorological, and botanical studies in Lower Canada during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup> Only by the late 1840s did Upper Canada (then Canada West) house numerous mechanics institutes modelled after British ones that espoused moral improvement for a settler and working class; these institutes eventually evolved into formal natural history societies such as the Canadian Institute in Toronto in 1849 and the Hamilton Association for the Cultivation of Literature, Science and Art in 1857.<sup>43</sup> Colonial ornithology in Upper Canada therefore emerged informally mainly from the British military officers, settlers, and tourists who created amateur networks, private collections, watercolour paintings, and writings about birds.

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36. Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage*, 53; Edward S. Rogers, “The Algonquin farmers of southern Ontario,” in *Aboriginal Ontario*, 143-144.

37. Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage*, 53.

38. Ainley, “Emergence of Canadian Ornithology,” 283-302.

39. Joseph Kastner, *A World of Watchers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 6-7; Ainley, “Emergence of Canadian Ornithology,” 283-302.

40. Sivasundaram, “Trading Knowledge,” 27-63.

41. The Canadian Institute in Toronto was established in 1849.

42. Mrs. Sheppard, “Notes on Some of the Canadian Song Birds,” *Transactions* (1835): 222.

43. J.L. Cranmer-Byng, “The Role of the Naturalists’ Clubs in Ontario, 1887-1920,” in *Ornithology in Ontario*, eds. M.K. McNicholl and J.L. Cranmer-Byng (Toronto: Hawk Owl, 1994), 72; Ainley, *From Natural History to Avian Biology*, 40.

### Military Ornithologies

Commissioned officers often engaged in amateur ornithology while in the service of the War Office, exerting a real imperial and masculine presence in the British colony through their sportsman and scientific practices.<sup>44</sup> Promoted as rational recreation, “innocent recreation,” such as roving “the woods and wilds,” helped to rout out idleness, “smoking and drinking to kill time,” and desertion, common problems that damaged the imperial military’s fitness such as at garrisons in Upper Canada.<sup>45</sup> British military forces occupied Upper Canada between 1759 and 1871 by establishing forts along the Great Lakes region and securing military presence with the American War of Independence, the War of 1812, and the Rebellions of 1837-1838. The British military contributed significantly to colonial society through transportation and communication systems, and their cultural practices. Distinguished officers positioned themselves as British sportsman-naturalists, or “male monarchs,” who anticipated the excitement of the hunt, festooned with a “double-barrelled gun,” and “quite ready for the birds of the country,” according to English officer Sir George Head (1782-1855) in 1815.<sup>46</sup>

The education of the nineteenth-century British military officer involved training in observation, inventorying, and documentation of the natural intricacies of occupied lands while at the same time securing British interests throughout the empire.<sup>47</sup> The creation of the imperial ordnance

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44. Studies on the British military presence in Canada include: J.M. Hitsman, *Safeguarding Canada, 1763-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968); George Raudzens, *The British Ordnance Department and Canada's Canals, 1815-1855* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1979); Carol Whitfield, *British Soldier in Canada* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1978); Mary Beacock Fryer, *Volunteers & Redcoats, Rebels & Riders: A Military History of the Rebellions in Upper Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press/Canadian War Museum, 1987); Nancy B. Bouchier, “‘Aristocrats’ and their ‘Noble Sport’: Woodstock Officers and Cricket during the Rebellion Era,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 20, 1 (1989): 16-26.

45. Allen, *The History of American Ornithology*, 521-522, 526-527; Mearns and Mearns, *The Bird Collectors*, 187-208; Hitsman, 230; J.E. Alexander, *L'Acadie, or, Seven Years' Explorations in British America* (London: H. Colburn, 1849), 17, 173-176.

46. The concept of ‘male monarchs’ is discussed by Pratt in *Imperial Eyes*, 197-223. Sir George Head was an older brother to Upper Canada Lieutenant-Governor Francis Bond Head (1793-1875). He was sent to Upper Canada to superintend the commissariat duties along Lake Huron and Simcoe. His book narrated his sojourn at Penetanguishene Bay. The Head family was also very close to Elizabeth Simcoe’s family. Sir George Head, *Forest Scenes and Incidents in the Wilds of North America: Being a Diary of a Winter's Route from Halifax to the Canadas, and During Four Months' Residence in the Woods on the Borders of Lakes Huron and Simcoe* (London: John Murray, 1829), 192; Mary Beacock Fryer, *Elizabeth Posthuma Simcoe, 1762-1850* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1989), 79, 96.

47. Jim Burant, “The Military Artist and the Documentary Art Record,” *Archivaria* 26 (Summer 1988): 33-51; Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographic Construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997);

soldier included formal training in watercolours, landscape painting, science and geography as part of their military training alongside gunnery, fortification and mathematics at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, pioneered by mathematician John Bonnycastle (1750-1821).<sup>48</sup> Instructions in these subjects were prerequisites for a well-trained British military officer who sought to convey information about the region's military capabilities, but also a region's natural history and cultural artefacts while serving with the British Ordnance Department.<sup>49</sup>

Royal Engineer officer Sir Richard Bonnycastle (1791-1847) positioned himself as a purveyor of colonial knowledge on "The Birds of Upper Canada" from the garrison at Kingston. Son of Professor John Bonnycastle, Richard introduced his work on natural history curiosities with the words of William Shakespeare to a British audience in *The Canadas in 1841* (1841-42): "Tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks; Sermons in stone, and good in every thing."<sup>50</sup> His ornithological activities occurred regularly around Fort Henry where he observed the "brilliant and daring blue-bird; the timid and splendid scarlet-bird, with its wings tipped with glossy black; the orange-bird; the bright and golden-coloured yellow-bird, *sum multis aliis*."<sup>51</sup> Bonnycastle sent "a box containing specimens in ornithology from Kingston and its vicinity" to the Montreal Natural History Society during a time when Upper Canada lacked any professional scientific societies.<sup>52</sup>

The garrisons in Upper Canada such as Fort Henry emerged as an imperial site for sportsman-hunting and ornithological activity among British military officers in Upper Canada, and a place for information and

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Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain and the 'Improvement' of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Douglas M. Peers, "Colonial Knowledge and the Military in India, 1780-1860," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33, 2 (2005): 157-180.

48. J. Smyth, *Sandhurst: The History of the Royal Military Academy* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), 54-55; Dickenson, *Drawn From Life*, 199; G.K. Raudzens, "Bonnycastle, Sir Richard Henry," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 7 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 90-92.

49. Ordnance officers with the Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, and Royal Sappers and Miners were promoted based on educational level rather than through purchase. Raudzens, *The British Ordnance Department*, 14.

50. *Ibid.*, 1-2, 50-51. Paul J. Willis, "'Tongues in Trees': The Book of Nature in 'As You like It,'" *Modern Language Studies* 18, 3 (1988): 65-74; Richard Bonnycastle, *The Canadas in 1841*, vol. 1 (Wakefield: S.R. Publishers, 1968), 39. Bonnycastle's book was originally published in 1842.

51. Bonnycastle, *The Canadas in 1841*, vol. 1, 50-51.

52. McGill University, Blacker Wood Museum of Ornithology, Sir Richard Bonnycastle's letter to the Montreal Natural History Society, 24 June 1829, in "Minutes of the Proceedings of the Natural History Society of Montreal," unpublished manuscript, vol. 1, May 1827 to October 1839, p. 332.

commodity exchange with local First Nations. As a fortified space, the garrison helped to preserve and re-create imperial activities among gentlemanly officers, which also provided tangible evidence of occupation and dominance in the colony. British military officers often equipped themselves with “shooting trim,” “shot belts, or powder flasks, or horns,” and “a shot gun or rifle” in the vicinity of the garrisons, exemplifying the gun, and knowledge of the quarry, as the principal instrument of imperial masculinity.<sup>53</sup> Sempronius Stretton collected numerous species of birds while stationed at Fort York in 1804.<sup>54</sup> Scottish-born Sir James Edward Alexander (1803-1885) commented on the “rich harvest in flowers, insects and birds” near London, Upper Canada, which he described to a metropolitan audience as an ideal place to amass “a beautiful collection of bright plumaged birds” in his *L'Acadie, or, Seven Years' Explorations in British America* (1849) ca. 1841.<sup>55</sup> Sir Alexander emphasized his elite-military position to his readers by ridiculing a “newly arrived” Irish settler who mistook a bee for a hummingbird, and suffered the consequence for his ignorance by getting stung.<sup>56</sup>

One of the earliest British garrisons in Upper Canada, Fort Niagara (1791-1796), provided a material space to collect, stuff, and disseminate information on birds in the colony during a time when colonial museums did not exist.<sup>57</sup> Captain Henry Darling of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot regularly entertained Englishwoman and wife of the Lieutenant General,

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53. J.M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester: St. Martin's Press, 1988); M. Procida, “Good sports and Good Sorts: Guns, Gender and Imperialism in British India,” *The Journal of British Studies* 40, 4 (2001): 454-488.

54. Sempronius Stretton collected birds at Fort York in 1804 and later sketched them in Montreal in 1806. York (Toronto) was supposed to be a “temporary” emergency measure from the vulnerable border town of Niagara. York eventually replaced Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake) as the capital of Upper Canada when Fort Niagara fell to the Americans in 1796. Carl Benn, *Historic Fort York, 1793-1993* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History, 1993).

55. Alexander, 267, 257. Alexander befriended American ornithologist John James Audubon and attempted to accompany him on an expedition to the Rocky Mountains. *Ibid.*, 86.

56. Sir James Edward Alexander recounted his early days serving in Upper Canada with the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot starting in 1841. See E.M. Lloyd, “Alexander, Sir James Edward,” *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 679-680. Alexander, 85-86, 254, 267.

57. Fort Niagara was originally built by the French and was ceded to Britain in 1759. After the War of Independence in 1783, Fort Niagara was surrendered to the United States and only occupied in 1796. Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006); Walter Scott Dunn, *Opening New Markets: The British Army and the Old Northwest* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2002), 53.

Elizabeth Simcoe (1766-1850), to view his collection of stuffed birds when she resided in Newark (Niagara-on-the-Lake) in 1793, then capital of the new colony. Upper Canada provided an opportunity for aristocratic women, such as Simcoe, to engage in ornithological pursuits alongside their male counterparts, as they often had higher expectations and fewer constraints than those influencing similar women in Britain.<sup>58</sup>

Darling's collection included several local birds from the Niagara region including a Redwing Blackbird "with scarlet on the wings," a scarlet bird he called "the King bird," and a "Duc owl," which he collected at the garrison. On one evening, Captain Darling stuffed a bird for Lady Simcoe that he named "a Recollect," which had "red wax on its brown wings and the tuft of feathers on its head make it very pretty."<sup>59</sup> British sportsman-naturalists removed these specimens from their local environments and placed into the European-derived stuffed bird collection of the British officer. However, as evident in the texts, a number of British naturalists used First Nations and Métis peoples as guides, informants for bird names, and collectors of bird specimens. As noted earlier, Edward Walsh required the assistance of his First Nations "friends" for his survey of the natural history of Upper Canada while garrison at Fort George, Niagara.<sup>60</sup> As Lady Simcoe noted in 1793, the Mississauga "Indians shoot small birds with such blunt arrows that their plumage is not injured" around Fort Niagara.<sup>61</sup>

British military officer George Head employed a Métis guide named Liberté while observing a number of bird species along the Huron and Simcoe shores such as "a large description of woodpecker, the size of a small fowl, with black bodies and scarlet heads, and called by the natives as cocks of the wood," which they use for "articles of ornament."<sup>62</sup> Head compared the "Indians" of Upper Canada as "altogether a finer race of

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58. Jeanne Kay Guelke and Karen Morin, "Gender, Nature, Empire: Women Naturalists in Nineteenth-century British Travel Literature," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26, 3 (2001): 306-326.

59. J. Ross Robertson, *The Diary of Mrs. John Graves Simcoe* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1911), 196, 229; M. Beacock Fryer, *Elizabeth Posthuma Simcoe, 1762-1850* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1989); Edith G. Firth, "Elizabeth Postuma Gwillim," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 7 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 361-363.

60. LAC, Edward Walsh Fonds, MG 19, F 10, Folder 3, 150.

61. Based on Elizabeth Simcoe's excursion 9 June 1793 in Niagara. Robertson, 229.

62. Sir George Head, *Forest Scenes and Incidents in the Wilds of North America*, 175, 246. The area documented by George Head consisted of the Collins Purchase of 1785, an ambiguous transaction whereby no formal document exists and descriptions of the region have been vague. The Penetanguishene Peninsula and harbourlands was surrendered to the Crown in 1798 with a payment of £101 by Lieutenant Governor Simcoe with the Lake Simcoe Ojibwe, which supposedly ended with the bands concerned assuring Simcoe that the sum paid included payment for the lands taken in the Collins Purchase. Surtees, "Land Cessions, 1763-1830," 106-107.

men” to those in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in terms of their “countenance, carriage, and general appearance,” and athleticism.<sup>63</sup> His guide, *Liberté* (French for freedom) “possessed, in common with the Indians, the faculty of crossing woods to any point he wished, and proposed to make a straight line in this instance, instead of keeping along the shore.”<sup>64</sup> Yet, *Liberté*’s face exemplified for Head the “extremes of health and ugliness combined,” as he was “evidently in blood, half savage; either by the father’s or mother’s side, he was the son of an Indian.”<sup>65</sup> Head’s disenchantment with the Métis guide might have paralleled his anxiety toward the disappearance of authentic wilderness due to the presence of the metropolitan European male in Upper Canada or increasing tensions about mixed races in the colony.<sup>66</sup>

British military officers accumulated ornithological knowledge in the colonies for the metropolitan centre, which became another form of imperialism. Focused on “centres of calculation” (e.g. London and Edinburgh) and “cycles of accumulation,” these informal explorers contributed to the accumulated ornithological knowledge at the imperial centre (Britain) as a means to dominate new lands and to extend the boundaries of empire.<sup>67</sup> Natural history provided a transforming agent for disseminating the ideology of empire through its practices, which included naming, classifying, and describing natural objects.<sup>68</sup> Sir Edward Sabine (1788-1883) of the Royal Artillery provided an extensive avifauna list of British North America in his 1814-1815 ornithological notebook while stationed at Fort George.<sup>69</sup> From a prominent Anglo-Irish family in Dublin, Sabine collected and classified numerous bird specimens throughout the north-eastern United States and Canada shortly before his trip back to England in 1816. Sir Edward Sabine exemplified the model imperial officer, as he attended the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich and later joined Captain John Ross’s (1777-1856) first Arctic Expedition in 1818. Subsequently, Sabine became Fellow to the Royal Society in 1828 and President in 1861.<sup>70</sup>

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63. Head, 176.

64. *Ibid.*, 248.

65. *Ibid.*, 210-211.

66. Phillips, “Jasper Grant and Edward Walsh,” 56-71.

67. Latour, 220-235; Miller, 21-38.

68. Gascoigne, “The Ordering of Nature and The Ordering of Empire”, 111.

69. Edward Sabine scientific works were “well known to the Council of the Royal Society on account of some works which he had written, one being on the Birds of North America, in which country he had served during the war of 1812-1814.” Francis Duncan, *History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery* (London: John Murray, 1879), 468.

70. Edward Sabine compiled his manuscripts—now housed on microfilm at the Library and Archives of Canada—while serving on the Niagara frontier, at the siege of Fort Erie and at Quebec, shortly before his return to England in 1816. Although Sabine mentions



Edward regularly referred to his brother Joseph Sabine's (1770-1837) collection of birds in England, often mentioning "Jos" in his journal.<sup>71</sup> Joseph was an eminent naturalist in Britain, and his extensive collection of North American birds garnered attention from British surgeon-naturalist John Richardson (1787-1865) and William Swainson (1789-1855) who both acknowledged his stuffed birds in *Fauna Boreali-Americana* (1831), as a gentleman who "has long studied Ornithology of the Hudson's Bay."<sup>72</sup> As a member of the Royal and Linnaean Societies, Joseph presented papers on North American birds to the scientific institutions. The Sabine brothers transformed avifauna observations and specimens from British North America into useful knowledge that could be stored at the centre of accumulation and reused for future explorations by applying scientific nomenclature to the birds they collected.<sup>73</sup>

However, Sir Edward Sabine also maintained connections to an American ornithological network rather than focusing solely on London, England, as an imperial British centre for scientific knowledge production and consumption. In 1814, Sabine shot a nondescript tern that he sent to the Peale Museum and the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia.<sup>74</sup> Philadelphia emerged as a centre for scientific advancement with the American Philosophical Society, founded in 1743 by Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), and the Peale's Museum, established in 1786 by Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827), which often advertised in newspapers and circulars to captains' ships.<sup>75</sup>

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frequently the species of birds he observes, collects, and compares with Joseph Sabine's collection, it is difficult to determine whether he actually collected specimens during his service in Upper Canada. LAC, MG 24-H56, Reel, A-1621, Edward Sabine, *Ornithological Notebooks, 1814-1815*, vol. 1, vol. 2, and an unnumbered manuscript; T.H. Levere, *Science and the Canadian Arctic: A Century of Exploration, 1818-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 46, 73-74; T.H. Levere, "Edward Sabine," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 11 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 798-800.

71. For example, see Sabine, *Ornithological Notebooks, 1814-1815*, unnumbered manuscript, p. 24; LAC, MG 24-H56, Reel, A-1621, Edward Sabine, *Ornithological Memoranda 1819-1820*, vol. 2, book 1, 70.

72. John Richardson and William Swainson, *Fauna Boreali-Americana* (London: John Murray, 1831), xii.

73. Ibid; G.S. Boulger, "Sabine, Joseph," *The Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963-1964), 568; Miller, 21-38.

74. Sabine shot the bird 18 April 1814 on the Delaware River. Sabine, *Ornithological Memoranda 1819-1820*, vol. 2, book 1, 70.

75. Marianne G. Ainley, "The Contributions of the Amateur to North American Ornithology: A Historical Perspective," in *The Living Bird*, eds. D.A. Lancaster and J.R. Johnson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 1991), 161-188; D. Lindsay, ed., *The Modern Beginnings of Subarctic Ornithology, Northern Correspondence with the Smithsonian Institution, 1856-68* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Record Society, 1991); David C. Ward, "Democratic Culture: The Peale Museum, 1784-1850," in *The Peale Family*:

British military officers engaged in ornithological activities while in the service of the War Office. For the most part, these officers were formally trained in water-colours, landscape painting, and geography, which provided a background for natural history studies. In line with the British natural history tradition of the time, military philosophy endorsed naturalist activities to rout out idleness, drunkenness and womanizing, common problems in the military especially during times of peace. Officers documented, illustrated, stuffed, and amassed collections of birds while stationed at the garrisons in Upper Canada where encounters and exchanges for specimens and information with Indigenous peoples occurred. British military soldier-naturalists not only maintained scientific networks in Britain but also tapped into professional societies in the United States such as the American Philosophical Society, an emerging political and scientific empire in North America.

### Settler Ornithologies

Natural history subjects such as ornithology helped define white settler culture, as birdlife accounts in Upper Canada featured predominantly in promotional material on emigration for an audience in Britain. By the 1830s, immigration from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales increased, as land was made available by (partially unsubstantiated) treaty negotiations with First Nations people.<sup>76</sup> Works on immigration attempted to attract the ideal settler versed in the British natural history tradition, which encompassed moral, physical, and intellectual improvement that could elevate the intellectual and moral status of a new colony.<sup>77</sup> According to the Anglican settler, Catharine Parr Trail (1802-1899), natural history refined and purified the mind and brought one closer to “that bountiful God who created and made flowers so fair to adorn and fructify this earth.”<sup>78</sup> Unlike the position of Lady Simcoe, Traill lived the

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*Creation of Legacy 1770-1870*, ed. Lillian B. Miller (Washington, DC: Abbeville Press, 1996), 270; Charles Coleman Sellers, “Good Chiefs and Wise Men: Indians as Symbols of Peace in the Art of Charles Willson Peale,” in *New Perspectives on Charles Willson*, eds. D.C. Ward and L. Miller (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 119.

76. The lands on the north shore of Lake Ontario between Trent and Etobicoke River, reaching from Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe, were surrendered without proper regard for provisions of the Royal Proclamation of 1763. These areas included Rice Lake, where Catherine Parr Traill and Charles Fothergill settled in Upper Canada as part of what Surtees terms the first and second “invasions of the newcomers.” Surtees, “Land Cessions, 1763-1830,” 92-121.

77. Berger, 3-27; Suzanne E. Zeller, *Land of Promise, Promised Land: The Culture of Victorian Science in Canada*, Canadian Historical Association Booklet, no. 56, Ottawa, 1996.

78. Catharine P. Traill, *Backwoods of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989), 92. Traill's *The Backwoods of Canada* was originally published in 1836.

reality of middle-class settler life, working the land and gaining authority on natural history through her Christian theology.<sup>79</sup>

Traill immigrated to Upper Canada from England in 1832 and contributed significantly to colonial botany. At her Lake Cottage in 1834, Traill described the appearance and behaviours of some of the more common birds encountered in Upper Canada in her section “Canadian Ornithology.” Her “ornithological sketches” enabled “the outcoming female emigrant to form a proper judgement of the trials and arduous duties she has to encounter.” Traill’s interest in birds must have been well-known to her community, as a “very curious bird’s-nest” was given to her by one of her “choppers” who helped clear the land.<sup>80</sup> She also applied Indigenous knowledge when attempting to identify a chickadee. “I am not quite certain, but I think it is the same little bird that is known among the Natives by the name of Thit-a-be-bec; its note, though weak, and with few changes, is not unpleasing; and we [British immigrants] prize it for its almost the only bird that sings in the winter.”<sup>81</sup> Traill’s extensive works reflected a demand to attract the proper British middle-class Christian woman to the British colony.

Many American, English, Scottish and Irish immigrants in the 1820s and 1830s were poor and uneducated, and lacked the education, leisure time, and financial means to pursue an activity such as natural history.<sup>82</sup> Perhaps the toils of colonial life prevented many from supporting the initiatives, as English settler John Langton (1808-1894) described early in his settler and political life: “As for botany—I carry it and a little ornithology on at intervals and am beginning to be acquainted with most of the plants and birds one commonly meets with, but one is so much occupied with other things that these studies proceed slowly.”<sup>83</sup> Langton

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79. Charlotte Gray, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Lives of Catherine Parr Traill and Susanna Moodie* (Toronto: Penguin, 2008); Zeller, “Nature’s Gullivers and Crusoes,” 193; Marianne G. Ainley, “Science in Canada’s Backwoods: Catherine Parr Traill,” in *Natural Eloquence: Women Reinscribe Science*, eds. Barbara T. Gates and Ann B. Shteir (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 77-96; M.A. Peterman, “Strickland, Catharine Parr,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 995-999.

80. Traill, *The Backwoods of Canada*, 3, 167-168. The section of Canadian ornithology includes 165-168.

81. Traill, *The Backwoods of Canada*, 182.

82. Ainley, *From Natural History to Avian Biology*, 28.

83. Langton’s letters were published by W.A. Langton, ed., *Early Days in Upper Canada: Letters of John Langton from the Backwoods of Upper Canada and the Audit Office of the Province of Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1926). Langton came from a wealthy Lancaster family and would become Canada’s first Auditor General after Confederation in 1867. W. Cameron, “Langton, John,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 136.

immigrated to Fenelon Township, Upper Canada, in 1833, and would later become an established Conservative politician, Auditor-General of Canada, and future president of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec in 1859 when the government moved to Quebec.

British settlers of a certain rank, religion, and status encouraged each other to “take up abode” close to “those who have led such a life as yourself, and whose wants are similar to your own,” not including the “Yankees” or American “brutes” who “hold no conversations about the real pleasures of the soul,” according to Scottish engineer John MacTaggart (1791-1830).<sup>84</sup> MacTaggart revered Burlington Bay (near Hamilton), and the adjoining country, as the “loveliest place in civilised Canada” due to its “natural beauty, the fertility, the amusements which may be obtained in hunting and fishing, are greater than I have met in any other place.” “Had time permitted” MacTaggart exclaimed, “some curious stuffed birds might have been obtained from this *Paradise*” [Coote’s Paradise, near Hamilton], which he “strongly recommended to ornithologists and sportsmen, as a place, above all others yet known in Canada, most deserving of attention.”<sup>85</sup>

Anglo-Irish settler, Edward Allan Talbot (1802-1839), attempted “to give a true description of Upper Canada, to represent the vast importance of that portion of his Majesty’s dependencies, and to demonstrate some of its capabilities as a grand field of colonization” in his *Five Years’ Residence in the Canadas* (1824). Edward, who immigrated to Upper Canada in 1818 and “claimed a ‘high literary reputation’,” provided detailed accounts of the birds he observed in the colony.<sup>86</sup> Talbot continually asserted British superiority in birdlife when evaluating the Canadian “lark” for his metropolitan readers, which was “very much like the sky-lark of your [Britain] country.” According to Talbot, the Canadian species “never attempts to sing. It is a stupid inactive bird and unwilling to get upon the wing; seemingly as ignorant of the art of flying, as it is of the science of music.”<sup>87</sup> The colonial species therefore lacked the refined qualities of the British skylark, a national icon in literature and poetry.

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84. J. MacTaggart, *Three Years in Canada: An Account of the Actual State of its Resources, Productions, Improvements and Capabilities, and including Sketches of the State of Society, Advice to Emigrants, &c* (London: H. Colburn, 1829), 195; G.S. Emmerson, “John MacTaggart,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 6 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 480-482.

85. MacTaggart, *Three Years in Canada*, 302-303.

86. Daniel J. Brock, “Edward Allen Talbot,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 7 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 842-844.

87. Edward Allen Talbot, *Five Years’ Residence in the Canadas, Including a Tour through Part of the United States of America in the Year 1823*, vol. 1 (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orm, Brown and Green, 1824), 234.

The home of Charles Fothergill (1782-1840) at Rice Lake emerged as an ornithological centre for a number of local collectors in Upper Canada.<sup>88</sup> As an English Quaker, Fothergill believed that an examination of nature through science was one way to view God's work and refine the mind.<sup>89</sup> His efforts included attempting to establish a Literary and Philosophical Society of Upper Canada at York in 1831 and a Lyceum of Natural History in 1835, in order to inventory the birds of the interior of British North America.<sup>90</sup> In his second address in 1836, Fothergill described Upper Canada as "so richly endowed as it is by the Creator," and "without any establishment of the kind" in its "metropolis," York (Toronto).<sup>91</sup> He worked continuously towards his "Memoirs and Illustrations of the Natural History of the British Empire," and dedicated his work to the King of Great Britain by stating "that I should one day be able to present the Sovereign of my country and my Countrymen with something of this kind that should be more worthy."<sup>92</sup>

However, Fothergill's attempts to establish a museum never reached fruition. His political views often contradicted the conservative government at the time, which might have impacted the lack of patron support for his naturalist initiatives. Furthermore, Fothergill regularly

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88. Charles Fothergill would be considered part of the "second invasion of newcomers" after the War of 1812 with the Rice Lake Purchase in 1818. First Nations in the interior of the province experienced increased encroachment of their lands after 1815. William Craus's negotiation with the Rice Lake Mississauga in 1818 for the Kawartha Lake region resulted in a new payment plan, which involved the annual supply of clothing for the Mississauga from King of England rather a lump sum of money for the land. Surtees, "Land Cessions, 1763-1830," 113.

89. These drawings and paintings, which included several species of birds, were engraved and published in four volumes of his *Oriental Memoirs* (1813). Allen, *History of American Ornithology*, 541; P. Pal and V. Dehejia, *From Merchants to Emperors: British Artists and India, 1757-1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), 141. See L.R. Clarke, "The Quaker Background of William Bartram's View of Nature," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46, 3 (1985): 435-448; E.H. Coleridge, "Coleridge, Wordsworth and the American Botanist William Bartram," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature* (1906-1909): 69-92; 27-28; B. Hindle, "The Quaker Background and Science in Colonial Philadelphia," *Isis* 46, 3 (1955): 243-250.

90. Charles Fothergill, *Proposed Lyceum of Natural History, and the Fine Arts, in the City of Toronto* (Toronto: W.J. Coates, 1835), 1-2. See Suzanne E. Zeller, *Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1987), 20-22; Ainley, *Canadian Ornithology, 1860-1950*, 39-42; James L. Baillie, "Charles Fothergill, 1782-1840," *Canadian Historical Review* 25, 4 (1944): 376-396; Berger, 3-4.

91. Charles Fothergill referred to *The Book of Nature* in his second address for a lyceum, *Second Address Relative to the Proposed Lyceum of Natural History and the Fine Arts in the City of Toronto, U.C., 1836* (Toronto: s.n., 1836), 1; P. Romney, "Charles Fothergill," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 7 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 317-321.

92. Baillie, "Charles Fothergill," 379.

looked to the United States for ornithological knowledge and ideas. He visited the Peale's Museum in Philadelphia and the Lyceum in New York rather than focusing solely on natural history institutions in Britain. His notebooks regularly referred to bird species observed at the two institutions such as the Catbird, which he saw at the "Philadelphia and New York museums under this name."<sup>93</sup> Other species included the Black Cheeked Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Purple Finch, and "Lettuce Bird," about whose naming he commented, "I know not why."<sup>94</sup>

Fothergill frequently consulted with the Mississauga First Nations for their ornithological observations and collecting capabilities around his home at Rice Lake. They were also instrumental in collecting bird specimens for his interest, as "an Indian of the Mississauga tribe brought me a pair male and female of this noble species, shot near my own grounds on the R. Lake, October, 1820."<sup>95</sup> In the 1830s, Fothergill stated that he knew "an Indian kill nearly 100 in the course of the day near Pigeon Lake with a bow and arrow at a single shot, and I have known a white man to kill 20 at a single shot with a gun."<sup>96</sup> However, despite his apparent admiration for the First Nations' approach to hunting, Fothergill proceeded to classify the local nation under the animal category "Mississauga Indians or Chippaweyan race of Indians" together with black squirrels, bears, fish, and birds. This practice subjected them as part of the animal kingdom, and as less than the human race.<sup>97</sup>

When a growing market evolved in Upper Canada for stuffed birds as souvenirs and scientific specimens, Indigenous peoples positioned themselves at the center of the trade. Many often traded their furs and specimens for "tobacco, groceries and other necessities" at colonial post offices in settler communities, another site of interaction between white British settlers and First Nations peoples.<sup>98</sup> Catherine Parr Traill recounted the interactions of a Métis named Peter who exchanged an "American Hawk Owl" for "a small gift and plug of tobacco from the

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93. R. Delamere Black, "Charles Fothergill's Notes on the Natural History of Eastern Canada, 1816-1837," *Transactions of the Canadian Institute* 20, 1 (1934): 152.

94. *Ibid.*, 154, 155, 158, 159, 160.

95. *Ibid.*, 145.

96. *Ibid.*, 159.

97. University of Toronto, The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, C. Fothergill, MS 140, vol. 20, Canadian researches chiefly in natural history, 1816-1821, p. 89; Kay Anderson, "Science and the Savage: The Linnean Society of New South Wales, 1874-1900," *Ecumene: International Journal of Culture, Environment and Meaning* 5, 2 (1998): 125-43.

98. For a discussion on the ways Indigenous cultures used European commodities in early exchanges, see Thomas's "The Indigenous Appropriation of European Things," in *Entangled Objects*, 83-124.

Major” at the local post office at Gores Landing in the 1840s.<sup>99</sup> Traill considered Peter a “Noble Savage,” a “picturesque figure as he marched into the store, gun in hand, and clad in his blanket-coat and red sash, especially as drawn through this red sash hung a beautiful Hawk-owl,” as he was “Indian only on the mother’s side.”<sup>100</sup> She asked “Indian Peter” the name of the bird to which he responded with a “customary prologue of “Ugh!”. Peter then continued, “Indian call bird ‘cut-throat’; see him breast!” thus calling Traill’s attention to the red marks on the bird. Those in the post office laughed at Peter’s ignorance of the Rose Breasted Grosbeak. However, as Traill remarked, Peter had indicated “they were not bloodstains caused in the killing of the bird. He was taking it to a young gentleman who wanted it as a specimen, and who was a clever taxidermist.”<sup>101</sup> Peter clearly knew the relevance of the bird species to the local collector.

The rising privileged classes, which mostly enjoyed observing and collecting birds as a leisure pursuit, often distanced themselves from the metropolitan centre (Britain) while at the same time attempted to assert their imperial and white identities over Indigenous peoples and lower-class immigrants through their ornithological texts. Descriptions of natural history and naturalist activities therefore filled popular emigration literature to attract similar immigrants from Britain. Upper Canada settler-naturalists did not erase Indigenous Peoples but co-opted First Nations and Métis hunters to further their own purposes, and denied them an equal role.

### **Tourist Ornithologies**

During the early nineteenth-century, Upper Canada became a popular tourist destination area for wealthy British gentlemen and women who travelled to British North America in search of new and authentic experiences through natural history during a time of rapid urbanization and industrialization in Britain. Primarily motivated to experience the untamed wilderness, British elite tourists explored Upper Canada as part of a larger North American tour, and exerted a real imperial presence through their ornithological practices of commodifying and appropriating birds through taxidermy as imperial scientific specimens and souvenirs.<sup>102</sup>

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99. C. Parr Traill, *Pearls and Pebbles* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History, 1999), 34-36. Originally published in 1891, Traill recounted her earlier experiences of settler life from her journal starting in the 1830s.

100. *Ibid.*, 35.

101. *Ibid.*, 34-35.

102. For a history of the wilderness tourism in Ontario, see Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto,

The North American wilderness therefore provided enough distance, mystery, and excitement to create another alternative to the European Grand Tour, which extended the boundaries of tourist space from the European continent to Canada. For example, as naturalist Mary Burges (1763-1813) wrote to her friend Elizabeth Simcoe (1766-1850), who travelled with her husband to Upper Canada in 1791:

... the whole of your journey must have been delightful; and so much more gratifying than all those common place European Tours—even here in England, where the face of the country is so much the same, it is a most satisfactory thing to explore a new land; but to explore a new Province carries such an idea of sublimity with it.<sup>103</sup>

The majority of wealthy travelling-naturalists referred to Alexander Wilson's (1766-1813) *American Ornithology* (1808-1814) and later, John James Audubon's (1785-1851) *Birds of America* (1827-1838) illustrating an emergence of American authority on ornithology consumed by a British audience. Although too bulky and expensive to be used as field guides, they became extremely popular as the British elite longed to collect birds in the North American wilderness.<sup>104</sup> *The Literary Garland* published an article on "The Ruby-throated Hummingbird" by J.J. Audubon in November 1840. The newspaper promoted "a well ordered and leisurely society" that was "devoted to the Advancement of General Literature" in both Upper and Lower Canada.<sup>105</sup>

During his travels to Niagara Falls from England in 1834-35, William Pope (1811-1902) described the stuffed birds available for purchase at the local museums.<sup>106</sup> As a formally trained artist, Pope roamed the woods

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1995). For an overview of the Grand Tour, see John Towner, "The Grand Tour: a Key Phase in the History of Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 12, 3 (1985): 297-333.

103. LAC, John Graves Simcoe Fonds, MG23-H11, Folder 29, Reel A606, Letter from Mary Agnes Burges to Mrs. Simcoe, 30 November 1792.

104. Alexander Wilson has been considered the "father" of American ornithology. Born in Paisley, Scotland, Wilson immigrated to the United States in 1794 befriended famous naturalist William Bartram, who developed Wilson's interest in ornithology. Alexander Wilson and Clark Hunter, *The Life and Letters of Alexander Wilson* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1983). John James Audubon's wife, Lucy, was essential to her husband's work as she supported her husband both financially and emotionally while he worked on his book *The Birds of America*. See E. Delatee, *Lucy Audubon: A Biography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1982) and Marcia Bonta's, *Women in the Field* (College Station: Texas A and M University Press, 1991), 9-13. Audubon's *Birds of America* (1826-1838) was published in Great Britain and 90% of its subscribers were British; Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 284.

105. M.M. Brown, *An Index to the Literary Garland* (Toronto: Bibliographical Society of Canada, 1962), iii-vi.

106. William Pope, *William Pope's Journal March 28, 1834-March 11, 1835*, ed. M.A. Garland (London, ON: University of Western Ontario Press, 1952-54), 48. William Pope



with a gun and paint-brush in hand documenting the colony's avifauna through his watercolour paintings as a sportsman-naturalist, and would later settle in Upper Canada. One of the "most beautiful of the duck tribe" was the Woodduck, which Pope previously observed in London, England, "amongst the rich and splendid collection of birds and animals in the zoological gardens."<sup>107</sup> Perhaps Pope referred to the Zoological Gardens in London (est. 1828) where many British amateur naturalists first encountered wild birds of the British Empire before observing them in the field in the colonies. Bird collections in Britain's metropolitan centres signified the material wealth, vastness, and potential of the British Empire, as foreign specimens (dead and alive) were tangible proof of Britain's expanding authority and affluence, the grandeur of the monarchy, and recreations of Edenic, heavenly and terrestrial paradises in the landed gentry's aviaries.<sup>108</sup> However, Pope often referred to American ornithologist Alexander Wilson's work, illustrating an emerging American ornithological tradition that British naturalists relied on when visiting British North America.<sup>109</sup>

As tourists purchased stuffed birds that they used as scientific specimens or collected to fill their natural history collections, taxidermy became the practice of changing a live bird into a material object for consumption, display, and souvenir of a particular place or experience.<sup>110</sup> Birds were not only placed within an imperial scientific discourse, but also appropriated for financial gain as part of a developing tourism industry that commodified stuffed local birds as material evidence of the wilderness trip in Upper Canada. Consequently, the stuffed bird

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would later settle in the Long Point area in Upper Canada. He has been dubbed the "Audubon of Upper Canada" because of the numerous paintings of birds he produced while observing and collecting birds along the shores of Lake Erie and Long Point near St. Thomas settlement.

107. Pope, *William Pope's Journal*, 31, 58.

108. Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 205-242; Tim Barrington, "The South Kensington Museum and the Colonial Project," in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, eds. T. Barrington and T. Flynn (London: Routledge, 1998), 11-27; Yi-Fu Tuan, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 84-85.

109. William Pope referred to Alexander Wilson's *American Ornithology* frequently in his journals. Harry B. Barrett, *The 19<sup>th</sup>-century Journals and Paintings of William Pope* (Toronto: M. F. Feheley, 1976), 29, 150.

110. On natural history specimens as analogous to souvenirs, see Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, and the Collection* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Victoria Carroll, "Natural History on Display: The Collection of Charles Waterton," in *Science in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century Sites and Experiences*, eds. Aileen Fyfe and Bernard Lightman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 271-300.

represented untamed wilderness in the colony in public museums and domestic spaces of metropolitan Britain.<sup>111</sup> Many male travellers referred to Charles Waterton's instructions on collecting and preserving stuffed birds "for cabinets of natural history" and it was a popular source for travellers interested in taxidermy especially to North and South America, where Waterton undertook four trips to form his collections.<sup>112</sup> As a wealthy Catholic and self-proclaimed authority on taxidermy, Charles Waterton stated that "you must possess Promethean boldness, and bring down fire and animation, as it were, into your preserved specimen."<sup>113</sup> Waterton's taxidermy manipulated wild birds into unnatural positions such as placing "your eagle in attitude commanding, the same as Nelson stood in, in the day of battle, on the *Victory's* quarter-deck."<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, by accentuating the hawk's chest, the stuffed bird represented the ideal imperial, courageous male during the nineteenth-century, Lord Horatio Nelson (1758-1805). These specimens were on display at his Walton Hall estate near Wakefield, Yorkshire.<sup>115</sup>

Alfred Domett (1811-1887), an Englishman and future New Zealand administrator, referred to Waterton in his Canadian journal on his American tour 1833-35, and may have followed Waterton's instructions as he collected several species of birds during his trip to Upper Canada.<sup>116</sup>

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111. Barrington, "The South Kensington Museum," 11. For a discussion on material culture and western or British imperialism, see Donna J. Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the Modern World of Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 19; R. Huxley, "Natural History Collectors and their Collections: 'Simpling Macaronis' and Instruments of Empire," in *Enlightenment: Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. K. Sloan (London: British Museum Press, 2004), 80-91; Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 125-184.

112. Charles Waterton, *Wanderings in South America* (Upper Saddle River: Heron Books, 1968), 321-341. *Wanderings* was originally published in 1828. See Cristina Grasseni, "Taxidermy as Rhetoric of Self-making: Charles Waterton (1782-1865), Wandering Naturalist," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 29, 2 (1998): 269-294; Carroll, 271-300.

113. Waterton, *Wanderings*, 336.

114. *Ibid.*, 336.

115. The symbolic representation of the Nelson monument at Trafalgar Square in London, England, is discussed in the introduction of Rodney Mace, *Trafalgar Square: Emblem of Empire* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976). Carroll, 271-300; Vicky Carroll, "The Natural History of Visiting: Responses to Charles Waterton and Walton Hall," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biology and Biomedical Sciences* 35, 1 (2004): 31-64.

116. Alfred Domett was born in Surrey, England, and would become a New Zealand colonial statesman and poet. He befriended Robert Browning the poet and remained friends throughout his life. His motivation for touring Canada was for pleasure. S.L.L., "Domett, Alfred," in *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1888), 199-200; A. Domett, *The Canadian Journal of Alfred Domett: Being an Extract*

The educated, gentlemanly travelling-naturalist procured a collection of stuffed birds, which served as a “mental diorama” and material evidence of the trip to the British colony and a dominant metaphor for the imperial, aesthetic science of natural history during the nineteenth century.<sup>117</sup> By carefully selecting birds based on their aesthetic and visual appeal, Domett recounted:

I stuffed a few beautiful birds of which there were already many in the woods. There was the golden oriole (Baltimore oriole), a dark yellow bird the size of a sparrow, the exquisite red-bird (Red tanager or Blackwing Redbird)—the whole graceful body of a deep crimson the excepting wings and tail of jet black, the bluebird (*Motacilla Sialis*)—dark violet on the back, a pale primrose under the top of the wings and a streak of the same colour on each side of the head and above a beautiful scarlet crest of the back of the head.<sup>118</sup>

Domett arranged his birds according to colour, shape, and size, which he exhibited using contrasting colours such as dark yellow, exquisite red, deep crimson, dark violet, and pale primrose all combined to attract the eye of the observer, while simultaneously applying scientific nomenclature for a few of the birds he collected.

Travellers purchased stuffed wild birds as souvenirs and scientific specimens at “T. Barnett’s Museum of natural and artificial curiosities” in Niagara Falls, a popular tourist destination for the British North American tour.<sup>119</sup> Barnett’s museum housed “upwards to 800 stuffed animals of various kinds and descriptions,” as well as First Nations artifacts for sale. His collection was “arranged very tastefully so as to represent a forest scene,” and was “caught in the vicinity of the Falls,” and “calculated to delight the eye, improve the understanding, and mend the heart.” One of the main attractions included the American Bald Eagle, “the noblest of eagles of the land delight to hover around the Falls; and they are frequently

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from a *Journal of a Tour in Canada, the United States and Jamaica* (London, ON: University of Western Ontario, 1955), 54.

117. Lynn L. Merrill, *The Romance of Victorian Natural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 107, 257.

118. Domett, *The Canadian Journal of Alfred Domett*, 54. The bird names are written according to Domett’s journal.

119. Thomas Barnett was born at Harborne, near Birmingham in England in 1799. He landed in Kingston ca. 1824 and formed a museum there ca. 1827-28, which he moved to Niagara Falls in 1829. Visitors included American and European tourists including Professor Benjamin Siliman, Yale University, in 1838; Professor Louis Agassiz of Harvard’s Museum of Comparative Anatomy; King Louis-Phillipe Albert of France; and Abraham Lincoln in 1837. The museum was patronized by Lord Aylmer (ca. 1831-35) and Lord Durham in 1838. Thomas Barnett and his son Sydney were skilled taxidermists and would stuff birds for tourists. T. Lynne Teather, “Delighting the Eye and Mending the Heart,” *Ontario History* 94, 1 (2002): 49-77.

killed, stuffed, and offered for sale.”<sup>120</sup> Stuffed birds from the Niagara Falls represented the North American wilderness, sublimity, and God’s omnipresence tourists longed for when visiting the tourist destination.

Aesthetic appropriation of birds filled many descriptions of travels to British North America especially for women who wished to contribute to colonial knowledge of wild birds.<sup>121</sup> Those interested in birds considered Britain as the norm against which other scenery and birds could be evaluated and constructed to adhere to the cultural and economic demands of the metropolitan audience. The romantic-aesthetic gaze occurred when the viewer looked on the prospect afforded by the vantage point of place, and was often associated with privilege and the politics of taste.<sup>122</sup> Anna Jameson (1794-1860) pronounced in her popular *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles* (1838), “apropos to birds, we have alas! No singing birds in Canada. There is, indeed, a little creature of the ouzel kind, which haunts my garden, and has a low, sweet warble, to which I listen with pleasure; but we have nothing like the rich, continuous song of the nightingale or lark, or even the linnet.”<sup>123</sup> Jameson’s critique of the Canadian songbirds represented a gender-defined response expressed from the domestic sphere of home, while at the same time exerting her imperial authority over the dissonant birds of Upper Canada.<sup>124</sup>

As the European Grand Tour diminished in popularity, travelling to distant lands in search of pristine nature became a new means for wealthy Europeans to distance themselves from the common people. The North

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120. H.A. Parsons, *The Book of Niagara Falls* (Buffalo, NY: O.G. Steele, 1838), 17; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 29-54, 44-45, 33.

121. Kirsten Greer and Jeanne Kay Guelke, “Intrepid Naturalists and Polite Observers,” *Journal of Sport History* 30, 3 (2003): 323-346.

122. John Barrell, *The Birth of Pandora and the Division of Knowledge* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 41-61. See also, Denis Cosgrove, “Landscape and the European Sense of Sight-Eyeing Nature,” in *Handbook of Cultural Geography*, eds. K. Anderson, M. Domosh, S. Pile and N. Thrift (London: Sage, 2003), 249-268.

123. Anna Jameson, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 178. Anna Brownell Murphy was born in Dublin, Ireland, and married Robert Jameson, who became an attorney general of Upper Canada in 1833. On her tour, she separated from her husband and returned to England. She wrote several works such as *A Lady’s Diary or Diary of an Ennuyée*, and was friends with Goethe’s daughter-in-law, Ottilie van Goethe, and Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Jameson’s *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles*, based on her tour of Upper Canada, was a critical and popular success, which reinforced Anna’s reputation as a writer. C. Thomas, “Anna Brownell (Jameson) Murphy,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 8 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 648-651.

124. Anna Jameson’s disappointment with Canadian songbirds might have mirrored tensions with her marriage with Robert Jameson. Vera Norwood, “Constructing Gender in Nature: Bird Society Through the Eyes of John Burroughs and Florence Merriam Bailey,” in *Human/Nature: Biology, Culture, and Environmental History*, eds. J.P. Herron and A.G. Kirk (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), 49-62.

American wilderness provided enough distance, mystery, and new flora and fauna to create another alternative to the European Grand Tour, which extended the boundaries of British tourist space from the European continent to British North America. Stuffed birds provided tangible proof of the wilderness experience, whether it was to emulate the American sportsman-ornithologist or as representations of the romantic-aesthetic for curiosity cabinets.

## Conclusion

This paper provides an examination on the impact of empire and local contexts on colonial ornithology in Upper Canada by teasing out military, settler, and tourist ornithologies in the British colony. Military officers who pursued ornithological activities were believed to make better officers, less prone to alcoholism and other “vices” that damaged the military’s fitness. Settlers who engaged in moral improvement through the study of birds made better colonists, and tourists who roamed the woods with gun in hand helped to solidify Britain’s stronghold on the colony. Thus natural history activities like ornithology strengthened Britain’s military and settler occupation in Upper Canada.

However, Indigenous peoples made possible the collection and description of the birds of Upper Canada. They exerted a real presence in colonial ornithological space (albeit a passive one in the participants’ texts). Encounters occurred at garrisons and post offices as sites of ornithological exchanges and confrontations in the new British colony. As argued by Elizabeth Vibert, British anxieties over First Nations peoples as an impediment to white settlement manifested itself in disparaging representations of the uncivilized “Indian,” which was exemplified in British ornithological narratives in Upper Canada in this paper.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, colonial ornithology in Upper Canada owed some of its traditions to a competing scientific empire in the south rather than solely on Britain, as the United States emerged as an ornithological centre by the nineteenth century. Therefore, notions of British Empire remained tenuous as colonial ornithology adopted British, American, and First Nation people’s ornithological traditions.

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125. Elizabeth Vibert demonstrates how the Hudson Bay Company traders depended on First Nation people’s knowledge, which shifted once colonial interests changed from fur trading to white settlement in the HBC region. Elizabeth Vibert, “Real Men Hunt Buffalo: Masculinity, Race and Class in British Fur Traders’ Narratives,” in *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Reader*, ed. Catherine Hall (New York: Routledge, 2000), 43.