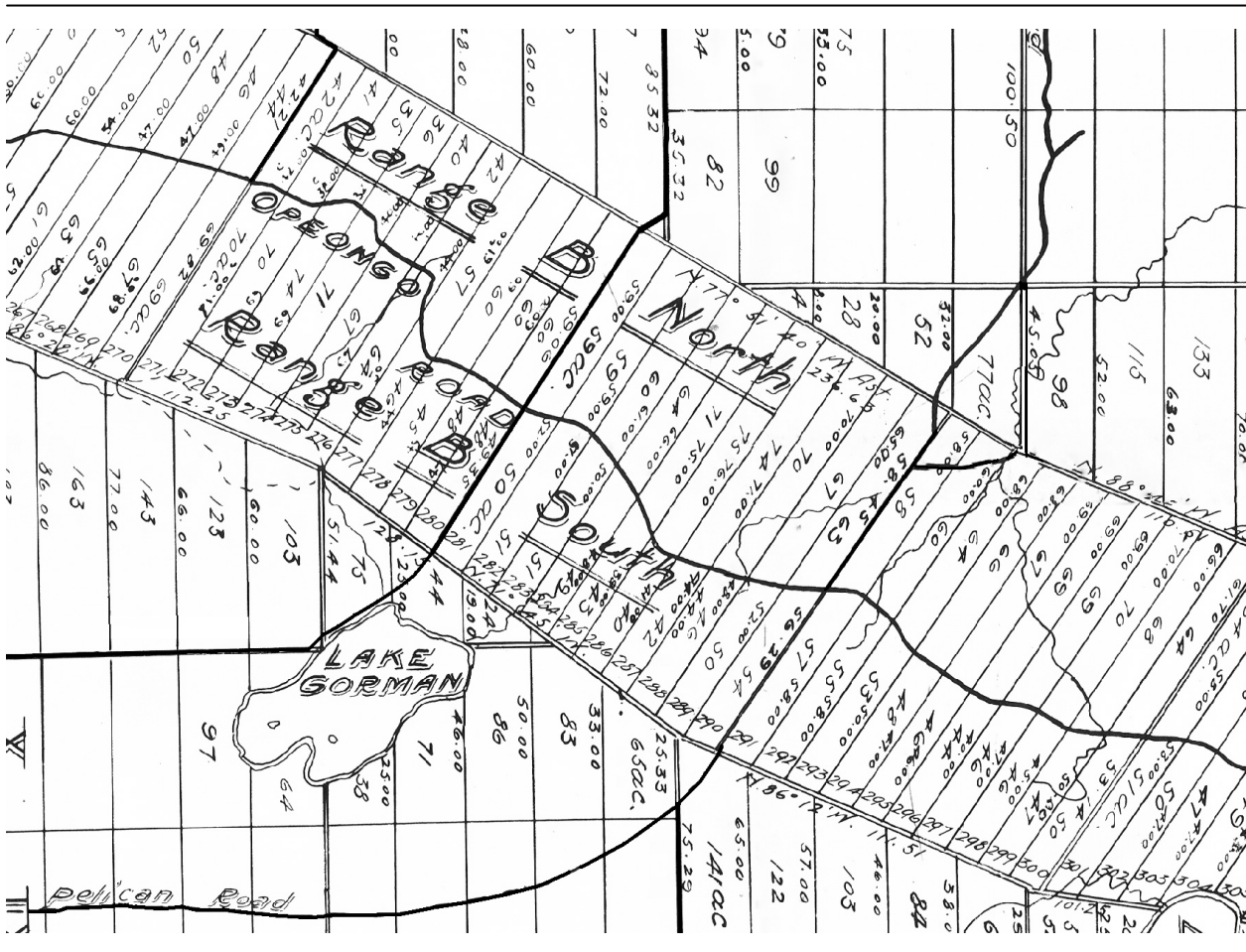# Narratives, Transitions, and the Spaces Between Old and New

A Socio-Economic History of Brudenell, Ontario through the 1871 Census of Canada

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Introduction

Statistics, most notably those based on the data accumulated by census-makers, have become a mainstay of the research and writing of social history in Canada and elsewhere. Such resources have been invaluable in understanding movement and change in society from one period to the next, especially so-called "transitions" such as modernization, urbanization, and industrialization. Statistical analyses of longitudinal trends that utilize aggregated data from census reports have immensely impacted our understanding of the past. Yet the data from which they evolve offers researchers the opportunity to study much more than just (inter)national, long-term, processes and/in major urban centres. When one examines census returns at the local level in minute detail, and uses them as the primary basis of a study of local history—as opposed to just a corroboratory source—one becomes aware of the possibilities for the use of census data in understanding not only the main currents of Canadian history, but also those currents which branched off from the central flow; of those instances of community formation which were located between tradition and modernity; and of those people on the fringes of our historical imagination.

The spaces between past and present, between certain epochs, historical periods, or abstract states of being—between tradition(al) and modern(ity)—are usually characterized as transition periods. These are periods defined by their progress from an older to a newer idealized form. People in the past went from living one way, to living in a new—and sometimes a radically different (or even revolutionary)—way. Yet most of the people whom we so often speak of with much authority could not possibly have seen themselves involved in the abstract transitions (or revolutions) from traditional societies to modern ones, from economies based on artisanship to ones based on industrial production, or from primitive to

sophisticated social configurations, in the terms used by academics. They may have seen themselves as involved in larger processes, but they could not have predicted the eventual outcomes. They saw themselves as living in their own place and time, with an uncertain future ahead of them. They had ideas about that future, but these were ideas that may or may not have coincided with the trends they saw happening around them—ideas independent of the wider social and economic transitions envisioned by social scientists. Canadians of the middle to late nineteenth century were modern, even if they existed on the margins of the processes defined by many social historians in Canada and elsewhere.

This major research paper seeks to make a place in the historiography of nineteenth century Canada for a few of those neglected people, groups and communities that have been written about extensively at the local level—and have become prime fodder for the growth of heritage as a twenty-first century "industry"—but have been passed over in the writing of the grand narratives of Canadian history as it is taught to university students. They have existed at the margins, both in terms of their geographic location, and in terms of their place in history. Further, the paper seeks to put these people at the centre of a narrative that does not view them as transitional or marginal, but as living in their own place and time. Already many valuable projects in Canadian social history have put supposedly ordinary people at the center of their narratives, and this paper seeks to make a small contribution to that historiography.[1] In

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[1] See for example Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish in* Ontario*: a Study in Rural History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), David Gagan, *Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land, and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada* West (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1981), Douglas McCalla, "The Needs of Farm Households: Farm Families Purchases from Two Upper Canadian Stores in 1861," in Serge Courville and Normand Séguin, eds., *Espace et culture / Space and Culture* (Sainte-Foy: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1995), and Catharine A. Wilson, *Tenants in Time: Family Strategies, Land, and Liberalism in Upper Canada, 1799-1871* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), to name just a few.

addition, this study provides a model and a basis of comparison for future studies using census data in the exploration of localized socio-economic and spatial relations.

My analysis of the socio-economic character of Brudenell is framed by a discussion of the growth of social history as an academic discipline, the writing of local history, and the commodification of cultural/historical identity for consumption and profit. Explicit in this is a theoretical discussion of the concept of transition. Second, I provide an overview of the methodology, concepts, and tools used in the research project. Next, I present a detailed analysis of the socio-economic and spatial relationships and environments in the remote frontier township and village of Brudenell, Ontario, by analyzing the character of a "typical" family farm within the context of a frontier farming economy with a distinct relationship to forestry. I note several examples of these farms along with some non-typical counterparts. The families of 1871 Brudenell were not all identical with the typical and the notable being each and together vital in the development of local and inter-regional socio-economic relationships.

Social History, Transitions, and the Marginalization of the Other

Key dichotomies, themes and processes—tradition and modernity (modernization), subsistence and market-orientation (commercialization/industrialization), and wilderness/frontier and civilization (progress)—hold significant weight in Canadian social history. These often become part of an overall grand narrative of progress, based on the movement from one mode of existence to another.[2] Marginalized by these narratives are stories of "outsiders" or "others"—those on the fringes of society—people who did not fit with an ideal of

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[2] See for example Donald Creighton, *The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence, 1760-1850* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1937), and A.R.M. Lower, *Colony to Nation: A History of Canada* (Toronto: Longmans, Green, 1946).

progress, or whose individuality was lost in the explanation of vast social and economic structures and processes The grand narrative of progress, as a continually advancing justification of the present regime, has left in its wake mythologies and romanticized images of the past, often developed by local historians and popular media (as opposed to academic history). While attempting to preserve the past in a meaningful way and serving as prime material for popular representations, they did not do justice to the nuances of the many individual and particular life experiences.

The notion that in history human kind has moved (and continues to move) through stages of existence in a rational (though abstract) progression, was spawned in the mid-nineteenth century, as the claims of inductive scientists and social theorists, working within the Darwinian intellectual climate, gained considerable reputation. "The past became, as it had been in *dix-huitième* Paris, a series of predictable transitions organized less as a finite number of ages in the style of Vico or Condorcet than as a progression from one conceptual state to another."[3] History for these thinkers was a process from lesser to greater sophistication. In the grand narrative of progress that plays so a crucial a role in American historiography, the influence of Frederick Jackson Turner should not be overlooked. In 1920 he wrote:

> American development has exhibited not merely an advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line...This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character...In this advance, the frontier is the outer edge of the wave—the meeting point between savagery and civilization.[4]

Initially the frontier ensnared the settler, but through his industriousness and his modern spirit, the pioneer tamed and dominated the frontier landscape, civilized it, and brought it

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[3] Michael Bentley, *Modern Historiography: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 82.
[4] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920), pp. 2-3.

into the fold of American society. After 1945 the idea began to take hold that history needed to become a social science with its own theoretical models and with at least some emphasis on quantification.[5] To many American historians it appeared that,

> In contrast to Europe, [America] was a truly classless society, free of ideological divisions...They believed that an expansive capitalist market economy had eliminated the final elements of class conflict...In their eyes, a society that had achieved industrial efficiency and created a mass consumer market required a history and a social science adequate to the realities of a modern world.[6]

Lost in the postwar consensus was the experience of those who did not fit the norm—those who resisted the progressive processes that characterized the overall experience of people in the past. Unassimilated immigrants, the working class, and women were left without a voice through which to express their historical importance. In writing about the history of the nineteenth and twentieth century, historians often speak of "transitions" and "revolutions", a way of characterizing historical change that necessarily privileges one aspect of society over another—the roles of technology and capitalism in industrialization, or the role of infrastructure development and settlement processes in the push of civilization. Those who led or took part in the transition are given the most attention. Those who had views of the future in contrast with the overall transition are less important. Transitional concepts dichotomize historical eras in that they posit two mutually exclusive modes of existence at polar ends of a spectrum, and then plot the life course of an individual or society along a time-line from one pole to the other.

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[5] Georg G. Iggers, "The Professionalization of Historical Studies and the Guiding Assumptions of Modern Historical Thought," in Lloyd Kramer and Sara Maza, eds., *A Companion to Western Historical Thought* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 233.

[6] Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), p. 43.

As a way of elucidating this notion of transition, let us make a comparison between it, and the similar notion of a shift. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* a transition is:

> A passing or passage from one condition, action, or (rarely) place, to another; change...a passage in thought, speech, or writing from one subject to another...the passage from an earlier to a later stage of development or formation...change from an earlier style to a later; a style of intermediate or mixed character...the historical passage of language from one well-defined stage to another...[and] as transition area, belt, form, period, point, region, species, stage, state, zone, [etc.]...[7]

These definitions imply a purity of condition at each end of the transitional spectrum. While these may exist as potential Weberian ideal types, they do not usually take concrete form in reality. In addition, one must know of both ideal types before one can posit the existence of a transitional period. It is problematic to attempt to write history which makes "ordinary people the subject of history on their own terms,"[8] while conceptualizing that history in terms of transitions whose outcomes those people could not know.

A more effective way to conceptualize the experiences of people in the past is to use the language of shifts as opposed to transitions. Again, the *OED* provides us with several definitions of shift that could be used in conceptualizing historical experience:

> A movement to do something, a beginning...an expedient, an ingenious device for effecting some purpose...faculty of contrivance, resourcefulness...manner of livelihood...a fraudulent or evasive device, a stratagem; a piece of sophistry, an evasion, subterfuge...an expedient necessitated by stress of circumstances; a forced measure...to make efforts, bestir oneself, try all means...to attain one's end by contrivance or effort; to succeed; to manage to do something...change, substitution, succession...[9]

Conceptualizing history in terms of shifts instead of transitions allows for greater freedom to write history on terms dictated by the subject. In this sense, settlers in the "backwoods" of the North America were not caught up in transitions from tradition to
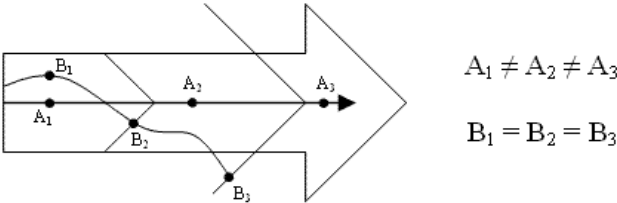
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[7] "Transition," *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, accessed July 3, 2009.
[8] Sigurdur G. Magnússon, "'The Singularization of Social History': Social History and Microhistory within the Postmodern State of Knowledge," *Journal of Social History* 36.3 (2003), p. 701.
[9] "Shift," *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, accessed July 3, 2009.

modernity. They were not carried along unwittingly by the vast processes that shaped the country as a whole. Rather, they pursued their livelihood through rational assessment of needs and opportunities, within a vernacular context not necessarily based on national- or international-scale processes. They were involved in, "a movement to do something," and used whatever means at their disposal to, "attain [this] end by contrivance or effort." The difference between societies in transition over time and societies shifting in time is expressed graphically in Figures 1 and 2 below, where the block arrow represents time, the small arrows show the trajectories of particular societies, and the letters indicate the location of a society at a particular point along that trajectory. In Figure 1, the process and trajectory of the transition is unavoidable. This is

Figure 1 – Societies in Transition *over* Time

$$A_1 \neq A_2 \neq A_3$$

$$B_1 = B_2 = B_3$$

Figure 2 – Societies Shifting *in* Time

$$A_1 = A_2 = A_3$$

$$B_1 = B_2 = B_3$$
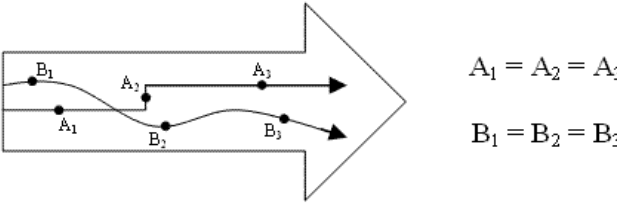
the case with society B, which finds itself on the margins of the grand narrative (or not included at all), whereas the relationship between societies A_1 and A_3 is linear and straight and a new society emerges after each successive transition whose thresholds are represented by the thin arrows. In Figure 2, however, the trajectory of each society depends on circumstance and rational choice based on particular variables. The relationship between A_1 and A_3 is linear, but not straight. Society B follows its own path, which may or may not intersect with that of society A, however, it cannot be seen as "backward" or "other" since it is very much at the center of its own world.

Modernization is one way to characterize the evolution or development of a society from an earlier time to a more recent time.[10] The concepts "traditional" and "modern" in this paradigm tend to, "refer to social structures that are radically different from each other."[11] However, we should be cautious in taking this so far as to say—as Harold Gould does—that they are, "mutually exclusive."[12] He argues that:

> Changes in social systems of the order which evoke polar concepts, like "traditional" and "modern", are evolutionary in nature. That is, they presuppose basic technological and associated demographic, economic, political and other institutional transformations which literally mean the elimination of certain social structures or systems of social relationships because they are incompatible with the emergent level of socio-cultural integration.[13]

Social structures of different periods are not necessarily interchangeable. However, they do have points of comparison and similarity. Modernization in its extreme forms can be either an incoherent conglomeration of theories of change from past to present or a catchall phrase denoting the idea that, "as human and social behaviours have neared the present they [have] become more modern and that various aspects of the human experience [have also] become more modern."[14] These definitions are innocuous—the real danger is in modernization itself becoming a statement of causality:

> Thus-and-such happened because *society* modernized – whereas [modernization] is really, again, a set of descriptive categories, organizing experience into some coherent patterns. And of course some early formulators of the concept proper (though not the actual intellectual forerunners, notably Max Weber) were naively American, assuming that modernization is good and that the concept provides a checklist that in fact describes whether a non-Western society is becoming more Western or not.[15]

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[10] See for example, Myron Weiner, ed., *Modernization: The Dynamics of Growth* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), Richard D. Brown, *Modernization: The Transformation of American Life, 1600-1865* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), and, more recently and in a Canadian context, Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

[11] Harold A. Gould, "Is the Modernity-Tradition Model All Bad?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 5.29/31 (1970), p. 1171.

[12] Gould, "Is the Modernity-Tradition Model All Bad?" p. 1171.

[13] Gould, p. 1175.

[14] Peter N. Stearns, "Modernization and Social History," *Journal of Social History* 14.2 (1980), p. 189.

[15] Stearns, "Modernization and Social History," p. 189.

Though useful in conceptualizing abstract developments over long periods of time, modernization as such does not capture the individuality of particular experiences of people, families or communities. Social geographer Steven M. Schnell provides us with an example of, "the changing nature of the narratives of ethnicity and place-based identity that the residents of Lindsborg have used to create a place for themselves in American society."[16] Tradition and modernity here are not static states between transitional phases since the concepts themselves are continually in flux. Characterizing the situation as a movement from one to the other does not make sense. Some recent contributions to Canadian social history offer new insight on the notion of transition as a means of understanding history from the point of view of ordinary people. In *Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists* Béatrice Craig reconsiders the place of one local economy within larger North American and trans-Atlantic contexts. In opposition to export-oriented models of economic growth which dominate the historiography of nineteenth century North America Craig explores the, "concrete exchange networks and participants agency and choices."[17] She resists the characterization of farmers between self-sufficiency and commercialism as "transition-types" and instead suggests that:

> People stumbled towards modern capitalism trying to solve the concrete, mundane problems of everyday life, from putting a roof over their head and food on their plate, to raising their children, improving their quality of life, supporting their pastor, or ensuring the security of their old age. Capitalism was neither the inevitable end of history, as economists tend to present it, nor a predefined external force that imposed itself on the North American countryside, as some American social historians describe it.[18]

The agency of individual actors and the unpredictability of the circumstances they faced are emphasized in telling the story of one township on the frontier of settlement in 1871 Canada.

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[16] Steven M. Schnell, "Creating Narratives of Place and Identity in 'Little Sweden, U.S.A,'" *Geographical Review* 93.1 (2003), p. 1.

[17] Béatrice Craig, *Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists: The Rise of a Market Culture in Eastern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 4.

[18] Craig, *Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists*, p. 13.

Census Data and the Microstudy Approach to Social History

Canadian social historians have dispelled many myths about how our ancestors lived through the careful and systematic analysis of such routinely generated sources as census data. In seeking to understand mainstream society, they sometimes obscured happenings at the community and household levels, especially in remote corners of society. A microstudy approach to social history, also using census data, will help to reveal the diversity of life experiences in the past, and in doing so, provide an opportunity to question and rethink such notions as modernization, industrialization, and civilization in the context of Canadian social history, and social history in general. The microstudy undertaken in this essay is based on the convergence of an apparently idyllic society—in terms of the image disseminated by such publications as *Picturesque Canada*—in a relatively sparsely populated frontier location on the cusp of major socio-economic change, with the mapping and organization of that area, and with the conducting of the first census of Canada after Confederation.

Census-based studies often confront difficulties associated with the reliability of their data. In his study of the making of Canadian censuses in the mid-nineteenth century, sociologist Bruce Curtis takes a Foucauldian approach to the subject:

> A critical scrutiny of the making up of a population through the census is of central importance to a great many historical and socio-scientific debates and investigations. Census making involves identifying political subjects and centralizing knowledge. It entails the grouping of subjects together to form a 'population' whose elements may then be selectively disaggregated and made the objects of social policy and projects. As a practice that creates social equivalencies, census making is further bound up with the formation of states.[19]

Curtis' analysis sheds important light on earlier Canadian social histories which used the census as their primary source base such as Michael Katz' study of industrializing Hamilton.

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[19] Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840-1875* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 3.

The census cannot be viewed as an objective window onto the past, since its implementation was intimately tied up with political and ideological interests of the time. In addition to this, problems to do with accuracy of enumeration, under- and over-enumeration in certain areas, bad habits of the enumerators themselves, and the difficulty in reading and interpreting sometimes illegible manuscripts, are well documented.[20] Nevertheless, even if it is a tinted window, the census remains an invaluable source for social historians interested in the lives of ordinary Canadians, as many important studies have shown.[21]

Historians using census data as their main source tend to focus on structures and processes and feature ordinary people caught up in social and economic transitions which are largely out of their control and which in many ways determine their destinies. They are mostly centered on urban locations such as Montreal, Toronto, and Hamilton—as such places are often considered as close to representative of a particular theme (such as industrialization, modernization, etc.) of interest as one might manage—and often give only a cursory glance to what is happening in areas outside the mainstream. As a methodology, the search for and elucidation of such structures and processes at a macro level can lead to a privileging of the large-scale over the small, of the transition itself over the everyday experience of change and continuity, and of the grand over the local narrative. Donald Akenson's 1984 study of Irish immigrants in Ontario asserts that the key point of a rural microstudy, "is not that the specific

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[20] See for example Margo J. Anderson, *The American Census: A Social History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988) and the appendices to Donald H. Akenson's *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984).

[21] See for example David Gagan, *Hopeful Travellers*, Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), Robert B. Kristofferson, *Craft Capitalism: Craftworkers and Early Industrialization in Hamilton, Ontario, 1840-1872* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) and Lisa Dillon, *The Shady Side of Fifty: Age and Old Age in Late Victorian Canada and the United States* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008).

community being studied is of great importance in itself but that a thorough case-study permits examination of a fundamental historical process...with the detail provided by an electron microscope for living organisms."[22]   Broadly speaking, Brudenell will probably never be of great importance to most people. However, conceiving of its existence in terms of a case-study of fundamental historical processes might ignore many interesting stories about the people who settled there.   The significance of individual experiences and circumstances need to be given as much attention as the overall narrative.

Local histories offer a contrast to academic histories, and scrutiny of these sources can help to indentify narrative strains, popular (mis)conceptions, and keen observations.[23] Many stories of Brudenell focus on its character as a nineteenth century "boom town" which rose and fell—both in population and in economic importance—with the uncertainties of the timber trade. Marilyn Miller, in the employ of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation in the 1970s, studied the Opeongo Line—part of a nineteenth-century government infrastructure and settlement project—as a potential "historical resource." She urged its preservation so that it could be put on display for public consumption and be enjoyed by future generations.[24] Within this narrative, Brudenell rose as a centre of trade, supply, and entertainment with the growth of the timber trade in the Upper Ottawa Valley, which served markets at Ottawa and

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[22] Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario*, p. 4.
[23] See for example Bernadette Burbage, *Early Families: Our Lady of the Angels Parish, Brudenell, Ontario, 1858-2008* (Renfrew: Renfrew Printing, 2008), Larry D. Cotton, *Whiskey and Wickedness No. 4: Renfrew County, Ontario, 1825-1900* (Lanark: Larry D. Cotton and Associates, 2008), Joan Finnigan, *The Story of a Canadian Colonization Road: Life Along the Opeongo Line* (Canada: Penumbra Press, 2004), and Marilyn Miller, *Straight Lines in Curved Space: Colonization Roads in Eastern Ontario* (Ottawa: Ministry of Culture and Recreation: Historical Planning and Research Branch, 1978).
[24] Miller, *Straight Lines in Curved Space*, and "The Opeongo Road: A Unique Historical Resource," in Vrenia Ivonoffski and Sandra Campbell, eds., *Exploring Our Heritage: The Ottawa Valley Experience: Proceedings* (Arnprior: Arnprior and District Historical Society, 1980).

Québec City. Map 1 shows colonization roads built in the nineteenth century alongside modern routes. These roads were part of a network commissioned by the Crown Lands department, which along with a free land grant policy, was used to encourage settlement in areas of the Ottawa-Huron Tract.[25] Settlement in Brudenell began as part of this program,

Map 1 – Colonization Roads in Eastern Ontario
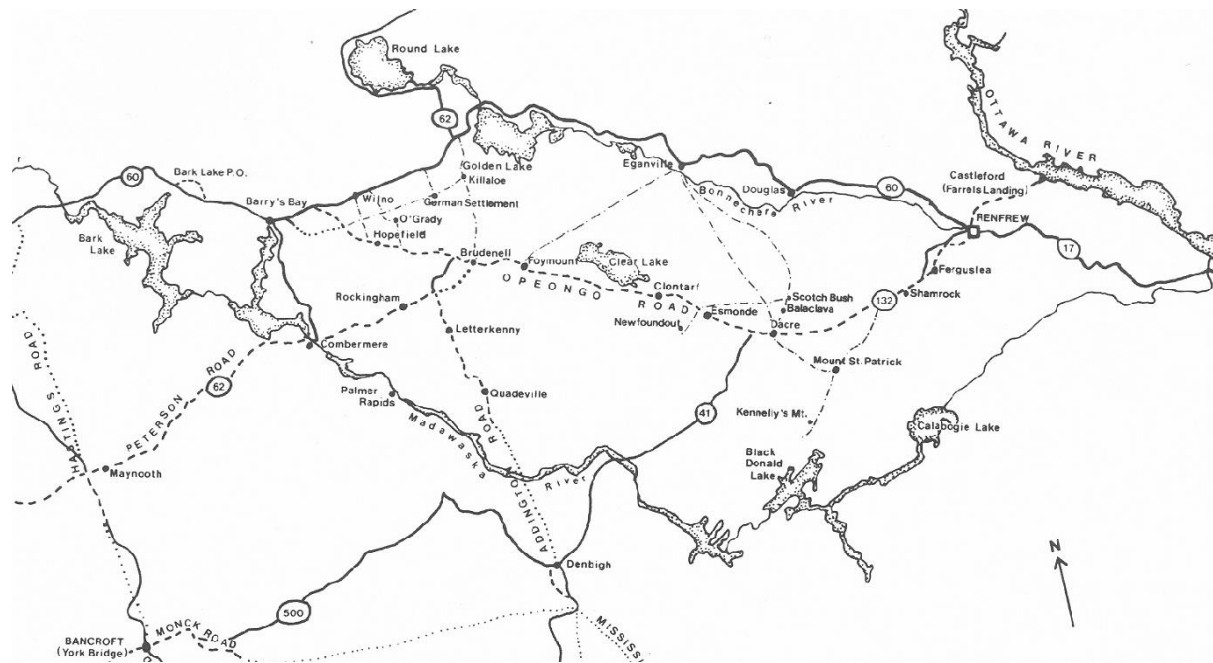
Source: Marilyn Miller, *Straight Lines*, p. 5.

and its economic development was associated with the extraction of timber and sawlogs and with the establishment of farms to supply the industry.

With the building of the Ottawa, Arnprior and Parry Sound railway by "lumber baron" J.R. Booth (completed in 1896), loggers gained a much more efficient access route into the forest resources of what is today Algonquin Park, and the Opeongo Road diminished in importance as a thoroughfare for shantymen and settlers. Brudenell village—along with

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[25] Helen E. Parson, "The Colonization of the Southern Canadian Shield in Ontario: The Hastings Road," *Ontario History* 79.3 (1987), p. 266.

many other villages along the colonization road—thus declined to the point where it became a "ghost town" devoid of economic and social activity and wasting away forgotten in the wilderness. This characterization led to the development of the popular notion that Brudenell was a relic of an old, rural frontier way of life—somehow trapped in the past—that could be explored by eager adventurers and tourists seeking an escape from their modern urban lifestyles.[26] Websites for local tourist organizations and businesses advertise the area as home to spectacular scenery and beaches, but also to ghost towns and a (not so secret) hideout of Chicago mobster Al Capone—that is supposed to exist in the hills south of Rockingham. They tell of the attempts of Irish, Polish, and German immigrants to make a living through farming the sandy soils of the area and meeting the demand for produce of the omnipresent timber economy. In doing so, they turn history into a commodity to be packaged and sold. Automobilers, hikers, cyclists, canoeists, and geocachers now scour the landscape in search of the lost vestiges of a once thriving community.

While it is true that some communities along the road were completely abandoned after the initial rush of settlers, such as the settlement of Newfoundout, this was not the case with Brudenell, which continues to be an active, albeit small, community. The racetrack and the taverns are gone, and with them the boisterous and blustery activities of the shantymen, scam artists, gamblers and prostitutes who apparently graced the few streets of this little village with their presence. Modernization (especially the railroad) is supposed to have been the ruin of Brudenell. Yet life goes on, and a community still exists, which has

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[26] See for example, Ron Brown, *Ghost Towns of Ontario: Volume 1: Southern Ontario* (Langley, B.C.: Stagecoach, 1978) and Tobi McIntyre, "Standing Legacy: Ghost Towns of the Ottawa Valley," *Canadian Geographic Magazine Online* (2008) which mention Brudenell as a ghost town.

been defined in large part by a measure of continuity, stability, and communal belonging through church and family life over the last 150 years.[27]

Sigurdur Magnússon argues that the institutionalization of social history in the twenty-first century has had the consequence of encouraging a more rigid definition of what constitutes "good" social history, while at the same time the demand for socio-historical knowledge has led to a boon in several areas, for example, the heritage industry.[28] This helps to explain the divide between popular history and academic history. In the Upper Ottawa Valley, an area of Ontario which saw a dramatic rise and fall of settlement and economic importance from the early nineteenth century up to the mid-twentieth, the heritage industry today is thriving. Local artists and historians seek to tell the story of their past through murals, music and radio, plays, and local histories.[29] However, these local histories and cultural productions tend to romanticize the past and the lives of their forebears by speaking of the immense hardships experienced and the endurance and piety required to "see it through". Within the academic mainstream, the Upper Ottawa Valley is usually viewed as an important part of the trans-Atlantic timber economy during the period of economic and social growth during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[30] Most social histories of the region focus on the pioneer farm or the lumber shanty. The fact that

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[27] See Burbage, *Early Families: Our Lady of the Angels Parish, Brudenell, Ontario.*

[28] Sigurdur G. Magnússon, "Social History as 'Sites of Memory'? The Institutionalization of History: Microhistory and the Grand Narrative," *Journal of Social History* 39.3 (2006), p. 892-3.

[29] See for example, Pembroke Heritage Murals Project: http://www.pembrokeontario.com/content/visiting_here /heritage_murals/, Valley Heritage Radio: http://www.valleyheritageradio.ca/news.php, and Stone Fence Theatre: http://www.stonefence.ca/ Also Joan Finnigan, *Life Along the Opeongo Line: The Story of a Canadian Colonization Road* (Manotick: Penumbra Press, 2004), Brenda Lee-Whiting, *Harvest of Stones: The German Settlement in Renfrew County* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985) and Clyde C. Kennedy, *The Upper Ottawa Valley: A Glimpse of History* (Pembroke: Renfrew County Council, 1970).

[30] See for example, H.V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines, and Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

development in the region was short-lived and that today the area is still sparsely populated has meant that the history of those peoples who experienced this dramatic rise and fall has been relegated to the realms of heritage industry and romantic myth. An example of this again is the characterization of such villages as Brudenell as "ghost towns", a characterization which local residents would vehemently reject.[31]

The Upper Ottawa Valley was exploited for its timber and lumber resources and when it became evident that it could never support permanent agricultural settlement such as that which existed in southern Ontario, government interest in settlement moved on to the vast prairies of the Canadian west. In fact, it was not because of the absolute inability of the area to support permanent settlement that interest declined, but of the relative nature of that inability in light of the seemingly limitless potential of the prairies once they were opened up for settlement through the building of the Canadian Pacific Railroad and then settled through vigorous immigration programmes. Even though roads and railways passed through the region, it remained remote because of its distance from major urban centres and cultures. The policy of encouraging permanent agricultural settlement on the Shield then seemed less of a priority to a national government dealing with the migration of rural Canadians to the United States. Images of life in the lumber camps became the dominant motif concerning the social history of the Upper Ottawa Valley. Yet, most people did not live in lumber camps. If they were living in the camps for a portion of the year, this means that they were not living in those camps for the rest of the year. Rather than relying on the duality of the pioneer farmers and the shantymen, a more thorough characterization of the residents needs to be made.

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[31] See Brown, *Ghost Towns of Ontario*, and McIntyre, "Standing Legacy." For a rejection of this characterization see Burbage, *Early Families*.

Methodology

The availability of nineteenth century township survey maps and census returns, generated by the routine planning, settlement, and governance of much of the Canadian territory, allows for telling myriad stories of ordinary and extraordinary experiences of settlement in Confederation-era Canada. Nominal census data allow for recreating family structures and household compositions. Together with the agricultural schedules we are able to imagine a detailed picture of life on one part of the Canadian settlement frontier. By utilizing address data from the census along with contemporary maps, one can visualize entire communities or townships at crucial points in their history while also bringing to light the stories of those settlers who did not leave behind letters, journals, or account books.[32] It was a crucial point for the country because in 1871 the first census of the newly formed confederation was taken, while it was crucial for Brudenell because the area was experiencing a period of growth.
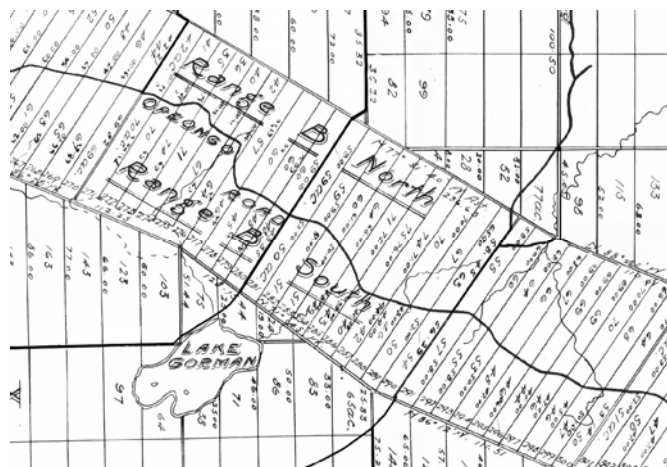
The 1871 census, "provides a unique perspective on an era of fundamental change," in regards to Confederation, the spread of commercial farming, railways, and industrial development.[33] Brudenell is an interesting case also—though similar cases also exist elsewhere on the Canadian Shield—because of the supposedly artificial nature of agricultural settlement along the government initiated colonization roads built during mid-century and populated through the offering of free grants of 50-acre lots along the road. The configuration shown in Map 2 is comparable to other townships through which the colonization roads were built.

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[32] A recent presentation by Gordon Darroch at the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, on the value of census data for research into the lives of "ordinary" Canadians echoes this point: Gordon Darroch, "The Canadian Century Research Infrastructure Microdata Series: Samples and Structure, " Unpublished Conference Paper, 2009.

[33] Gordon Darroch and Lee Soltow, *Property and Inequality in Victorian Ontario: Structural Patterns and Cultural Communities in the 1871 Census* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 13

It is my intent to show how one might utilize the data available in the census to its

utmost. This means that a great deal of time was spent transcribing, sorting, and analyzing the data from 1871, with an effort made—though less vigorous—to consult other primary sources. In many microstudies, it is the objective of the researcher to accumulate as much

Map 2 – Excerpt from H. Wood's 1857 survey map showing location of lots along the Opeongo Road (Roads are not highlighted in original version)

information from as many sources as possible and to bring them to bear on a certain time and location.[34] However, such studies tend to use the census to fill in gaps missing in the other documents, while this study seeks to experiment with the notion that much more can actually be gleaned from these reports than has been attempted to date. Thus it was undertaken to focus almost exclusively on the 1871 census manuscripts, supplemented by other readily available supporting documents, to see to what extent the census may be utilized effectively (or not).[35]

My main source is a computerized database comprising 100% of the data available in the 1871 census of Brudenell. To this database was added more data from two publicly accessible websites, which allowed for linking persons in 1871 to the 1861 and 1881 censuses. In addition, I have used contemporary maps to explore the spatial organization and relationships

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[34] Suzanne Morton, *Ideal Surroundings: Gender and Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 5. See for example Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), Paul Voisey, *Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), and Bradbury, *Working Families*, Bruce S. Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach*. 2nd ed. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), and W.H. Graham, *Greenbank: Country Matters in 19th Century Ontario* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1988).
[35] These sources are listed in more detail below.

in the village and township of Brudenell. A survey map from 1857—and a hand-drawn map

from that same year (by the same author) which shows names on some of the lots—allow both for a simple understanding of the local geography, and for linkage of residents from 1871 to 1857. This compilation of primary sources was buttressed by an extensive reading of the secondary literature on settlement and forestry, colonization roads, census-making, agricultural, economic, social and ethnic history, record linkage, historical theory,

Map 3 – Brudenell Township and Surrounding Area in 1874
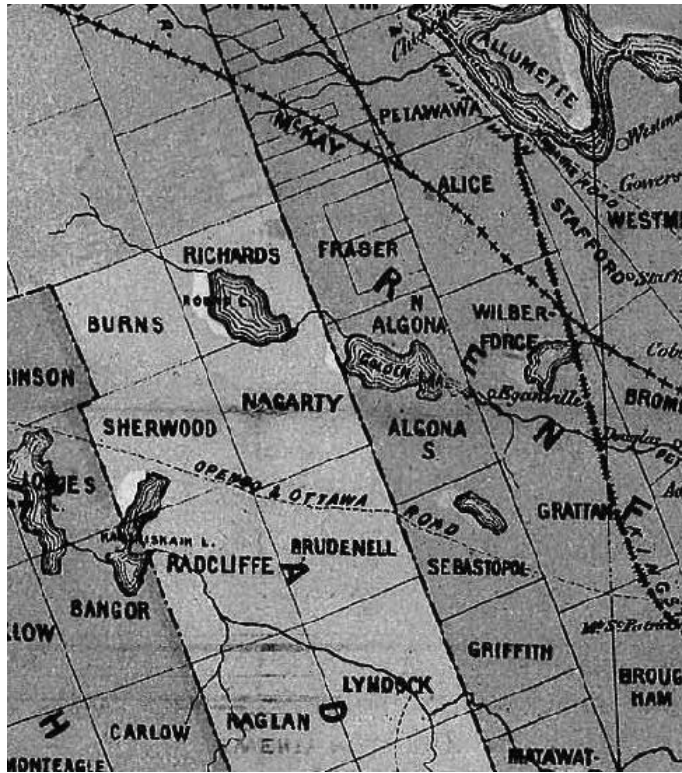
Source: Library and Archives Canada, *Map of Ontario (1874) NMC 021481, Section B8*. Available: <http://www.collections canada.gc.ca/ databases/1871-ontario/001016-130.02.20-e.html>.

numerous local histories and recent popular media accounts. It is worth taking a moment to reflect on the compilation and organization of the primary source mentioned above before moving on to a discussion of the concepts and tools used in the analysis of those sources.

Schedule 1 of the manuscript census of the enumerator's sub-division of Brudenell and Lyndoch, in the electoral district of Renfrew South, Province of Ontario, Canada, for 1871, contains 49 pages of nominal data on 967 residents. The vast majority of residents lived in the northern portion of the division in the township of Brudenell. Through the township passed the Ottawa and Opeongo Colonization Road, the main transportation artery for all economic activity between the Madawaska and Bonnechere Rivers (see Map 3). This

road was connected to the north-south running Hastings Colonization Road by the Peterson Junction Road (see p. 13, Map 1). The villages of Brudenell and Rockingham were clustered near this intersection. The Ottawa and Opeongo Road was opened for wagon traffic to the Brudenell border in 1856, a year after the first settlers arrived.[36] The townships of Brudenell and Lyndoch were incorporated into Renfrew County in 1860.[37] The borders of the townships did not change between 1857 and 1881, and the townships themselves remained part of the electoral district of Renfrew South for that entire time. The geographic area in question is consistent throughout the linkage exercise with the exception of the 1857 maps showing only Brudenell township. This is only of minor significance since most of the population lived in Brudenell, wherein local infrastructure was concentrated.

The 49 pages of data from schedule 1 were entered into a database by a researcher with the 1871 Census Project, run by Kris Inwood and Graeme Morton at the University of Guelph. The format is the same as that used by the project for its own databases and the information from Brudenell will be added to the main database that the project will seek to make available to other researchers in the future. All of the information entered was checked and corrected by myself, using the same checking and correcting methods prescribed by the guidelines of the 1871 Census Project.[38] To this base of nominal records was added all the data from the agricultural schedules of the census. Schedule 3 recorded information on institutions, real estate, vehicles and implements. Schedule 4 recorded the addresses of landholders and the productivity of their properties, including information on acres occupied, improved, and

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[36] Miller, *Straight Lines*, p. 178.
[37] Thomas A. Hillman, "A Statutory Chronology of Eastern Ontario," in Donald H. Akenson, ed., *Canadian Papers in Rural History Vol. IV* (Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1984), p. 327.
[38] As a researcher for the Census Project during the summer of 2008 I received thorough training in these methods and gained a significant amount of practical experience in their application.

planted and on production of a range of crops and plants. Schedule 5 recorded details on livestock, animal products, home-made fabrics, and furs. Schedule 7 provides us with information on forest products such as timber, sawlogs and firewood. And schedule 8 recorded information on shipping and fisheries. These schedules have all been linked to the nominal data, allowing for the detailed reconstruction of individual households and families and much of their economic activity. Once compiled, this database was transferred to a spreadsheet file, and the remaining data from schedule 2 (deaths) and schedule 6 (industry) was added.

Using this as the primary resource of the study, two online sources were used to link persons and families from the 1871 census to the 1881 and 1861 censuses to provide an indication of movement and continuity, of property acquisition and transmission strategies, and of the relative successes of individual families and farms. FamilySearch.org, offers an online database of 1881 nominal records which can be searched by name, and which allows for narrowing-down by geographic location. I used the names from the 1871 census to search for the same people in 1881, and then recorded any definite matches, failed matches, and uncertainties in a spreadsheet. The second website I used was produced by the Ontario Genealogical Society. The site provides an index to all the censuses of Canada. A volunteer has transcribed information on individuals and households from the census of 1861 into a file that can be read online. Again, names from 1871 were searched for on the site and any definite matches, failed matches, and uncertainties were recorded in the spreadsheet.

The completed database was sub-divided so that it is possible to gather evidence pertaining to particular socio-economic groups. One of those is all the heads of households who identified their occupation as farmer on the census (others might be origin, age, or sex, for example). This arrangement allows us to develop and understanding of the differences

between and variations within such groups. Another division that was made was the isolation of all those households located on the Opeongo Road. This was done so that we could ascertain the character of settlement on the government initiated road, such as the village of Brudenell, where free land grants were available, as opposed to settlements which grew up off the road, such as Rockingham, where a village was established based on the availability of a water supply for milling. Using this database, we can ask numerous questions about the socio-economic character of Brudenell and Lyndoch in 1871.

Some of the first questions normally asked by researchers of such a database are basic demographics. What was the ethnic make up of the region? What was the dominant religion? What were the occupations of the residents? What was the literacy rate? These are all valuable questions that can help to tell some interesting stories about any place. However, in this paper, I am interested in much more specific questions that attempt to dig deeper into the census to gather as much evidence as possible about the overall character of the farming economy and of the society as it existed in its relationships and vernacular environments. This means asking questions such as: What differentiated the families in the township? Were they all pioneer farmers working at subsisting on their land for part of the year, while producing surplus hay and oats to supply the shanty market, and then working in the lumber camps in the winter? Was there a difference in farm and household type and composition associated with family size or time of entry into the economy? Using such a database and the tools and concepts described below, we can gain a better understanding of the intricacies of the socio-economic character not just of Brudenell, but of any township where such data are available. We also get a better sense of the usefulness of the census—what it can and cannot tell us about Canadians in the past.

Manual Record Linkage

One of the primary goals of this project was to be able to assess movement and continuity in the frontier township—a potential indicator of success. This goal was facilitated in part by the linking of individuals and households from one document to another over a course of time. The 1871 census database remains the critical component of the research, but linking these individuals to the same location through the 1857 map, the 1861 census, and the 1881 census provides a wider perspective. By comparing the linkage matches to factors such as property ownership, production levels, livestock holdings, household size and composition, and marketable surpluses, one can consider whether a family might have left the township due to economic hardship, or whether there might have been some other reason—possibly one not be visible in the census.

One of the recurring elements of narratives of the history of the Upper Ottawa Valley is that when settlers cleared their lands and tried to farm, they found the soils were too sandy and rocky to be very productive, leading many of them to become dependent on the forests, and to eventually give up and leave for more promising opportunities elsewhere.[39] Others emphasize a story of continuity, wherein settlers stayed for generations afterward.[40] Through linkage, we can gather evidence to further our understanding of the reasons why people moved when and where they did. Linking various historical records into one central database has been a useful tool for historians for some time.[41] Since I.P. Fellegi and A.B. Sunter published their theory for record linkage in the *American Statistical Association*

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[39] Miller, Straight Lines, Brown, Ghost Towns of Ontario, and Brenda Lee-Whiting, "The Opeongo Road: An Early Colonization Scheme," *Canadian Geographic Journal* 74.3 (1967): 76-83.

[40] Burbage, *Early Families*.

[41] For example, Stephan Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

Journal in 1969, there has been much discussion of the methodology and practicality of record linkage in historical research.[42] Cross-disciplinary research into social structures and processes in the nineteenth-century—that grew in the 1970s and 1980s—spawned efforts by sociologists, economists, statisticians, and historians to articulate various methods of record linkage. This effort happened in conjunction with increasing levels of cooperation and sharing between disciplines, projects, and individual researchers.[43]

Linkage of records from one historical source to another is a valuable way of understanding social behaviour in contexts of life-course transitions as well as cross-sectional studies. Studies of household structure help to understand the evolution of family life and complexities of social behaviour with the life-course approach focusing on transitions and the cross-sectional approach addressing families in their particular household structures at a point in time.[44] While much of the theoretical literature focuses on computational methods of record linkage, there is still recognition of the value of manual linkage as a supplement to the automatic results. Gordon Darroch, in his study of 1861-1871 central Ontario, developed a methodology which was a combination of computer and manual linkage suited to census data.[45] For the purposes of my major research paper, a manual approach to record linkage is used because the number of individuals in question is relatively small and the goal is to become

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[42] Ivan P. Fellegi and Alan B. Sunter, "A Theory for Record Linkage," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 64.328 (1969), pp. 1183-1210.

[43] A recent example of this type of collaboration was the 2009 "RECORDLINK" workshop, organized by Kris Inwood and held at the University of Guelph, April 6-7, 2009.

[44] Lisa Dillon, "Researching Households in the French and English Canadian Context: Record Linkage of the 1871-1881 Canadian Censuses," unpublished conference paper presented at World History Conference, Sydney, 3-9 July 2005, Available through *Life Courses in Context*, <http://www.lifecoursesincontext.nl/sydney2005.html> (2005), p. 1.

[45] Gordon Darroch, "A Study of Census Manuscript Data for Central Ontario, 1861-1871: Reflections on a Project and on Historical Archives," *Histoire sociale / Social History* 21.42 (1988), p. 307.

as intimate as possible with the subjects in question. A manual approach also allows for the production of more detailed links. Even if there is a failed or an uncertain link, it is possible to explain why this might be the case and to reason out a plausible solution.

The 1857 map used in this exercise is a hand-drawn survey map, on which was written the names of occupiers of particular lots.[46] The drawback of this map is that it does not label any locations on the Opeongo Road. However, when linked to the 1871 census, it still gives us a quick indication of how long some settlers had been on their particular properties, or in the township at all. The names and locations from the map were compared with the 1871 names and locations. There are various ways in which the results of this linkage exercise can be formatted. An 'exact' match is a name and location from 1857 which is identical to an 1871 record. Out of 96 individual name/location combinations, there are 39 which have an exact match in the 1871 file (40%). Several of these matches belong to the same person owning more than one lot. In terms of the names alone a higher success rate is achieved: just fewer than 78% (49 out of 63) can be linked in some way to 1871. This still does not exhaust the possibilities for linkage between these two sources. If one takes into account weaker links, such as a similar name at a different location, or the name of a known descendant, the success rate is 86.5%.

For the 1861 and 1881 censuses, the method of linkage used was to begin with each family name in the 1871 database, and search for those names in the online sources. The 1881 database is sophisticated enough that it

Table 1 – Linkage of 1871 to 1861

	Total	% of 1871 Population
Negative	232	24.0%
Uncertain	424	43.8%
Positive	311	32.2%

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[46] H. Wood, *Brudenell* [Map] (Ottawa, 1857), Library and Archives Canada, G3463.R4:3B78 1857 .W66 H2.

allows for deviations in spelling (though some degree of adaptation is still required by the researcher), while the 1861 transcription needs exact spelling, requiring more effort by the researcher to hypothesize alternate spellings for family names. For example, Peyt= Payette=Pyett=Payet. In linking to 1861, the location data is also available, so we can tell if a person or family has either stayed at the same location, or moved elsewhere in the township, or has transferred property to a family member. Three types of linkage categories were used in this process. The

Table 2 – Linkage of 1871 to 1881

	Total	% of 1871 Population
Failed	432	44.7%
Ambiguous	106	11.0%
Successful	427	44.2%

first is a positive link, meaning that the person chosen in 1871 was for certain in the township in 1861 or 1881. If they were at the same location (for 1861 only), or if there was any other information of note (such as a different occupation, religion, etc., deaths, or new children), this was added to a comments section in the database. The second type of classification is one wherein no link was possible, but where this failure was not due to out-migration. It could mean that the person was too young to have been there in 1861, or had died by 1881. This type of link was also used to denote single women in 1871 that could not be linked to 1881; they could have married someone in the township, but a positive link, based primarily on given name, would be unlikely. Similarly, women who were married in 1871 to men who were single in 1861, would be difficult to match. The third type of link was a negative link, meaning that the person chosen in 1871 was not there in 1861 or in 1881. Linkage rates for these years are shown in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively. Linkage to 1861 produced more ambiguous links than linkage to 1881. At the same time, both exercises produced a significant number of positive links. 32% of people enumerated in 1871, had been there in 1861 as well, while only 24% had definitely not been there. This

indicates a significant amount of both natural growth and immigration during the ten year period. While some likely did leave Brudenell because of the hardships they faced, others who departed may have done so when they, "had little invested in the locale, and viewed leaving as a step to something better, not a last resort."[47]

Calculating Marketable Surpluses

One way to predict in general the relative success of a farming venture, based on the assumption that Brudenell residents were involved in a proto-capitalist economy, is to calculate the surplus or deficit of products produced on the farm relative to the

Table 3 – Adult Male Equivalent Consumption of Major Food Items

Commodity	Quantity Per Year
Wheat	7 bu.
Potatoes	14 bu.
Beef	62.5 lbs.
Pork	95 lbs.
Mutton	20 lbs.
Butter	52 lbs.

consumption needs of the family. Also, by performing this calculation, one can make a reasonable estimate as to the needs of the family, and as to the available assets which could be converted to cash, or utilized within a local system of exchange. My calculations for estimating marketable surpluses for Brudenell are based on those performed by Marvin McInnis in his study of farming in Upper Canada in the 1861 census. The first step is compiling all the data needed for the calculation. This information is readily available in the database and is already linked to all the

Table 4 – Food Consumption by Sex and Age as a Proportion of the Consumption of Adult Males

Age Class	Males	Females
<15 and >59 years	0.6	0.6
15-59 years	1.0	0.8

available census data. With this format, one can interpret the results with easy reference to household size, age of family members, farm size, location, or whatever other variable deemed important in telling a story about a particular family, or about the general

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[47] Wilson, *Tenants in Time*, p. 213.

population. Once the data is in place in the spreadsheet, it is fairly simple to input the necessary formula for calculating marketable surpluses. Tables 3 and 4 show the consumption estimates used, which have been derived from McInnis' method and adapted to this database.[48] Indicators used in this exercise are wheat, potatoes, beef, pork, mutton, butter, and firewood. The results are tabulated on a household-by-household basis so that we can check back to the specific household characteristics to seek an explanation for the result.

Production values for each household were calculated using census data, and from this was subtracted a consumption estimate made using McInnis' formula, which produced a

Table 5 – Marketable Surpluses in Brudenell, 1871

	Total	Mean per Household
Wheat (bu.)	1246.8	8.1
Potatoes (bu.)	16643.6	108.1
Beef (lbs.)	55212.5	358.5
Pork (lbs.)	-9377.0	-60.9
Mutton (lbs.)	8098.0	52.6
Butter (lbs.)	-16217.2	-105.3
Firewood (cd.)	-212.0	-1.4

surplus or deficit value for each individual household. As a whole, the township did not produce much in the way of surpluses. Table 5 shows the total surplus or deficit of each product, and the average per household. As we can see from this table, Brudenell had only minor surpluses and minor deficits of the various farm products. Table 6 shows the number of adult males that could be fed for a year based on the estimates in Table 5. One way to explain these numbers would be that the settlers simply ate more beef and mutton than in other areas of the province, while eating less pork and butter. It is also possible, however, that pork and butter were

Table 6 – Marketable Surpluses Expressed as Annual Consumption Values per Adult Male

	# Adult Males Fed	
Product	Total	Per Household
Wheat	162.4	1.1
Potatoes	1224.5	8.0
Beef	847.4	5.5
Pork	-94.9	-0.6
Mutton	393.7	2.6
Butter	-313.8	-2.0

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[48] Marvin McInnis, "Marketable Surpluses in Ontario Farming, 1860," *Social Science History* 8.4 (Fall 1984), p. 94.

available for purchase, and that settlers bought what they could afford rather than produce it themselves. Estimates of marketable surpluses on a household-by-household basis will be used later in the paper when we examine some examples of farms in Brudenell. This will help to better understand the relationship of individual households to their land. Many residents are enumerated as farmers even when an initial examination of the agricultural schedules would indicate that some of these could not have actually made a living off of their farm activities alone, but would have had to look elsewhere for gainful employment, possibly as a wage labourer in Brudenell or a neighbouring community, or as a worker in the lumber shanties. Given that the soils of the region were not as productive as those in southern Ontario, it is also likely that residents of Brudenell saw farming as a means of producing at a subsistence level, and utilizing others sources to supplement—or even to make up the majority—of their income. In addition to subsistence farming, they could add to their diet through hunting and fishing. 119 moose were shot and 67 nets of fish were caught in Brudenell in 1870. Hunting was common—twenty-six percent of households reported something in at least one of the columns related to game—but not all families hunted, and only ten farms. Though we can tell with a fair amount of certainty through the census what people were producing, we can only make reasonable suggestions about what and how they consumed.

A Typical Family Farm

In attempting to identify the character of a typical family farm in Brudenell, it is not the intention to identify a model to which all farms adhered without variation. Identifying a model that is flexible, and that allows for variation, is essential to the exercise. The notion is predicated on the establishment of a symbolic type, which most farms will come close to, but which will not be a normative prescription of how a farm should have looked. It is an

abstract type based on commonality and mean statistics. As such, none of the households we will encounter in our survey of Brudenell will have been exactly as the symbolic type supposes them to have been, but many of them will have been close, which allows us to categorize them as typical. The basic definition of a farm family used in this paper is a household wherein the household head is enumerated as a farmer and is linked to a plot of land in the township of at least 50 acres—which accounts for eighty percent of households— with the standard or most common acreage being between 100 and 200 acres. If we say that the typical farm family in Brudenell was six persons—mother and father and four children— living in a home of modest construction and farming a 100 acre plot of land on which they produced 50 bushels of wheat, 100 bushels of oats, 150 bushels of potatoes, 12 bundles of hay, 150 pounds of butter, 20 pounds of wool, and 20 cords of firewood, and on which they kept a horse or an ox, 2 cows, 4 steer, 8 sheep, and 4 pigs; then, if a seven person family had 2 horses and 120 pounds of butter, while the remaining indicators were also more or less on par with the typology, we will call them typical.

However, if a family was composed of only 3 persons—a father and two sons, for example—who owned 5 horses, and only grew hay and potatoes, then their inclination was more toward supplying the shanty market with labour and transportation than with establishing a family farm, and so they should be categorized differently. The people of Brudenell responded to myriad influences. The crown lands agent who advised them; their cultural and religious backgrounds; their social and political inclinations; their immediate physical environment; their economic status; their skills with the axe and the hoe; and, most importantly, the needs and desires of their family, were all factors which made up their particular experiences. These were not determinants, however. They were part of a non-

systematic dynamic of decision-making enacted in response to foreseeable and unforeseeable circumstances, crises, and opportunities, being sometimes within their control, and sometimes not. Thus any conception of typicality is fraught with contradictions and absurdities. To say that any household or family was typical is to standardize and demean their experience as "one of many" instead of seeing it for the unique "one in many" that it really was. With these difficulties in mind, we are going to go ahead and manufacture a typology of experiences anyway, for the sake of our own understanding of the past and for the sake of bringing out some of the broad similarities and differences among the individual families of Brudenell Township, which contributed to the development of local socio-economic relationships and environments. Using the terms "relationships" and "environments" is a conscious attempt at avoiding the use of terms such as "structures" and "systems" which in themselves posit determinisms that clash with the objective of stressing the agency of people in the past.

Table 7 – Frequency of Occupations Recorded in the Census of Brudenell, 1871	
Blacksmith	5
Carpenter	5
Clerk	3
Contractor	1
Cook	1
Farmer	211
Foreman	2
General Manager	1
Gentleman	1
Inn Keeper	2
Labourer	2
Miller	1
Minister	1
Priest	1
School Teacher	2
Servant	5
Shantyman	2
Shoe Maker	6
Store Keeper	3
Telegraph Operator	1
Weaver	4

The main socio-economic unit in Canada in the nineteenth century—as seen through the census—was the landed household. The census did record individuals, and in doing so accumulated vast amounts of information at the personal level. However, individuals always had a family or household number and could not exist otherwise, even if that family or household consisted of only one person. At the level of the enumerator's sub-division, society was broken down into households (with their respective "heads"), families, landowners, industries, and, finally, individuals. These were further

subjected to categorization in the nominal schedule based on sex, age, birthplace, religion, "origin" (itself a complex term), occupation, marital status, literacy, and infirmities (deaf/dumb, blind, and "unsound mind"). This compartmentalization, though admittedly rigid, still left room for individual expressions of family identity that can be extracted by the researcher who knows where to look and how to combine the various elements of the census tables. Table 7 shows the various occupations returned in the census. The 211 farmers included heads of households who owned their own land, sons who lived with their fathers while also owning their own land, and sons who were out of school, while still living at home and working on the family farm. The 1871 census did not record the relationship of individual members of the household to the household head, which at times makes it difficult to attain definite knowledge of such relationships. However, it is still possible to make a reasonable inference as to the relationship based on other individual and household characteristics, such as an identical surname or a different surname, combined with an occupation like "labourer". These types of relationships help to define how a typical or an atypical household would have looked at that time.

My analysis of Brudenell begins with a typical farm based on the agricultural schedules of the census; by linking them to the nominal schedules, one is able to discern general trends which allow us to envision the character of a typical family farm. In an effort to get closer to understanding the minority experience in contrast—and in complement—to the majority, we will then turn to an examination of several general associate-types of farms which one would encounter in Brudenell in 1871. Still not exhausting the possibilities of the data, we will add to these stories those of the unique and unusual—who come close to no discernable type. These complementary examples will be showcased in an interpretive walk up the Opeongo Line from

east to west. In taking this walk we will encounter the usual and

the unusual as we get a picture of the make-up of the local

economy and the character of the local community.

The typical family living in Brudenell was of Irish

origin and was Roman Catholic. These were nuclear families

consisting of a mother, a father, and four children. They were young, growing, families,

with the parents in their twenties or thirties and the children ranging from newborns to

those in their late teens. The average family size was 6 members, while eighty-four percent

of households had between 3 and 10 members (see Table 8); and of the 80 (out 155)

Table 8 – Household Size in Brudenell, 1871

Size of Household	# of Households
1-2	15
3-4	29
5-6	40
7-8	38
9-10	23
11+	10

Table 9 – Age of Residents of Brudenell by Birthplace, 1871

Age	Total	Ontario	Quebec	England	Germany	Ireland	Other
< 1	43	42	1	0	0	0	0
1 - 5	162	158	0	2	1	0	1
6 - 10	164	151	0	2	4	3	4
11 - 15	135	112	7	6	6	1	3
16 - 20	101	69	9	6	5	9	3
21 - 25	73	32	6	4	2	27	2
26 - 30	73	23	3	2	3	40	2
31 - 35	46	16	2	5	0	20	3
36 - 40	43	6	1	8	3	24	1
41 - 45	24	5	3	4	1	10	1
46 - 50	29	4	2	4	2	16	1
51 - 55	20	1	0	2	2	14	1
56 - 60	26	1	0	3	1	21	0
61 - 65	14	0	1	1	1	10	1
> 65	14	0	0	1	2	10	1
Total	967	620	35	50	33	205	24

households linked from 1871 to 1881, 52 had more children by 1881. The parents were

born in Europe, while the children were born in Ontario. Only 17 out of 369 children under

the age of 11 (4.6%), and 33 of 504 under the age of 16 (6.5%), were born outside of

Canada. These were not immigrants straight from the "old country" (see Table 9). They

were people who had come to Canada one or two decades beforehand and had eventually made their way up from the ports of Quebec City, Montreal, and Ottawa, to the "backwoods" of the Upper Ottawa Valley. The census does not tell us where else in Canada they lived before 1871. These families brought with them the skills and habits they had picked up along their way and utilized these in the making of moderately successful farms and of the beginnings of a thriving frontier community. Many of them can be traced to the 1861 census of Brudenell or to Wood's 1857 survey map; the majority of those who cannot be traced backward still had children born in Canada, suggesting that they had been in the country for several years. Ontario-born residents only begin to constitute a minority in the 21-25 age group and above, though in this cohort they remain the largest group, with Irish-born being the second largest. The older generations were more likely to have been born outside Canada, most likely in Ireland.

Schooling was important for these families and children as young as 5 could enter and stay until they were 19. It was more common, however, for children to enter school at age 6 and stay until they turned 14. Schoolhouses were located at crossroads and in central places where they could be accessed by the majority of township residents. In

Table 10 – School Attendance in Brudenell, 1871

Sex/Age	In School	Total	%
Females < 6	1	100	1%
Males < 6	4	105	4%
Females 6 - 14	86	144	60%
Males 6 - 14	82	130	63%
Females 15 - 17	12	37	32%
Males 15 - 17	4	28	14%
Females 17 - 19	3	29	10%
Males 17 - 19	2	24	8%

Brudenell in 1871 there were six schools listed on the census, which were attended by a majority of children from ages 6 to 14 (see Table 10). It was more common for young girls to continue in school past the age of 14. The young boys were needed on the farm and would have been better served by the work experience than they were in schools where they were

taught alongside other children of varying ages and skill levels. Life on the frontier was difficult, but not so difficult as to force families into turning young children into full-time workers and thus reducing their chances at receiving a proper education.

The farm was still largely a family effort. The typical farm family, though they may have hired temporary help, did not employ full-time labourers and occurrences of hired labourers living with families were extremely rare. Table 11 shows the breakdown of the workforce by household size. Most households did not have labourers who lived with

Table 11 – Workforce by Size of Household

Household Size	Average # in Household by Type			
	M15-59[a]	F15-59[b]	OCC[c]	BRD[d]
1-2	1.0	0.5	1.1	0.1
3-4	1.1	1.2	1.3	0.0
5-6	1.4	1.4	1.7	0.1
7-8	1.7	1.7	1.8	0.0
9-10	1.9	1.3	1.7	0.1
11+	2.2	2.5	2.3	0.3
Total	249	229	252	10
% of Population[d]	25.9	23.8	26.2	1.0

a. Males ages 15 – 59.
b. Females ages 15 – 59.
c. Members of the household with an enumerated occupation.
d. Members of the household with an enumerated occupation that have no
discernable familial relationship to the head of the household.
e. This does not include lumber shanties, so the number used in this calculation is 961,
instead of 967, which is the total population of the township.

them. In fact, only two people in the entire township give their occupation as "labourer". Even if one includes servants in the category of hired live-in labour, the number is still modest at seven (see Table 7). As one would assume, the larger households housed a greater proportion of the workforce. The typical household had three members that we would consider of working age. This included the father and mother and one child, while the oldest son—assuming he was over the age of thirteen and not in school—would also be

recorded as a "farmer" by the enumerator.[49] The relatively small size of the household workforce, combined with the lack of obvious wage labour meant that farm families performed most of the everyday duties themselves, while partaking in work bees for the larger projects such as raising barns and other outbuildings. Through such activities, "many individual families were able to acquire the extra labour, skills, and equipment necessary for capital improvements, so that profitable farming could proceed."[50]

The typical farm in Brudenell was medium sized—100 acres—and was owned by the family.[51] Tenancy in Brudenell was rare at this time, and other types of occupancy, such as an employee occupying and working land owned by someone else, were also uncommon.[52] If the main economic activity of the family was farming, then there was at least an 87% chance that they owned the land on which they based their livelihood (See Table 12). This was also the only land they owned within the dominion. The census asked three separate questions about land ownership and occupancy: (1) how much they owned throughout the Dominion; (2) how much land they occupied within the sub-district; and (3) whether they were owner, tenant or employee. The average ratio of land owned in the Dominion to land occupied in the township (by those giving their

Table 12 – Land Ownership

Owner	146
Tenant	1
Employee	3
Other*	17

*Denotes where either no information is given, or where the information given is illegible.

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[49] There are no persons in Brudenell with enumerated occupations that are also under the age of 14. There is only one instance of a teenager who is recorded as having an occupation and also being in school (SEX=M, AGE=19, OCCUPATION=FARMER).

[50] Catharine A. Wilson, "Reciprocal Works Bees and the Meaning of Neighbourhood," *Canadian Historical Review* 82.3 (Sept. 2001), p. 436.

[51] The "standard" farm size (acres occupied) used in McInnis' study of farming in 1860 Upper Canada is 70-169 acres: McInnis, "Marketable Surpluses in Ontario Farming, 1860," p. 98.

[52] The tenancy rate in Renfrew district in 1871 was .044, which was considerably lower than the provincial average of .153, according to William L. Marr, "Tenant vs. Owner Occupied Farms in York County, Ontario, 1871," in Donald H. Akenson, ed., *Canadian Papers in Rural History Vol. IV* (Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1984), p. 52.

status as "owner") was 1.02 while the most common ratio was 1.0, with 120 of the 146 landowners having this ratio.[53] Based on these numbers, we can conclude that a typical farm family in Brudenell in 1871 was either landless before they came to the area or they sold whatever land they had in order to raise capital to start a farm in Brudenell. The cost of land in Brudenell was different from other areas in the province. The 50 acre lots along the Opeongo road came free, but once cleared, settlers found that the soil was usually of poor quality. Either way, owning land, as opposed to renting, even if it was of poor quality in comparison, provided a measure of stability that would have been more difficult to come by in other areas of the province. If the land was even moderately productive it gave residents an incentive to stay where they were as opposed to moving. Owning land and other small property in 1871 Ontario was a central feature of family strategies.[54] In a township where 75% of farms were between 100 and 250 acres, owning a 100-acre plot of land put the typical farm family on par with most households and contributed to the egalitarian character of the township: it provided opportunities that were not available elsewhere in the province.

The physical structures on these typical 100 acre farms consisted of a single-family dwelling and at least two outbuildings, which were designated as "barns" by the census taker. Figure 3 shows a typical homestead on the Opeongo Road in 1871. It is difficult to be certain what type of dwelling the typical family lived in since the 1871 census takers did not record differences in house type. However, they did ask whether the family lived in a shanty (some form of "temporary" dwelling) or a permanent dwelling, as well as whether

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[53] Four landowners had ratios of less than 1.00, while three had ratios greater than 1.00. Nineteen landowners gave no answer to the question of total land owned in the Dominion.
[54] Darroch and Soltow, *Property and Inequality,* p. 13.

another structure was under construction at the time, or if there was another dwelling not in use. In Brudenell only a very small minority of people lived in shanties. In three out of four cases, the shanties recorded were lumber camps, the residents of which were not enumerated along with the rest of the township. In the one other instance a shanty was occupied by four of the seven children of William and Mildred Haryett, a family of English origin who operated a store on the road between Brudenell village and the neighbouring village of Rockingham to the southwest. The Haryetts were not newcomers to the region.

Though William, Mildred, and their two eldest daughters were born in England, the rest of the children—the oldest of which was 12—were born in Ontario. Wood's 1857 map of Brudenell indicates a property occupied by "W

Figure 3 – A Typical Homestead on the Opeongo Road in 1871

Source: Archives of Ontario. Reprinted in Miller, *Straight Lines*, p. 61.

Haryett" adjacent to the lot which is recorded under William's name on the 1871 census. With the growth of their family, the Haryetts resorted to the construction of a temporary dwelling while they worked up the capital to afford to build a larger house for everyone— or until the older children moved out. It is fair to say that most families lived in a relatively permanent dwelling of log or wooden construction.

In 1871, a typical farm of 100 acres had 30 acres of improved land, 10 of which were planted with crops. The gap between acres occupied and acres improved is indicative of the

frontier character of the township, since most farms in Ontario at this time would have had a much higher ratio of improved acres to occupied acres. The average ratio given in Marr's study of farm sizes in 1871 Ontario is .716 (95 acres occupied to 68 acres improved), whereas in Brudenell, the ratio was .203 (143 acres occupied to 29 acres improved).[55] A "small" farm, according to Marr, would have had 40 acres improved, while in Brudenell only 28% of farms had this much land improved by 1871. The amount of "improved" land included not only useable farmland, but also any land that had been measurably altered through clearing activities such as underbrushing, and also included the land on which the home and outbuildings stood and any roads built on the property.[56] The process of clearing and improving the land was one of the first tasks undertaken by the early families in the township, whether they arrived in the 1850s or later. This was a time-consuming and arduous task, which had to be done mostly by hand, using tools such as brush hooks, felling axes, and crosscut saws.[57] It would have taken even longer in Brudenell because of the sparse population. Population density was crucial in land development because of the potential human energy available.[58]

Aside from human energy, a typical farm family in Brudenell kept a number of draft animals. Each family kept at least one horse, which could be used to help with the heavier tasks such as skidding felled trees to areas where they could be burned to make ashes, cut and chopped for next year's firewood, or stored as logs before being transported to the local sawpit or sawmill.

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[55] Marr, "Did Farm Size Matter? An 1871 Case Study," in Donald H. Akenson, ed., *Canadian Papers in Rural History Vol. VI* (Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1988), p. 282.

[56] Canada, *Manual Containing "The Census Act," and Instructions to Officers Employed in the Taking of the First Census of Canada, 1871* (Ottawa: 1871), p. 29.

[57] Patterson, Clyde R. *Harvests Past: Domestic and Agricultural Hand Tools and Rural Life in the Ottawa Valley, 1860-1875* (Erin: Boston Mills Press, 1989), p. 87.

[58] H.W. Taylor, J. Clarke, and W.R. Wightman, "Contrasting Land Development Rates in Southern Ontario to 1891," in Donald H. Akenson, ed., *Canadian Papers in Rural History Vol. V* (Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1984), p. 71.

The ashes were sold to one of the seven potasheries in the township, while the logs could be taken to Daniel Copps' sawpit in Brudenell, or to John Watson's mill in Rockingham. The amount of land cleared by 1870, as reported in the census tables, in addition to the presence of permanent homes, gives us an indication of how long the typical settler had been living and working on the land. The necessity of getting this work done quickly, so that a viable farm could be developed, meant that early settlers often had to hire others to help them in the clearing process, providing a market for wage labour which, though not recorded on the census, would have been integral to the early development of local economic and social ties. In Upper Canada in 1839, the average rate of clearance per adult male was about 1 acre per year, with rates that ranged from 0.09 acres up to 6.9 acres.[59] Assuming an average of two adult males per farm (owner and son or hired labourer) and a clearance rate of 1 acre per adult male per year, it would have taken 15 years to improve an area of 30 acres, meaning that the typical Brudenell farm family in 1871 had been there since about 1856. This estimate fits seamlessly with the opening of the Opeongo Road through the township and with the granting of free 50-acre lots along it.[60]

The typical Brudenell farm was enough work for a family of six, who occasionally employed hired labour from elsewhere in the community. Of the 138 farmers who are recorded in the agricultural schedules, 34 did not report any acres planted. Of these 34, 2 recorded no agricultural products whatsoever, while 9 others produced only a small amount of potatoes, and the remainder reported varying amounts of wheat, potatoes, oats, and hay, most of which were well below the average for farms in the township (see Table 13). One

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[59] Peter A. Russell, "Forest into Farmland: Upper Canadian Clearing Rates, 1822-1839," *Agricultural History* 57.3 (1983), p. 334.

[60] The records of free land grants along the Opeongo Road for 1857 are available at the Archives of Ontario.

unusual number in this table is the amount of potatoes reported by those with no acres planted. Potatoes were one of the first crops farmers planted—they were a versatile crop and could be used for human or animal consumption. Acres planted is also a curious number.

Table 13 – Average Agricultural Output of Farmers Reporting No Acres Planted
Compared to Overall Average (Measured in bushels unless otherwise noted.)

	Acres Owned	Acres Improved	Acres Planted	Spring Wheat	Oats	Potatoes	Hay (tons)	All Other Crops	All Animals (Live or Killed)	Butter (lbs.)
1 or more	152.7	31.2	6.3	42.7	106.4	13.7	10.3	58.4	20.7	137.4
--	119.4	14.0	--	20.0	46.1	79.1	3.8	16.7	7.7	52.6

34 out of 138 farms reported no acres planted, yet many of these farms had upwards of 30 acres improved, and reported acres planted in wheat, potatoes, and hay. The consistent gap between reporting of acres improved and acres planted requires some explanation. Acres in hay were not included in the calculation of acres planted. A quick comparison of total acres reported in hay (1623) and acres planted (870) confirms this. The gap between acres improved and acres planted is closed significantly when acres in hay are added to acres planted, with a ratio of 0.58, as opposed to 0.20. However, this 42% of acres improved that are not planted is still significant. Most of these acres would have been used as pasture.

The typical farm family had two ploughs, a fanning mill, and sometimes a carriage, boat, or cart. They either brought these implements along with them when they moved to Brudenell, made them themselves, or procured them from one of the several blacksmiths or carpenters in the township. The ownership of such implements gave farmers a degree of independence and is an indicator of prosperity. The principal crops of the typical farm were spring wheat (2 acres, 50 bushels), oats (100 bushels), potatoes

(1.5 acres, 150 bushels), and 12 tons of hay. These provided a base sustenance for the family and the farm's stock of animals and any surplus could be sold at market or to the lumber camps in the area. In addition, the typical farm in Brudenell also produced two or three secondary crops which might include barley, rye, peas, or turnips. Whatever else they needed could be procured through local and regional markets and through local exchange.   Money may not have always changed hands because amounts could be cancelled out over a period of time, but this does not mean that the process was unsophisticated.[61] Many of the non-typical farms specialized in the production of other vegetables such as beans, carrots and beets, as well as operating gardens ranging in size from 1/4 or 1/2 of an acre in 14 instances, to up to 9 acres in one instance.

A typical farm in Brudenell kept a range of livestock: 2 cows, 4 steers, 8 sheep, and 4 pigs; and would have slaughtered about 1 steer, one sheep, and 2 pigs during the year. The animals slaughtered could be consumed on the farm or sold on the open market. Demand for these products was created by the lumber camps in the area and by the families who did not produce their own stock. The remaining animals were assets to the farmer as potentially marketable commodities, while they were also used in the production of dairy products and wool. The typical farm with two cows and eight sheep produced 150 lbs of butter and 20 lbs of wool. A family of six with this level of production would not have produced enough butter to meet their needs, while the wool was part of a local economic exchange between farmers and the several weavers in the area who did not farm and thus did not produce their own wool. There were two weavers' looms in the township, which

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[61] Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada 1784-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 146.

operated for 6-8 months of the year. These consumed 1470 pounds of yarn and produced 2620 yards of fabric worth a total of $1965. This is a low number which supports the argument that homespun fabrics only supplied a portion of the province's textiles, and is a further blow to the conception of frontier families as pursuing self-sufficiency.[62]

They attempted to take care of fuel for heating and cooking through the cutting of firewood. Each typical farm cut 20 cords of firewood a year, which would have been about enough to cover the needs of a six person family living in a poorly insulated home.[63] This supply would have been supplemented through exchange with those households who produced a surplus of firewood and with any supplies left over from the previous year. If it made sense for them to meet the need on their own—meaning their property supplied suitable trees in sufficient numbers and they had enough time and energy to complete the tasks of cutting, chopping, and drying their own firewood—then they would have done so. If this wasn't possible, they sought other means to meet their needs and compensated for this expenditure in equally rational ways. Such would have been the typical farm in Brudenell in 1871. 80% of the farms one would encounter in a reconnaissance of the area fit the general criteria outlined above. These farms made up 70% of the total population, and accounted for much of the economic activity in the region.

Examining the households that do not come close enough to this definition of typical—whose roles have been referenced in passing throughout the discussion of the above definition of typical—is also vital in establishing the character of the local farming

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[62] McCalla, *Planting the Province*, p. 100.
[63] McCalla estimates an annual per capita consumption of 3 cords of firewood. This is roughly equivalent to a six or seven member household. McCalla, *Planting the Province*, p. 230.

economy. These were the inn keepers, blacksmiths, store keepers, teachers, clergy, merchants, shoemakers, weavers, millers, carpenters, and employees of the forestry companies. They provided goods and services and an injection of cash into the economy. Rates of landownership among these were lower, and the people themselves were more transient than the farming population, yet they were integral to the character of the economy. In the following section of this paper, I provide examples of both typical and atypical households by narrating a walk along the Opeongo Line in Brudenell, from the eastern entrance to the township, to its merging with the western frontier.

A Walk Up the Opeongo Line

As one traveled west along the Opeongo Line and crossed the boundary from the neighbouring township of Sebastopol into Brudenell, there was little to mark the difference between the two municipalities. From the top of one of the many hills one could see that the terrain was rough and hilly, with a few visible patches of improved farmland.

The first family one would have met was that of Michael Sleep, a widower, 51 years of age, with his daughter Mary, 20, and his sons Peter, 18, and Edward, 16. Living in the same household was Michael's oldest son, John, 30, with his wife Annora, 20, and their own newborn baby daughter Catharine, born in June of the previous year. Michael, John, Peter, and Edward were farmers, and between the holdings of landowners Michael and John they occupied 225 acres of land on the south side of the Line in the northeast corner of the township. Theirs was a new farm—the Sleeps were not present in Brudenell in 1861—and did not produce much other than small amounts of barley, potatoes, hay. They kept five horses, giving them a substantial workforce that could be used in clearing the land and perhaps also as transportation to and from the lumber shanties. They had one cow, two steers, four sheep, and

two pigs, and had slaughtered two sheep and three pigs in the past year. John was a hunter and managed to shoot eleven moose in the past year, which would have supplemented both their diet and their income. It would be possible to treat the Sleeps either as one family or as two, but I prefer to look at them as a single unit. They lived in the same house, and being side by side, there is no reason to think the two farms were not operated as one. Michael and John Sleep were both born in Ireland, while the rest of the family was born in Ontario. John was still living in the township in 1881. By this time he had become head of his household and had five new children. Michael, Peter, and Edward had moved on by 1881, likely attracted by opportunities elsewhere. By establishing his family in Brudenell, Michael Sleep achieved something sought by many Ontarians in the nineteenth century. Though he and three of his sons moved on from Brudenell, he had helped his son John establish a livelihood based on land ownership and a modest farming operation.

Down the road from the Sleeps lived the Drohans, another Irish Catholic family. According to the census, the head of the family was the oldest son Robert. This was one of the larger families in the township, consisting of himself, his mother Mary, 46, and his eleven siblings. Robert, Mary, and the oldest brother, James, 22, were born in Ireland, while the rest of the family was born in Ontario. All the children between the ages of 6 and 16 were in school. There were three brothers—Robert, James, and John, 18—who identified themselves as farmers and who worked their 300 acre farm, which straddled the Opeongo Road and touched the northern end of Lake Lorwell. They had improved 125 acres and had 20 acres planted, making theirs one of the larger farms in the area and, with a diversity of crops, they had many options in terms of consumable and marketable products. They had a ½ acre garden which provided much in the way of food for the family. They had 12 acres in spring wheat,

producing 100 bushels. They produced 150 bushels of oats and utilized 40 acres of hay to produce food for their live stock of four horses, six cows, four steers, fifteen sheep and six pigs, in addition to the three cattle, six sheep, and seven pigs they slaughtered that year. They produced 60 pounds of wool and churned 400 pounds of butter. The Drohans produced modest surpluses of everything except butter. They were larger than most families, but their production was largely proportionate to their family size. The family was still there in 1881 and by this time Robert had moved into his own house, with his mother listed as head of the other household.

Michael Dolan, 60, was a weaver who lived two lots west from the Drohans. He owned a 100-acre plot of land on the south side of the road, while his son Thomas owned 100 acres on the north side. In 1871 these lots did not produce much in the way of farm products: 20 bushels of oats, 260 bushels of potatoes, and 21 tons of hay. Michael and wife Martha, 55, immigrated from Ireland before they had their six children, daughters Sarah, 18, and Bridget, 16, and sons Thomas, 24 (also a weaver), Patrick, 12, and Joseph, 10. His weaver's shop, which operated for six months of the year, was his primary occupation, and employed one other person, his oldest daughter Sarah. His shop consumed 350 pounds of yarn worth a total of $175 and produced 700 yards of cloth and flannel items worth a total of $525, which, minus inputs and a wage of $72 paid to Sarah, meant a gross profit of $278. It cannot be ascertained from the census schedules whether Dolan worked on commission, or whether he bought all of his raw materials outright. This is one interesting question that cannot be answered through the census.

According to local lore, the village of Brudenell was once called "Dooner's Corners" because of the concentration of Dooner families around intersection of the Opeongo Road and the Pelican Road (see Map 4). The Dooner family is a very interesting example of a farm

family in Brudenell that had many aspects in common with the typical family farm—if each unit were examined on its own—but who were too unique to be categorized as such. Depending on how one chooses to examine this family, it could be analyzed in a number of ways: as one family, as three households, or as nine individual farms. It consisted of three households, in which lived two generations of Dooners. The first household was that of James and Cathrine Dooner, ages 64 and 65 respectively, in which lived sons James, 30, John, 28, Bernard, 26, and Francis, 24—each of whom owned his own farm, and daughter Mary, 19. Everyone in this family can be linked to both 1861 and 1881, meaning they had by this time invested a great deal, and would continue to be involved in township life for at least another 10 years after. Between the five properties they occupied 627 acres of land and produced surpluses of potatoes, beef, pork, mutton, butter, and firewood.

The second Dooner family was that of John, 56, and Cathrine, 45, lived next door to the first Dooner family. Their family was larger, having 8 children, ages 13 to 28, two of whom owned their own farms, four of whom were farmers, and one who was a school teacher. They produced surpluses of wheat, potatoes, beef, mutton, and firewood. Farming activities were concentrated on the farm of the father, with the sons only reporting some oats and potatoes and reporting no livestock or slaughtered animals. This was one of the more diverse farms in the region, producing not only the typical crops, but also rye, peas, beets, and carrots. James' wife Cathrine died before the taking of the 1881 census, but again, all others in the family can be positively linked to both 1861 and 1881.

The third Dooner family lived just off the Opeongo Road. Bernard and Winefrid Dooner (52 and 50) had five children, all of whom were under 20 years old, with the youngest three in school. Bernard's farm was modest compared to his brothers', but he still

Map 4 – The village of Brudenell in 1871. The village was located at the intersection of the Ottawa and Opeongo Colonization Road and the Peterson Junction Road.
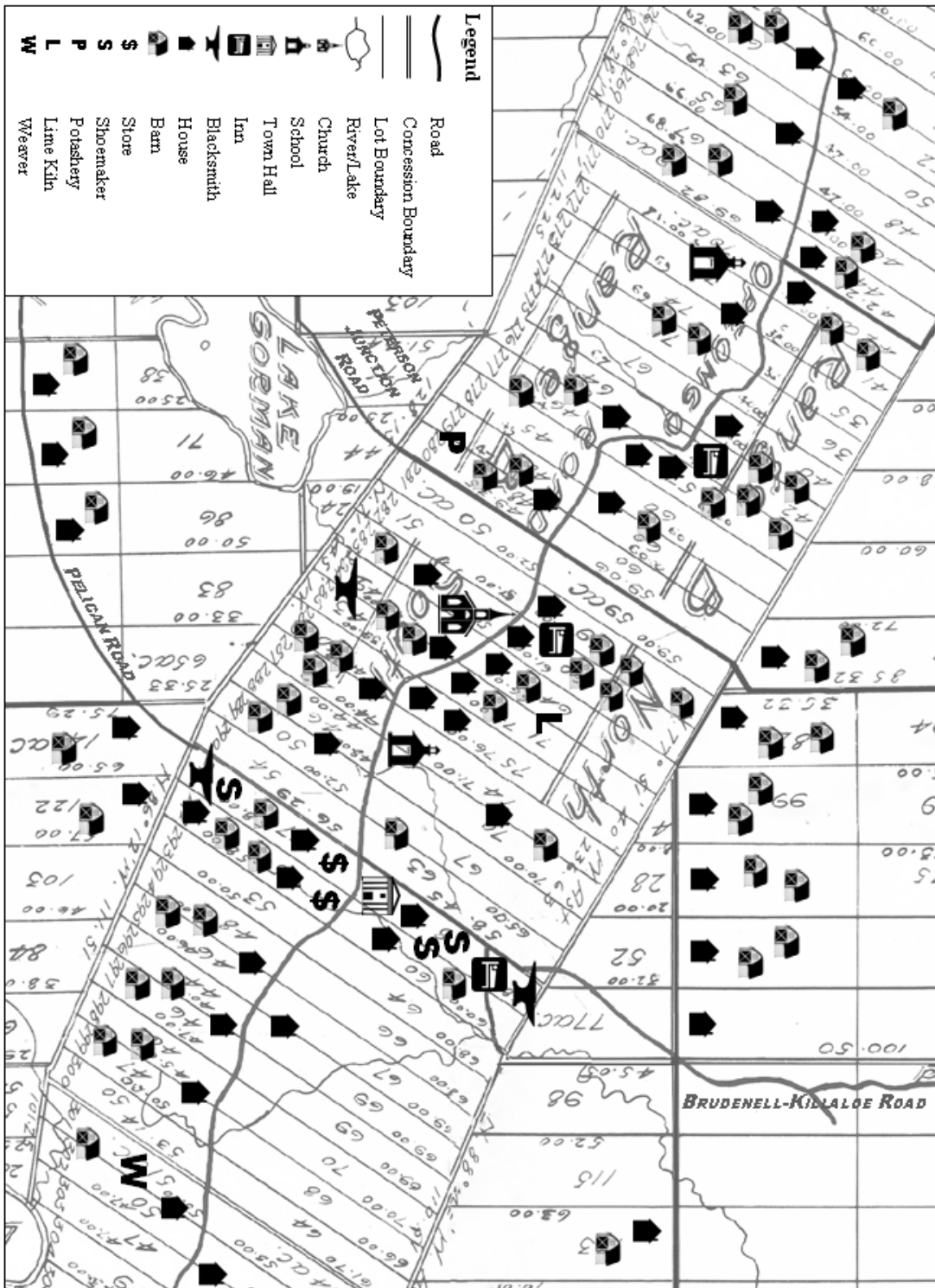
Source: H. Wood's 1857 map of Brudenell (see Appendix). Drawings are based on information from the real estate and agricultural schedules of the census.

managed to produce surpluses of some products. The family did not live in Brudenell in 1861, which explains this modesty; however, they were there in 1881, which indicates that they were able to farm profitably over those ten years.

So far in our walk up the Opeongo Line, we have passed a third of the way through the township of Brudenell and would now be coming into the village of Brudenell itself. Within the village were concentrated a number of commercial enterprises and social institutions. The most densely populated portion of the township is the area around the intersections of the Opeongo Road with the Brudenell-Killaloe Road, the Pelican Road, and the Peterson Junction Road. Located in this concentrated area were the town hall, the Catholic church, two schools, at least three inns or stopping places, three blacksmiths, three shoemakers, a weaver, a lime kiln, a potashery, and two stores. Trades people and merchants tended to occupy less land and their property was not normally utilized for agriculture. They were also less likely to still be living in the township in 1881. 198 people lived between lots 265 and 305 inclusive, which is 20% of the entire population of the division, and a density of 10 people per acre. Economic and social activities were concentrated in this area and in the village of Rockingham, just to the south of Brudenell on the Peterson Road, where the sawmill and grist mill were located as well as another school, store, telegraph office, tannery, blacksmith, and a Wesleyan church. The link between these two villages would have been well travelled as residents of Brudenell went to the mill and to send telegraphs in Rockingham, while people from Rockingham went to Brudenell to conduct official business at the hall, go to the store, or to have their shoes fixed. What they wouldn't have used the road for, however, was going to church. Those who lived along the Opeongo Road were predominantly Irish Catholic, while those living in

Rockingham were Protestants of various backgrounds, with the largest denomination being Church of England. The miller and the merchants were Protestant, while the blacksmiths and shoemakers were mostly Catholic. The two communities were separated according to religion and education, but they did retain some economic and social ties.

Forest Products in Brudenell

An important element of the economy of Brudenell was the extraction of timber and saw logs from the surrounding forests. The 1871 census was conducted *de jure* meaning that anyone away working in the fisheries or the forests would have been enumerated as being at their permanent residence, whether or not they were there at the taking of the census. For most of the workers in the shanties, it was a temporary occupation and so they would have been enumerated at their permanent residence. There were exceptions to this however, which we can ascertain from the census. Exceptions were the cooks, foremen, managers, and clerks, whose positions required them to be at the camps on a semi-permanent basis. The enumerator for Brudenell recorded one cook, two foremen, one general manager, one clerk, and one teamster. Finding these people is not always as simple as just checking the occupation column, however. The cook, foremen, manager, and clerk were entered with these as their specific occupations. The teamster can only be identified as such through a comment in the remarks column indicating that Bartholomew Keravin was a "teamster to McLachlan".

In Brudenell there were only two shantymen enumerated on the 1871 census. This does not preclude the possibility that other residents of the township were working in the forests, but it does give us an indication of their (or perhaps the enumerator's) priorities. If they were working in the camps and it was not their primary occupation, then they mostly saw it as an opportunity to earn a cash wage in order to have more fluid assets. Work in the

forests, combined with the operation of a small farm, provided for some families. The seasonal nature of farming is commonly associated with the demand for labour of the shanties.[64] As others have demonstrated, the link between seasonal work in lumber camps and the available labour of settlers in logging regions is tenuous in that estimates of workers are usually high and because of the prevalence of the migrant labour of French Canadians skilled in the work required.[65] However, it is probable given the proximity of the forest and the seasonal nature of forest work that settlers' sons could have worked for several weeks or months in the bush or on less-skilled tasks such as road cutting, in order to gain income.[66] While it would certainly have benefited their economic status, this temporary labour would not necessarily have defined these men's identities to the extent that the dominant motifs of shanty and frontier life would have us imagine.

The vast majority of the shantymen were not enumerated individually, since these were not their permanent residences. However, the enumerator indicated in the remarks column that there were at least two timber and logging operations in the area and gave estimates of the number of men working in the camps. One was run by Daniel McLachlan of the McLachlan Brothers in Arnprior. McLachlan employed Keravin as a teamster (though he would have likely needed more than just this one teamster in his operation), William Waddington as a foreman, and Donald McDonald as a cook, while directly employing 22 men elsewhere in his operation in the township. He also contracted work out to Donald

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[64] See for example Brenda Lee-Whiting, "The Opeongo Road," p. 79, and Lorne F. Hammond, "Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty: A Social History of Labour and Production on the Lièvre River, 1876-1890," in Donald H. Akenson, ed., *Canadian Papers in Rural History Vol. IX* (Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1994), p. 299.
[65] McCalla, *Planting the Province*, p. 55.
[66] Ian Radforth, "The Shantymen," in *Labouring Lives: Work and Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario*, Paul Craven, ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 206.

McMaster, who had in his employ Evars Dewar as a clerk and Charles Movell as a shantyman, with others domiciled elsewhere, though a definite number is not recorded. The other operation was a group called "Wright and Batrow" or "Wright and Batrom" (the writing is difficult to read; I will refer to them as W&B). They had 60 men working in a camp near Brudenell. This adds up to a total workforce of over 80 men.

Daniel McLachlan's company was a fixture of operations in the Upper Ottawa Valley for many years. McLachlan operated extensively on the Madawaska River around this time, and was a major producer of sawlogs.[67] Figure 4 shows the location of Brudenell and the Opeongo Road in relation to the 1866-67 white pine harvest. The black dots indicate one thousand saw logs, while the white dots indicate two hundred pieces of squared timber. In the census of 1871, McLachlan is credited with extracting a total of 30,164 saw logs and 8554 pieces of squared timber. The remainder of saw logs extracted from Brudenell (7500 pieces) are linked in the census schedules to the store keeper and contractor William Haryett, though it is uncertain whether he had any direct relationship with the W&B company. We cannot say for sure how consistent logging operations were in Brudenell over the period between 1866-67 and 1878-79, however, Figure 5 shows an increase in the amount of timber being extracted from the area just south of Brudenell, and a significant increase in the amount of saw logs being extracted from the newly opened townships to the north of Brudenell. Head notes that the McLachlan Brothers continued to work the region of the central Bonnechere and central Madawaska in 1878-79, though their operations on the upper

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[67] Grant C. Head, "Nineteenth Century Timbering and Sawlogging in the Ottawa Valley," in *Exploring Our Heritage: The Ottawa Valley Experience: Proceedings,* Vrenia Ivonoffski and Sandra Campbell, eds. (Arnprior, Arnprior and District Historical Society, 1980), p. 56.

Figure 4 – Ottawa Valley White Pine Harvest (Upper Canada/Ontario) for 1866-67.
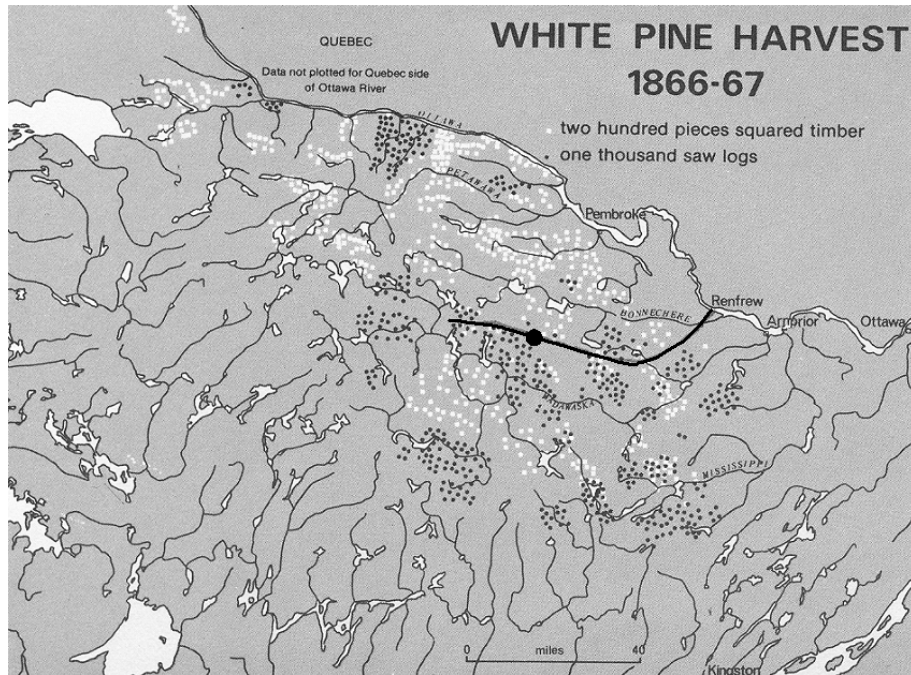
Source: Head, "Nineteenth Century Timbering and Sawlogging," p. 57. Location of Brudenell and Opeongo Line are hand drawn.

Figure 5 – Ottawa Valley White Pine Harvest (Ontario) for 1878-79.
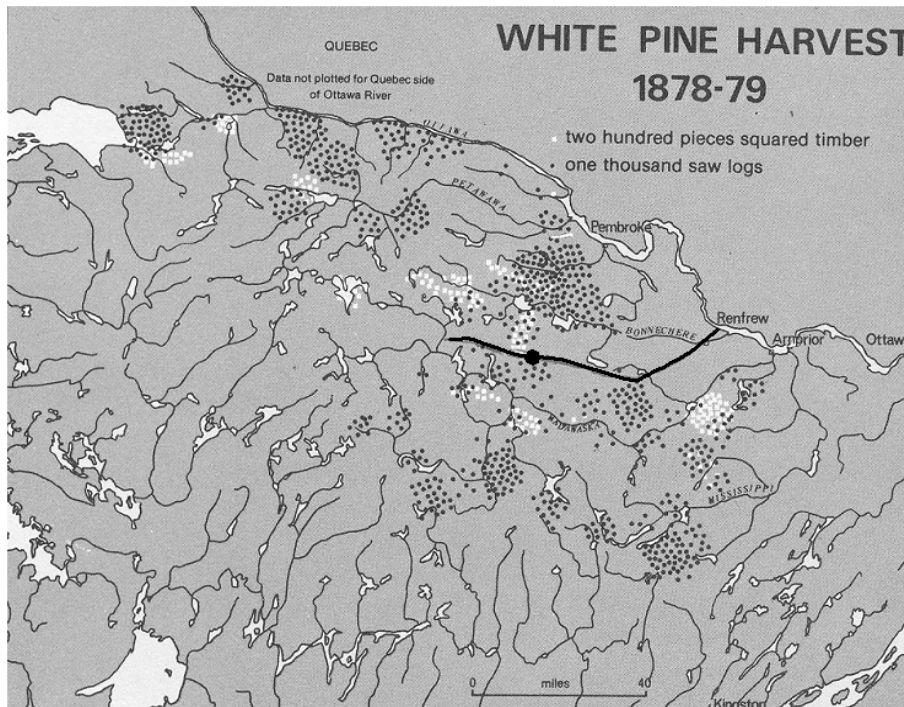
Source: Head, p. 57. Location of Brudenell and Opeongo Line are hand drawn.

Madawaska had declined significantly.[68] An output of 37,664 saw logs and 8554 pieces of timber is a significant total in relation to the amounts in figures 4 and 5. It was also production on a larger scale, unlike the family-centred production methods Graeme Wynn describes as happening in the forests of New Brunswick.[69]

In his study of the MacLaren shanties on the Riviére du Lièvre on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River, Lorne Hammond makes several notes which are important for this study to consider.[70] First, is the shanty routine, which began in the fall when men were signed to contracts for their labour. After the men were hired, the site was located, buildings were set up (or repaired from the previous year) and the crews built dams to raise water levels for the eventual log drive. Roads were cut which would be used to get logs from the bush to the water and stores of supplies were brought in once trails were adequate for transportation. The actual cutting was done by a second group of workers, and during the winter, settlers and their teams would continually arrive with loads of produce to replenish the camps stocks. The drive began in the spring when the waters thawed and levels were high. In the case of the MacLaren group, logs went as far as the mill at Buckingham, while timber would have been sent down river to Ottawa and then on to Quebec City. In the case of the McLachlan operation, most logs would have ended up at the mills in Arnprior while timber would again have continued down the Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers. It is difficult to tell whether any of the logs cut by the McLachlan and W&B companies stayed in Brudenell. John Watson's mill at Rockingham consumed

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[68] Head, p. 56.
[69] Graeme Wynn, *Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 72-78 and 115-118.
[70] Hammond, "Anatomy of a Lumber Shanty," beginning on p. 300.

only 400 sawlogs, while Daniel Copps' saw pit consumed 100. These could have been cut from local properties and sawn on commission with the individual landowner not declaring this on the census. On the other hand, the local mills could have purchased the logs from the lumber companies and then sold the finished lumber to people in the area.

Conclusion

Using databases derived from census returns—such as the one utilized in this project— allow the researcher to tell many different stories about how people in Canada lived. The 1871 census is a particularly valuable resource, and in conjunction with readily available maps and online resources can be used to explore socio-economic relationships and environments across the country. Through this project the people of Brudenell have been given a small place in the historiography of Canadian settlement, and the model used in this paper can be similarly applied to other communities. Brudenell families and households were not all identical, yet they did share characteristics in common. The overall method allows for subtle variation, while the characterization of a "typical" farm is representative of a theoretical common experience. Ideally, more emphasis should be placed on telling stories such as the "walk" up the Opeongo Line featured above. This essay was written primarily to establish a methodology and to show the possibilities and limitations of the census. If more space were available, much more could be written about the socio-economic character of Brudenell.

One of the noticeable limitations of the census is the ability to predict consumption habits, which are here surmised through secondary sources. Another is knowledge of land quality in the region. Pockets of higher quality soils existed, but the census does not tell us which farmers lived on these prize lots. Another is the ability to discern the precise

relationship of settlers to the forest economy. We can make reasonable inferences, but the census does not tell us for certain whether or not families sold surpluses to the shanties, or whether men farmed for part of the year and worked in the forests for other parts of the year. Yet despite these limitations, this method is still able to reveal much about the character of family farms, rural life, and the socio-economic history of Canada.

The people of Brudenell were not consumed by abstract transitions, nor should they be characterized as transitional types—between traditional and modern worlds. Their lives were affected by many different agents, and their approaches shifted in response to these various factors. To an extent, they participated in modern capitalist economies, but this extent was mitigated by household, local, and regional considerations. Brudenell was not an industrial economy, yet it had industrial its elements—and several industrious establishments—and its consumption behaviour was associated with the colonization road along which manufactured goods travelled from urban centres to the township. Analyzing census data at the local level in minute detail allows for a more nuanced understanding of Canadians' experience of the processes identified by wider-framed studies. Together, they promote the development of a historiography that sees "ordinary" rural Canadians in the nineteenth century as modern—as living in their own place and time—and that sees their stories as worthy of their own narrative.

Appendix

Shown on this page is a copy of the 1857 survey map by H. Wood, held at the Wilfred Laurier University library in Waterloo.
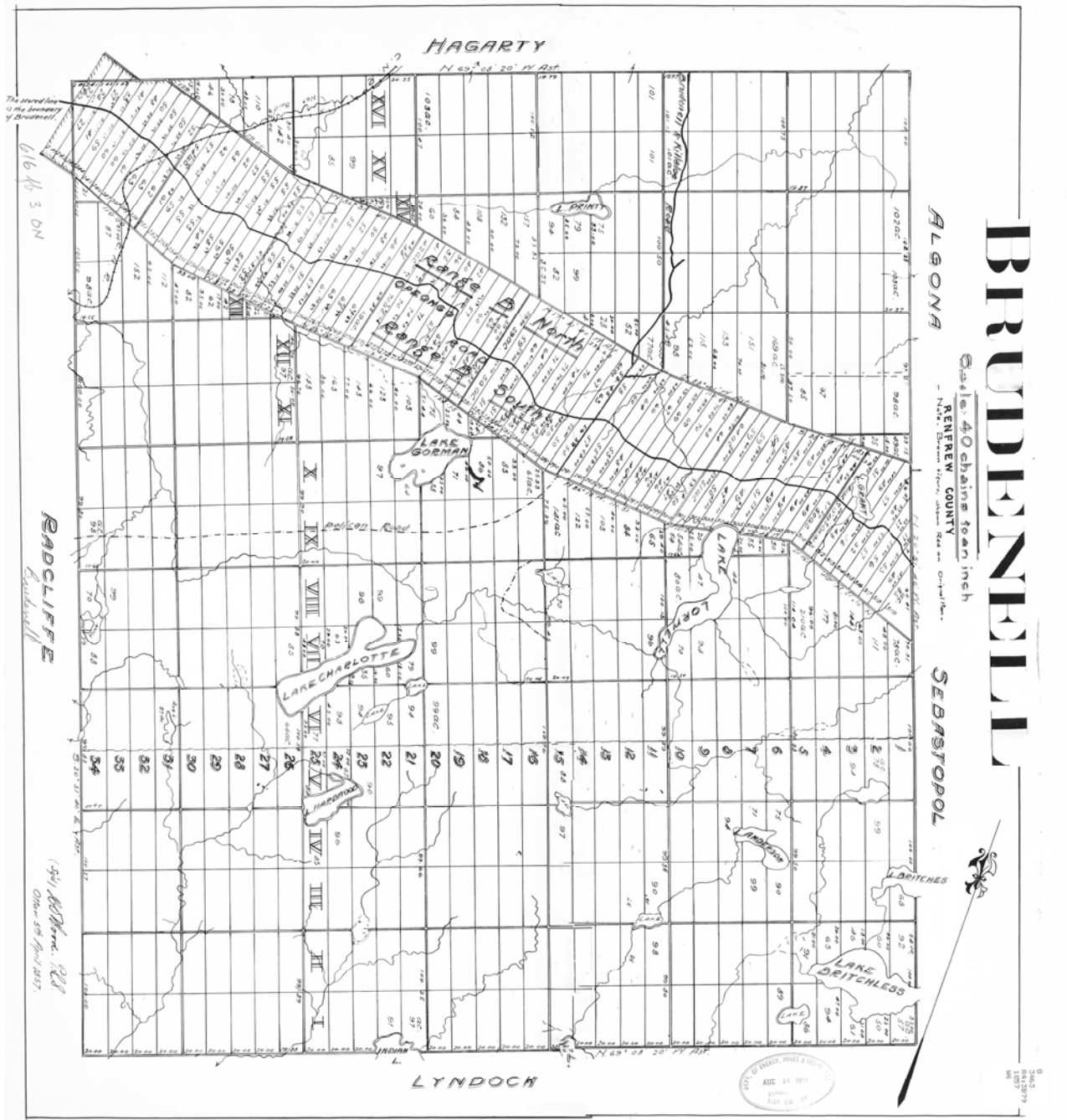
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