

THE BRITISH IN NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO: THE UBIQUITOUS MINORITY

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To undertake the writing of an article on the British in Northeastern Ontario is a hazardous enterprise indeed given the enormous amount of data to be collected and analyzed.

The enterprise becomes audacity when one attempts to distinguish, under the label British, between the English, the Scots and the Irish.

Finally, when one tries to analyze the British in the perspective of an ethnic group (in order to fit the theoretical framework of this Review's theme), the undertaking becomes sheer temerity.

These caveats notwithstanding, I will attempt in this article to describe, in general terms, the contribution of the British to the development of North-eastern Ontario since the beginning of the 20th century. While the emphasis is, as much as possible, on the whole of Northeastern Ontario as defined in the Preface, I have focused mainly on the British in the districts of Sudbury and Nipissing.

Theoretical Considerations

The analysis of the British as an ethnic group in the context of Canadian society presents conceptual and theoretical difficulties mainly because the British in Canada do not perceive themselves as an ethnic group.

Not only do the British not define themselves as an ethnic group, but the scholars who have studied them have tended to adopt the same position. The following is an example of such a position:

To sharpen its theoretical focus, this study concentrates on ethnic groups whose survival in North America has always been considered most precarious: European nationality groups composed of immigrants and their descendants living in large, urban industrial contexts. These are the so-called white ethnics, persons of German, Polish, Italian and other European heritage. Because of this focus, the study excludes several types of cases. It leaves aside those groups that exist because of conquest, such as the native peoples or the division between French — and English-language communities in Canada. In these cases, the term "ethnicity" actually refers to the existence of potentially autonomous societies rather than to groups existing in the context of a single society. In fact, although these groups formed by conquest have some attributes in common with other ethnic groups, they often resist this label, preferring to think of themselves as nations instead.¹

It has been customary, in the literature dealing with ethnic groups, to identify the British as well as the French not as ethnic groups but rather as the "charter groups" in Canadian society. This term was coined by John Porter:

In any society which has to seek members from outside there will be varying judgements about the extensive reservoirs of recruits that exist in the world. In this process of evaluation the first ethnic group to come into previously unpopulated territory, as the effective possessor, has the most say. This group becomes the charter group of the society, and among the many privileges and prerogative which it retains are

decisions about what other groups are to be let in and what they will be permitted to do. Canada has two charter groups, the French and the English, although they have been by no means of equal strength in economic decisions, and since Confederation they have had conflicting ideas about who should enter the country."²

Implicit in this labelling of the English and French as the charter group of Canadian society is the notion that other groups, labelled "ethnic", do not share the same status and are continually to be measured and compared in terms of the charter groups, especially the British.

The fact that the British, and the French, do not view themselves as "ethnics" is corroborated by a survey designed to investigate the attitudes of Canadians toward multiculturalism.³

A second theoretical consideration concerns the definition to be given the British.

There is tendency to view the British as a homogeneous charter group which enjoys and manipulates power and privilege in Canadian society and as such constitutes the ruling class.

The Canadian historian and sociologist, S.D. Clark has noted:

If one were to quarrel with the Porter analysis of this society as it was, it would be only on the score that by seeking to relate ethnic affiliation to the hierarchical structure tended to obscure the underlying forces producing this hierarchical structure. Members of the British charter group were admittedly very much on the top, but they were on the very bottom as well, occupying marginal farm lands in eastern Nova Scotia, northeastern New Brunswick, and eastern and central Ontario, or engaged in a subsistence fishing industry in Newfoundland.⁴

While Clark argues that the British are far more heterogeneous as regards the social class structure than is usually perceived, it must be stressed that on numerous other counts the British are far more diverse than it might first appear.

The term British, firstly, refers to English, Scots, Irish, and Welsh. While these may appear to be homogeneous because of a commonality of language, the distinctions between them are real.

As numerous interviews I have conducted have shown, members of these groups perceive themselves to be distinct from each other due in large part to the history of conflicts in the British Isles between English, Scots, Irish, and Welsh over the centuries.

"Historians and sociologists might find better examples of forced anglicization in Scotland, Ireland or Wales in view of centuries of resistance to English conquest and domination in those countries, not to forget vigorous separatist movements in Scotland and Wales, while Ireland has long had complete independence from Britain and Northern Ireland a high degree of political autonomy plus a bitter civil war."⁵

"Before one jumps to the facile conclusion that whatever synthesization has not already occurred in the British Isles later occurred in Canada, one should note that to quite an appreciable extent separate Scottish, Irish and Welsh identities have been retained in Canada, not a little due to the fact that numerous original migrants from these "peripheral" countries of the British Isles... were themselves refugees from political control or economic deprivation."⁶

A. Anderson concludes by stating that while such term as "Anglo-Canadian", "English Canadian", "Anglophone Canadian", "British Canadian" may be appropriate in Canadian ethnic studies, the use of these terms must be more careful and more qualified.

Given these considerations, I have defined British, for the purposes of this article, as those whose ethnic origin can be traced to inhabitants of the British Isles, be they English, Scottish, Irish, or Welsh. (I have not included the Welsh in this study.) Whenever warranted however I will qualify this definition by pointing to major differences between these groups.

A recent definition of ethnicity emphasizes the double dimension of cultural identity and social relationships.⁷ In his essay, McCormack defines an ethnic group as a collectivity which shares a culture, recognizes a collective identity and which is perceived as distinct by society.

While it is difficult to apply all these characteristics to the British of Northeastern Ontario because of their internal differences, the fact remains that the English, Scottish and Irish do share common cultural traits but most of all they are perceived and perceive themselves as being members of a common charter group in Canada labelled the British.

On this basis therefore it seems appropriate to describe these relatively different groups under the label British and to refer to their ethnic origin as a common denominator.

Methodological Considerations

This research was conducted on two levels: a) the analysis of secondary material such as census data, books and articles; b) interviews with approximately fifteen informants in the cities of Sudbury, North Bay and Sault Ste. Marie.

These informants were chosen on a "snowball" basis. Starting from three informants, I asked each of them to identify others who had lived in the region for a long period of time and who could provide reliable information on the English, Scots and Irish. From these sources, I have attempted to provide a general description and analysis of the British in Northeastern Ontario. I will focus mostly on: a) demographic data provided by published census reports of Statistics Canada; b) certain institutional structures of the British and c) the social and cultural distinctions between the English, the Scots and the Irish. Finally, I will conclude by attempting to answer the question: to what extent is there still what one informant called a "British ethos" in Northeastern Ontario?

Because of their status as a charter group, the analysis of the British requires a framework which is different from that of "other" ethnic groups.

Research on these other groups has focused on the establishment and survival of sub socio-cultural organizations within the context of the larger Canadian society. It has also focused on the biographies of ethnic leaders who have been instrumental in promoting the group's culture and economic opportunities.

Analysis of the British has focused on the organizations and institutions of this larger society because the British and their institutions constitute the core society relative to which the other ethnic groups mould their own.

This has been the case in Northeastern Ontario. Although a numerical minority, the British have been the charter group in Northeastern Ontario. They have been and still are the ubiquitous minority whose social, economic and cultural influence has moulded the major institutions of this regional hinterland.

British Immigration and Settlement

The settlement of Northeastern Ontario at the end of the 19th century was part of the opening of the West. The construction of the railroad led to the development of the Canadian Shield.

This development, based on the exploration and exploitation of mineral and forest resources, required a large influx of population.

In the euphoria that seemed to accompany the opening of New Ontario (the term coined for Northern Ontario), in the early period of the 20th century, the then premier of Ontario, James Pliny Whitney, envisaged a population of one million people in the northern region of the province. This mood of euphoria, which subsided at the beginning of the First World War, attracted many settlers to New Ontario.

Although French Canadians and Italians emigrated to the North in vast numbers, the British were recruited in priority.

From across the Quebec border came French-Canadian settlers, working their farms in summer and the pulpwood camps in the winter. They were less desired than the English settlers, but more inclined to stay.⁸

In order to bring British immigrants to this developing part of the province, the Ontario government of premier Whitney established an Agent-General in London at the beginning of the century.

The preference for British immigrants was not unique to Ontario. The federal government also recruited in priority in Great Britain.

After all, Canada was a British creation, though indifferently conceived by British statesmen of the day. Although the French participated in Confederation, Canada's political and economic leaders were British and were prepared to create a British North America. It is not surprising then that, as a source of immigrants, Britain should have been preferred by those in power.⁹

The British came to New Ontario not only from the British Isles but mostly from other parts of the province of Ontario. They settled in every corner of the developed Northeast, in rural as well as urban centers.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the British were the majority in Northeastern Ontario. In fact, in 1901, they comprised 58 per cent of the population of the districts of Algoma and Nipissing which supports the opinion that the British were the desired settlers at the beginning of the century. Of this total of 58,000 Britishers in 1901, there were an equal number of English and Irish.

Table 1 shows the relative distribution of English, Scots and Irish in 1901 in Northeastern Ontario.

Table 1: Composition of British population in the districts of Algoma and Nipissing, 1901

	N	%
English	20,985	36
Irish	20,359	35
Scots	16,790	29
Total	58,134	100

Source: Census of Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics 1901

Because the Dominion census distinguished between the English, Irish and Scots until 1931, it is informative to see the relative distribution of these groups in Northeastern Ontario in the first third of the century.

Table II: Relative distribution of the British population of Northeastern Ontario, 1901-1931

1911			1921		1931	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
English	27,185	(37)	28,663	(43)	44,189	(43)
Irish	26,219	(36)	18,555	(28)	31,810	(31)
Scots	20,171	(27)	18,138	(28)	26,212	(26)
Total	73,575		65,348		102,221	

This table demonstrates that while English and Irish made up approximately the same proportion of the British population of Northeastern Ontario in 1901, that proportion had changed in 1931. The English were then clearly the majority, due to a net emigration of Irish after 1911 which coincides with an overall decrease in the population of Northern Ontario after the First World War. The proportion of the Irish has fluctuated more than the English and the Scots in the first third of the century. The latter have remained fairly constant during this period.

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics (now Statistics Canada) having ceased to distinguish in its published census reports of 1941 to 1971 between the English, Irish, Scots, and Welsh, it is impossible to determine their relative proportions in the latter part of the century. However other data pertaining to place of birth indicates that from 1941 to 1971 the British born come mostly from England and Scotland.

The British as a whole have declined relative to the total population of Northeastern Ontario since 1901. While at the turn of the century, the British made up nearly 60 per cent of the population, in 1971 they constituted only 40 per cent. This pattern is not unique to Northern Ontario but reflects the growing numerical importance of other ethnic groups in Canadian society since 1901.

Table III: British population in Northeastern Ontario, 1901-1971

	Total population	British population	Per cent of total population
1901*	100,400	58,134	58
1911**	147,510	73,655	50
1931***	240,980	102,565	42
1951***	358,469	148,187	41
1971***	541,210	220,410	40

* Districts of Algoma and Nipissing

** Districts of Algoma East, Algoma West and Nipissing

*** Districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Sudbury and Temiskaming

Source: Census of Canada, Statistics Canada

The proportion of the British population has remained constant over the past fifty years. The other ethnic groups have gained in numerical importance mainly at the expense of the French. The increase in the British population

has been due to natural increase and internal migration rather than immigration although there have been fluctuations in these variables from 1901 to 1971.

In 1901, seven per cent of the British in Northeastern Ontario were born in the British Isles. In 1911, fifteen per cent were British born. This percentage drops gradually after 1911 until 1971 when six per cent of the British population were born in the British Isles. That fifteen per cent of the British should have been born in Great Britain in 1911 is not surprising since the decade 1903-1913 was marked by an upsurge in immigration to Canada.

Where did the British settle in Northeastern Ontario during the 20th century?

A comparison of the data from 1931 to 1971 (the five main districts of Northeastern Ontario were the same during this period thus making comparisons easier) shows that the majority settled in the Algoma and Sudbury districts, especially in the urban areas in and around Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury.

Table IV: British population in the districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Nipissing, Sudbury and Temiskaming, 1931-1971

Districts	1931		1951		1971	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Algoma	26,364	25	25,278	24	60,260	27
Cochrane	19,295	19	27,102	18	27,465	13
Nipissing	16,471	16	20,233	13	35,805	17
Sudbury	18,692	19	38,848	26	73,430	33
Temiskaming	21,746	21	26,726	19	23,440	10
Total	102,568	100	148,187	100	220,410	100

Source: Census of Canada, Statistics Canada

The preceding table indicates that since 1931 the greater proportion of the British have settled in the district of Sudbury due, no doubt, to the increasing importance of Sudbury as the metropolitan center of the Northeastern hinterland.

The British have also settled in great numbers in the district of Algoma. The following table demonstrates that, relative to the total population in each district, Algoma and Temiskaming have maintained a higher proportion of British than any of the other districts.

Table V: Proportion of British population in districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Nipissing, Sudbury and Temiskaming, 1931-1971

Districts	1931	1951	1971
	%	%	%
Algoma	57	55	50
Cochrane	33	32	29
Nipissing	33	40	45
Sudbury	32	35	37
Temiskaming	59	54	50

Source: Census of Canada, Statistics Canada

Algoma and Temiskaming have always had at least half of their population of British origin although its proportion has been declining. For the

purposes of this article, the district of Manitoulin has been neglected. Had it been considered, Manitoulin would be the district where the proportion of British is the highest. In 1971, nearly two-thirds of the 11,000 inhabitants of the district were of British origin.

The district of Nipissing has increased its proportion considerably especially in the urban area of North Bay where fifty per cent of the population in 1971 was of British origin.

Sudbury's and Cochrane's proportion of British has remained somewhat constant. While Sudbury's population is characterized by an equal proportion of British, French and "others", Cochrane's is marked by a majority of French due in large part to its socio-cultural proximity to Quebec.

While census data can give an overall view of a population, it does not provide a description or analysis of its socio-cultural characteristics.

The next section of this article will attempt to do so, albeit briefly.

The British Social Network

From the very first years of settling in Northeastern Ontario, a century ago, the British set about to establish a social and cultural environment which, apart from its frontier aspect, reproduced as much as possible the communities from whence they came be they in Canada or in Great Britain.

"The British attempted to recreate in this region the institutions with which they were familiar, explained one informant from Sudbury. They tried to establish an environment which was familiar, with very slight differences, from the ones they knew either in Britain or in the English Canadian communities from which they were emigrating."¹⁰

Although some British settlers had emigrated to Northeastern Ontario much earlier, the majority of the British arrived in this area with the CPR. They were the engineers and the labourers who built the national railway in the 1880s and then settled in the different communities to establish and work in various enterprises, mostly lumber, commercial and then mining and smelting.

They established Northeastern Ontario as a hinterland of Metropolitan Toronto.

By the end of the nineteenth century Toronto had firmly established itself as the pre-eminent regional metropolis of Southern Ontario, organizing and financing the trade and commerce of a prosperous, agricultural hinterland. Rail penetration of the Canadian Shield necessarily expanded that hinterland and changed its character... Railroads thus brought the Shield under the dominance of Toronto which developed in response the techniques, facilities and in a sense the energies to finance resource industries, especially mining, with a vigour that Montreal, for some reason, seemed to lack. Toronto's initial advantages of transportation and experience on the Canadian Shield imparted a powerful thrust to its rise from regional to national metropolitan stature."¹¹

This opening of the hinterland was the work not only of Southern Ontario capitalists of British origin but also of American and British capitalists and, to an important extent, the government of Ontario which provided different types of assistance. The opening of New Ontario was therefore a public-private venture.

... in reality the development of New Ontario was a joint public

and private venture, a provincial equivalent to the opening of the West. The exaggerated individualism of the northern narratives has almost totally obscured the role played by the far from silent partner in the enterprise, the government of Ontario... Promotion, embracing the improvement of access to resources, the provision of information and technical education, was the public contribution to resource development.¹²

This hinterland/frontier character has affected, from the very beginning, the social class structure of Northeastern Ontario in ways that I can only sketch briefly at this point.

Because the British, mostly English and Scots, engineered either from Toronto or "in the field", the development of Northeastern Ontario, they constituted, and still do, the "ruling class" in the hinterland. But this "ruling class" was, and still is, very different from the one in the metropolitan center of Toronto. It was composed mainly of 1) managers of transportation and resource companies whose proprietors resided in Southern Ontario and the United States and 2) of proprietors of numerous and fairly small lumber and saw mills, commercial enterprises and service industries.

The role and influence of James Worthington, the superintendant of the CPR during its construction phase in Northeastern Ontario, certainly typifies the British manager of this period. He named the future city of Sudbury "in honour of his wife's birthplace in England"¹³ but more importantly he "enjoyed a 'tremendous authority' over his men which he was not averse to exercising".¹⁴ These men were in the majority French-Canadians either from Manitoba or Quebec which illustrates fairly well the type of social structure of the hinterland: managers of British origin and workers of French origin at the beginning but increasingly of other origins.

These British managers constituted not only the economic elite but also the political elite of the communities.¹⁵ One need only read the history of the different communities of Northeastern Ontario to recognize the "Britishness" of the "ruling class". A glance at the list of directors of major corporations — mining, transportation, forestry — suffices to reinforce the image of this class as being British.

It is the rarest thing in the records of the mines, *unless you get a list of the bosses and mining engineers*, to find an English name.¹⁶

This ruling class has been overshadowed numerically by a large working class made up of British (mostly Irish), French, Italian, Ukrainians and others. This working class has had, since the First World War, a history of union militancy and organization.

Thus the social class structure of the first decades in Northeastern Ontario was relatively simple. Gradually a middle class composed of professionals and public servants (managers of federal, provincial and regional governments, teachers and professionals in the health and social fields) has expanded and occupied positions of power and authority in Northeastern Ontario. This middle class seems to be ethnically heterogeneous compared to the "ruling class" of the northeastern hinterland.

In order to recreate as much as possible the world from which they emigrated, the British named their new communities, be they cities, towns, villages, or townships, in honour of existing communities in Great Britain.

It is however in the production of major institutions that the British set about to recreate their social and cultural world and to establish a social network which would function to draw other British to New Ontario and

also to maintain the Britishness of the ruling class and the socio-cultural environment.

Since the length of this paper does not permit the analysis of all the various institutions, I will focus briefly on three: the churches, the lodges and the union movement.

Churches

Ethnicity and religion have been closely related in the social history of Canadian society, especially prior to the Second World War.¹⁷

The majority of the informants I interviewed stressed the importance of churches in the life of the British. The establishment of a community was always accompanied by the presence of a priest or minister and the construction of a church. "There was always an effort, when establishing a community, to also establish a church. It is as if one could not go without the other," remarked one informant about the settlement of the British in Northeastern Ontario.

The Anglican diocese had been established in 1873 and the Methodists had sent missionaries in many areas of Northeastern Ontario since the mid-19th century.

Anglicanism in Northeastern Ontario, as in other parts of the country, represents the "British ethos" which one informant described as having the following characteristics: attachment to and respect for the Crown, defense and promotion of a form of authority which is shared and not imposed, and social mobility.

In the latter part of the 20th century, Anglican churches in Northeastern Ontario recruit, much more than other Protestant churches, the recent British immigrants and also attracts a following which is more closely identified with maintaining a certain "Britishness"¹⁸ just as the Scots have tended to maintain their national identity through their affiliation with the Presbyterian church.

Anglican parishes clearly provided immigrants with important emotional support... Anglican parishes functioned as networks for the distribution of charity and jobs, but more importantly, it mitigated the immigrant's sense of dislocation... Among Protestant denominations, the Church of England was unique in that its liturgy and doctrine were identical to those observed in the United Kingdom; thus identification with England was regularly renewed. It also linked sending and receiving societies in a powerfully emotive way... The Church also promoted group cohesiveness by sponsoring collective activities, such as women's auxiliaries, musical societies, athletic clubs and youth organizations, which brought the English together and promoted associations among the immigrants.¹⁹

While it is impossible to relate with any degree of certainty social class and Anglicanism in Northeastern Ontario, various informants have mentioned that the members of the "ruling class" belong to Anglican churches.²⁰

While the Anglicans have traditionally been more British they have not been the most numerous in Northeastern Ontario as the following tables will readily testify.

Table VI: Population of Northeastern Ontario by major religious groups, 1901-1921

	Anglicans	Lutherans	Methodists	Presbyterians	Roman Catholics
1901	15,950	2,480	15,990	20,660	37,609
1921	14,400	4,690	11,730	19,780	64,935

Source: Census of Canada, Dominion of Statistics

The union of the Methodists, the Congregationalists and some levels of the Presbyterian Church in 1925 led to the establishment of the United Church which is now the largest Protestant denomination in Northeastern Ontario.

Table VII: Population of Northeastern Ontario by major religious groups, 1931-1971

	Anglicans	Presbyterians	United Church	Roman Catholic
1931	23,338	15,309	41,417	96,803
1951	37,370	13,308	73,695	195,769
1971	50,105	15,330	87,665	316,920

Source: Census of Canada, Statistics Canada

While the Methodists tended to recruit heavily from among the working class of British origin, before the union of 1925, which thus distinguished it from the Anglican Church, the United Church has emerged to recruit from the middle class of all ethnic origins especially after 1945.

"The United Church today has lost its British ethnic identity which it had prior to and for a few years after the union of 1925".²¹

Prior to World War II, the United Church was definitely more oriented towards the working class, liberal causes and matters of Canadian identity than the Anglican Church.

"The United Church, in its structure and theological orientation, is certainly very liberal. It is tied closely in its major social views to the political ideology of the CCF and NDP. As far as being Canadian, the United Church is the first and only Canadian church since it is the only one created in Canada. Intellectually the United Church has helped in many ways to define whatever Canadianism is."²²

There is no doubt that the Protestant churches have helped to promote and maintain some aspects of "Britishness" by creating first and foremost a social network for people of British origin. Distinctions have to be made however between these churches. Whereas the Anglicans and the Presbyterians have been identified more closely with English, Scottish and upper class issues, the United Church is identified more closely with the working and middle classes and Canadian issues.

The Lodges

There existed a great number and variety of lodges in Northeastern Ontario. Like the churches, these lodges were established with the communities. Unlike the churches, however, the lodges have lost their importance for the British especially since World War II. Their numbers and functions have dwindled and, barring some unforeseen circumstances or event, have been relegated to the past.

In the frontier climate of the new communities, Masonic and Orange lodges were very important. Apart from promoting and defending the Empire and the English language, these lodges reinforced the social network of the British. They accomplished this in numerous ways, chief among them being their serving as a meeting place mostly for the leaders of the community.

"The members of the lodges were the top dogs of the whole works," answered one informant about the membership of the Sudbury Masonic lodges.

While these meeting places served officially only for social gatherings, there were discussed and arranged the recruitment and placing of people, predominantly of British origin and conviction, in the higher as well as lower echelons of the public and private institutions.

Lodges were formed across the country and usually led by affluent Englishmen, professionals, clergymen and former military officers, who had joined local elites.²³

The lodge meeting provided a regularized form of socializing. Gossip, tales of mutual friends, and, more usefully, information on job opportunities and techniques for day-to-day chores were all exchanged in the forum provided before and after the formal lodge business. In the male preserve, meeting under the auspices of a semi-secret body, the more ordinary community links would be reinforced and revitalized. The lodge also served to introduce newcomers into the community and to provide them with a useful set of contacts. No other formal infrastructure for social intercourse existed except for churches...²⁴

The lodges in Northeastern Ontario (the oldest one was established in Sturgeon Falls in 1883) did not cater solely to the upper class but did in fact attract men from all walks of life but the leaders of these lodges were evidently members of local elites.

In writing about lodges, one has to distinguish between Masonic and Orange lodges. According to various informants there were basic differences between these two types of lodges. Masonic lodges were more oriented toward the social and economic promotion of their members while the Orange lodges were more interested in defending the "Britishness" against the inroads of catholicism and French Canadians in Northeastern Ontario.

These lodges, both Masonic and Orange, grew at a rapid pace across Northeastern Ontario in the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th.

In these northern districts of Ontario is the great growth of the Order especially gratifying. North of the line of the French River, where a decade ago were but a few white settlements, there are now forty Orange lodges in full working order. The lumbering, mining, farming and fishing industries in these parts have, as in Manitoba and the north-west, called the last and bravest of the young men from the older provinces. These young pioneers are losing no time in implanting in their new homes the principals of our Noble Order, which today form the keystone of all responsible government and true religion.²⁵

The history of these lodges remains to be researched and written. It will be no easy task however since the members of these lodges seem somewhat reluctant to divulge for public use many important features of their lodges' functioning and role in the community.

It is apparent that the lodges are no longer a viable concern after 1945. Membership dwindled and the socio-political functions they had served no longer seemed necessary after World War II. The waning of a British identity and the development by certain segments of the British population of a Canadianism contributed to their decline.

One of the reasons for their decline has been the takeover by governments and corporations of the function of economic support. As McCormack notes: "Friendly societies were mutual aid associations which provided British workers with insurance and a variety of other benefits."²⁶ When employers, professional and trade organizations started to assume these responsibilities and when various social and recreational clubs flourished in the communities, the lodges ceased to have a viable *raison d'être*. As the frontier aspect of the communities waned, so did the lodges.

Some lodges still exist in many communities but, according to informants, they no longer have the vital role they assumed at the turn of the century.

Unionism

Although Northeastern Ontario was settled by a large working class, the history of union organization is fairly recent. It is only during the First World War that attempts to unionize working people in Northeastern Ontario started. This was done in the gold mines of Kirkland Lake and the silver mines of Cobalt and later, in the 1920s and 1930s, in the nickel mines of the Sudbury region.

Although the majority of the rank and file of the North's unions have been French, Ukrainians, Italians, and others, the leadership has been overwhelming British.

The personnel and ideology of the Canadian labour and socialist movements have been primarily British. Many of those who built these movements were British immigrants with past experience in the British labour movement; many others were Canadian-born children of such immigrants.²⁷

The leaders of the union movement in Northeastern Ontario originally established locals affiliated with the Western Federation of Miners which, in 1917, became the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. These leaders were predominantly British as the following slate of officers of the Cobalt Miners Union of 1906 shows:

President: Britton Duke
 Secretary: P.M. Fleming
 2nd Secretary: Jack Dwyer
 Recording Secretary: Joseph Gorman
 Solicitor: W.J. Mahon
 Fieldman: James P. Maguire²⁸

Not only in Cobalt, but in Kirkland Lake, Sudbury and Sault Ste Marie, the union leaders have been predominantly of British origin. Only in the latter half of this century and in union locals where the majority of members have been non-British have leaders been of origin other than British.²⁹

The fact that leaders have been of predominantly British origin has had a great influence on the type of union organization and the degree of its militancy in Northeastern Ontario. B. Hogan states that the British origins of the union leaders and their trade-union experiences of British helps explain why most of these leaders did not become communists. Most of these

leaders, also because of their British origin and trade unionist background, could not support a radical orientation such as the one taken by the One Big Union.³⁰ The conflict between Mine Mill and the Steelworkers in the Sudbury area during the 1950s is partly a reflection of this conservative orientation of the British leaders of the union movement.

More than any other British institution discussed previously the unions have recruited members from the other ethnic groups largely because the working class of Northeastern Ontario has been and is ethnically heterogeneous. However the leadership of the large locals has tended to remain held by men of British origin. What if any influence by British trade-union ideology and practice there remains on the present leadership is difficult to ascertain.

I have discussed unionism briefly to point out that the British have occupied every spectrum of the social class structure of Northeastern Ontario, from "ruling class" to local elite of working class. To treat them as a homogeneous entity, either socially or culturally, is not empirically correct.

The next section of this article will deal with this notion of heterogeneity by describing the distinctiveness of the Scots and the Irish.

The Scots

Of the British, the Scots are the least numerous to have settled in Northeastern Ontario. This fact must not belie, however, the influence they have had in the region and, for that matter, across Canada. They have settled in many areas and been involved in many occupations.³¹

Contrary to earlier settlements in the 18th and 19th century across the Maritimes and Eastern Ontario (Lanark and Perth), the Scots of Northeastern Ontario did not establish distinct communities in this region. Their pattern of emigration was also more on an individual basis than was the case for earlier emigration of Scots in Eastern Ontario.

The informants I interviewed indicated that the migration of Scots to this region originated from either Scotland or Toronto where some had settled. Many Scots came to Northeastern Ontario as a result of recruiting campaigns in Scotland by the large corporations of the region, especially INCO. These corporations were interested in obtaining mining engineers and miners with experience. They also wanted to recruit workers with the skills, including linguistic and cultural, necessary to maintain an efficient operation.

Many Scots were also recruited to work in the police and security forces of Northeastern Ontario. The informants interviewed all mentioned that if one were to look at the police forces of this region, one would find that many of its officers are of Scottish origin.

This type of recruitment is a testimony to the kind of social network built by the British in Northeastern Ontario. In order to reproduce a type of society known to them, they tended to recruit its members from their own.

The Scots have been instrumental in many occupational settings from the mines of Sudbury, to the steel mills of Sault Ste Marie and the farms of Manitoulin.

They were very active in the Masonic lodges of the various cities and towns. They established in many of these communities the Sons of Scotland, a mutual aid and group insurance society which, according to informants, was quite a going concern in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. The members of the Sons of Scotland met once a month for social and business purposes. This organization is no longer very active in the region nor across Canada for reasons mentioned previously.

Some Scottish clubs were also founded in different communities. The Caledonian Club of Sudbury is an example of the kind of club established by the Scots. It was a thriving organization for a number of years, from the 1930s to the 1950s but is now defunct. Because of the growing social and cultural heterogeneity of its members, the Caledonian Club could not ensure the perpetuation of Scottish customs. After having been maintained by the first generation of Scots in the area, the language and customs unique to the Scots have tended to be lost by the second and third generations.³²

"There is no difference now between Scots and other English-speaking people of this area," declared one informant.

The high rate of exogamy, the decline of clubs and organizations that recruited Scots and the growing identification of Scots as Canadians have contributed to the gradual disappearance of a Scottish distinctiveness especially since the Second World War.

Whatever distinctiveness the Scots now have is maintained by the numerous Presbyterian churches of the area, the observance of Robert Burns day the various Pipe bands and Highland dancers active in many communities of the Northeast.

Overall, the Scottish tradition in Northeastern Ontario is now more of an individual and, for some, family heritage than an organizational one.

The Irish

Due to the division between the Catholic and Protestant Irish, it is even more difficult to speak of an Irish community in Northeastern Ontario.

The following table indicates that in 1931 there were more Protestant Irish in this region than Catholic Irish.

Table VIII: The Irish of Northeastern Ontario by religious denomination and census division, 1931

Census div.	Religious denominations			
	Anglicans	Presbyterians	Roman Catholic	United Church
Algoma	1,097	834	1,800	2,930
Cochrane	793	429	2,822	1,495
Nipissing	998	442	2,611	1,947
Sudbury	827	527	2,890	1,531
Temiskaming	<u>903</u>	<u>651</u>	<u>2,213</u>	<u>2,225</u>
Total	4,618	2,883	12,336	10,128

The informants interviewed for this article all stated however their impression that the majority of the Irish of Northeastern Ontario today are Catholics. It has been impossible to verify this statement.

What is certain however is that Irish Catholics of the region do not consider themselves as British. The following statement by an Irish Catholic informant is typical of others made during these interviews: "Southern Irish Catholics do not consider themselves to be British. Maybe the Northern Irish do but certainly not the Southern. We do not accept the Queen nor anything related to the monarchy."

Whether Catholic or Protestant, the Irish came to Northeastern Ontario mostly as part of the large working class which constructed the railways and then worked in the mines and lumber operations of the region.

Like the Scots and the English, neither Protestant nor Catholic Irish settled in distinct neighborhoods or communities. In a sense, the whole of Northeastern Ontario society was their neighborhood.

Distinct by their religious affiliations, the Protestant and Catholic Irish seem however to have been united on at least two dimensions: their social class and their enmity towards the French Canadians.

For the Protestant Irish, this enmity was mostly religious. They fought against whatever was allied to the Roman Catholic papacy and church. Their instrument was mostly the Orange Lodge of which, as previously mentioned, there were many chapters in Northeastern Ontario until the Second World War.

Apart from this, the Protestant Irish have had no particular distinctiveness as a group in this region that I have been able to discern in the course of this study.

The Irish Catholics have perhaps been more noticeable due to their social clubs which have sprouted and died in the various cities and towns, the celebration of St. Patrick's Day and their congregating in Catholic parishes and organizations such as the Knights of Columbus.

The Irish Catholics' enmity toward the French has been evident in various incidents concerning schooling and religion, especially in the first half of the 20th century. Probably because of their inhabiting a common socio-economic space, which was the working class of Northeastern Ontario, both French and Irish Catholics have tended to vie for social mobility, for influence and power within the Catholic Church and society at the expense of one another.

The debate over the teaching of and in French in Ontario schools which culminated in the Government of Ontario edicting Regulation 17 in 1912 was largely a conflict between Irish and French.³³

Although this conflict was a provincial one, it had many repercussions in Northeastern Ontario from 1912 to 1927.³⁴ To this day, the school question remains a source of latent conflicts.

In Northeastern Ontario, the Irish and the French have been involved for many decades in a conflict, usually silent but sometimes not, within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste Marie. The obvious source of the conflict has been the position of the Bishop of the Diocese. While the majority have been and still are French, the bishops have been Irish. This is due to the structure of the Catholic Church in Ontario which has been governed mostly by Irish Catholics.

This conflict has been evident in the question of the establishment of parishes in the Diocese, the French complaining at times of the difficulty of creating parishes.

In conclusion, the Irish, whether Protestant or Catholic, have experienced the same social and cultural evolution as the Scots. While their language and customs were maintained by the first generation, they have become largely "folklorised" over the last fifty years.

Britishness

Is there, today, an identifiable "Britishness" in Northeastern Ontario?

The answer to that question would require measurements that I have not constructed. However the informants I interviewed indicate that if Britishness is defined as an emotional attachment to the monarchy, to a language and to the Empire, then it no longer exists or at least not to the extent to which it existed at the beginning of the century.

These informants all point to the Second World War as the point in time when Britishness evolved towards a vague and as yet underfined Canadianism.

There has been however a thread of continuity in this shift which has been the English language. The British are now identified more as anglophones and those who still hold to some kind of "Britishness" have been in a sense relegated to a marginal, sometimes extreme, position.

Such a position is typified by an organization such as the Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada (A.P.E.C.).

A letter published by a president of A.P.E.C. describes the objectives of this organization. It states:

The Alliance for the Preservation of English in Canada was formed in response to the unnecessary and expensive extension of the French language outside Quebec. A.P.E.C. realizes that there is no political party in Canada willing to openly oppose the rule of the bilingual elite over the unilingual English-speaking majority. A.P.E.C. is... an organized group trying to make the political parties realize that bilingualism is discrimination at its worst.³⁵

In the 1970s, A.P.E.C. had established branches in North Bay, Timmins and New Liskeard. The North Bay branch seems to be the most vigorous and best organized. In a newsletter distributed by this branch, numerous items related to bilingualism in Canada and published in different newspapers are brought to the attention of A.P.E.C. members. The following is an example: "If you want the monarchy retained, be sure to write your M.P. about it;" "Frenchification of the Armed Forces — being carried out at an increasing rate."

It is interesting to note that this type of "Britishness" is more a negative campaign against bilingualism than an effort to promote a particular "British ethos". When asked about A.P.E.C. the informants who knew of its existence were quick to point to its marginality.

In order to measure the evolution of "Britishness" in Northeastern Ontario a survey of regional daily newspapers was made at different points in time: 1) the conscription referendum of 1942; 2) the flag debate of 1964 and 3) the constitutional debate of 1981-82. These events were chosen with the assumption being that they represented an occasion when British sentiments would come to the fore.

The results of the survey were not as conclusive as the hypothesis had led to suggest. Editorials concerning the conscription issue emphasized the necessity to defend Canada but not necessarily the British Empire.

On the flag debate, editorialists' British sentiments were more evident as the following illustrates:

... the great flag debate saw Mr. Pearson leading his liberal cohorts in a campaign to remove the Union Jack from the Canadian flag — the Red Ensign. The end result was the elimination of the Red Ensign as a national emblem.³⁶

The constitutional debate of 1981-82 did bring out in the editorials a certain Canadian nationalist sentiment but at other times the emphasis was put on the continuity of the new constitution with the initial British North America Act.

Despite all the propaganda to the contrary, the new Canadian constitution to be proclaimed here this week is neither very new nor totally Canadian. The parts that are new, along with the massive sections that are old, are on the British statute books, placed there by the British Parliament, at the request of the

Parliament of Canada. And the new passages, together with the old ones, will remain on the British statute books for as far ahead as anybody can see.³⁷

Conclusion

To conclude this general analysis of the British in Northeastern Ontario, it is not too temerarious to state that people of British origin, be they English, Irish or Scots, have had a great influence in the building of this region. They have managed to reproduce, to a certain extent, the world from which they emigrated. They were able to do so largely because they were members of the "ruling class" of the hinterland as well as members of the middle and working classes.

The success of the British in reproducing their world is, paradoxically, the main factor in the attenuation of Britishness in Northeastern Ontario. As the other ethnic groups settled in great numbers in this region and adopted as their own, over time, parts of the "British ethos", and the influential section of the middle class, they also managed to transform the Britishness into a vague and ill-defined Canadianism.

Today, the British remain a ubiquitous minority in Northeastern Ontario. But they are now more anglophones and Canadians than distinctly British.

Footnotes

1. Reitz, Jeffrey, *The Survival of Ethnic Groups*. McGraw-Hill, 1980.
2. Porter, John. *The Vertical Mosaic*. University of Toronto Press, 1965, p. 60.
3. cf. Berry, John W., et al. Multiculturalism and Ethnic Attitudes in Canada in Goldstein, Jay *Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations in Canada*. Butterworth and Co., 1980, pp. 259-278.
4. Clark, S.D. *Canadian Society in Historical Perspective*. McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1976, p. 58.
5. Anderson, A.B. *Canadian Ethnic Studies Association Bulletin*, Vol. IX, no. 3, Fall 1982, p. 18.
6. *idem*. p. 17.
7. McCormack, Ross. Cloth Caps and Jobs, in Dahlie, J. and Fernando, T. *Ethnicity, Power and Politics in Canada*. Methuen, 1982.
8. Schull, Joseph. *Ontario Since 1867*. McClelland and Stewart, 1978, p. 76.
9. Porter, John. *op. cit.* p. 62.
10. Interview with Sudbury informant. The names of these informants are being withheld at the express wish of some of them.
11. Nelles, H.V. *The Politics of Development*. Macmillan of Canada, 1975, p. 118.
12. *ibid.* p. 109.
13. Brandt, Gail Cuthbert. "J'y suis, j'y reste", The French Canadians of Sudbury, 1883-1912. Ph. D. Thesis. York University, 1976, p. 11.
14. *ibid.* p. 12.

15. cf. Dennie, Donald. La pénétration des francophones dans la structure économique de Sudbury. Unpublished paper, 1979.
16. Stelter, Gilbert. Community Development in Toronto's Commercial Empire. *Laurentian University Review*, Vol. VI, no. 3, June 1974, p. 45.
17. cf. Porter, John, *op. cit.*
18. Interview with Sudbury informant.
19. McCormack, Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
20. Sudbury informant.
21. *ibid.*
22. *ibid.*
23. McCormack, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
24. Houston, Cecil. *The Sash Canada Wore*. University of Toronto Press, 1980, p. 112-113.
25. Announcement at a grand lodge meeting quoted in Houston, Cecil, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
26. McCormack, *op. cit.*
27. Horowitz, Gad. *Canadian Labour in Politics*. University of Toronto Press, 1968, p. 24.
28. Hogan, B. *Cobalt, Year of the Strike, 1919*. Highway Book Shop (no year), p. 14.
29. Union informant, Sudbury.
30. Hogan, B. *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.
31. Reid, Stanford, W. *The Scottish Tradition in Canada*. McClelland and Stewart, 1976.
32. This is the general opinion of the Scottish informants of Sault Ste Marie, Sudbury and North Bay.
33. cf. Choquette, Robert. *Language and religion*. University of Ottawa Press, 1975.
34. cf. Lalonde, André. Le règlement 17 et ses répercussions sur le Nouvel-Ontario, Documents historiques de la Société historique du Nouvel-Ontario, nos 46-47, 1965.
35. Letter written by Mr. Robin Reid in A.P.E.C. flyer.
36. *Sudbury Star*, Feb. 1, 1965, p. 4.
37. *North Bay Nugget*, April 15, 1982, p. 4.