

## Upper Canada and the Mapping of Settler Space

John C. Walsh

Department of History and Carleton Centre for Public History

Carleton University

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In this essay I take up the challenge of exploring how maps and mapping contributed to the politics of place-making in Upper Canada. More specifically, I want to argue that maps and mapping *inscribed* Upper Canada as a historical geography of settler space. Inscription took on many different forms: physically, it appeared on government maps, on commercial maps, on the surface of the landscape in boundary markers and seals, and in surveyors' field notebooks; culturally, these inscriptions made it possible for people to see, know, and eventually remember Upper Canada as a landscape of settler space not-yet-formed, as a landscape-in-formation, and, finally, as a landscape formed. In the course of this essay, we shall see the many different facets of inscription, for it was deeply material and cultural, representational and performative.<sup>1</sup> It was also relentlessly political, especially when those politics were being repressed.

To anchor all of this, I have decided to focus on one especially significant map and to pursue this map in the archive and in the library. As a piece of material culture,

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the critical cartographic historiography and its evolution over the last twenty years see Jeremy Crampton, *Mapping: A Critical Introduction to Cartography and GIS* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010) and Veronica della Dora, "Performative Atlases: Memory, Materiality, and (Co-)Authorship," *Cartographica* 44, 4 (2010), esp. 240-242.

the Devine Map was born in the 1850s, matured in the 1860s, died with Confederation, but then had a significant after life both in the nineteenth century and arguably until today. It is this evolution which serves as the chronological spine for the essay, even though the stories I tell overlap thematically. Methodologically, readers will see the influence of governmentality scholars, of social studies of science scholars, as well as historical geographers of colonialism.<sup>2</sup> While my citations indicate some specific debts to these literatures, experienced readers will recognize their influence at various points in the narrative.

One final point of qualification and context: this essay belongs to two much larger research projects. The first is about governance and place making in the nineteenth century as it involved a state-planned and administered colonization project.<sup>3</sup> The second is about the construction of place memories in the twentieth century, more particularly about the dialectical relationships between social forms of remembering and place making.<sup>4</sup> While these are distinct projects, I hope this essay also sheds some light on how they are also a connected set of questions and concerns.

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<sup>2</sup> Among others: R. Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002) and "How Did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94, 1 (2004), 165–182; Bruno Latour, *Pandora's hope : essays on the reality of science studies* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); John Law, *Organizing Modernity* (Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass., USA : Blackwell, 1994); David Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Jeremy Crompton and Stuart Elden, eds., *Space, Knowledge, and Power: Foucault and Geography* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), including the newly-translated essays by Foucault featured in the collection.

<sup>3</sup> This was the focus of my doctoral dissertation and also a book I am writing based in part on it called *Landscapes of Longing: Colonizing Space and the Social in Upper Canada*.

<sup>4</sup> The first major statement of this appears in James Opp and John C. Walsh, editors, *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), especially (with James Opp) "Introduction: Local Acts of Placing and Remembering," 3-21 and my own "Performing Public Memory and Re-Placing Home in the Ottawa Valley, 1900-1958," 25-56.

## The Devine Map

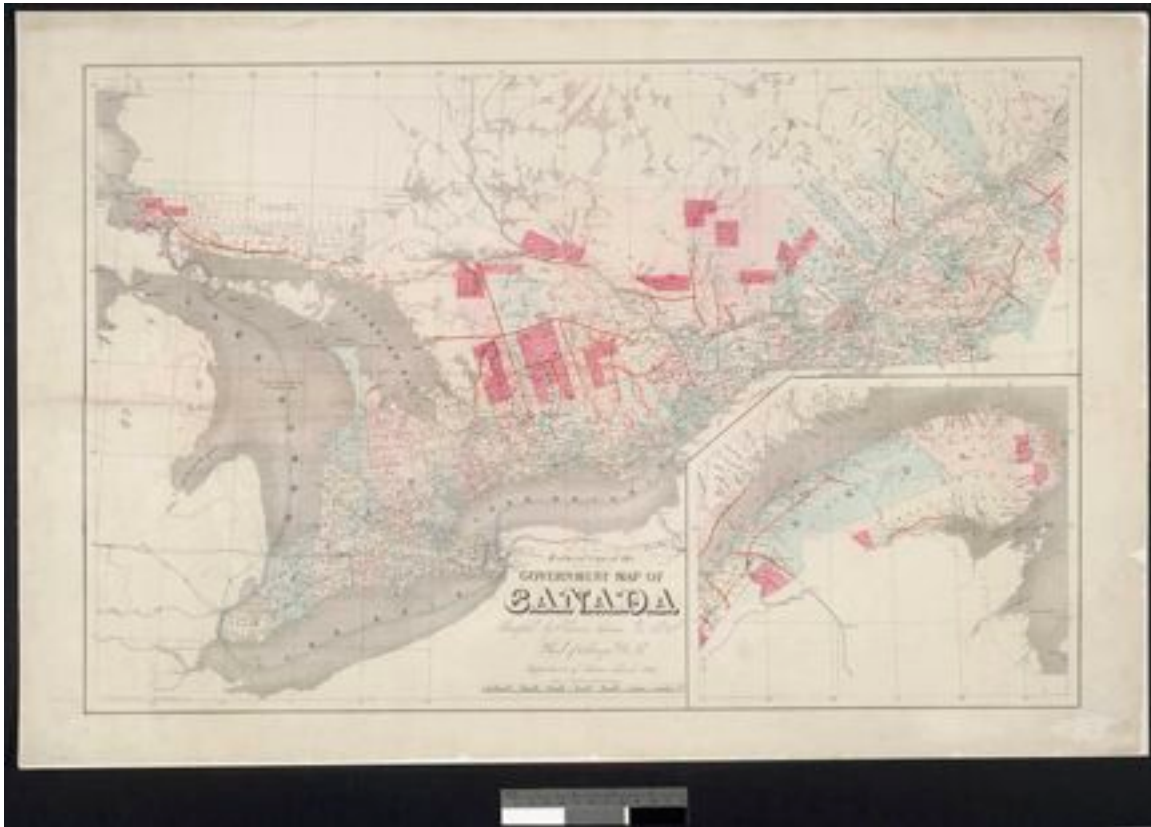


Figure One: Government Map of Canada, 1861  
Source: Library and Archives Canada

Figure One is a map that circulated all over the North Atlantic world from the mid 1850s right through Confederation in 1867 when the “Province of Canada” ceased to exist. It appeared in a wide range of versions, where the scale of representation and physical appearance were dictated by the format of its publication. The “Devine Map,” which is the shorthand I will use to describe it for its draftsman, Thomas Devine, was produced in the context of an explosion in land and route surveying done throughout

the northern forests of Upper Canada in the 1850s and 1860s.<sup>5</sup> This work largely occurred in a region contemporaries called interchangeably the “Ottawa-Huron Tract,” the “Huron-Ottawa Territory,” and the “Ottawa-Huron Territory,” the boundaries of which reached the city of Ottawa in the east, Georgian Bay and Lake Huron in the northwest, the French River in the north, and the edge of the Canadian Shield in the south. (See Figure Two) It was also occurring in older settled areas of the Province where surveyors were updating, refining, and (they hoped) correcting earlier surveys. In addition to the lines and place names, the map also showed the new colonization roads being surveyed and built season-by-season throughout the 1850s and 1860s.

In many versions of the map, Devine also provided extracts, selected and edited by him, from surveyors’ field books that provided more detailed descriptions of a township’s topography and its prospects for agriculture, lumbering, and mineral extraction as well as its overall “fitness” for settlement. A reader could therefore choose a place on the map and then look up its corresponding description in the attached text. What they saw in these extracts was surveyors not only documenting what was in front of them in the field, but also what might emerge from the landscape. J.W. Fitzgerald, for example, concluded his massive survey: “Having thus reviewed the eight Townships ... stating as near as possible the proportions of good and bad land, the description and quality of the timber and soil, it is my opinion that at least 40 per cent of the whole is well adapted for immediate cultivation; besides, a large proportion would,

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<sup>5</sup> For context, see John Ladell, *They Left their Mark: Surveyors and their Role in the Settlement of Ontario* (Toronto : Dundurn Press, 1993) and Michelle Vosburgh, “Agents of progress: The role of Crown land agents and surveyors in the distribution of Crown lands in Upper Canada, 1837-1870,” Unpublished PhD Thesis (McMaster University, 2004).

in the course of time, be rendered available.”<sup>6</sup> A similar projection was made by Quintin Johnston’s survey of four townships along the Hastings Road.<sup>7</sup>

For a decade, the Devine Map was a living map; the first edition was published in 1857, but it was annually revised right up until Confederation in 1867 when the boundaries of “Canada” were dramatically enlarged by the political birth of the country as a nation-state. Each year, more lines and names were added to the blank spaces, and more extracts from surveyors’ field notes appeared in the accompanying text. The Devine Map was a predator of blank space, devouring what earlier maps had often called “waste lands” or, after the Robinson Treaties of 1850, simply “public lands.”

As contemporaries recognized, the most dramatic cartographic changes from Joseph Bouchette’s earlier maps of the Province (1841-1853) occurred in the north-western borderlands of the Ottawa-Huron Tract. (See Figure Two) Whereas Bouchette’s maps featured lines running northwest into blank spaces, like outstretched arms, Devine’s maps gave those lines something to hold on to and to bring back into the centre. Its appetite for this seemingly insatiable, every year the Devine Map overwrote one kind of space on the map and in doing so contributed to the (re)production of a new space out of and over the old. It seems only appropriate, then, that an evolving map of the Ottawa-Huron Tract was published as appendices to the Crown Land Department’s annual reports throughout the early 1860s for it showed that Department fulfilling its

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<sup>6</sup> *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada* (hereafter *JLAC*), 1861, Sessional Paper 15, Appendix 36, Surveyors’ Extracts, J.W. Fitzgerald, surveys of boundary lines between Minden and Stanhope, Dysart and Guilford, Dudley and Harbourn, and Harcourt and Bruton townships.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Quentin Johnston, survey of Limerick, Wollaston, Dungannon, and Faraday townships.

bureaucratic imperative: to make all of the province's territory known and its spaces and population in those spaces governable.<sup>8</sup>



Figure Two: Government Map of the Huron and Ottawa Territory, 1863  
Source: Library and Archives Canada

Of course the Devine Map did none of these things itself. Its appetites and its desires for blank space were the result of those who made and used the map. Here the labour of the Crown Land Department's Provincial Land Surveyors was pivotal. Working under Chief Surveyor Thomas Devine's direction and in his new split-line method, the

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<sup>8</sup> *JLAC*, 1861, Sessional Paper 15, Appendix 36; *JLAC*, 1862, Sessional Paper 11, Appendix 26; *JLAC*, 1863, Sessional Paper 5. This kind of geopolitical reading of the map is encouraged by, among others, Matthew Sparke, *In the Space of Theory: Postfoundational Geographies of the Nation-State* (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2005). While I cannot develop the point here, this kind of surveying had much importance to (and with) the decennial census as it is explained in Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840-1875* (Toronto, Ont. : University of Toronto Press, 2001) and also that of the Geological Survey of Canada as it appears in Suzanne Zeller, *Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation* (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1987).

Provincial Land Surveyors undertook their own “assault” on the northern forests of Upper Canada in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> As Suzanne Zeller remarks, this was the same “expansionist Crown Lands Department” that produced the historiographically well-known isarithmic map of British North America in 1857 that “proved” much of Rupert’s Land was climatically well-suited to agriculture. This map was almost-immediately published in the expansionist Toronto Globe as part of its efforts to force Canadian colonial politicians to seize territorial control of Rupert’s Land from the Hudson’s Bay Company and pursue a transcontinental fantasy.<sup>10</sup>

The Devine Map’s utility was closely related to its more famous cartographic cousin. Its township and county lines as well as the projected colonization roads served to extend the older settled areas of the Province “closer” to where, on the map, Canada met Rupert’s Land. Perhaps it is little wonder, then, that politicians on all sides of the legislature used the Devine Map an instrument for their own domestic imperial ambitions. This was given voice in 1862 by Thomas D’Arcy McGee when he proclaimed, with a not-so-subtle allusion to the then-raging American Civil War: “Fortunately for us

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<sup>9</sup> Devine’s work as an administrator has left a remarkable trail in the archive, something I talk about in more detail in *Landscapes of Longing*. For just one representative example, see Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), RG 1, A-II-2, Vol. 5 “Report Book Regarding settlement and surveying of northern portions of the Province 1856-1866,” Thomas Devine, “Report on Provincial Land Surveyor Francis Jones’ Survey of Part of the township of Canonto,” 28 October 1858.

<sup>10</sup> The classic study of this remains Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980). Owram also points out that another map of the area north and west of the Great Lakes, which Devine also produced in 1857, and drawn almost entirely from American sources, was useful to expansionist claims on the Prairies in this period. (p.60) Suzanne Zeller has done very important work on the connections between science and colonialism within Victorian Canada. In addition to *Inventing Canada*, see “Nature’s Gullivers and Crusoes: The Scientific Exploration of British North America, 1800-1870,” in John L. Allen, ed., *North American Exploration, vol. 3: A Continent Comprehended* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 190-243; “Classical codes: biogeographical assessments of environment in Victorian Canada,” *Journal of Historical Geography*, 24 (1998), 20-35; “The Colonial World as Geological Metaphor: Strata(gems) of Empire in Victorian Canada,” *Osiris* (2001), 85-107.

who advocate the recruiting of a productive rather than destructive army, science with its hammer and its theodolite, has been for twenty years, at work in these wildernesses. Our living geologists have exploded one fallacy – that the granite country between the Ottawa and Lake Huron could never sustain a numerous population....”<sup>11</sup> McGee’s excitement about the map overlapped with his and others’ excitement of the work of the GSC, and thus he muddled the genealogy of the scientific archive he exalted. A parliamentary committee devoted to the question of whether or not it was prudent to promote colonization in the Ottawa-Huron Tract was a little more generous (and accurate) in their explanation of the significance of the Devine Map: “Sir William Logan is of the opinion that fertile land will be found,” they wrote, “and this opinion is borne out, in fact, by the testimony and actual observations of persons familiar with the country, and is also substantiated by the results obtained from the Surveyors’ Reports as exhibited on the colored map of the newly-surveyed Townships, which has been prepared by the Crown Lands Department.”<sup>12</sup>

Together, map and text proved critical to re-making the geographical imagination of political élites. They constructed the framework for a new ontology of the Ottawa-Huron Tract and, by extension, of the larger move north and west. On one

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas D’Arcy McGee, *Emigration and Colonization in Canada: A Speech Delivered in the House of Assembly, Quebec, 25 April 1862* (Quebec: Hunter, Rose & Lemieux, 1862), 20.

<sup>12</sup> “Report of Committee on Ottawa and Georgian Bay Territory,” *JLAC*, 1864, Appendix 8. “First – The Ottawa Tract.” The work of William Logan and the GSC was pivotal to the spatial organization of the Ottawa-Huron Tract. The mapping and surveying performed by the GSC were, in the words of A. J. Russell, “the basis for the projection of their [waste lands of the Crown] subdivision into townships and farm lots...” See the testimony of Russell in “Report of the Select Committee investigating Geological Survey,” *JLAC*, 1854, Appendix L. The complementary relationship between Logan’s maps and these topographical survey maps cannot be discussed here, but the former penetrated the layers of time in the surface while the latter, we shall see, projected time across the surface.



level, map and text were cultural representations “constructing” or even “reconstructing” the geographical identity of the colony as settler space. Yet this does not quite capture the extent of the transformation. We might want to think of this process as one that helped make possible a new way of knowing the region as a settler geography.<sup>13</sup> As such, the map and text became not only technique but also technology. For the storytelling that others did with the map, such as through reference to it in a parliamentary committee or when it appeared inside a larger publication or exhibition display such as that at Paris in 1861, the Devine Map functioned as a technology of inscription layering more factual narrative into the territory being represented. For the northern borderlands, especially, this filling up of the map with stories made for an effective narrative: the Ottawa-Huron Tract was no longer a borderland of wandering aboriginal and métis peoples, fur traders, shantymen, isolated pioneer settlers, and missionaries. It was now a land of boundaries and a field for systematic colonization. It was ready to become actualized settler space.

This dramatic transformation in spatial identity was far more fantasy than reality. In the context of the high politics of state formation and colonization, the map’s gaze was cast away from the past and very much to the future, even though its production and usage was very much rooted in the present. This effect, though, was not restricted to political élites. Consider, for example, the experience of Thomas McMurray who attended a recruitment session in Belfast in the early 1860s given by a Canadian

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<sup>13</sup> I use “ontology” here in Ian Hacking’s formulation as “the coming into being of the very possibility of some objects” from his *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 1-26, quotation from p.2.

immigration agent, J.A. Donaldson, in which attendees were given one of the colonial government's settler guides: "In looking over the map," he later wrote, "I was favourably impressed with the position of Muskoka. Its proximity to Toronto, and its unlimited water facilities, led me to conclude that if the soil was what the surveyors reported it to be, that eventually it must become a place of considerable importance."<sup>14</sup>

As McMurray's recollections suggest, the relationship between maps, mapping, and place making was also worked out in spaces outside the central offices of the state and the legislature. There was a related politics of place unfolding around the Devine Map connected to a different set of surveying practices and involving a different set of fantasies about the making of settler space that, like McMurray's experiences with the map, were decidedly more intimate and localized.

### **Mapping and Place Making**

In addition to those on the map itself, surveyor lines were inscribed on the physical landscape in the form of boundary markers and the application of "official" seals. This work was done by licensed and paid surveyors who hired work teams (some combination of axemen, chainmen, guides, and apprentices) and often did their field work over the course of weeks and months. At the same time as these markers and seals were put down, surveyors' field books filled up with the first, generously-scaled maps depicting what the surveyor could see from a particular location, as well as the schematic collection of data that would later be used to generate the surveyor's field

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas McMurray, J.P., *The Free Grant Lands of Canada, from practical experience of bush farming in the free grant districts of Muskoka and Parry Sound* (Bracebridge: Northern Advocate, 1871), 37.

notes. Given the evolving nature of the Devine Map, and of regional maps such as that of the Ottawa-Huron Tract, all of this work in the field overlapped and intersected with Devine's office work as a draftsman and administrator. The context, however, of this fieldwork was rather different from that of Devine in the capital.

Surveyors' work in the field had an intimate relationship to a related-but-distinct politics of place making. In his memoirs, Seymour Penson recounts how he was taken into the forests around Bracebridge, then an emerging white settlement in Muskoka along the southwestern edges of the Ottawa-Huron Tract, in the early 1860s. Penson and other would-be settlers were led by two guides who "clung tenaciously to the [surveyor's] line" for fear of getting lost. Even though this was only the front, Penson's guides assured him that the entire lot resembled its frontage. The next day, Penson went to the local Crown Lands Office, chose his lot from a surveyor's map and field notes, had his claim recorded in the official land register, and then proceeded into the forests with his friends and extended family. While he admits in his memoirs that this was "a very unbusinesslike" manner to choose a lot for settlement, he also insists, "this was only what hundreds of men from the British Isles did when these lands were being settled. If any of us had strayed a hundred yards from the blazed trees we should have been totally lost ... and if we had travelled the lots end to end I doubt if we should have been much wiser, for the thick mat of leaves that cover the floor of a northern forest,

and the difficulty of seeing the rocky ridges in the thick timber, would probably have deceived our inexperienced eyes. In fact all the bush looked alike to us.”<sup>15</sup>

While Penson invested his trust into the boundary markers and surveyors’ field notes for his desires for a new home for himself and his family, other settlers saw boundary markers as essential for a slightly larger scale of place-making. Consider one early white settler in the Ottawa-Huron Tract who complained that the absence of official, surveyed property “denied the benefits of civilization.” In a letter to the newspaper, he bemoaned how he and his neighbouring settlers were instead “kept in a state of anarchy, with scarcely a single check but physical force, against lawlessness, and every inducement to violence and injustice.” “John McMullan, A Squatter” argued that, for three years, settlement on un-surveyed lands had caused “several Law Suits between themselves for *imagined* trespass on each other.” He also said that twice in the past year, “bodies numbering over *fifty* men” had come armed “to decide by mortal fight boundaries of antagonistic neighbours in the Lake Doré District.”<sup>16</sup> In the absence of boundary markers, local violence struggled to make these boundaries “seen” and for John McMullan this was not only dangerous but precluded the kind of permanence and social order that underscored his imagination of place.

Similar local concerns were also at the root of Andrew Russell’s reprimanding of Duncan Sinclair, P.L.S., for delaying land, township, and route survey work in the Upper Ottawa Valley. (Sinclair had taken on some survey work in Lower Canada.) Russell told

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<sup>15</sup> “Seymour Penson and His Muskoka Neighbours, Part I: An Autobiography,” *East Georgian Bay Historical Journal*, 3 (1983), 183.

<sup>16</sup> *Bytown Packet* (later named the *Ottawa Citizen*), 05 October 1850. All emphases are in the originals.

his erstwhile correspondent that the region's "County Councils...are pressing for the survey of the lands adjunctious [sic] to the [existing] line..."<sup>17</sup> For local councils and rival timber companies to govern themselves in the backwoods of Upper Canada, and for the former to raise taxes, build schools, and secure loans from the provincial state, property lots and township boundaries had to be marked both on the map and on the ground. So it was that letters of worry and complaint were complemented by others celebrating the arrival of surveyors and, with them, the arrival of official lines of property.<sup>18</sup> For a variety of reasons, therefore, many (but not all) local white settlers saw inscribed boundary markers as a moderating influence on the excessive passions and desires of those prone to "trespass" and "lawlessness."<sup>19</sup>

This local utility, however, required visibility to be effective and surveyors worked hard to ensure that their lines and markers could be seen. Seymour Penson wrote that when he arrived in Bracebridge, "the lands were recently surveyed, and...the surveyor's work in blazing the trees and planting the common stakes, was quite plain even to the plainest of eyes."<sup>20</sup> Penson was not alone in being able to see these lines on the land, but others who saw them raised questions about the socio-political order these lines inscribed, about the differences they produced and the relationships they demanded.

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<sup>17</sup> Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), MG 24, I 83, Duncan Sinclair Papers, 1852-1854, Russell to Sinclair, 22 October 1852.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, a letter from the settlers of Wilberforce in the *Bytown Packet* 31 January 1852 and a plea from Grattan Township in the same newspaper 20 March 1852.

<sup>19</sup> But does this mean, therefore, that here is the inevitable "liberal ordering" of Canada? I shall leave that question for a different essay, but the short, abbreviated answer is, "not necessarily."

<sup>20</sup>"Seymour Penson and His Muskoka Neighbours," 183.

Since Governor General Francis Bond Head's experiments in reserve-making in the late 1830s, Manitoulin Island (and areas near it along the shores of Lake Huron and Lake Superior) was a fluid territory since the limits of aboriginal and non-aboriginal presence on the island were never clearly defined on the land much less on the map.<sup>21</sup> This fluidity was challenged by the Robinson Treaties that were intended to formerly cede aboriginal claim for much of the territory around Lakes Huron and Superior including the archipelago and shorelines of Georgian Bay. In support of these treaty ambitions, Provincial Land Surveyor John S. Dennis was sent out with instructions to "plant substantial posts at the front and rear Angles of the Reserves making I.R. [Indian Reserves] & C.L. [Crown Lands] respectively on the posts...." He was also told: "From the posts or other boundaries at the front points of the Reserves you will take the angular bearings of such islands, points or other remarkable fixed objects as would tend to identify the limits of the Reserves." While such acts of inscription were expected to eliminate the confusion over boundaries, local aboriginal chiefs were unsure: "Great Father...in describing our Reserves we did not understand the distance of miles, but we

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<sup>21</sup> On Bond Head, see Theodore Binnema and Kevin Hutchings, "The Emigrant and the Noble Savage: Sir Francis Bond Head's Romantic Approach to Aboriginal Policy in Upper Canada, 1836-1838," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 39, 1 (2005), 115-138. On the complexity of aboriginal and non-aboriginal relations involving the island in the 1850s and 1860s see, among others, John Joseph Borrows, "'Traditional Use, Treaties and Land Title Settlements: A Legal History of the Anishnabe of Manitoulin Island,'" Unpublished PhD Thesis (York University, 2004), esp. 111-189; Douglas Leighton, "The Manitoulin Incident of 1863: An Indian-White Confrontation in the Province of Canada," *Ontario History* 69, 2 (1977), 113-124; Ruth Bleasdale, "Manitowaning: An Experiment in Indian Settlement," *Ontario History*, 66, 3 (1974), 147-157.

gave certain points & we hope that in the Survey those Boundaries will be adhered to & not the imaginary space which a term conveys to us tho' well known to you." <sup>22</sup>

The "imaginary space" of "miles." This concern of the chiefs is a critical reminder of the talking past of one another that often occurred in colonial contact zones, a reflection in this case of two different forms of geographical knowing (of distance) making communication of "the facts" exceedingly difficult if not impossible. Yet consider this lament in the larger context of the quotation: the chiefs shared completely the meaning of the lines on the ground and the blazing of the posts as "boundaries," as the edges of not simply where they belonged but also where their "other," white settlers, did not. For the chiefs, however, those "certain points" existing on the landscape were more tangible, tactile, and material than the arbitrary and abstract representation of distance in "miles." The latter required not only knowledge of imperial measurement, but also a trained and experienced eye to see distance as units of this imperial standard. Possessing a different training and experience, the chiefs saw the same topography and the same distance but they saw a different landscape of territory. The cultural and historical framing of their sight, and thus the disciplining of their knowledge, was radically different from that of the land surveyor, his tools ("the chain", the compass, and the theodolite), and the Cartesian logic that underwrote all land surveying.

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<sup>22</sup> Quotations appear in Michael Mallarat, "The Calamity of the Initial Reserve Surveys under the Robinson Treaties", *Papers of the 35<sup>th</sup> Algonquian Conference*, ed. H.C. Wolfart (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2004), 289-291.

Yet the chiefs, like white settlers Seymour Penson and John McMullan, were responding to a set of inscriptions of settler space that had immediate significance for their localized efforts of place making. Rather than occurring on the paper of a map and textual descriptions, however, here the inscription of settler space on the land itself became both a site of consolidation and conflict for this emerging new order of things. On Manitoulin Island, at least, aboriginal peoples demonstrated a keen understanding of what was being signified by these inscriptions: not only would they contain “native space” but, if adhered to as promised by treaty negotiators, these lines would also contain settler space. For settlers, these inscriptions were to provide security for themselves from each other; not only the very real episodes of trespass that John McMullan wrote about, but also security from the threat of trespass and confiscation that gave Seymour Penson the confidence to take up residence. Indeed, where these surveyors’ inscriptions appeared and in what form were thought to be essential to allowing those living with them to get on to the everyday challenges of building, governing, and eventually passing-on homes and communities. So if the Devine Map was about a future landscape of settler space not-yet-realized, surveyors’ lines on the land were about the same landscape’s present-in-the-(re)making.

### **Seeing and Remembering Settler Space in Upper Canada**

In the generation that followed Confederation, when Upper Canada / Canada West became Ontario, the Devine Map and others like it became the cartographic



framework for a generation of popular county atlases.<sup>23</sup> Often appearing under the imprint of an American publisher, and belonging to a thriving American market of local and regional atlases, thirty-two county atlases about Upper Canada, or “Ontario” as it was now called, appeared in the 1870s and early 1880s.<sup>24</sup> Composed of fairly extensive local historical geographies describing the evolution of both social and physical geographies, plus numerous maps, biographical sketches, and graphic illustrations of both places and people, these atlases added new kinds of thematic and chronological depth to the “fact of the landscape” that the earlier maps and surveyor reports had established. In doing so, time became projected across the surface of the landscape, marking it as historically-produced.

The commercial maps in the atlases looked much like the Devine Map, with the same neat rectangles, the same lines of communication and travel, and the same outlines of townships and property lots. The major difference was that these maps were often impregnated with family names: owners and occupiers who were doing the work of translating the promise of making settler space into a material reality. (See Figure Three) Who appeared as one of these makers was tied less to the fact of presence and more to social hierarchies. Due to their publication and commercial history – publishers relied on paid subscriptions in advance from local people and

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<sup>23</sup> The atlases were accompanied by a tradition of commercial county maps produced under the direction of George Tremaine and H.F. Walling. Excellent reproductions of these are visible in R. Louis Genticlore and C. Grant Head, *Ontario's History in Maps* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 102-103.

<sup>24</sup> Cheryl Lyon-Jenness, “Picturing Progress: Assessing the Nineteenth-Century Atlas-Map Bonanza,” *Michigan Historical Review* 30, 2 (2004), 167-210.

institutions who wanted to be featured – the atlases allowed for already-established local identities to be located as iconographic markers and makers of “place.”<sup>25</sup>

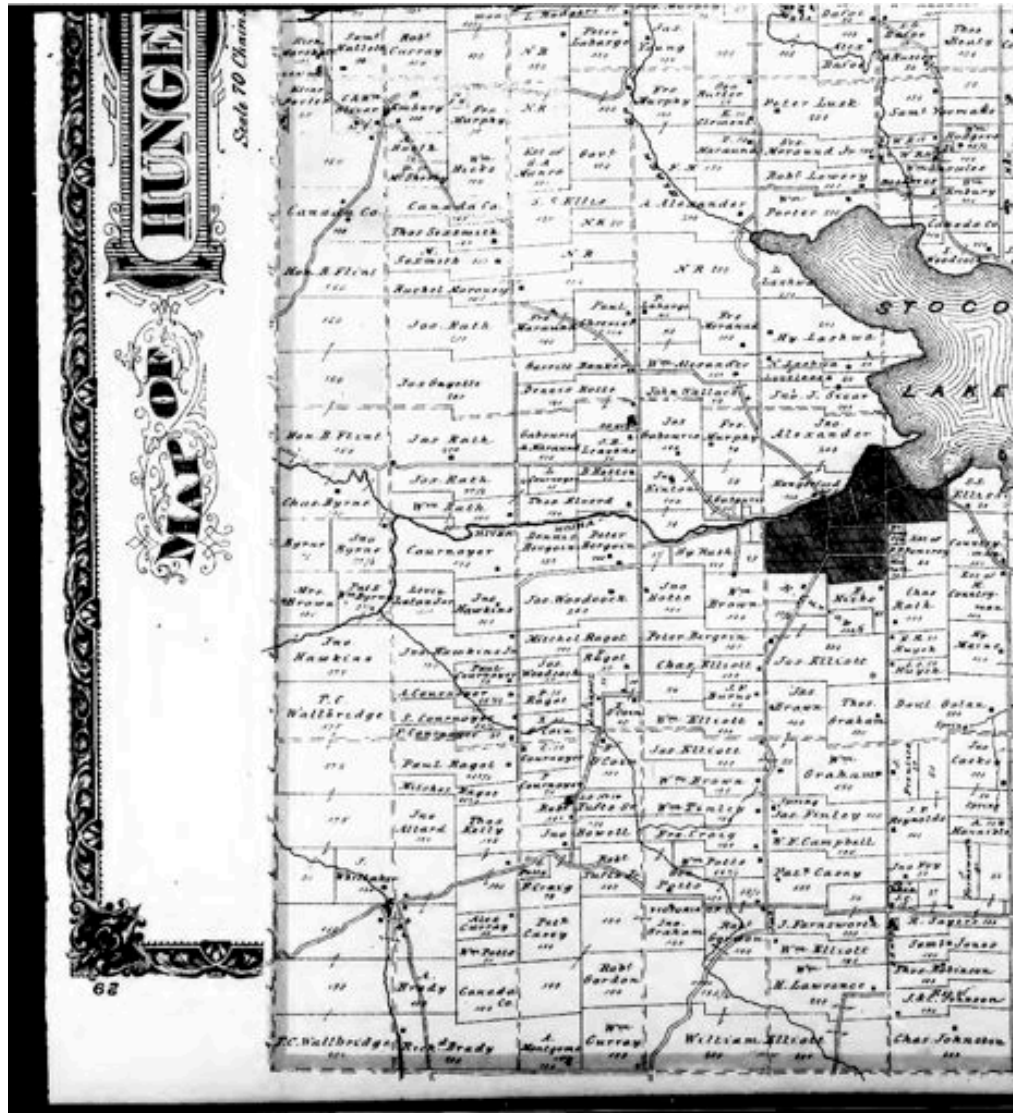


Figure Three: Extract from Hungerford Township  
Source: *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties*  
(Toronto: H. Belden & Co., 1878), 29.

These new names inscribed on the map were contributions to a larger narrative of “second creation” in the atlases. Second creation narratives, as David Nye explains,

<sup>25</sup> The centennial re-publication of these atlases sometimes altered this by using census and assessment roles to add more names onto the maps.

are those that demonstrate how historical actors fulfil the promise and potential of God's first creation, Nature.<sup>26</sup> Second-creation narratives in the atlases were given the specificity by the several thousand words describing the county's local history and by the tapestry of carefully-drawn graphic art pictures of a county's buildings, farms, and notables. As shown in Figure Four, the aesthetics of these inscriptions belonged to a well-established representational practice of speaking "truth to nature" in that the artist sought to capture the essence as much as the factuality of the landscape.<sup>27</sup> In every image, themes of order, productivity, and permanence dominate. For their part, the hovering faces of property and local business owners served to underline the genealogical function of the atlases: these were literally and figuratively the founding fathers and mothers of the townships.

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<sup>26</sup> David E. Nye, *America as Second Creation: Technology and Narratives of New Beginnings* (MIT Press, 2003).

<sup>27</sup> Lorraine Datson and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 55-113.

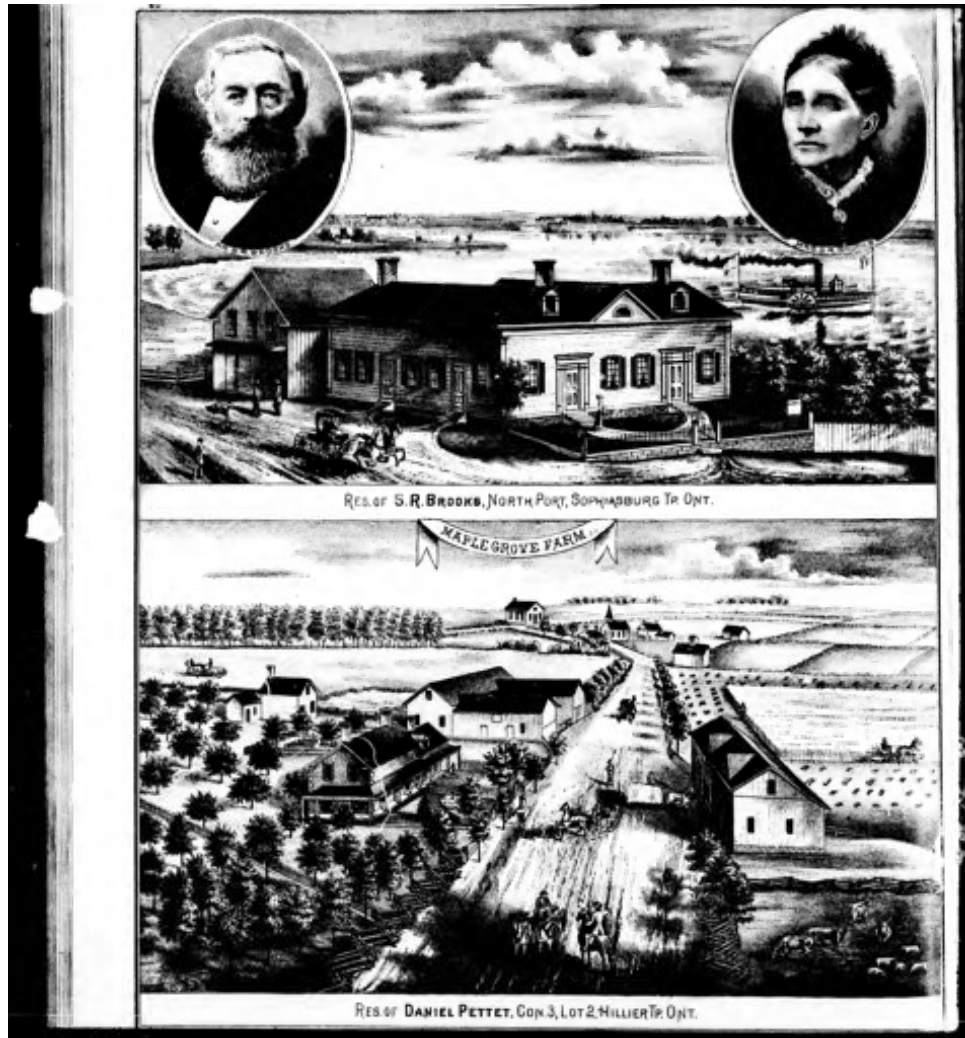


Figure Four: Residences of S.R. Brooks (Sophiasburg, ON) and Daniel Pettet (Hillier, ON)  
Source: *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties*, 20.

While some elements of the atlas were very much rooted in the present, they were also self-conscious about telling and preserving a (hi)story of Upper Canada defined by the making of settler space and both the unmaking and remaking of native space. While “Indians” appeared in the atlases’ they appeared in the written histories as figures from the early or even pre-history of a county’s past. By the 1870s and 1880s, aboriginal peoples simply did not belong among the kind of spaces and places being displayed in these atlases: cultivated farms, neat Victorian houses, towns, mills, factories, churches,

and schools. This was even the case for a place as saturated in recent Upper-Canadian history as Tyendinaga. The *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties* explained that it was “named after and in honour of the celebrated chief of the Six Nations Indians” and had been home since 1793 for some of the Mohawk who had demonstrated loyalty to the British Crown in the American Revolution. However, “the land being of first-class quality, and heavily timbered, was rapidly taken up by actual settlers. In 1840, the remaining north part of the township was surveyed, placed in market, and also sold by the Government for the benefit of the Indians.”<sup>28</sup> In the atlas, this emptying of the township was not only legal and in the best interests of the Mohawk, but it also inscribed the Mohawk as belonging on the reserve located just east of the township’s borders.<sup>29</sup> Into the void stepped “actual settlers” who would transform the “land of first-class quality” into the productive landscapes now shown in the atlas.

This inscription of settler space and settler places was a deeply classed and racialized process made to appear historically organic, natural, and inevitable by the county atlases. In this respect, they very much functioned as sites for the inscription and edification of “place memories.” Place memories are memories anchored in place, but this expression also refers to the ways in which memory contributes to place making. While this effect seems clear for nineteenth-century audiences of the atlases, it also continued right through the twentieth century.

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<sup>28</sup> *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties*, v-vi.

<sup>29</sup> This historical narrative is, of course, highly problematic. Contrast it with how the Mohawk at Tyendinaga narrate this same chapter of their past at <http://www.mbg-tmt.org/community/history-of-tyendinaga>.

In the mid 1970s, a century after they were originally published, all of the county atlases were reprinted and sold (some as numbered limited editions) to local buyers as well as academic and public libraries, museums, and archives. Some of the re-prints featured small changes, but for the most part the re-issues were photocopies of the originals. As part of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Peter Robinson settlers, Peterborough County decided to issue their own historical atlas based on the earlier model, even though Peterborough was one of the few Upper Canadian counties not to receive the Belden treatment in the nineteenth century. The *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Peterborough County* was enthusiastically reviewed in the *Canadian Historical Review* (by J.M.S. Careless) and *Queen's Quarterly* (by Brian Osborne), with the former calling it, “an unusual, imaginative, and quite successful attempt to recreate a historical atlas in the format of the 1870s, when a number of these were produced for the counties of Ontario, which now provide valuable sources of information for regional historians of the province.”<sup>30</sup> Careless was speaking mainly of academic research, but Gerald Boyce, who oversaw the re-issue of the *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties* spoke about its importance for more popular forms of historical research and knowledge: “For almost a century, this atlas (generally known as the *Belden Atlas*, after the name of the publisher) has been regarded as an excellent historical source. It is valued for its detailed maps, stylized sketches, and

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<sup>30</sup> J.M.S. Careless, review of A.O. Cole, ed., *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Peterborough County* (Peterborough: Peterborough Historical Atlas Foundation, 1977) in *Canadian Historical Review of Canada* 58, 1 (1977), 69.

comprehensive text.”<sup>31</sup> In both cases, the comments of Careless and Boyce signalled that, by the 1970s, the atlases functioned as archives and not just as documents.

They were hardly alone in doing so. In *Ontario’s History in Maps*, R. Louis Genticlore and C. Grant Head interpreted one sample from the Belden atlases, a graphic illustration of a family farm (much like that in Figure Four), as follows: “The layout of fields, the works in progress, the solidity of the buildings bespeak the family’s accomplishment in this part of Old Ontario.”<sup>32</sup> Even Brian Osborne’s nuanced review, while well aware of the Victorian culture splashed on almost every page, could not resist recommending the atlas as archive: “the [Peterborough] atlas constitutes a valuable resource for the genealogist, the local historian, and all who are interested in the material landscape and social setting of this section of Ontario as it was a hundred years ago.”<sup>33</sup>

There is nothing inherently “wrong” with such readings of these historical atlases. Like the statistical data of censuses, maps and the surveying work from which they were derived, are full of factual information. Yet just like the census, maps are also constructed facts that affect how one sees, knows, and, in the case of the county atlases, remembers the world. Scholars have an obligation to intervene in these processes, to call attention to the history of the facts upon, from, and through which

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<sup>31</sup> Gerald Boyce, ed., *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the Counties of Hastings and Prince Edward, Ontario* (Belleville: Mika Publishing, 1977 [orig. 1878]), n.p.

<sup>32</sup> Genticlore and Head, *Ontario’s History in Maps*, 105.

<sup>33</sup> Brian Osborne, review of *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Peterborough County*, in *Queen’s Quarterly* 83, 4 (1976), 672.

historical narratives and memories are being formed.<sup>34</sup> To do otherwise is to remove from history these facts and the narratives and truths constructed with them. Inscribed place memories are always contested, of course, but they can also be difficult to refine or even remake, especially with historical geographies like Upper Canada. Just ask the Mohawk of Tyendinaga or Six Nations.

### **Concluding Thoughts (More or Less)**

In this essay I have (briefly) explored three related cartographic histories as they involved the Devine Map. In the first instance, we saw how the map was a technology of rule, both a monument to and a site of the power-knowledge practices at the heart of governmentality in the Province of Canada. In the second section, there was more focus on how the Devine Map, or more accurately the field work that was done to make the Devine Map as it represented the Ottawa-Huron Tract, was also a contact zone where the inscribed boundaries of “native” and “settler” space were being worked over both from without and within the region. As discussed in the third section of this essay, though, this contested history was soon mapped over in the 1870s and 1880s by a new generation of commercial cartography that re-purposed the Devine Map as a historical document and an archive of place-making.

While contemporary, nineteenth-century audiences were highly-cognizant of how the Devine Map (and its related practices) contributed to the politics of place making, at both “national” and “local” scales, once the map became a repository its

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<sup>34</sup>As his prolific work on memory would indicate this is something Brian Osborne would likely do should he have reviewed the *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Peterborough County* today. Jim Opp and I argue this point more generally in “Introduction: Local Acts of Placing and Remembering,” esp. 15-16.



politics became muted, subdued, repressed. In this regard, the Devine Map not only inscribed settler space in Upper Canada, it was also a technology that consumed history. Maps, it seems, do not have to lie in order to deceive. Still, one wonders, how have other maps travelled? What new possibilities for being, or ontologies, has this kind of mobility created? And might this process be a site of a progressive politics or even one of resistance? For Upper Canada, at least, these seem to be questions we need to pose of its settler past if we are to affect a better future.