



UNDERSTANDING CANADA

A Primer for Americans

Joseph-André Senécal, *Editor*



Nationalism and the Dilemmas of Modern Canadian Politics

by Jeffrey M. Ayres

The Beaver and the Elephant: a History of Canadian–American Relations

by David Massell

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11. Based on past fluctuations in support, assess the future of Quebec nationalism.
12. How might an elected Senate alter the convention of responsible government in the Canadian political tradition?
13. How might recent Canadian federal election results been different had a proportional election system been in place?
14. Assess the staying power for the federal Liberal government in the near future.

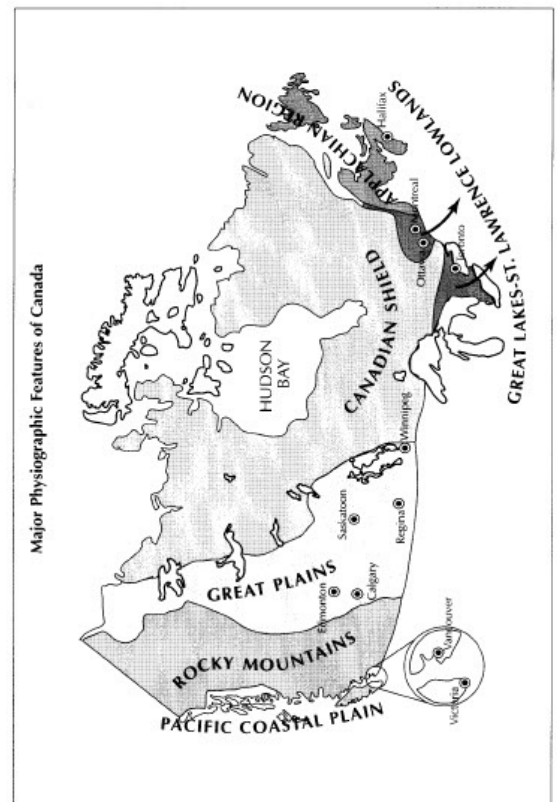
The Beaver and the Elephant: a History of Canadian- American Relations¹

David Massell

As 21st century Americans, we take our relationship with Canada entirely for granted. And why not? Canada poses no threat, military or otherwise. Its economy is largely dependent on our own. Canadian citizens (except French-speaking Quebecers) seem unrecognizable from ourselves. The two societies share similar democratic traditions and values. The famously peaceful and porous U.S.-Canadian border beckons American tourists and dollars north. Meanwhile the occasional spat over lumber, fish, steel, acid rain or agricultural imports, navigation of the Northwest Passage, or foreign policy coordination in the Middle East or elsewhere remains largely overlooked by the American press and public south of the border. Yet the present should not obscure the past. In fact, the current peaceful, if at times prickly, relationship between the two countries belies a long and dynamic history that has shaped the development and character of both the United States and Canada. This history includes large-scale military invasion in addition to cooperation, huge movements of people and ideas and trade, a sometimes uneasy defensive alliance in NORAD and NATO, and a century's aggressive export to Canada of American popular culture. The purpose of this brief study is to sketch what is in

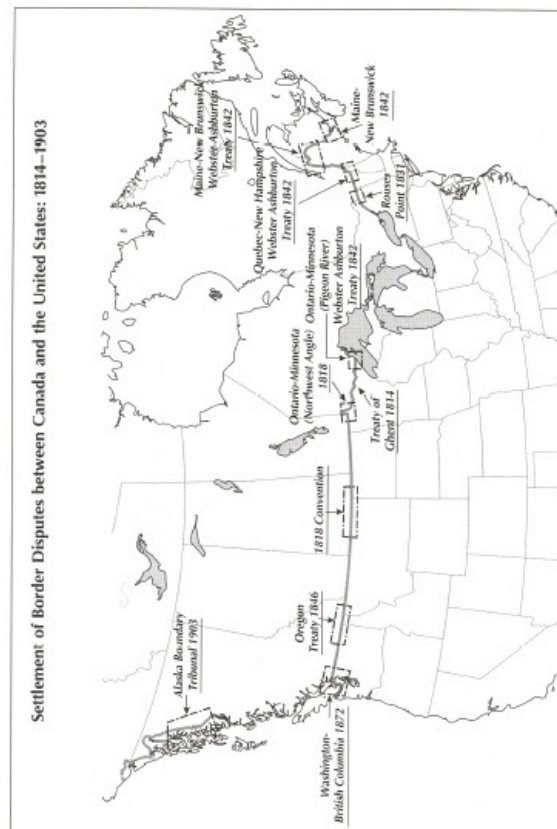
fact a very rich political, economic and cultural Canadian-American interrelationship from the era of the American Revolution to the present.

This story should prove downright useful as well as engaging. Canadian-American relations offers a vivid illustration of the interplay and mutual influence of two North American nations that parted political company in 1776 while remaining tightly bound by geography. From the American Revolution, forward, Canada and the United States evolved their own distinct histories, different political systems and political cultures, and distinctly different styles of solving North American problems. All the while, and especially from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, Canada had to contend with the growing political and economic influence of the rising U.S. power to the south, including efforts by Americans to colonize their hemispheric neighbors for territorial gain or market expansion. This is a story, then, with a simple and compelling arc: the story of a divergence of ways in the eighteenth century, followed by the gradual merger of cultures and economies and even government bureaucracies through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to the extent that the "average American" can no longer tell the difference between him/herself and our northern neighbors. The study of Canadian-American relations provides an unparalleled opportunity for U.S. citizens to consider the world beyond our borders in an effort to understand our place within it – to fathom the nature of our own society and thus ourselves. Perhaps no other field of study provides a better opportunity for American students to do comparative history.



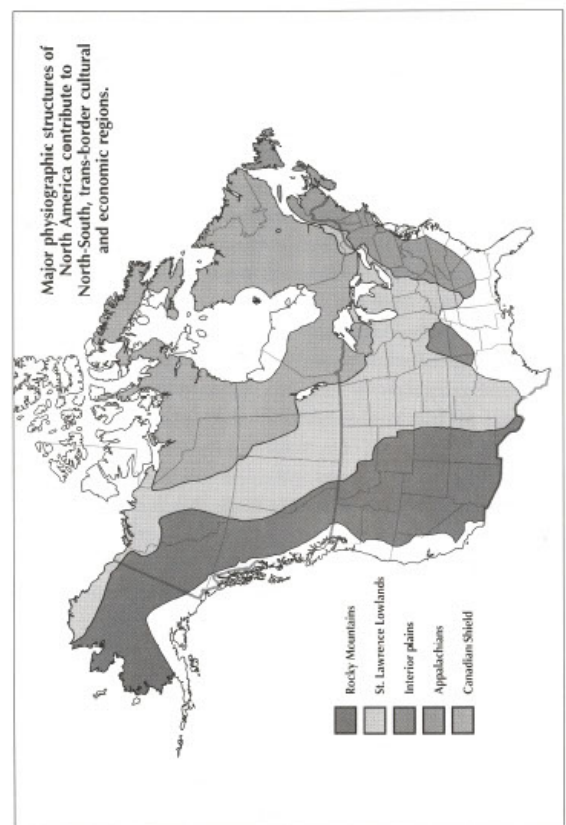
History, of course, takes place in geography, and North American geography defines both the setting and the stakes of the Canadian-American relationship. Of Canada's major underlying physiographic regions (Canadian Shield, Rocky Mountains, Appalachian Mountains, St. Lawrence Lowlands, Prairies) scholars point to two of these that distinguish Canada from the United States. Historian Harold Innis was among the first to articulate in the 1920s how the St. Lawrence River offered a unique point of access to the Shield (or Laurentian Plateau). In what became known as the Laurentian Thesis, Innis and others argued that Canadian geography had actually favored the creation of an east-west territorial axis, as French and then British settlers worked to produce and harvest Canada's major staples – fur, then timber, wheat, and minerals – for export to metropolitan markets, including Europe. The broad patterns of the landscape, Laurentian School members suggested, actually fostered the creation and survival of the Canadian nation-state; and Canada's current Atlantic-to-Pacific boundaries reflect human/geographic interaction along east-west lines.²

Others have noted a very different pattern in the landscape, with very different implications for Canada. Goldwin Smith was an Oxford historian who migrated to Canada in the late nineteenth century, married well, and then settled into a career as a political commentator with a very sharp wit. In 1891, when Canada was just one generation old, Smith wrote a now-famous work entitled *Canada and the Canadian Question*. Here he expressed a conviction (which was shared by other historians



as well as geographers and economists) that Canadian independence was not geographically viable. Canada is, after all, partitioned by the natural north-south barriers of the continent, including the Appalachian chain which divides the Maritimes from the St. Lawrence, the Shield which bars the St. Lawrence Lowlands from the Prairies, and the imposing western mountain ranges which isolate British Columbia from the rest. All the while, these same barriers define Canada's several populated regions (Maritimes, St. Lawrence, Prairies, West Coast) as merely the northward extensions of similar regions in the far more populous and powerful United States. Canada's geographic divisions, moreover, are augmented by regional divisions by ethnicity, especially between the French and English peoples of Quebec and Ontario. Smith's "Canadian question" remains legitimate more than a century after it was posed: "whether the four blocks of territory constituting the Dominion can forever be kept by political agencies united among themselves and separate from their Continent." Put another way, given the geopolitical realities of North America, how can Canada possibly resist commercial integration, and eventual political unification, with the United States?³

Certainly the "pre-history" of U.S.-Canada relations (before the birth of the United States) demonstrates the interconnectedness and porosity of what became the continent's current borders. Archeologists tell us that modern humans likely entered North America by way of the Siberian-Alaskan land bridge some 14,000 to 75,000 years ago. They migrated south across many generations through what is now the Yukon



Territories and British Columbia (thus Canada), before entering what would become the lower forty-eight states. At the time of European-Native contact, North American Native cultures and language groups spanned what became the U.S.-Canadian boundaries. Nomadic Great Plains tribes followed the bison across the length and breadth of North America's grasslands. Similarly, the sedentary Northwest Coast peoples relied on salmon across what is now British Columbia and the northwest States, as did the Northeastern Woodlands peoples of both Eastern Canada and New England mix hunting with the cultivation of maize. Canada's Cree in the vicinity of James Bay spoke in an Algonkian language, as did the Pequots and Narragansetts of what would become Massachusetts. In the period of French incursion into North America, similarly, (1608-1763) natural features tended to link, rather than separate, the continent. With the aid of Indian allies, the French established fur trading posts and military forts in two great arcs across North America: from the mouth of the St. Lawrence, northwest to the Rocky Mountains, and also southwest via the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. Native peoples and French empire-builders, alike, remind us of the artificiality of the eventual U.S.-Canadian territorial lines.

Divergence

Our formal history of U.S.-Canada relations begins, however, in political separation rather than merger. And this "celebrated North American divorce," as the American socialist Seymour Martin Lipset dubs it, resulted from the American Revolution.¹

By the 1770s, what was to become Canada was a collection of British colonies including French-settled Quebec as well as French-, British- and German-settled Nova Scotia. Both held strategic importance to the revolutionaries because they controlled the vital water passages of the St. Lawrence and Richelieu rivers, yet neither French Quebecers nor Nova Scotia's "neutral Yankees" accepted American invitations to join the uprising against England. Seeking to preempt a British invasion from the North by taking these colonies by force, Americans led by officers Benedict Arnold and Richard Montgomery struck north. Although Montreal surrendered to the advancing armies late in 1775, the stronghold of Quebec City held. The British southward counterstroke toward New York City failed when it was stopped two years later at Saratoga. In the end, military stalemate was the result in this northern theatre of the Revolutionary War.

While military invasion sputtered, a quieter invasion followed the Treaty of Paris of 1783 that ended the war. These migrants were Americans who had remained loyal to the British Crown and now took refuge in what remained of British North America. Of the some forty thousand so-called Loyalists three fourths settled in the Maritimes (there were roughly 100,000 French in the colony of Quebec at the time, and perhaps 200,000 colonists in the British-held territory as a whole). The remaining fourth established homesteads in the fertile St. Lawrence valley lands west of Montreal. Among these were British aristocrats and destitute farmers, Native Americans as well as African-American ex-slaves. Their impact on British

North America was to be profound. Loyalists founded the new British colony of New Brunswick (1784). They caused the British government to split Quebec into eastern and western parts, called Lower Canada and Upper Canada (1791), the future provinces of Quebec and Ontario. These colonies reflected different traditions in law, language and religion. Loyalists imparted their own conservative political values to all of British North America in their support for governmental authority in the British Crown. Although the loyalists supported the British tradition of representative governance, they rejected what they deemed the radical excesses of American republicanism. In this way the Revolution planted the seeds of two countries and not one, sociologist Lipset argues: "The United States is the country of the revolution, Canada of the counterrevolution."⁵

Canadians would continue to reject the revolutionary option, along with U.S. influence generally, through the middle of the nineteenth century. This was certainly so during the War of 1812. This conflict is remembered by Americans as a second war of independence from England, but Canadians are eager to point out that the conflict marked a second, failed military invasion of Canada from the south. The war originated in tensions between the youthful United States and Great Britain over free trade on the high seas. However, in recognition of Britain's world-class navy, and hoping to quell British-aided Indian attacks on the western frontier, American generals chose to avoid a losing sea battle and instead to strike at what they deemed was Britain's vulnerable Canadian flank. Once again, Americans counted on the support and cooperation of local

Canadian citizens, and once again those hopes were dashed. Loyalists and French Canadians, alike, remained either neutral in the fight or loyal to Great Britain. Neither side succeeded in crushing the opposing army or altering the border. Military stalemate was again the result, and the boundaries fixed by the American Revolution remained in force in the Treaty of Ghent of 1814. Four years later, British and American negotiators agreed that the 49th parallel would serve as dividing line west of the Great Lakes to the Rocky Mountains.

We should note that the war did not resolve territorial claims along the full length of the current U.S.-Canadian border. Determining the precise line between Maine and New Brunswick could well have deteriorated into a war over timber rights, had British Lord Ashburton, who was married to an American, not negotiated a settlement with the American Secretary of State, Daniel Webster. The U.S. Senate ratified the Webster-Ashburton Treaty in 1842. Similarly, the massive and resource-rich Oregon Territory, claimed by both the U.S. and Britain, would require concerted diplomatic efforts to avoid a fight that had been picked by the bellicose U.S. President James Polk. The agreed-upon line of compromise, settled by treaty in 1846, would in fact follow the 49th parallel, giving the U.S. control of the mouth of the great Columbia River.

The War of 1812 accentuated the ideological, as well as geographic divisions of the continent. The young republic could congratulate itself for having fought the former mother country to a draw and affirming its status as an independent nation. General and war hero (and later President) Andrew Jackson

stepped onto the national political stage, and the war supplied a national anthem composed during the British bombardment of Baltimore's Fort McHenry. British North Americans, similarly, praised the heroic exploits and loyal hearts of its own people, including British General Isaac Brock, the martyred defender of Queenston Heights, and Upper Canadian settler Laura Secord, for having kept American invaders at bay. Secord, whose home was commandeered by Americans, overheard enemy battle plans and ran through enemy lines to warn British troops and their Iroquois allies. As a result, the story goes, the Canadians (actually British regulars and Natives) won the Battle of Beaver Dam. Canadian anti-Americanism intensified, rather than diminishing, and this sentiment moved Upper Canadian authorities to pass legislation stopping further American immigrants from settling the fertile Niagara Peninsula (some 50,000 had entered the region up to 1812). "The speedy settlement of the Colony, however desirable," one postwar governor put it, "is a secondary object compared to its settlement in such a manner as shall best secure its attachment to British Laws and Government." Further British immigrants to the Canadas did in fact ensure that the St. Lawrence valley retained its British character and political institutions. By 1851, according to census data, immigrants from the British Isles outnumbered those that traced their ancestry to the United States by a ratio of seven to one.

No wonder, then, that British North Americans remained largely aloof from the influence of American republican values during this period, including during the tense events of the Rebellions of 1837-38. These brief but violent episodes - revolu-

tions, really, albeit on a relatively small scale - did in fact shake the colonial societies of both Upper and Lower Canada. The rebels of Upper Canada were of English or Scottish origin, while the reformers of Lower Canada were mostly French Canadians; otherwise, they shared a common desire for greater representative democracy as exemplified by the United States. While Upper Canadian rebel leader William Lyon Mackenzie praised "Jacksonian democracy" and modeled his declaration of grievances on the Declaration of Independence, Louis-Joseph Papineau's "Patriots" quoted Thomas Jefferson and formed a paramilitary organization called the Sons of Liberty ("les Fils de la liberté"). Supporting the Canadian rebels with both money and arms, Americans in border towns like Burlington, Vermont saw another opportunity to annex Canada to the United States.

Why, then, did the Rebellions fail? They failed because political reformers seeking more democracy constituted but a fraction of the Canadian populace, the significant majority retaining their loyalty to an established elitist order under the British Crown. "Theirs were distinctly minority reports," historian S.F. Wise has written, and "the prevailing picture was still a conservative one."⁶ Representative government in Canada advanced by increments (by evolution not revolution, it is often said) and only as Britain granted it. The Canadas' first elected assemblies had been allowed in 1791 (New Brunswick: 1784; Nova Scotia, 1758). In the wake of the Rebellions, a British political reformer, Lord Durham, inspected the colonies and recommended an additional measure of self-governance. The British Crown eventually implemented his recommendations for

"responsible government" in 1848 by which the colonial Governor was obliged to select his ministers from the majority party of the assembly instead of simply choosing them himself. Thus through the middle of the nineteenth century British North America pursued its own distinct political course, albeit in the shadow, and within the influential range, of an increasingly powerful and expansionist United States.

U.S. expansionism posed a particular threat to British North Americans during the American Civil War of 1861-1865. Here was yet another conflict, as in 1775 and 1812, that saw rising tensions between the United States and Great Britain, and another in which Americans, in their anger, sought to strike at Britain via her nearby Canadian flank. British-American relations soured when Britain declared her formal neutrality in the war between North and South, while nevertheless recognizing and supporting the Confederate States of America as a belligerent power. British support included permitting the construction in British ports of Confederate warships, such as the *Alabama*, which wrought havoc on Union ships. British North Americans, meanwhile, initially sympathetic to the Union's plan to make a war to end slavery, were nevertheless disturbed and frightened by the possibility that the Union would use the Civil War as a pretext to extend its northern boundaries. Such fears were not mere fantasies: Lincoln's Secretary of State William Seward publicly advocated the annexation of the Canadas as compensation for any loss that might result from the secession of the Confederacy. Among the marching songs of Union troops was one sung to the tune of "Yankee Doodle Dandy": "Secession first

he would put down, Wholly and forever. And afterward from Britain's crown, He Canada would sever." Americans and British North Americans weathered the contentious decade of the 1860s in such a climate of suspicion and fear. This tension was punctuated and exacerbated by the mobilization of British troops and Canadian militia along the American frontier, by the Confederate raid on St. Albans, Vermont from Canadian soil, and then, after war's end, by the northward strikes of the Irish-American Fenians in their foiled effort to capture and ransom Canada to free Ireland from British rule.

Although an Anglo-American war was averted, and the Fenian raids sputtered, the era's hostilities nevertheless had a profound and lingering impact on historical events. British North Americans had long considered proposals to unite as an independent nation, mainly to facilitate economic expansion (via railroad construction, mineral exploitation and agricultural settlement) into the western interior. Britain herself, by the 1860s, was willing to grant the project approval. Ultimately, the danger of American attack in the wake of the Civil War served to finally draw the British North American colonies together as a means of collective defense. Thus did the American Civil War catalyze the formation of the Dominion of Canada as a nation state in 1867, helping, in effect, to create one nation while preserving another. The form of government adopted by the new Dominion also reflected the war, since many Canadians understood the huge bloodletting as the inevitable consequence of an excessively loose federation of states. So Canada embraced a strong central government built on British Parliamentary principles,



The Canadian-American Relation: A Prevailing Canadian View from the Late Nineteenth Century

Mrs. Britannia: "Is it possible, my dear, that you have ever given your cousin Jonathan any encouragement?"
 Miss Canada: "Encouragement: certainly not, Mamma. I have told him we can *never* be united."

albeit with a two-tiered federal structure (balancing national and provincial governments) to guarantee the preservation of French culture and language in Quebec.

The 1860s also marked the last time that the U.S.-Canadian frontier resembled an armed camp. In 1871, British and American diplomats met in the U.S. capital. Canada's first Prime Minister, John Macdonald, was a member of the British delegation. The resulting Treaty of Washington resolved outstanding wartime grievances of the United States such as the Alabama damage claims. The U.S. also acknowledged Canada as a sovereign nation, a nation that as of 1871 included the new provinces Manitoba and British Columbia. British troops withdrew from North America, leaving the United States as the uncontested power of the continent. Canada, with some 3.5 million citizens clustered in disparate pockets from the Bay of Fundy to Vancouver Island on the Pacific (and cheek by jowl to 35 million Americans), was left to fashion something of a national life on the margin of the American Empire.

Canadian insecurity over U.S. encroachment continued to drive the young nation's growth after Canadian Confederation. John Macdonald rapidly organized the new province of Manitoba in 1870 in part to keep the northern Plains out of Yankee hands. "It is quite evident to me that the United States government [is] resolved to do all they can, short of war, to get possession of our western territories," he wrote, "and we must take immediate and vigorous steps to counteract them." British Columbia's organization as a British colony (1858) and then a Canadian province (1871) was also tinged

with the fear of American annexation of the Far West, since thousands of American gold-seekers had established a U.S. presence in the region beginning with the Gold Rush of 1858. Moreover, Macdonald and his Conservative Party's grand nation-building or "national policy" of 1879 forward embraced high tariffs on U.S. imports, the construction of a transcontinental railroad, and plans to settle Canada's West. Such a policy was, in effect, a defensive strategy to keep U.S. economic and political influence at bay.

Defensive expansionism was certainly exemplified in the Canadian West. After Confederation, the Canadian Government crafted its Indian policy to carefully avoid violent confrontation with Natives, lest regional instability and lack of government control encourage U.S. annexation. The North-West Mounted Police, established as a peacekeeping and law-enforcement agency for the Plains in 1873, was a key ingredient in this policy. The resulting relationships between Canadian settlers and western Indians proved remarkably tranquil compared with those south of the border. While Canadian troops fought just seven military engagements with Native people between 1866 and 1895 (all but one during the Northwest Rebellion of 1885), the U.S. Army fought a staggering 943!⁷ The end result of Canadian policy was much the same as in the U.S. – impoverished Natives impounded on reservations, robbed of independence and livelihood – but the method was certainly different. Minimal violence in Canada may have been due in part to Canadians' historical respect for law and order, and also to the relatively small number of Canadian settlers in the Plains before the 1890s. But "the single

most significant explanation" for the different approaches to managing Indian affairs, argues historian Roger Nichols, "is that Canada saw the United States as a potential aggressor" and feared that "any demonstration of weakness or lack of national purpose...might invite American territorial expansion north."⁸ In short, although the era of military confrontation between Canada and the United States may have been drawing to a close with the Treaty of Washington, the threat of American domination would continue to shape Canada's development for the remainder of the nineteenth century and well beyond.

Merger

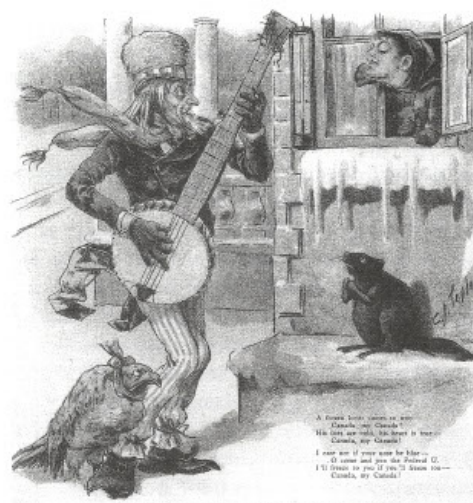
Indeed, as the era of military confrontation was ending, an era of friendly trade and economic integration had already begun. In the economic sphere, in fact, Americans and Canadians had already grown closer together some decades before the American Civil War and the birth of Canada. Both the United States and the British North American colonies had embraced the Industrial Revolution in the early years of the nineteenth century, canals and then railroads forging several north-south links between the growing commercial economies. Raw materials such as Canadian wheat, New Brunswick timber, Nova Scotia coal and Newfoundland fish flowed south to the Eastern Seaboard and the Middle West, as well as eastward to London and Europe. Once canals linked the St. Lawrence system to New York City, the Richelieu-Hudson river corridor, in particular, hummed with waterborne traffic. The British Government sanctioned such arrangements in the 1840s by abolishing the



The Canadian-American Relation: A Prevailing American View from the Late Nineteenth Century

This cartoon appeared in the American magazine *Puck* (October 1, 1890) under the caption "As it ought to be, under one flag." Miss Canada appears as a Native American with American (U.S.A.) accessories. She tramples the Union Jack, symbol of British allegiance, and the toque and jacket of the voyageur, symbol of the French fact in North America.

University of Vermont: Bailey-Howe Library



The Canadian-American Relation: A Prevailing Canadian View from the Late Nineteenth Century

This cartoon appeared in the American magazine *Puck* (December 26, 1888) and features Uncle Sam and his eagle as poorly prepared to brave the frigid realm that protects Miss Canada.

University of Vermont: Bailey-Howe Library

old, restrictive Navigation Acts whose purpose had been to bind colonies to the Empire. The so-called "Reciprocity Treaty" of 1854, ratified by the U. S. Senate and the colonial legislatures of British North America, accelerated such trade. In order to further facilitate American trade, the British North American colonies began to issue decimal (dollar) currency in 1858 instead of relying on English pounds.

Canada's protectionist tariff of 1879 marked a shift away from free trade with the United States. But several scholars have noted that the ultimate effect of the tariff was to further bind the economies together. Barred from selling sewing machines, cigarettes or harvesters to Canadian consumers at market price, U.S. firms like Singer, American Tobacco and International Harvester simply built subsidiaries on Canadian soil to avoid the duties. In this way the national policy "greatly encouraged the branch-plant movement," historian Michael Bliss asserted in the 1960s, and "sowed many of the seeds of our present problem with foreign ownership."⁹ Great Britain would continue to dominate the Canadian economy as its principal investor and consumer until the First World War. But even on the eve of Canadian Confederation, Canada had already begun its economic tilt toward the United States.

Humans, like dollars, flowed in ever-larger volume across the increasingly permeable frontier during the decades following the Civil War. Even before the war, and before the abolition of slavery in the United States, American blacks had found refuge in the Canadas by following the secret stations of the Underground Railway. Slavery certainly had a history in

Canada's French period, but it was a relatively minor one due to a short growing season and a lack of arable land to support slave-grown cash crops like sugar, rice or tobacco. Slavery was phased out in British North America from the 1790s, and it was abolished altogether in the British Empire in 1833. In all perhaps 30,000 American blacks moved north to the Canadian "Canaan" in the four decades preceding the Civil War, most of them settling in Upper Canada. They did find freedom, but they also encountered serious prejudice and discrimination. Many would eventually return to the United States. The Civil War itself saw several thousand British North Americans go south to enlist and collect pay in the Union Army. American draft dodgers, meanwhile, perhaps 10,000-15,000 in all, went to Canada to avoid the fight. Economics, not politics, moved a much larger northward migration from the 1890s through the 1910s, when roughly one million farmers from the American Middle West (many in fact born in Europe, not the States) accepted the Canadian Government's invitation to homestead the northern extension of the American Great Plains. Touted as "the last best West," fertile land and cheap, the additional attraction to the newcomers' was their familiarity with the land settlement system: the terms of the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 roughly followed those of the American Homestead Act of 1862. The settlers brought their politics with their farm tools and covered wagons. Political scientist Tom Flanagan, for one, traces western Canadians' distrust of central authority and external control, at the heart of a century-old tradition of Prairie populism, to this large-scale human influx from the United States.¹⁰

Canada sent many more of its citizens to the United States than it received. Given Canada's relatively small population, the net loss reflects the veritable deluge of Canadians that flowed south into the U.S. during the great migrations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Over two million Canadians, English and French (recall that Canada's total population in 1867 was 3.5 million), sought work in or around American cities between the Civil War and the Great Depression. Ontarians sought factory work in expanding cities like Chicago in the Middle West, while Maritime carpenters and their families (the Maritime ship building industry now defunct) moved to "the Boston states" of New England to build homes for the growing suburban middle classes. A full half, or one million, of the Canadian migrants were French Canadians. Their presence in the American cultural landscape was also the most noticeable since language and religion, as well as settlement patterns in U.S. cities, set them apart. French Canadians settled in enclaves called "Little Canadas" ("petits Canadas") in New England's textile mill towns (as well as cities in the American Midwest). Remarkably resistant to assimilation, each New England community boasted its own French newspaper, parish church and parochial school, as well as holiday festivals. Only after World War Two, when manufacturing moved south or overseas and the mills closed, did the communities disperse and the homogenizing force of TV culture blend these French-speaking Catholics into the American "melting pot."

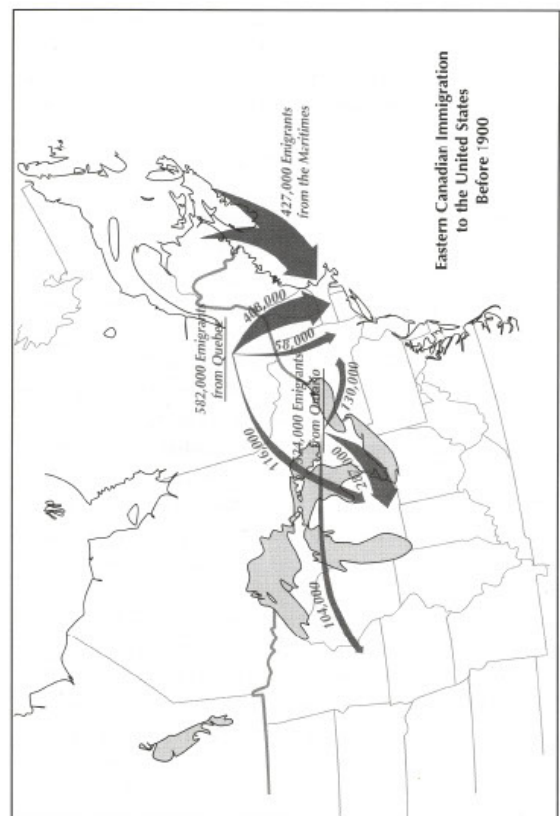
Formal bilateral cooperation between Canadian and U.S. governments followed economic and cultural exchange at the

turn of the century. Such institutionalized cooperation dates from the last great boundary dispute between the nations and threat of U.S. invasion, over Alaska. Triggered by the Klondike gold rush and the resulting competition over coastal access routes to the gold fields, the dispute was finally resolved by arbitration in 1903. In the wake of the conflict, cooler diplomatic heads set out to fashion organizations to discuss and mitigate actual or potential international sticking points, to prevent small discords from growing into larger ones and/or to keep the larger ones from war. The International Boundary Commission (1908) was established to survey and clarify the precise boundaries between the two countries. The International Joint Commission (1909) was formed to examine the use and management of common boundary waters, from the Great Lakes to the Columbia River, and to make recommendations to the two national governments in this regard. Both the IBC and IJC reflected the Progressive Era's abiding faith in "scientific management," including the management of natural resources, as a means of bettering the human condition. Both also demonstrate how the Canadian-American bilateral relationship emerged from, and was in fact fostered by, this Age of Reform.

The Progressive Era saw an exchange of ideas in addition to technical experts. Canada and the U.S. developed urban, industrial economies in tandem through the nineteenth century, albeit on different scales. No wonder that Canada absorbed many of the solutions to the problems of industrialization that Progressive Era reformers were already adopting or advocating in the U.S. (as well as Britain). This included women's suffrage,

social work, the prohibition of alcoholic beverages, and government's regulation of private power utilities and natural resource development. Each reform would find its own niche and variation in Canada according to province or region. The American labor movement also leapt the Canadian border when Samuel Gompers's American Federation of Labor (AFL) exported its model of "business unionism" to Canada and won control of the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress in 1902. In this way, historian Robert Babcock explains, did "labour continentalism" become an established fact. By 1915, Canadian craft unions under the aegis of the U.S.-led AFL represented some 90% of organized workers in Canada.¹¹

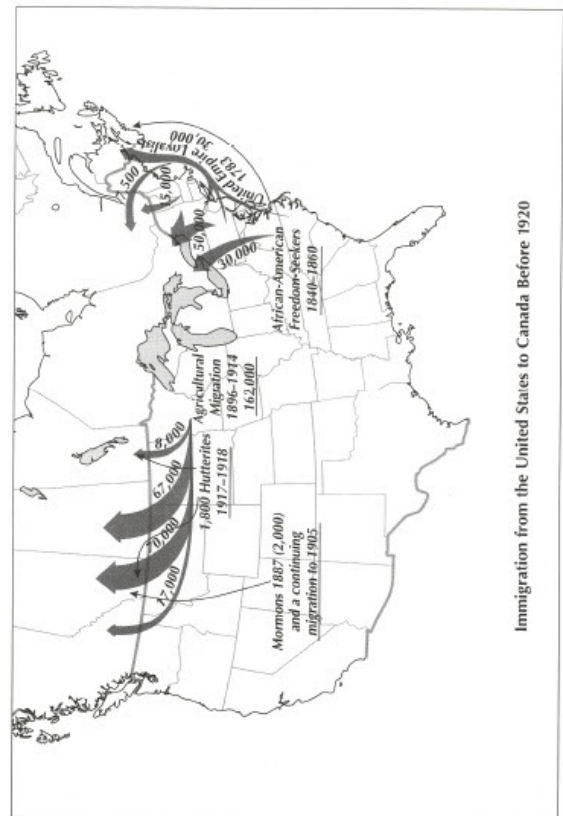
Labor was simply following capital north. The last years of the nineteenth century witnessed a fundamental shift in U.S. foreign policy, from the conquest of new territory in the West, to the systematic acquisition and development of foreign markets. In this "new empire," as historian Walter LaFeber has dubbed it,¹² Canada would play a prominent role. The American branch plant movement accelerated in the 1890s as burgeoning U.S. corporations burst the bounds of the U.S. and sought new consumer markets as well as sources of raw materials abroad. Canada possessed both. Canadian raw materials were found plentifully on the Canadian Shield: pulpwood for paper, especially newsprint; ore for metals, including copper, nickel and zinc; and hydroelectricity from the Shield's powerful rivers. American branch plants in Canada manufactured everything from chewing gum, to tractors, to automobiles, for the expanding Canadian middle class. Canada also boasted geographic proximity, stable



governments, and a shared language. Thus did Canada become, and thereafter remain, the most important business destination for American multinational enterprise. In 1908, the volume of U.S.-Canadian trade slipped beyond that of the U.S. and Mexico. Canada became the single largest trading partner of the U.S. as of this date, and has never since relinquished the title. In 1922, another milestone in North American economic history was reached when the volume of U.S. investment in Canada surpassed investments from Great Britain. From the 1920s forward, the United States became the dominant external force in the Canadian economy, and Canada was on her way to becoming an economic satellite of the United States.

Growing reliance on American dollars and American consumers, moreover, rendered the Canadian economy increasingly vulnerable to market conditions south of the border. When the New York stock market crashed in the fall of 1929, triggering the decade-long Great Depression, its effects were felt immediately and profoundly to the north. The great severity of the depression that Canadians endured was an object lesson in Canada's economic dependence on foreign countries, the United States chief among these.

The U.S. economic invasion brought American values as well as U.S. market links. In fact, the inter-war period of the 'twenties and 'thirties witnessed what historian John Herd Thompson describes as a "northbound tidal wave of American mass culture" in film, radio, print media and sports.¹³ In the film industry, Hollywood's major production companies such as Paramount and MGM quickly overwhelmed smaller Canadian



Immigration from the United States to Canada Before 1920

firms, while Hollywood movies themselves monopolized Canadian theatres and audiences. In radio as well, as Canadians tuned in to the powerful signals and captivating programs of NBC and CBS in order to follow shows such as the wildly popular (and, later, racially controversial) "Amos 'n' Andy." Canadians in large number took to reading the *Ladies Home Journal*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Pictorial Review* and *McCall's Magazine*, all of which held significantly larger circulations than the leading Canadian title, *Maclean's*. Unlike these American magazines, Canadian newspapers were owned and published in Canada. Yet that didn't stop Canadian papers from mimicking American sensationalist styles to boost readership. Canadian dailies such as the *Toronto Star* and *Vancouver Sun* emboldened their headlines, increased their coverage of sports, crime and celebrities in lieu of "hard" news, and added plenty of syndicated American comics such as *Mutt and Jeff* or *Little Orphan Annie*. Lacking their own network of foreign correspondents, Canadian papers increasingly relied on U.S. wire services such as United Press and the Associated Press for international news. In sport, Canadians embraced America's game, baseball, and Babe Ruth became their hero. Canadian hockey began its southward migration to the U.S. as Canadian teams were bought up by American owners and moved to larger and more lucrative markets such as Boston, New York, Chicago and Detroit. Because Canada lacked the buffers of language (70% spoke English) or distance, Canadians of the early twentieth century (and thereafter) were uniquely vulnerable to the American media colossus.

Growing political ties accompanied economic and cultural links through the two world wars. Canadians resented Americans' much delayed entrance into World War I, as well as Yankee claims at war's end of having "won" it for the Allied cause. Still, the war saw Canada and the United States, former military foes, fighting for the first time on the same side of an armed conflict. Thereafter, Canadian and American governments established a formal diplomatic presence in Washington and Ottawa (1927), even while Canada went about loosening her political attachments to Great Britain. The Canadian-American affiliation blossomed into a formal alliance during and as a direct result of World War II. In August, 1940, France having fallen and England under heavy aerial bombardment, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and President Franklin Roosevelt met at the sleepy border town of Ogdensburg, New York. The leaders quickly agreed to a joint defense of North America to counter an expected Nazi or Japanese invasion of the continent. The economic corollary to the Ogdensburg declaration, signed the following spring at FDR's Hudson River estate at Hyde Park, New York, stated that "each country should provide the other with the defence articles which it is best able to produce." Thus did the war also accelerate cross-border trade by creating a continental economic zone for defense production.

The Soviet threat during the Cold War did for the Canadian-American relationship what the Nazis and Japanese had done earlier: frightened the two nations into collective defense. Thus in 1949, did Canada and the U.S. become founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

In 1957, they fashioned the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) to consolidate American and Canadian air forces against a potential Soviet air strike coming across the North Pole. With the fear of such a strike clearly in mind, the U.S. and Canada also collaborated in the construction of three radar warning lines on Canadian soil, the most northerly of which (the Distant Early Warning or DEW Line, completed 1957) roughly followed the Arctic Circle and was financed and operated by the U.S. military. Military cooperation begot further economic integration. Under the Defense Production Sharing agreements (the first in 1958), which in effect fashioned a continental system for industrial mobilization, Canadian arms makers could bid on American defense contracts on the same basis as U.S. firms. During U.S. led wars to contain communism in Korea and then Vietnam, American demand soared for Canadian strategic materials like uranium, aluminum, and nickel. American branch plants continued to proliferate in the commercial heartland of Canada's "Main Street." By 1959, U.S. capital controlled some 44% of Canadian manufacturing; 55% of mining; 60-70% of vital gas and petroleum resources; and over 90% of auto production.

Numbers like these created growing unease in Canada regarding the nation's subordinate and dependent position in the American Empire. The Government-sponsored Massey Commission's Report (1951) documented the formidable "invasion...from a single alien source" in radio, film, and magazines; and the cultural juggernaut that was television had just begun. Thus did Elvis, *Reader's Digest*, and I Love Lucy advance the

process of cultural homogenization begun by "Amos 'n Andy" and the *Saturday Evening Post*. The Gordon Report (1957) demonstrated that the Canadian economy was dominated by U.S. investment almost as thoroughly as culture. Certainly such a level of U.S. incursion was the result of thousands of private choices made by Canadian consumers and American investors – to purchase a General Motors car, or to invest in the extraction of Canadian iron ore – rather than some American conspiracy to subordinate Canada to U.S. market aims. Still, such revelations produced a stir of ambivalence in the Canadian electorate that would place prairie populist John Diefenbaker in power as Prime Minister from 1957 to 1963, and nourish fits of anti-Americanism and economic nationalism right through the eras of Lester Pearson (1963-68) and Pierre Trudeau (1968-79; 1979-83). "Living next to you is...like sleeping with an elephant," Trudeau explained the discomfort of being Canadian in North America to the National Press Club in Washington in 1969. "No matter how friendly and even-tempered the beast, one is affected by every twitch and grunt." In an effort to create more wiggle room for the Canadian beaver, as it were, Trudeau moved to assert increased state control over foreign policy, industry and culture.

Canadian resistance to Americanization certainly predated the 1960s. Whether on the battlefield (in 1775 and 1812), or in the field of economics (e.g. the National Policy of the 1870s), students of the relationship can readily identify episodes of Canadian counteraction to U.S. invasive control. In the cultural realm, the creation in the 1930s of the publicly owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) or the

National Film Board (NFB) offer additional examples, here of government-sponsored efforts to check the northward flow of mass media. Under Trudeau, the Canadian Government publicly opposed the war in Vietnam and reduced its troop commitments to NATO in an effort to demonstrate a measure of foreign policy independence from the United States. Canada served as a haven for at least 50,000 American war resisters. Trudeau also cooked up an alphabet soup of protectionist organizations to increase Canadian control of the domestic economy. These included the CDC (Canada Development Corporation), which attempted to finance Canadian ownership of mining and chemical firms, FIRA (Foreign Investment Review Agency) to screen proposed corporate takeovers by foreign investors, and the NEP (National Energy Programme) to increase Canadian ownership of oil and gas industries. NEP initiated a 25% decline in U.S. control of Canadian oil and gas (from some three-fourths to less than half). With the exception of the NEP, however, these organizations were not very effective. In general, American control of the Canadian economy continued to expand.

More successful, perhaps, were Trudeau-era efforts to protect Canadian culture from American annihilation. Canada squashed the Canadian edition of *Time* magazine in 1976, funneling additional readers to *Maclean's*. Under the CRTC (Canadian Radio-Television Commission), Canadian content rules were effectively applied to radio and television programs to ensure that Canadian artistry continued to reach Canadian homes. Such cultural protectionism, complete with subsidies and tax breaks, seems to be achieving its desired aims, at least

for the time being. According to media scholar David Taras, who cites the popularity of the CBC, *Maclean's*, and newspapers like the *Globe and Mail* and *La Presse*, "a distinct, successful and powerful media tradition has taken root in Canada" that is today a "part of the fabric of Canadian life."¹⁴

So despite a long history of American "invasion" – military, economic and cultural – Canada has thus far held its ground against the United States. Ours are the two fragments of the British Empire that parted political and ideological company in the era of the American Revolution. Canada would continue to reject American republican values, and U.S. influence generally, through the middle of the 1800s: through the War of 1812, the Rebellions of 1837, border disputes in New England and over the vast Oregon Territory, and in fact right through the U.S. Civil War which Canadians feared would lead to yet another American invasion and so formed a united and independent Canada as a means of collective defense. Early 21st century Americans may consider Canadians to be "just like us" and Canada to be but a "51st state." Yet there remains a political frontier on the North American map. Different political systems – parliamentary democracy and republic – remain in force in Ottawa and Washington.

With the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the end of the Cold War in 1989, Canada may even have gained some breathing space in foreign policy. Witness Canadian leadership in the 1990s in pushing a world ban on land mines and the resulting Ottawa Convention (1997) that the U.S. has not signed; or Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's refusal in March of 2003 to commit

Canadian troops to a U.S.-led war in Iraq (even while holding out olive branches by means of Canadian naval support in the Persian Gulf as well as additional soldiers in Afghanistan to aid in the U.S.'s "war on terror"). In the economic realm, although the two nations' markets are largely integrated, Canada and the United States continue to use different monetary currencies. Nor is the labor market yet integrated; it still requires government permission for citizens to hold a job in the other country. In national culture there remain important distinctions as well. Beyond Canadians' loyalty to their newspapers, magazines and public radio stations, Canada can also boast broader government-sponsored education and health care as well as dramatically lower levels of societal violence. In this sense, Canada hasn't simply avoided statchood, but has also sustained something vibrantly different and uniquely Canadian right through the present day. It has been over a century since historian Goldwin Smith posed his famous Canadian Question, wondering at the sustainability of Canada, and predicting its eventual absorption by the United States. The simple fact of Canadian survival, let alone its thriving national difference, suggests Smith's prediction was off the mark.

Of course, history isn't over yet. Although the American Revolution divided the English-speaking peoples of the continent, the commonalities of shared heritage, as well as the proximity of geography and the events of history itself, have brought them much closer together. While the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw Canadian-American divergence, the prevalent historical pattern ever since then, over the last 150

years, has been that of creeping continental integration: economic, cultural and political.

Canadian and American markets have certainly grown ever more intertwined from the 1840s forward. In this sense, the recent Free Trade Agreement (FTA) of 1988, whose debate caused considerable political anguish in Canada, only confirmed and accelerated a long established economic trend. By the FTA, Canada and the United States agreed to eliminate customs duties on commodities from farm and factory over a ten-year period, while also loosening restrictions on cross-border foreign investment and establishing mechanisms for the joint resolution of trade disputes. In short, FTA rendered most of North America a free-trade zone. By 2001, U.S.-Canadian trade flows amounted to a staggering \$1.2 billion per day in goods and services in what is by far the largest bilateral economic relationship in the world. Nor is the relationship balanced, since Canada's market dependence on the U.S. is far more acute than the reverse: just 25% of U.S. exports go north to Canada (most important being professional services and manufactured goods) while some 90% of Canadian exports (beginning with autos/auto parts, crude oil/petroleum products, and wood/forest products) end up in the United States. In all, roughly one third of Canada's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) derives from U.S. exports.

Economic dependence has led to massive cultural assimilation as well, as we have seen. While *Maclean's* and the CBC are safely ensconced inside garrisons of government support, the Canadian landscape outside such protective walls is awash

in Americana, whether Hollywood TV dramas and the radio broadcasts of American "shock jocks," or fast food outlets the likes of Burger King, McDonald's or Taco Bell. That Quebecers consume "Poulet Frit à la Kentucky" rather than "Kentucky Fried Chicken" doesn't change the Colonel's famous recipe or the restaurant's hallmark red and white stripes.

In the political realm, Canada and the United States remain sovereign nations, to be sure. Yet there has been enormous change in the relationship over the last century and a quarter as former enemies became allies: when the Treaty of Washington resolved Civil War grievances, as Progressive Era diplomats fashioned the first Canadian-American bilateral institutions, when World War II fostered a formal political alliance, and as the threats of the Cold War led to common membership in NATO and NORAD. When Trudeau-era Canadian nationalism waned, Canadian-American relations warmed. The subsequent administrations of Brian Mulroney (1984-93) and Jean Chrétien (1993-2003) approved passage of not only the Free Trade Agreement but also the trilateral North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA, 1993) that included Mexico. Thus did the governments of the three countries expand the boundaries of the Canada-U.S. free trade zone to include the whole of North America. The Canadian Government endorsed the U.S. invasion of Panama (1989), and then participated in U.S.-led wars in the Persian Gulf (1991), the former Yugoslavia (1999), and in the U.S.-led "war on terror" in Afghanistan following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon of September 11, 2001. Canada's collaborative

demeanor reflects its unmistakable dependence on American good will. With one-ninth the population of the U.S., with nearly all of its exports southbound to American markets, and with a military force (roughly one-twentieth of the U.S.) that would require American assistance in the event of an assault on Canadian borders, pursuing meaningfully independent foreign policy becomes a risky endeavor. The beaver tugs the elephant's trunk occasionally, but with caution.

What does the future hold? Does economic integration lead to a seamless market and common currency? Will continued cultural homogenization erode remaining "Canadian" identity? Does foreign policy collaboration portend a continental congress modeled, say, after the European Union? In short, is the past a reasonable predictor of the future; and does creeping integration foretell the unification of the continent's English-speaking peoples and the dissolution of Canada? No one knows the answers. Meanwhile, we should be cognizant that the Canadian-American relationship, as complex and multifaceted as it is, will be shaped by much more than Canadians and Americans themselves. Information technology and/or the Internet may well reshape future patterns of global trade. Climate change and a warming trend might well shift the North American breadbasket northward, or clear the Northwest Passage of its ice cover, altering the geography and human use of the continent. North Americans' intense demand for oil and/or other forms of energy will likely play into this complicated equation, as will rising political powers beyond the reign and the current reach of the world-dominant United States. How will

the economic development of China, for example, or of Mexico, influence Canadians and Americans a century hence? These, of course, are only some of the preoccupations of the current era. The passage of time will produce others. History, as always, will humble us in the end.

Suggestions for further reading

Robert Bothwell, *Canada and the United States: The Politics of Partnership* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

J.L. Granatstein and Norman Hillmer, *For Better or for Worse: Canada and the United States to the 1990s* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1991).

Hugh L. Keenleyside and Gerald S. Brown, *Canada and the United States: Some Aspects of Their Historical Relationship*, Second Edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952).

Edelgard E. Mahant and Graeme S. Mount, *An Introduction to Canadian-American Relations* (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1984).

John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies*, Third Edition (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2002).

Discussion questions

1. What is the "Canadian Question," and how has history answered it thus far?
2. The entire span of Canadian-American history might be described as one long American "invasion" of Canadian soil. Explain.
3. Canadians' resistance to American takeover has taken several forms since the American Revolution. What forms has it taken? Note examples of each form.
4. War can be a valuable indicator of the nature of international relationships. Draw on the wars fought by or between Canada and the United States over the last three centuries to describe the evolution of the Canadian-American relationship.
5. A running theme of Canadian-American relations is the migration of people across the political boundary separating

Canada from the United States. Describe the key episodes of this cross-border migration, and use them to draw a larger conclusion about the two countries.

6. The Canadian-American relationship has long had an important economic component. Describe the crucial episodes. What have been the long-term results of trade and investment on the United States and Canada?
7. It is said that culture and ideas know no international boundaries. Has this been the case at the U.S.-Canadian border? Drawing on the history of cultural exchange at the "forty-ninth parallel," explain carefully.

Footnotes

¹I am grateful to William Metcalfe, Scott See, André Senécal, Laura Nault, Sylvia Perera and Tom McGrath for a thoughtful reading of the manuscript.

²Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*, revised edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956), pp. 388ff.

³Goldwin Smith, *Canada and the Canadian Question*, 1891 (reprinted by University of Toronto Press, 1971), pp. 4-5.

⁴Seymour Martin Lipset, "Revolution and Counterrevolution: Some Comments at a Conference Analyzing the Bicentennial of a Celebrated North American Divorce," in R.A. Preston, *Perspectives on Revolution and Evolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979).

⁵Lipset, *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (Washington, D.C.; Toronto: Canadian-American Committee, 1989), p. 1.

⁶S.F. Wise, "Colonial Attitudes from the Era of the War of 1812 to the Rebellions of 1837," *Canada Views the United States*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), p. 38.

⁷John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies*, Third Edition (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2002), p. 48.

⁸Roger Nichols, "The United States, Canada, and the Indians: 1865-1876," *The Social Science Journal* 26, 3 (1989): p. 260.

⁹Michael Bliss, "Canadianizing American Business: The Roots of the Branch Plant," in Ian Lumsden, *Close the 49th Parallel etc.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970): p. 32.

¹⁰See for example Tom Flanagan's "From Riel to Reform (And a Little Beyond): Politics in Western Canada," *The American Review of Canadian Studies*, 31, 4 (Winter 2001): p. 628.

¹¹Robert H. Babcock, *Gompers in Canada: a study in American continentalism before the First World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), chapter 13, pp. 210-16.

¹²Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963).

¹³Thompson with Allan Seager, *Canada, 1922-1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1985), p. 175. Regarding magazines in particular, see Mary Vipond, "Canadian Nationalism and the Plight of Canadian Magazines in the 1920s," *Canadian Historical Review* 58, 1 (1977), pp. 43-63.

¹⁴David Taras, "Swimming Against the Current: American Mass Entertainment and Canadian Identity," in David M. Thomas *Canada and the United States: Differences that Count* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2000), pp. 192-208, quotation from p. 206. For a contrasting viewpoint, see John Meisel, "Escaping Extinction: Cultural Defence of an undefended Border," in David H. Flaherty, ed., *Southern Exposure: Canadian Perspectives on the United States* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1986).