

THE COLONEL AND HIS FLOCK: THOMAS TALBOT'S SETTLEMENT IN
UPPER CANADA

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

THE COLONEL AND HIS FLOCK: THOMAS TALBOT'S SETTLEMENT IN UPPER CANADA

Andrew Wingate
University of Guelph, 1999

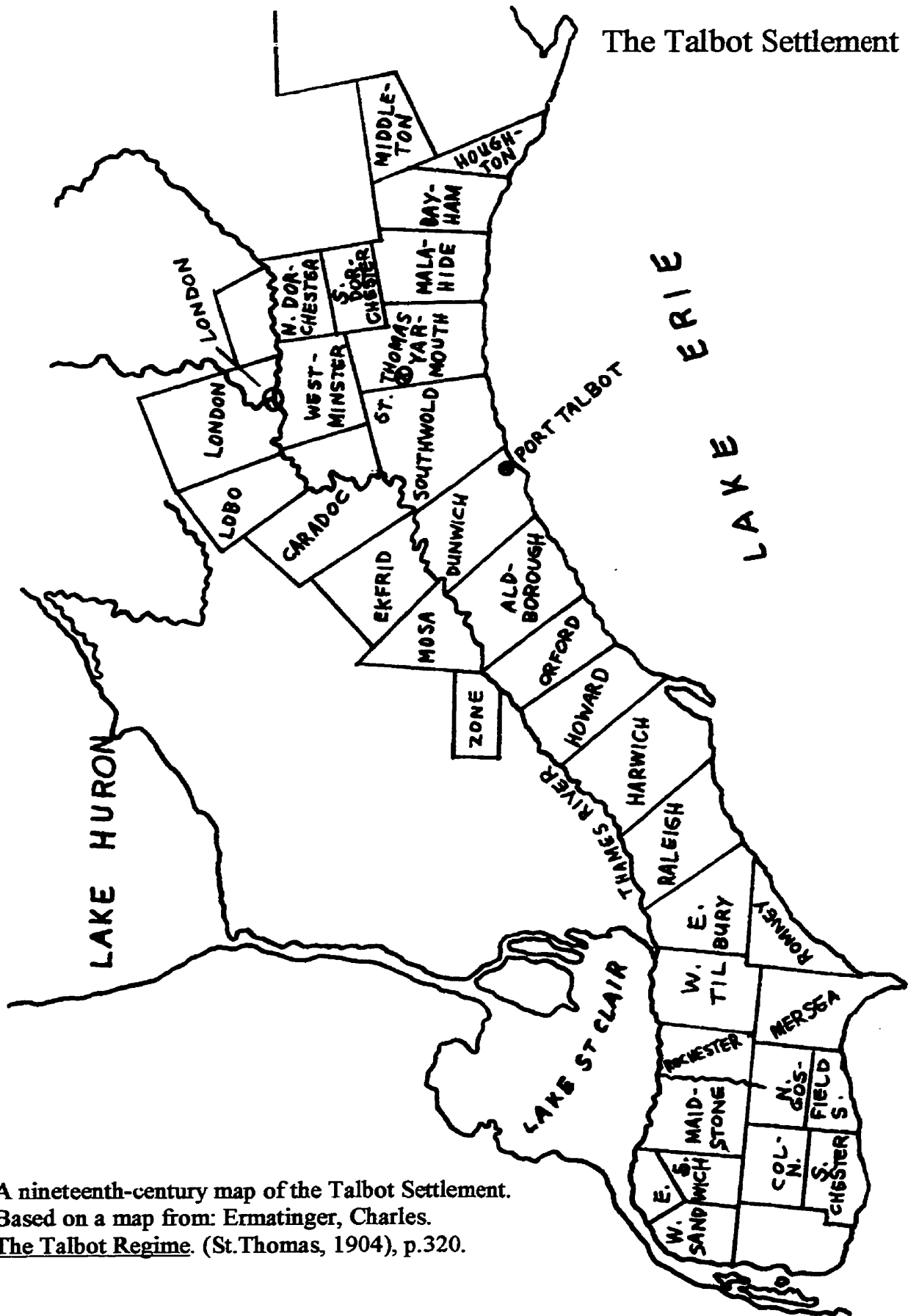
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Dr. G. Stelter

This thesis is an investigation into Thomas Talbot's contributions to the settlement of Upper Canada. It argues that his effectiveness in dealing with the problems of land settlement and the early period in which many of his contributions were made place him at the frontier of successful settlement in the province. Throughout, Talbot's attitudes, actions, weaknesses and achievements are placed within wider contexts of government action and Upper Canadian settlement in order to highlight his importance. At the same time, the thesis attempts to illustrate how he, as an individual, was able to find success while surrounded by ineffectiveness. It argues that his personality, his background, and his relationships with government officials all played roles in his success, but that ultimately it was the ad hoc nature of his approach to settlement that was most important.

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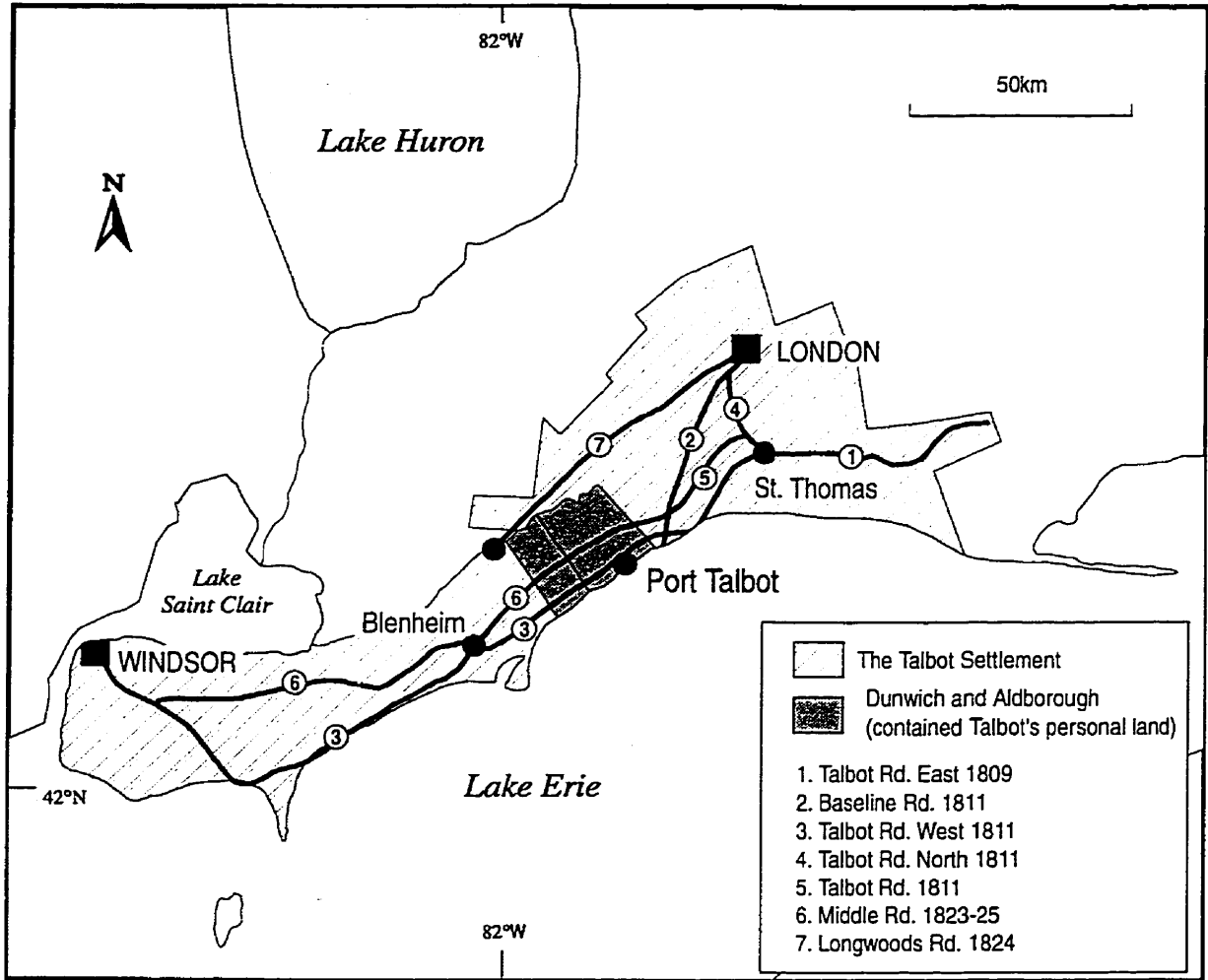
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The Talbot Settlement



A nineteenth-century map of the Talbot Settlement.
 Based on a map from: Ermatinger, Charles.
The Talbot Regime. (St. Thomas, 1904), p.320.

Roads in the Talbot Settlement



INTRODUCTION

The early nineteenth century was an important period of land settlement and development in Upper Canada, as the province developed from a meagre backwoods wilderness into a promising and constantly growing area. During this period, although non-directed settlement introduced large numbers of settlers to the province, directed settlement carried out by non-government affiliated groups and individuals was often more successful in creating effective settlement. This thesis will specifically emphasize the important contributions of one man. In a considerable area of the province, thanks to the efforts of Thomas Talbot, the problems that plagued Upper Canadian settlement were effectively dealt with, which provided great benefit for the province and its population.

During Talbot's time in Upper Canada, which included most of the first half of the nineteenth century, the province was in a period of intense change. Although immigration from the British Isles was at a standstill during the province's first twenty-five years, the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars made emigration an option for a British population that was experiencing the increasingly negative effects of industrialization. Before long, unprecedented numbers of settlers began to make their way to Upper Canada from Britain, while Americans, despite government attempts to keep them out after the War of 1812, continued to flow into the province. Although these great numbers of immigrants contributed to the growing complexity and diversity of provincial life, the effective settlement and subsequent development of the province was consistently hindered by the government's ineffective administration of land policies.

Despite the failures of this administration, Talbot settled an extensive tract of wilderness during this period. He had arrived as a permanent member of Upper Canada's population in 1803 after giving up a promising military career and privileged lifestyle. He received a sizeable grant of land and immediately set to work on his goal of fathering a prosperous settlement. In spite of his aristocratic background, his motives for doing so went beyond noblesse oblige. Despite his weaknesses, his actions in Upper Canada clearly illustrate that underlying his involvement in settlement was a love for the country and for the life of a settler. The thought of being the 'father' of a settlement did appeal to him, but from the first time that he set foot in Upper Canada he showed a genuine concern for the province. He therefore worked towards its further development and prosperity for the remainder of his life. Despite his settlement's humble and slow beginnings, by 1838 he was responsible for settling 28 townships covering over 500,000 acres and containing over 50,000 settlers, making him one of the most effective individual colonizers in the history of the province.

The central contention of this thesis is that Talbot was at the forefront of success in the settlement and development of Upper Canadian lands. He created his settlement during a time when the government faced continual difficulty with its land policies, and he solved the land problems that the government could not solve. At the same time, his successful efforts were the first of their kind, as he operated his settlement during a period when non-government groups and individuals attempting settlement of the same kind were limited and not nearly as successful. As an individual no other figure came close to equaling his contributions to settling the province. The only group that rivaled his achievements was the Canada Company, and it was not until decades after Talbot arrived

in Upper Canada that the Company began its operations. While recognizing his weaknesses and the problems that they created, this thesis will argue that Talbot was able to implement a system of settlement that created results that were unheard of in the province. His effectiveness in dealing with problems of land settlement and the early period in which many of his contributions were made place Talbot at the frontier of successful land settlement in Upper Canada.

Underlying this thesis will be the argument that Talbot's success was largely based on the ad hoc nature of his scheme. Unlike other prominent settlement schemes in Upper Canadian history, Talbot did not begin with a detailed overall plan of development for his settlement. Instead, he arrived in the province with a solid understanding of the basic requirements of success and he primarily worked to ensure that these were in place. As his settlement grew and developed, he adapted his policies and his approach in order to meet the continuously changing needs of his settlement. This rather ad hoc approach was directly related to Talbot's underlying motives. Because he was moved by a genuine concern for the province and its population, he adopted an approach that was fundamentally driven by the settlers and their needs. This allowed for the creation of a strong base on which the rest of the settlement could be built. At the same time, this is not to say that Talbot used this approach because he was unfamiliar or unknowledgeable about what was needed for stable settlement in Upper Canada. Before his permanent arrival in the province, he had been involved in its earliest development under Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe. Talbot was deeply influenced by Simcoe's optimism and by many of his plans. He was therefore familiar with the nature of Upper Canadian settlement and he

understood that the settlers had to be stable before a more detailed overall plan of development could be implemented.

This thesis not only aims at proving Talbot's importance, but also at illustrating why and how he was able to find success when others, especially the government, found consistent failure. Despite the province's growth, problems originating from the pinnacles of authority and filtering throughout all levels of provincial administration created extensive growing pains for the population. These governments were faced with a range of issues and problems that extended well beyond the physical development of the province, and this ensured that the necessary attention could not always be devoted to settlement issues. It therefore may have been inevitable that at various times officials would lose sight of foundational elements of the province that needed to be continually developed, such as compact and efficient settlement. For the settlers of the province, the lack of a widespread effective policy of land settlement was not only the most blatant offspring of inadequacies at both the imperial and provincial level, but it was also the most urgent. Rather than encouraging strong settlement, government policies lacked consistency and uniformity and were often based on a lack of knowledge and understanding of colonial realities, which hindered effective growth. Understanding the larger developments that happened during Talbot's years in Upper Canada will make clear how far in front of these developments he was.

Throughout Upper Canada's fifty years of existence, settlers arrived and settled in a number of different ways from various parts of the world, most significantly from America and Britain. Loyalists arrived from America for many years after the Revolution, taking advantage of free land grants and the liberal conditions attached to them. Other

settlers included ex-military officers who were awarded land in the colonies both due to their service and to create pockets of defense in Upper Canada. Some settlers went through emigration societies or government assisted programs of emigration in order to find new homes in Upper Canada. Others came to Canada and settled under a system based on the landlord-tenant relationship that they had lived under in Britain, such as those who made Amherst Island their new home.¹ Most importantly, however, a majority of Upper Canadian immigrants found their way to the province through their own initiative without assistance. These settlers purchased or were granted land directly from the government and in many cases started their new lives surrounded by wilderness without instruction or aid. Left by themselves, they not only had to face the problems of pioneer life alone, but also had to deal with the long delays and general inefficiency that were inherent in the government's administration of land settlement during the period.² Most importantly for Upper Canada, this led to a lack of compact, efficient settlement, which did not bode well for the future of the province.

Surrounded by this kind of inadequacy and failure, settlement carried out by groups and individuals not affiliated with the government offered great benefits for Upper Canada. These people found that their applications to create settlements were often quickly approved, as the government began to rely on private enterprise to take the responsibility of settling the province. Before the government began a new policy of land sales and sold their reserves of land to the Canada Company in 1826, most attempts at settlement were directed by individuals. These were men who organized a settlement scheme in which they recruited the settlers, created a settlement plan, and supervised the settlement. Although those involved faced a range of experiences, which makes

generalization, although appealing, quite difficult, an analysis of this kind of settlement is justified and made necessary by the important contributions that many of these individuals made. They were responsible for the founding and early development of Upper Canadian cities such as Guelph, London, St. Thomas, Fergus, Goderich and Galt (now Cambridge). Although some of these cities do not possess the same importance that they once had, at the time they operated as central posts for the development of their surrounding areas, and therefore represented the opening of important regions in Upper Canada. These men dealt with problems that harassed the province, as many of them worked to create settlements in which the settler was given the aid and compassion that was needed for success. Standing clearly at the forefront of this kind of settlement in terms of both time and success was Thomas Talbot, and this thesis aims at creating a better understanding of this man and his experiences.

Historiography

Present studies of Talbot are useful, but many do not go beyond personal detail and therefore do not allow for a full recognition of Talbot's importance in Upper Canadian settlement. This study will look at Talbot in a larger context in order to find evidence relating to *why* and *how* he was able to do what he did, with a view to showing the basis of his success and the significance of what he accomplished.

Published primary sources relating to Talbot are limited but valuable. In The Life of Colonel Talbot (1859), written only 6 years after Talbot's death, Edward Ermatinger, a personal acquaintance of Talbot, makes no pretence of offering a balanced picture. At the beginning of his book he makes it clear that "[i]n writing the Life of Colonel Talbot, [he]

had one object in view, namely, to transmit to posterity, whatever is praiseworthy in his conduct and character, for their imitation and example".³ Nevertheless, he offers a range of anecdotes and contemporary opinions about Talbot. James Coyne's The Talbot Papers and Charles Ermatinger's The Talbot Regime contain the largest collection of primary material and will be used extensively. Although Ermatinger's book has been cited as a secondary source, it includes an extensive reprinting of primary material that is often referred to throughout this thesis. Additional groups of Talbot's correspondence have been printed within Ontario History, such as Talbot's correspondence with Lord Wharncliffe and John Beverley Robinson. Published primary sources that relate to Upper Canada during this period and that refer to Talbot's settlement will also be used, such as Anna Jameson's Winter Studies and Summer Rambles (originally 1838) and John Howison's Sketches of Upper Canada, Domestic, Local and Characteristic (originally 1821).⁴ These published sources will be supplemented with an analysis of some of the unpublished material that exists. Government records of Talbot's correspondence, records and petitions will help to create an understanding of his experiences within larger developments, especially within official circles. Sources include the Upper Canada State Submissions, the Land Petitions, Upper Canada Sundries and the Upper Canada's Lieutenant-Governors' Letterbooks, all of which are held in the National Archives at Ottawa.

As far as secondary material is concerned, three prominent sources exist. Edward Ermatinger's son, Charles, writing 45 years after his father, offers a lengthier and more balanced account than his father in The Talbot Regime (1904), which, as already stated, is also useful for its inclusion of primary documents. A study of Talbot would certainly not

be complete without reference to the introduction of James Coyne's The Talbot Papers (1905), on which many of Talbot's historians have based their work. Finally, Frederick Coyne Hamil's Lake Erie Baron: The Story of Colonel Thomas Talbot (1955) represents the most recent major source devoted solely to Talbot. Along with these lengthier accounts, several authors have added more cursory analyses focussing solely on Talbot and his settlement. These include Wayne Paddon's The Story of the Talbot Settlement 1803-1840: A Frontier History of South Western Ontario (1976) and a chapter in Edwin Guillet's Pioneer Settlements of Upper Canada (1933). Other more minor sources include Fred Coyne Hamil's "Colonel Talbot's Principality" (1952), Ella Lewis' Sidelights on the Talbot Settlement (1938) and A.C. Casselman's "The Talbot Settlement" (1917), all of which offer summaries of Talbot's experiences. Shorter articles dealing with specific elements of Talbot's experiences include Hamil's "Colonel Talbot and the Early History of London" (1951), Paul Baldwin's "The Political Power of Colonel Thomas Talbot" (1969) and H. Orlo Miller's "Colonel, The Honourable Thomas Talbot" (1967). The brevity of many of these sources often does not allow the authors to fully explore or attempt to remedy the historiographical weaknesses that exist.

Although he is fairly well represented by such histories, there are some fundamental omissions within them that make a full understanding of Talbot's importance difficult. The main problem is that many focus too narrowly on Talbot and pay little attention to the wider trends in which he operated. This is not to say that they have not recognized the importance of considering Talbot within wider contexts in order to understand him. Charles Ermatinger has explained that if Talbot was "[p]laced in the light and shade and amid the environments of the days in which he lived, probably he

would present a different figure and moral aspect to his critics”.⁵ Similarly, after discussing those who defrauded the province, Kearney argues, “compare such characters as we have alluded to with the exertions of Colonel Talbot for upwards of half a century, and he will appear as an angel of light when viewed in juxtaposition with such contemporaries”.⁶ Despite this understanding, these historians do not heed their own advice. Most of Talbot’s historians fail to effectively deal with issues beyond those linked closely to Talbot’s personal experiences.⁷ Although in no way ignorant of Talbot’s success, they present his accomplishments in a rather singular and insulated manner.

At the same time, although these sources do present a great deal of detail, in most cases this detail is presented with limited analysis, and elements of Talbot’s background, personality and motivations are not fully analyzed. Many of these historians include anecdotes and stories relating to Talbot’s personality, but they seem to be included for entertainment value only.⁸ This does not allow the reader to recognize the importance that they had in dictating the nature of Talbot’s experiences in Upper Canada. Instead of using primary material to illustrate solely what Talbot was like, this thesis will analyze it for evidence of the interaction between Talbot’s personal characteristics and his success.

Historians who have written on larger topics such as British emigration, Canadian immigration and Upper Canadian history have dealt with Talbot in different ways and with varying degrees of effectiveness. Some sources, such as Douglas McCalla’s Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784-1870 (1993) and Phillip Buckner’s The Transition to Responsible Government: British Policy in British North America, 1815-50 (1985), offer solid histories of other aspects of Upper Canadian history, but they fail to include the important contributions that men such as Talbot made.

Indeed, they have failed not only to recognize Talbot's importance, but also that many of the problems of land settlement that they analyze were being solved by Talbot during the same period. This ignorance of Talbot's contributions clearly illustrates how he has been devalued in many histories. This thesis will attempt to combine some of the detail of the sources devoted solely to Talbot with the context that other sources offer in order to create a more balanced and accurate portrayal.

In other sources, historiographical problems are dealt with in a more effective manner, as some historians have attempted to place Talbot's experiences within larger developments. However, these sources come with their own deficiencies. In some cases, where they place Talbot tends to misconstrue his position and his experiences. For instance, within Gerald Craig's Upper Canada: The Formative Years (1963) and Lillian Gates' Land Policies of Upper Canada (1968), both authoritative sources on Upper Canadian history, Talbot, and many other individuals responsible for settlement in Upper Canada, are presented as elements of wider governmental actions and are not analyzed independently. To remedy this, this thesis will analyze primary sources, especially correspondence relating to his relationship with government officials, for what they can tell about Talbot's independence from the government and how he used this independence to create success. At the same time, fully understanding Talbot's accomplishments requires his actions to be contrasted with other individuals who were involved in directed settlement. By using these individuals' experiences in a comparative approach, this thesis will contribute to a deeper understanding of this kind of settlement and its contributions to the development of Upper Canada.

Structure

In order to achieve all of these goals, this thesis will consist of three chapters. The first chapter, entitled “Government, Policy and Land in Upper Canada: A Case of Misdirection”, will focus directly on the attitudes, policies and actions of the governments that operated during Talbot’s involvement in Upper Canada. Beginning with an analysis of the general weaknesses plaguing colonial administration during this period, this chapter will go on to link these weaknesses to the nature of the governments’ involvement in Upper Canadian land settlement, which is the chapter’s main focus. Rather than condemning the government, this thesis will recognize that poor land administration resulted from a variety of factors, some of which may have been unavoidable, while others were self-inflicted. This analysis will set the stage for a discussion of Talbot’s achievements by illustrating that the government’s colonial policies often hindered the development and settlement of land in the province.

The second chapter, entitled “A Map, Pencil and Eraser: Thomas Talbot and Upper Canada”, will offer a summary of Talbot’s life with the necessary emphasis on his experiences in Upper Canada. It will begin by summarizing Talbot’s early life before his arrival in Canada, which will be used later in the thesis to illustrate arguments relating to the role of his background. Turning to his Upper Canadian experiences, this chapter will analyze what he accomplished by focussing on his methods of settlement. Although this chapter will involve all periods of his life, emphasis will be placed on the period in which he made his biggest contributions to the settlement of Upper Canada.

The final chapter, entitled “Beyond the Statistics: Talbot’s True Importance”, will focus on illustrating why Talbot was able to achieve success where the governments of

the period struggled. This will be accomplished by critically analyzing the information presented in the previous chapter and presenting additional primary material to prove the contentions made. It will begin by discussing the success and failures of other individuals involved in directed settlement in order to contrast them with Talbot's experiences. It will then proceed to analyze Talbot's position in relation to the home and provincial government and how he was able to manipulate this position. Finally, this chapter will analyze the role of Talbot's personal characteristics to show that many of them played important roles. It is within this chapter that Talbot's actions and experiences will be firmly located within larger issues of Upper Canadian settlement and administration.

In these ways, this thesis will attempt to create an understanding that is beneficial on a number of different levels. It aims at making a contribution to the existing historiography of Upper Canadian land settlement, individually directed settlement, and most importantly the experiences of Talbot. Although it is focussed directly on understanding Talbot's success and the scope of his contributions to Upper Canadian settlement, the wider implications of such an understanding are equally as important. This thesis will ultimately shed light on the nature of an important element of settlement during a fundamentally important period in the history of Upper Canada. It will create an understanding of the early development of Canada and the kind of men that were responsible for the creation of the country. It will show how its development was related to the mother country's influences and actions, which is an element that has often been ignored. In all of these ways, this thesis will use Talbot's experiences to illustrate the nature of the development of a distinct area of Canada and its pioneering peoples. Although ultimately only dealing with a comparatively small area of Canada, an analysis

of such a settlement will allow for an understanding of the kind of vision, optimism and hardship that helped to create the country.

FOOTNOTES

Introduction.

¹ Catharine Wilson offers an analysis of this kind of settlement in her A New Lease on Life: Landlords, Tenants, and Immigrants in Ireland and Canada (1994).

² One of the best sources for description and analysis of settlers' experiences and hardships is Edwin Guillet's The Pioneer Farmer and Backwoodsman Vol.1 (1963). The most useful chapters include Chapter 17 "Characteristics of the Settlers" and Chapter 18 "Choosing a Lot".

³ Edward Ermatinger. Life of Colonel Talbot and the Talbot Settlement. 1859. (Belleville, 1972), p.III.

⁴ Gerald Craig's "British Travellers in Upper Canada, 1815-1837" (1951) and Early Travellers in the Canadas, 1791-1867 (1955) offer excellent analyses of these kinds of sources, and his conclusions will be heeded when applying the primary material. Craig argues that travellers' accounts from this period contain various levels of accuracy, but that in most cases fairly accurate and dispassionate accounts of Upper Canada are offered. He offers a good analysis of factors that affected what the authors wrote about Upper Canada.

⁵ Charles Ermatinger. The Talbot Regime. (St.Thomas, 1904), p.311.

⁶ L.C. Kearney. The Life of Colonel, The Late Honourable Thomas Talbot, Embracing the Rise and Progress of the Counties of Norfolk, Elgin, Middlesex, Kent and Essex, Etc. (Chatham, 1857), p.15.

⁷ For instance, Paul Baldwin's analysis in "The Political Power of Colonel Thomas Talbot" (1969) shows that Talbot can be better understood by placing him within larger contexts, in this case the larger provincial power structure, but this article merely scratches the surface of the potential of this approach.

⁸ In his research of the historiography, C. Orlo Miller argues that he had "found very little of the man himself, his character, his nature" C.Orlo Miller, "Colonel Thomas Talbot," Vignettes of Early St. Thomas ed. Warren Cron Miller. (England, 1967), p.25. However, he goes on to present only a brief analysis of a short period during Talbot's life which, although important, needs to be extended and improved.

CHAPTER 1

Government, Policy and Land In Upper Canada: A Case of Misdirection

This opening chapter will outline government attitudes and actions during the early nineteenth century, with the aim of illustrating the negative effects that some of its policies had on Upper Canada. Its purpose is to show that government involvement in Upper Canadian land settlement and development failed to offer the benefits that the province and its population required. It did not succeed in creating the kind of *effective* settlement that would ensure the province's future prosperity.

The home government's policies and attitudes towards its colonies went through important changes during the early nineteenth century. At the start of the century when Talbot began his settlement, the home government showed little interest in its colonies, as war preoccupied most official thought. By 1838 and the official end of Talbot's 'regime', the Colonial Office had become a visible government department that presided over a much wider range of issues that were growing more complex almost every day. Efforts to improve colonial administration in this period, however, were often belated attempts at solving problems that had not been given the attention that they had deserved in the past. More importantly, these changes, rather than being primarily based on the well being of Upper Canada and other colonies, were often implemented for the self-interest of the mother country. From its earliest involvement with its North American colonies, the British government maintained a strongly mercantilist notion of the benefits of the empire, and in the early nineteenth century these ideas continued to affect its decisions. Policies were based on a consideration of the domestic situation before anything else. Colonies were viewed only in terms of their material benefits for the mother country, as

their long term development and prosperity went unconsidered. Ultimately, this created a situation in which Upper Canada's needs were pushed to the background.¹

During the Napoleonic Wars, interest in colonial affairs by both the British general public and the government was minimal, partly because war required all of their resources and attention. At the same time, however, the prevalent attitude regarding the colonies was still strongly mercantilist, as the thought of making domestic sacrifices for the sake of the colonies was unheard of. This attitude was most evident in the early years of the century within the growing debate over emigration and the possibility of manipulating the colonies as a safety valve for domestic problems. By the first decade of the century, problems stemming from the increasing pressures of industrialization were beginning to make themselves felt in many areas of Britain, and this induced some philanthropists to become proponents of emigration. At that early time, however, the majority of those with the power to make changes did not show interest in the population needs of the colonies, nor did they share the belief that emigration would benefit the mother country. Government officials and many other prominent members of society viewed emigration negatively, as they saw a large population as beneficial in both political and military terms. Despite the fact that colonies such as Upper Canada were in dire need of a greater population, the home government discouraged emigration in order to ensure its own continued strength. As a result, emigrants leaving Britain for colonies such as Upper Canada during this period were minimal.

These attitudes and the general lack of interest in the colonies led to problems that would remain prominent in Upper Canada. Most obviously, the province suffered from a severe lack of population throughout this period, so that by the onset of the War of 1812

it held under 100,000 people.² This population was settled in a long strip that ranged from 10-80 kilometers in width and spanned 800 kilometers along various bodies of water from Ottawa to Detroit. The most settled areas included a stretch of land from Cornwall to Brockville, the Bay of Quinte and the Niagara peninsula, while Talbot's settlement in the south-west was also beginning to attract more settlers and become an important area.³ Nevertheless, the small population was scattered across a relatively large area of land, and the province's 'urban' areas could boast only a few thousand inhabitants combined.⁴ This lack of population, and more importantly the absence of compact settlement, not only hindered development and diversity, but it also made the province very vulnerable, and the American military threat would remain a constant source of anxiety. As a result of the lack of immigration from the British Isles, American settlers that were entering the province in increasing numbers came to dominate many facets of Upper Canadian life, and by 1812 they made up almost 80% of the province's population.⁵ This influence would come to haunt the home government, as it eventually came to view the American population as a threat to its ideals of loyalty and hierarchy.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars instigated new interest in the colonies and the formation of a new set of colonial ideas within government circles. It allowed the government to focus more clearly on the domestic situation, which was becoming increasingly unstable. The negative effects of industrialization were becoming most obvious for the masses, as unemployment, enclosure, low wages and unbearable working conditions took their toll. As a result, growing numbers of people began to look to emigration as a means of solving these problems and overcoming their hardships. In 1815, only 700 emigrants had left for British holdings in North America, but in 1818 the

number had increased to 13,000 and continued to rise up to 66,000 in 1832.⁶ Macdonald asserts that a total of 600,000 British emigrants landed in Canada between 1815 and 1841.⁷ At the same time, problems in the agricultural areas of Britain pushed many into the cities in search of work. This exodus added to the intensifying poverty and suffocating population of cities that were already buckling under the pressure of increased numbers. Witnessing the growing ranks of the unemployed masses and their worsening poverty made many believe that overpopulation was a pressing problem that needed to be remedied, a belief that was strengthened by the ideas of Thomas Malthus.⁸ All of a sudden, the future prosperity of the mother country seemed in jeopardy, and the same self-interest that pushed the government to discourage emigration now pushed them to encourage it. This ultimately thrust the colonies back into the government's attention.

The new interest surrounding Upper Canada was partly related to the situation in the province, but this interest was also based on the concerns of the mother country rather than those of the province. After the War of 1812, in which the province's vulnerability was made clear, the future of the remaining British colonies in North America was questionable at best. The small and scattered population of Upper Canada was in stark contrast to the strong and constantly growing American colonies to the south, and another war with the Americans seemed imminent.⁹ The home government believed that Upper Canada could be strengthened by encouraging British emigration and thereby creating a larger population that could protect Britain's remaining North American holdings. The home government's new interest therefore had its primary basis in domestic concerns, and this emphasis would continue in the future.

The growing attention that the colonies began to receive led to the increased importance of the Colonial Office, which was responsible for much of the subsequent action taken on behalf of the home government.¹⁰ Despite minimal public interest in colonial issues, this was a period in which the Colonial Secretary Bathurst and his Undersecretary Robert Wilmot Horton helped to expand the Office in the face of increasing colonial responsibilities. As a result, by 1825 it had nearly doubled its manpower and had become a distinct government department for the first time.¹¹ Nevertheless, although the Office experienced a great deal of improvement during this period, it was still unable to effectively deal with the problems that it faced.

Although their department was, at least in name and theory, closer to the colonies than any other, its members still pursued the home government's interest in creating benefit for the mother country, and they therefore shared similar weaknesses. Within the home government as a whole, interest in the colonies was shared by a small minority, and the cabinet only acted on this interest when public opinion or partisan considerations were at stake.¹² The Colonial Office was also plagued by this lack of interest, as even Colonial Secretaries had more pressing business to attend to, such as Bathurst's involvement in the House of Lords.¹³ This lack of interest was compounded by a lack of knowledge of what was going on in the colonies. The fact that the Office was overwhelmed with business ensured that its members often did not have time to obtain a full understanding of the issues that they faced. Lines of communication with colonial officials were minimal, and colonial inquiries often went unanswered or were given replies that were rarely satisfactory.¹⁴ Thus, regardless of the government's intentions, when action was taken it was often misinformed and ineffectively administered.

For instance, in dealing with the problems of population at home, rather than building up the strength of Upper Canada, the government imposed a policy that according to both Cowan and Macdonald turned into a pauper-dumping system.¹⁵ The government continued to believe that the retention of a strong population was a prerequisite of national strength, and its encouragement of emigration therefore only applied to the unemployed or undesirable elements of the population. The home government offered no supervision of this emigration, neither did it offer the stability or accuracy that a successful emigration policy required. Canada therefore found itself burdened with rising numbers of destitute immigrants, as it bore the full brunt of the arrival of Britain's undesirables.

By the mid-1820s, the home government came under increasing pressure to do more about the domestic problems that were creating widespread hardship and to take a more active role in emigration to the colonies. Despite the fact that it had been reluctant to manipulate its own resources for such problems in the past, some of its members began to come around to the idea of publicly funding and assisting emigration to the colonies. With the settlements that were created as a result, Horton, who took the lead in promoting them, seemed to be aiming primarily at easing the cost of poor relief and the stresses that such costs were creating in Britain. He was primarily concerned with ascertaining the cost of relocating the redundant population of Britain to Canada to the point of them no longer being in need of further assistance.¹⁶ Nevertheless, settlers were offered much needed aid, instruction and cooperation, and these schemes introduced settlements into Upper Canada that were successful and compact, qualities that were difficult to find throughout the province. They helped to create nuclei of settlement in areas such as

Peterborough that could ultimately be built upon in the future, and those who had already made these areas home were stabilized and strengthened.¹⁷ However, despite the advantages that assisted emigration seemed to offer in creating solutions to problems at home and within the colonies and despite the claims of its supporters within the government, the home government stopped supporting it, as it had failed as a moneymaking scheme.¹⁸ Obviously, the population of Upper Canada could still not expect any sacrifices to be made on its behalf.

A misunderstanding of colonial realities and needs was also clear in the government's subsequent actions aimed at dealing with the American threat. For many years, the practice of offering land to soldiers as a reward for their services had been common. In the case of Upper Canada, the home government believed that creating military settlements at strategic locations would create pockets of loyal settlers who would have the ability to stave off an American attack. It was also believed that such a policy would allow the government to deal with the large group of disbanded soldiers who were no longer needed after the end of war.¹⁹ As Lillian Gates has explained, these grants were created for the sole purpose of "strengthen[ing] the physical and ideological defences of the province against the United States".²⁰ From the outset, military settlements such as those at Perth and Richmond met with opposition from the provincial government, which was unwilling to grant lands and special benefits that only Loyalists were normally privy to. Military settlers also faced barriers of poor land and disorganization, which severely hampered their chances of success. Most importantly, the government had failed to recognize that soldiers were unaccustomed to an unregimented way of life that required much independent assertion, which made them

very poor settlers.²¹ While many of these settlers ended up selling their grants, those who never had the slightest intention of settling also sold out to speculators. Rather than settling along frontiers and creating the strategic benefits that were aimed at, those who did settle were located from 50-80 kilometers inland of the American border.²² The strategic aims of this element of land policy therefore failed, largely because of the unsuitability of government plans.

Rather than just creating protection from outside attack, the American threat was one that the government also witnessed and acted upon inside of the province. The American Revolution had been a severe blow to both British pride and colonial emphases, and attitudes resulting from this would dictate the home government's actions, even decades after the Revolution.²³ The home government's ideas about the most effective way to retain its colonies in North America were based in its belief that the American population had rebelled because of the existence of too much popular democracy. It therefore believed that this democracy needed to be curtailed with the creation of a society that was controlled by a hierarchy of authority and a social and political aristocracy.²⁴ It wished to ensure that a loyal population was created that would not react to British authority in the same manner as the 'over-democratized' Americans.²⁵ Rather than adapting to situations as they arose, the government based their subsequent actions and policies on the creation of this ideal population. By emphasizing end results, the government failed to consider basic elements of settlement that had to be in place before its ideals could be created.

The home government went out of its way to create its ideal population, which increasingly involved an openly hostile attitude towards American settlers and their

notions of democracy and republicanism. Reacting to the heightened animosity towards Americans created by the War of 1812, in 1814 Bathurst restricted the further settling of Americans in Upper Canada and made it illegal to administer the oath of allegiance to Americans. This reaction began a controversy regarding aliens within the province that would continue for years and lead to intense grievance and anger.²⁶ Indeed, the actions of the government intensified and in some ways solidified the growing ranks of radicals within Upper Canada's population and created new problems for the provincial government. The policies enacted by the government to deal with the supposed American threat therefore not only failed to prevent Americans from pouring into the province, but they also created problems and grievances in Upper Canada that caused the government much self-inflicted aggravation.

The attitudes and actions of the home government were transferred to Upper Canada from the very beginning of its existence.²⁷ The Constitutional Act of 1791 that created the province of Upper Canada was clearly based on the home government's intention of creating its aristocratic and hierarchical ideals. As the home government worked towards the attainment of these ideals, fundamental requirements and needs of the province were pushed to the background, which ensured a rather flimsy base for future development. Most importantly perhaps, the act influenced the creation of a system of government that was ill suited to Upper Canada.²⁸ In order to protect against unchecked democracy, the tenets of the act created an executive council that was free from popular control, as the home government aimed at creating an aristocracy of power that was not influenced by popular sentiment or grievance. This ultimately ensured that a select few possessed a majority of the political power within the province. At the same

time, because the home government wished to fully retain its colonies in North America on its own terms, the Lieutenant-Governor of the province was made completely responsible to the Colonial Secretary and did not have the power to make independent decisions. Afraid to make decisions on their own, Lieutenant-Governors were constantly waiting for correspondence that never came, and they regularly expressed their dissatisfaction with a system that stifled their initiative.²⁹ In simple terms, this was a system of over-government, as there were too many channels of power that extended decision-making time during a period when a simple form of government that could quickly adapt to changing situations was needed.

The act was also partly responsible for the creation of a small governing clique that had supreme control in the province. The Family Compact, as it was called by its opponents, has been the subject of extensive debate.³⁰ This thesis will adhere to a simple definition of the Compact that describes it as the select group of men responsible for the government of Upper Canada between 1815 and 1840.³¹ Members of the Compact were closely affiliated through economics, outlooks and marriage, and entry into their small circle of control was related to tradition, birth and wealth, as it was widely believed that these attributes made men suitable to rule.³² Plurality of office was the basis of their power and they maintained this position through patronage so that they held the highest public offices and the most political power. Although the Lieutenant-Governors were directly linked to the home government, their unfamiliarity with the situation in Upper Canada ultimately forced them to share close links with the Compact.

Within the insulated society of Upper Canada, it was almost inevitable that a small governing clique would form and jealously guard its power. As Michael Cross has

argued, the Compact developed a garrison mentality, as they believed that they were the sole defenders of loyalty and British links.³³ They became involved in petty and insular squabbles and suspicious of all others who pursued influence or offered criticism. Throughout their time in power, although they did not always agree, members of the Compact exhibited a closer affinity with the home government than with the people of Upper Canada.³⁴ They viewed the colonies through the eyes of the empire and, like the home government, were not colonially minded. The key characteristic of this governing group was therefore its exclusivity and distance from the population of the province. The Compact did contain some very able and knowledgeable men during its existence, but its insularity and power ultimately created bad habits.³⁵

The most important manifestation of the general weaknesses of the home and the provincial governments came about in the area of land policy and settlement.³⁶ Because this area was only one component of a range of issues that had to be dealt with, its fundamental importance was sometimes misunderstood or forgotten. Due to the abundance of land in the province, it was inevitable that its use would become entangled with other issues. From the time of Upper Canada's inception to its dissolution, land was used as a means of attaining the goals of the governments of the period. In itself, this use was legitimate and realistic, but when it was carried out without the necessary emphasis on creating the efficient and compact settlement that future prosperity depended upon, the government ensured problems. It looked to gain benefits from the use of land before foundational building blocks were in place, which led to the implementation of policies that hindered colonial development.

Some of the most serious of these problems can be directly traced to the Constitutional Act. The act initiated the creation of the Clergy Reserves, reserves made up of 1/7 of all surveyed land that would be used to support an established church in Upper Canada. The home government and framers of the act were strong supporters of the Church of England. They believed that by ensuring that Upper Canada was firmly tied to the established church that loyalty would come naturally. This idea of reserving land for the benefit of figures of authority would be extended shortly afterwards with the creation of the Crown Reserves in 1792. These were also made up of 1/7 of the surveyed land and were meant to support the provincial government in order to ensure that it had a source of independent income, thus allowing it freedom from popular assemblies and the controls of democracy. In order to create their ideals, by 1824 close to 3 million acres had been reserved.³⁷ A checkered layout of the Crown and Clergy Reserves was ultimately decided upon which scattered them throughout individual townships.

The Crown and Clergy Reserves were only the beginning of a policy that attempted to manipulate the province's vast possessions of land. As explained earlier, after the American Revolution, the alienation of land to members of the military and to Loyalists began on an unprecedented scale. These grants created a set of unique problems that would remain a source of constant grievance. The alienation of land was not restricted to groups who were believed capable of defending the province. Faced with a vast area of land that the government wanted filled with a loyal population, a system of free grants to the general population became standard procedure. It was firmly believed that such grants would attract loyal settlers who wanted to live under a British system. Alienation of lands to government officials and the provincial aristocracy also proceeded

at a rapid pace. In an official sense, land was used to reward loyal or effective service, but by handing out land to those who had proven their loyalty and devotion, officials also believed that they were strengthening the loyal base of the population. Because land was still believed to denote wealth, creating a small pool of individuals with large personal holdings would also go some way in creating the aristocracy that was believed to be necessary and beneficial.

These free grants ultimately resulted in the widespread and massive alienation of lands during the first twenty-five years of Upper Canada's existence. Although much of this land had been granted with the supposed intention of creating a strong population, only a small portion of the grants was ever settled. By 1824, out of the 8 million acres that had been alienated, only 3 million had been settled and only a ½ million were under cultivation, leaving close to 5 million acres in the hands of absentees and speculators.³⁸ Such lavish alienation ultimately became one of the biggest causes of the poor standards of settlement that plagued the province and became one of its foundational weaknesses. Not only did this cause severe problems for the province, but it did not bring the home government the advantages that it had hoped for.

For each of the main groups that received free land grants, the government's intended goals were not met. The general failure of grants made to ex-military men to create pockets of defence within Upper Canada has already been discussed. The conditions attached to these grants created added problems that would persist for decades. Hoping to entice these individuals to settle in Upper Canada in the face of more attractive American lands, grants were unencumbered with settlement duties and grantees were advantageously distinguished from 'regular' settlers. Believing that these grants were

their right for the hardship that they had endured, these settlers took full advantage of the fact that they were not bound to perform settlement duties and struggled against all attempts to force them to clear and settle their land.³⁹ At the same time, because many of these individuals never had any inclination to settle, they simply used their free grants in order to profit. As a result, much of the land granted in this manner ended up in the hands of speculators. Instead of the strong and loyal settlement that the government had envisioned, its grants to Loyalists and ex-military men exposed the province to even deeper problems.

The extensive grants made to all those who simply applied for them also failed miserably in their intended goals. Rather than encouraging the settling of a loyal population who wished to live under British institutions, such grants brought those who cared little for the form of authority and who simply came to take advantage of the free land grants. The nature of the government's granting procedures also ensured that speculation would run rampant throughout the province. Because the government saw the necessity of filling the province with as many loyal settlers that it could possibly entice, government officials did not adequately screen the applicants. Indeed, given the number of settlers that arrived to take advantage of the grants, this was a daunting task, and it gave profit-minded individuals the opportunity to make money through land jobbing and speculation.⁴⁰ At the same time, for those who wished to receive a location for the purpose of actual settlement, the process was made tedious by official negligence and corruption. Land ultimately became expensive and difficult to obtain, which pushed many legitimate settlers into the waiting arms of the speculators or into American lands.⁴¹

Added to such problems was the overall failure of the policy of creating reserves in order to support the established church and the government. In order to create any of the expected advantages for these groups, these reserves had to bring in revenue, a goal that they consistently failed to accomplish. The provincial government held fast to its policy of retaining the reserves and shunned any actions that would see it lose them, regardless of the constant difficulty that they created. As a result, despite the obvious competition that the large amounts of free grants would offer, the government attempted to lease the Crown Reserves. Unsurprisingly, instead of bringing in any kind of considerable revenue, the leasing system failed and the reserves continued to bring little advantage. The Clergy Reserves also engendered their own problems as religious antagonism charged their administration.⁴² The results of poor reserve administration created one of the most important popular grievances in Upper Canada.

Instead of creating the intended benefits, the government's land policies' main offspring was speculation, absentee ownership of land and the lack of compact settlement. Indeed, it is not surprising that such a situation was permitted to flourish when it is considered that many officials were personally involved in speculation. Just as in all other grants, those made to officials became stuck in the quagmire of speculation. Although not as incurably corrupt as some contemporaries' portrayals, evidence has been uncovered that lends credence to the argument that government officials were involved in land jobbing. Studies of such speculation are sparse but both J. Clarke⁴³ and David Gagan⁴⁴ have produced convincing evidence of the government's involvement. In the western district of the province, Clarke has shown that the most prominent groups involved in speculation were linked by marriage and economics and could be located

within the larger provincial power structure. Two of these groups held 26.9% of the granted land in the area.⁴⁵ Similarly, in his study of the Peel region, Gagan has shown that government officials were firmly entrenched in speculation and the creation of large personal estates. Other authors have gone as far as portraying the government as the worst speculator of all,⁴⁶ which makes the nature of the province's overall land problems easier to comprehend.

Speculation ultimately meant that legitimate settlers were harmed, while large amounts of land were held by those who had little concern for the well being of the province. Because of the alienation of lands and widespread speculation, great amounts of undeveloped land sat scattered throughout Upper Canada. Absentee ownership meant that legitimate settlers' lands were surrounded by unsettled wilderness. The checkered pattern of distribution for the Crown and Clergy Reserves that spread unsettled land throughout townships only exacerbated this problem. This ultimately made the creation of passable roads extremely difficult, which was a problem of epic proportions in the young province. Without good roads, not only were necessary trips such as those to the local mill made more difficult, but the creation of a unified and strong population was also severely hindered. Many settlers remained in isolated situations in which the lack of available capital pushed them to become indebted to a 'shopkeeper aristocracy' that was quickly coming to dominate.⁴⁷

Although the basis of many of the fundamental problems with this land policy can be traced to the home government, throughout this period of failure the subsequent actions of the provincial government were inadequate and ineffective at creating remedies. 'Solutions' were often implemented too late or administered so ineffectively

that the relative effect was minor, if any. Like the Colonial Office, the provincial government failed to recognize the largely negative impacts of its actions until they were already intense. It was only when popular sentiment began to threaten the provincial government's position that it was forced to listen and take action. This situation first presented itself with the successful agitation of Robert Gourlay.

Gourlay arrived on the Upper Canadian scene in 1817 and quickly became involved in the province's political scene.⁴⁸ His interest in the province had begun several years earlier when his philanthropic nature led him to consider Upper Canada as a colony for the settlement of the English poor. After presenting his ideas to the province in an address to its landowners, he began the creation of a statistical account, which he believed would make his personal beliefs obvious to all. To create such an account, he posed a series of questions to the province's population and received extensive replies. Most importantly, the respondents outlined their reasons for what they believed was hindering land development in their townships. Answers included the non-resident ownership of land, the lack of population and capital, the Crown and Clergy Reserves, bad roads, the nature of emigration from Britain, and the banning of American settlers.⁴⁹ After touring parts of the province, Gourlay became a strong opponent of the ban on American settlers, as he strongly believed that it was a major hindrance to the province's development. For the remainder of his time in Upper Canada, he was extremely critical of the executive council and the system of land settlement in the province. The province's population took strongly to Gourlay's agitation, clearly illustrating that he struck a chord with their grievances and emotions. The township meetings that he organized to strengthen the support for his agitation were very well attended in many areas and vocal

support for his criticisms was quite extensive. Although many of these criticisms may have been initiated by mental disorder and self-interested hostility, he gave a voice to real concerns within the province and pushed the population to demand change.⁵⁰

Although the government could have emerged relatively unscathed after Gourlay's expulsion in 1819 and the easing of popular hostility, its strict repression of Gourlay made him a martyr and ensured the creation of a permanent opposition that worked against the Compact. It was during these years that opposition to the Compact became most intense. In order to maintain its advantageous position in relation to the growing ranks of radicals, Lieutenant-Governor Maitland was pushed to act. Not only did Maitland want to ensure that the assembly did not take the lead in determining action, but he also wanted to create more revenue for the government.⁵¹ As a result of these motivations, subsequent action and administration failed to effectively deal with the problems, as the real grievances behind the agitation were never really dealt with. In many ways, by the time that Maitland began to act, problems had become so ingrained and serious that there was little chance of remedying them without a complete overhaul of the entire system of administration.

In his attempts to deal with the growing public antagonism, Maitland took several actions. To combat speculation, the Land Boards were reintroduced to ensure that land was not falling into speculators' hands and to hasten a system that was infamous for its lack of punctuality. Maitland also began to create stricter settlement duty regulations, which had been all but forgotten in earlier years. Up until 1818 there was no standard created for settlement duties and the government did not enforce them. Maitland also created a new tax on wild lands to ensure that absentee owners were pushed to develop

their holdings. Nevertheless, these policies failed for a number of reasons. As stated earlier, because they were not primarily based on the well being of the settlers, they did little to help. For instance, subsequent actions relating to the enforcement of settlement duties clearly revolved around the collection of fees, instead of the facilitation of land development and road creation, which hints at their underlying motivations. More importantly, however, these policies failed because they were not administered effectively and were laxly enforced. Land Boards were not vigilant enough in carrying out their duties and the tax on wild lands was also eventually overturned thanks to vested interests.⁵² In some cases, those who were responsible for administering the changes were those who had the most interest in ensuring that they were not enforced.

It soon became obvious to both the home and provincial governments that the land settlement system would have to be drastically changed if it were to bring them the advantages that they desired. By the mid-1820s problems were becoming increasingly severe, and as more and more settlers made their way to Upper Canada change became urgent. It was around this time that the government began to look at the option of selling land in order to bring in more revenue. It was believed that such a system was needed to replace the policy of retaining reserves of land, a policy that was creating little success in its intended goals. Once again, however, the change of attitude was not based on the creation of efficient and compact settlement, but was due to the financial situation of the governments.⁵³ The home government was looking for a way to decrease spending on its colonies, which pushed it to search for ways to get the colonies to pay more of their own expenses. At the same time, the provincial government continued to be embroiled in its search for increased revenue in order to thwart the radical opposition. In both cases, the

suggestions being made for the sale of the government's reserves of land found a sympathetic audience, and the government decided to embark on a policy of land sales.

The fact that this new use of land was carried out without consideration of the basic importance of effective settlement was clearly evident in the government's subsequent actions. Because the government was looking for new ways of administering the Reserves, the application of the Canada Company for a massive purchase of land was accepted.⁵⁴ As a result of this sale, the government would not only lose a great deal of aggravation relating to the Reserves, but it would also solve its most pressing and important concern for revenue. As it turned out, the system implemented by the Canada Company was based more on making money than on creating prosperity.⁵⁵ Indeed, if it was not for the efforts and abilities of the Company's supervisor John Galt, these problems could have been even more intense, as will be discussed later. Clearly then, the government's policy of land sales was firmly based around creating the revenue that the Reserves had constantly failed to bring in the past.

Throughout this entire period, the government's attempts to solve problems of land settlement were ineffective. The population of legitimate settlers continued to suffer as the ineffective settlement and development of land weakened the province. Successive Lieutenant-Governors who may have truly believed that they could contribute to change were stifled. For instance, although Colborne, who took over the position of Lieutenant-Governor after Maitland, wished to create widespread change, and although he could look back on earlier policies with the benefit of hindsight, he simply attempted to duplicate policies that had failed in the past. Despite the constant problems that had been created by the administration of the Crown Reserves, Colborne still believed that the remaining

Reserves could be scattered throughout the province to create benefits for the provincial government. Such misunderstanding of the realities of the land situation in Upper Canada illustrates the kind of thinking that caused the creation of failing policies.

In all of this, it becomes clear that the administration of land in Upper Canada during this period did not work to the advantage of the population. The governments consistently failed to recognize that in order to create their desired final results, the province and its population had to be stable and prosperous, which required basic assistance and support. Instead, those who were least interested in the province were able to benefit from weak policies and lax enforcement. Thus, due to the government's need to deal with a wide range of issues and the subsequent lack of attention they paid to effective settlement, it would eventually be up to others to attempt to successfully solve these problems. In order to fully understand the nature of Upper Canadian land settlement during this period, it therefore becomes necessary to discuss the contributions of non-government groups and individuals. This thesis will do this by presenting the actions and successes of one individual who made important and in many ways unequalled contributions to Upper Canada and its settlement.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 1.

¹ Sources that discuss most of the issues included in this chapter and that were most useful for this study were Helen Cowan's British Emigration to British North America: The First Hundred Years (1961) Norman Macdonald's Canada, 1763-1841: Immigration and Settlement (1939) and Aileen Dunham's Political Unrest in Canada (1963).

² Historians have put forth several different estimates of Upper Canada's population at the onset of the War of 1812, a result of the lack of adequate records. For instance, Gerald Craig has suggested a population of 75,000, Norman Macdonald argues 95,000, while Aileen Dunham has estimated that it stood at 90,000.

³ Aileen Dunham, Political Unrest in Upper Canada, (Toronto, 1963), p.19.

⁴ At this time, the largest urban centre was Kingston, which held about 2800 people. York, the province's administrative capital held under 1000 people, and many of these were government officials. Both centres remained isolated. Ibid., p.20.

⁵ In contrast to this estimate, Dunham suggests that at this time 2/10 of the population were British and their descendents, 1/6 were Loyalists, and the rest were Americans. Dunham, Unrest, p.20.

⁶ Helen Cowan, British Emigration to British North America: The First Hundred Years, (Toronto, 1961), p.38. Dunham suggests somewhat different statistics, as she claims that 1250 came in 1815, 15,862 in 1827, 28,100 in 1830 and 51,000 in 1832. Dunham, Unrest, p.22.

⁷ Norman Macdonald, Canada, 1763-1841 Immigration and Settlement, (Toronto, 1939), p.26.

⁸ Very basically, Malthus suggested that population would continue to grow in such a manner that it would eventually outgrow the supply of food available.

⁹ The American population in 1815 stood at 8 million, in 1830 13 million, and in 1840 17 million. Dunham, Unrest, p.24. This was in stark contrast to the population of Upper Canada which in 1825 was 157,923, 1832 236,702, and 1841 455,688. Ibid., p.23.

¹⁰ Several historians have created strong sources relating to the Colonial Office during this period, and the most influential for this study have been D.M. Young's The Colonial Office in the Early Nineteenth Century (1961), R.G. Riddell's "A Study in the Land Policy of the Colonial Office, 1763-1855," Canadian Historical Review. XVIII. 4. (December 1937), pgs.385-405, and most importantly Phillip Buckner's The Transition to Responsible Government: British Policy in British North America, 1815-50 (1985).

¹¹ Phillip Buckner, The Transition to Responsible Government: British Policy in British North America, 1815-1850, (London, 1985), p.31.

¹² ibid., p.16.

¹³ ibid., p.30.

¹⁴ ibid., p.52.

¹⁵ Macdonald argues that “[t]here was no attempt made to regulate the number of emigrants that left for the Colonies in any one year, or preparation made for their reception. Struggling Colonies, financially embarrassed, were expected to provide for these helpless crowds and assimilate them in the best way they could. It need scarcely be a matter of surprise if this dumping of pauper emigrants was viewed with suspicion and even hostility”. Macdonald, Immigration, p.27.

¹⁶ Lillian Gates, Land Policies of Upper Canada. (Toronto, 1968), p.95.

¹⁷ The most important settlements created in this fashion were those at Lanark and Peterborough. In the Peterborough settlement, named after the supervisor of this emigration, Peter Robinson, 567 people were introduced to the area in 1823, and another 2034 arrived in 1825. These settlers strengthened the population that had already made the area home. Cowan, Emigration, p.73. In 1824, the Lanark settlement had a prosperous population of 1560. Ibid., p.64. Macdonald has estimated that by 1827, 7000 settlers had been brought to Upper Canada thanks to government assistance. Macdonald, Immigration. p.23.

¹⁸ Gates, Policies, p.97.

¹⁹ Many soldiers were offered individual grants of land in various parts of the province, while group settlements were created in places like Perth (1816) and Richmond (1818). In 1822, these kinds of military settlements held 10,763 people. Ibid., p.92.

²⁰ ibid., p.86.

²¹ Macdonald, Immigration, p.61.

²² Gates, Policies, p.93.

²³ Randall White and Aileen Dunham are the most prominent proponents of this idea. Dunham argues that “all the evils of the little society were commonly attributed to its democratic tendencies. Prejudiced already against democracy by the long wars with France and the United States, the British ruling classes, in both church and state, felt that their mission in Canada was to curb democracy, and the conviction was the source of much misunderstanding and hard feeling”. Dunham, Unrest, p.27.

²⁴ Randall White, Ontario, 1610-1985: A Political and Economic History, (Toronto, 1985), p.66.

²⁵ Richard Reid, “The End of Imperial Town Planning in Upper Canada,” Urban History Review 19 (June 1990), p.30. In this article, the author describes the military settlements that were created at Perth, Richmond, Lanark and Bytown as a result of these concerns. He explains that these towns were created with the aim of creating a denser population and stronger lines of communication between Montreal and Kingston in order to defend against the Americans.

²⁶ Chapter 5 in Dunham’s book entitled ‘The Alien Question’, and chapter 8 of Gates’ book entitled ‘Robert Gourlay and the Alien Question’ offer the clearest analyses of the alien controversy.

²⁷ Beginning at this point in time and focussing on Upper Canada, there have been several sources of great usefulness. Most importantly, these include Gerald Craig's Upper Canada: The Formative Years (1963), James Careless' Colonists and Canadiens (1971), Leo Johnson's "Land Policy, Population Growth and Social Structure in the Home District, 1793-1851" (1971), and Howard Richards' "Lands and Policies: Attitudes and Controls in the Alienation of Lands in Ontario During the First Century of Settlement" (1958), along with the general accounts that were outlined earlier.

²⁸ Aileen Dunham's Political Unrest in Upper Canada (1963) has been especially useful for creating an understanding of the nature of the act and the resultant system of government.

²⁹ Buckner, Transition, p.52.

³⁰ David Gagan's "Property and 'Interest': Some Preliminary Evidence of Land Speculation by the 'Family Compact' in Upper Canada, 1820-1840" (1978) offers an excellent analysis of this debate. Sources such as Michael Cross' "The 1820s" (1971), Robert Saunders' "What was the Family Compact?" (1957) and William Wallace's The Family Compact (1920) have all been influential for this study, but the most useful source has been Earl's The Family Compact (1967)

³¹ Robert Saunders gives a similar simple definition in his "What Was the Family Compact?" (1957).

³² David Gagan, "Property and 'Interest': Some Preliminary Evidence of Land Speculation by the 'Family Compact' in Upper Canada, 1820-1840," Ontario History. LXX. 1. (March 1978), p.63.

³³ Michael Cross, "The 1820s," Colonists and Canadiens 1760-1867. Ed. James Careless. (Toronto, 1971), p.163.

³⁴ In his letters, Hugh Gray, a British traveller in Upper Canada, illustrates typical British attitudes towards the colonies' inhabitants and their suitability to rule. He wrote: "I do not deny that some of the Canadians are qualified from their education and general knowledge to take a part in state affairs, but it is the case with very few of them; and to pretend to find in the counties in general, fit men to represent them, is altogether out of the question...An infant colony is something like an infant child, and should be treated in the same manner. It would be considered extremely unwise to put a very young man, of large fortune, in possession of his estates, and allow him to have the management of them... This is precisely the case of the British government and Canada". Hugh Gray. Letters from Canada. 1809. (Toronto, 1971), p.79, 326, 327.

³⁵ Gerald Craig, Upper Canada: The Formative Years, (Toronto, 1963), p.109.

³⁶ The discussion of these issues within this chapter have been influenced most by Lillian Gates' Land Policies of Upper Canada (1968), Edwin Guillet's The Pioneer Farmer and Backwoodsman (1963) and Alan Wilson's The Clergy Reserves of Upper Canada: A Canadian Mortmain (1968).

³⁷ Craig, Formative, p.131.

³⁸ ibid., p.131. Richards offers a slightly different estimate as he argues that by 1838 over 90% of Upper Canada's surveyed land had been alienated, but that only 10% of this land had actually been settled. Howard Richards, "Lands and Policies: Attitudes and Controls in the Alienation of Lands in Ontario During the First Century of Settlement," Ontario History. L. 4. (1958), p.194.

³⁹ Gates illustrates the effects of these ideas in chapter 2 and chapter 9 of her book. Macdonald explains that beginning in 1789, loyalists "were to be discriminated from the rest of the community by the proud title of 'United Empire' Loyalists and their names entered in special registry books as a perpetual remembrance". Macdonald, Immigration, p.52.

⁴⁰ Craig, Formative, p.33.

⁴¹ In his Statistical Account of Upper Canada, which will be discussed shortly, Robert Gourlay clearly described this problem of government incompetence. "[W]hen civilized men were quietly and peaceably to enter into the occupancy of a new region, where all could be adjusted by the square and the compass; and where order, from the beginning, could have prevented for ever all possibility of doubt, and dispute, and disturbance; how deplorable it is to know, that in less than a life-time, even the simplest affairs should get into confusion! And so it is already in Upper Canada, to a lamentable degree". Robert Gourlay. Statistical Account of Upper Canada.1822 (Toronto, 1974), p.301.

⁴² This is not the place for a discussion of the religious problems related to these Reserves. The best sources on these problems are Wilson's The Clergy Reserves of Upper Canada: A Canadian Mortmain, chapter 6 in Dunham's Political Unrest in Upper Canada, and chapter 15 in Gates' Land Policies of Upper Canada.

⁴³ His article is entitled "The Role of Political Position and Family and Family and Economic Linkage in Land Speculation in the Western District of Upper Canada, 1788-1815" (1975).

⁴⁴ His article is entitled "Property and 'Interest': Some Preliminary Evidence of Land Speculation by the 'Family Compact' in Upper Canada, 1820-1840" (1978).

⁴⁵ J. Clarke, "The Role of Political Position and Family and Economic Linkage in Land Speculation in the Western District of Upper Canada, 1788-1815," Canadian Geographer. XIX.1. (Spring 1975), p.31.

⁴⁶ Edwin Guillet, The Pioneer Farmer and Backwoodsman. Vol.1. (Toronto, 1963), p.276.

⁴⁷ Gates, Policies, p.43.

⁴⁸ William Wallace's description of Gourlay and his actions in The Family Compact (1920), although dated, was useful for this study, as was S.R. Meaning's introduction to Gourlay's Statistical Account of Upper Canada.

⁴⁹ Dunham, Unrest, p.53.

⁵⁰ ibid., p.60.

⁵¹ Craig, Formative, p.134.

⁵² William Wallace, The Family Compact, (Toronto, 1920), p.31.

⁵³ Richards argues that government policy and action was largely dictated by the amount of land that was at their disposal. Thus, he argues that the policy of land sales was implemented when the government finally realized that the amount of land that they could use was not limitless. Richards, "Lands and Policies", p.197.

⁵⁴ The Company purchased 1,322,010 acres of crown lands, and the 1.1 million acre Huron Tract for total payments of £344,375, consisting of annual installments of around 20,000 pounds. Gerald Craig, Upper Canada: The Formative Years, (Toronto, 1963), p.169. Two of the most useful sources on the Canada Company are Thelma Coleman's The Canada Company (1978), and Clarence Karr's The Canada Land Company: The Early Years (1974).

⁵⁵ Lillian Gates argues that the brief summary that she gives "of the Canada Company's holdings of the Crown Reserves which, with the exception of the blocks, it did practically nothing to develop, is itself enough to account for the hostility shown it by the legislature of Upper Canada". Lillian Gates, Land Policies of Upper Canada. (Toronto, 1968), p.170. Gerald Craig also illustrates that there are differing opinions on the benefits that the Company offered the province. He argues that there is evidence to suggest that "its improvement program was often badly planned and directed, that it sold its lands at too high a price, and that, in the Huron tract, it became a powerful and sometimes tyrannical overlord, holding in its lands the fate of thousands of struggling farmers". Gerald Craig, Upper Canada: The Formative Years, (Toronto, 1963), p.138.

CHAPTER 2

A Map, Pencil and Eraser: Thomas Talbot and Upper Canada

A full understanding of Thomas Talbot's involvement in Upper Canada requires that his actions and attitudes be placed in the context of his background and life experiences, and the following chapter aims at doing this. Instead of presenting his Upper Canadian experiences as a unique period of his life, they will be located within his life experiences in order to create a clear understanding of his influences, motivations and attitudes.

Talbot's background made him an unlikely candidate to become a settler and colonizer in the wilds of Upper Canada. Born on July 19, 1771 in Malahide, Ireland, Talbot's future as an influential figure was all but guaranteed. For centuries, the Talbots had been a prominent family in Ireland's social, political and military circles. Indeed, they may have been one of the only families in Europe to retain their ancestral estate in the male lineage for almost seven hundred years.¹ It was on this estate in Malahide Castle, an impressive castle in the countryside of Ireland not far from Dublin, that Thomas' parents raised their seven sons and five daughters. This was a time when the Anglo-Irish aristocracy of Ireland was as oppressive as ever, as they demanded submission from a tenantry that was mired in poverty. They tried to remain as far as possible from the lower orders of society and lived in relative luxury while many of those under them struggled to subsist.² This was the world that surrounded the young Talbot and which would begin to mould his character and personality, while also giving him the privileged position that would serve him well in later years. The family had maintained its influential links, and

before long Thomas was benefiting from them and following in the military footsteps of some of his famous ancestors.

Because of the size of Thomas' family, providing for the children's future was difficult. Being in the middle, Thomas and his younger brothers, instead of receiving large inheritances, were given good educations and military commissions. Thomas was given his commission at the age of 12 and began a promising military career. He started as an ensign and soon became a lieutenant, but shortly after put active duty on hold for several years, during which time he received half-pay. After completing his education, the more active portion of his military career began in 1787. During this period of his young life, he constantly benefited from his family's influence, as he quickly began to climb the military ladder using promotions and commissions secured by his parents. As with his initial commission, Talbot's new assignment was based on his family's influence with the Lord and Lady Temple. Lord Temple was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when Talbot received his first commission, and he would eventually become the Marquis of Buckingham. Between 1787 to 1788 Talbot worked as an aide for Buckingham, a very coveted position which also required him to be named a lieutenant of the 24th regiment of foot. He spent much of his time as an aide within the Dublin court, which was well known for its lavishness and ceremony. Talbot therefore spent his developmental years associating with powerful and influential company. Writing about Talbot some 50 years later, Anna Jameson stated that "he has in his features, air, and deportment, that *something* which stamps him gentleman. And that *something* which thirty-four years of solitude has not effaced", thus illustrating that the characteristics he developed early in his life never fully left him.³

After Buckingham's resignation, Talbot traveled to Quebec with his regiment in 1790, thus initiating his first contact with the country to which he would make important contributions. While in Canada, his ability and determination caught the eye of John Graves Simcoe, Upper Canada's first Lieutenant-Governor. Thanks in part to Buckingham's recommendations, Talbot became Simcoe's personal aide, and retained this position for four years, during which time he was an intimate member of the Simcoe household.⁴ While in Canada, Talbot became accustomed to the landscape and possibilities of Upper Canada. He accompanied Simcoe on his journeys throughout the province, and as Simcoe's personal assistant became familiar with the political basis of the province. Acting as Simcoe's private secretary, he was responsible for writing documents such as the Proclamation of 1792, in which the land policy of the province was set out, and which ironically contained some of the policies that Talbot would fight against in the future.⁵

Talbot not only learned of Upper Canada's potential through his personal experiences, but his ideas were surely influenced by Simcoe, who held a lofty optimism for Upper Canada and its possibilities for settlement. Although many of his ideas were motivated by strategic concerns and British ideals of hierarchy and loyalty, Simcoe pushed for the full development of the province, as he believed that it could become a prosperous bastion of loyalty and a prop to the Empire. He firmly believed that the inevitable prosperity of the province would win back the American colonies for the British Empire. An aspect of his plans involved the future site of London, which he believed would make a perfect provincial capital. It was around this area that Talbot began his settlement a few years later and it was he who eventually founded the city of

London. Talbot's experiences under Simcoe therefore gave him a basic understanding of the nature of the province and what was needed for its future development. At the same time, the fact that Simcoe's optimistic ideas and plans for the province often met with the disapproval and ultimate denial of the home government may have conditioned Talbot to understand the nature of the home government's involvement. Nevertheless, Talbot's interest had been sparked, and it was this interest that would motivate him to begin his own settlement. Upon surveying the lands within the area of his future settlement he majestically proposed to Simcoe, "Here, General Simcoe, will I roost, and will soon make the forest tremble under the wings of the flock I will invite by my warblings around me".⁶ This proclamation would ultimately materialize and consume the rest of his life.

During his time in Canada, the Talbot family's links with Buckingham had continued to work for Thomas' benefit. Buckingham, because of his wife's close relationship with Talbot's mother, worked to allow Thomas to become a captain and eventually a major in the 85th regiment of foot. Returning from Canada in 1794 after being recalled for service with this regiment on the continent, but possibly already harbouring thoughts of settling in Upper Canada, Talbot continued in the military. He became a Lieutenant-Colonel in the 5th regiment of foot in 1795 and saw action in Holland and Gibraltar. It has been suggested that during these campaigns Talbot grew to dislike his military lifestyle. Perhaps his lack of continued promotion or the criticisms leveled at him for some of his decisions in the heat of battle soured his opinion.⁷ After the Peace of Amiens, Talbot returned to England where he reacquainted himself with the privileged lifestyle that he was growing to detest.

Given the Talbot family's influence and Thomas' growing reputation, Thomas' future as a high ranking military official still looked promising. In 1800, however, he suddenly sold his commission and retired from the army. Some have suggested that his unrequited love for a woman who was perhaps linked to royalty induced him to retire.⁸ Others have argued that the criticisms of his military decisions drove him to give up life in the military.⁹ Although such factors may have been the spark that pushed him to resign his position, it is most likely that Talbot had grown tired of the pretentious society within which he lived and wished to quit it. In later years, Talbot became more outspoken in his criticisms of this society, which were driven by his experiences in the wilds of Upper Canada, much of whose population had little time for aristocratic pretensions in the face of hard work and survival.

In his short time in Canada Talbot had fallen in love with the country and with the romantic idea of living the life of a pioneer. In one of his first letters that he sent from Upper Canada, Talbot stated that he ate his "homely fare with more zest than [he] ever did the best dinner in London",¹⁰ and similar sentiments would run throughout his correspondence in the future. In later years he told Anna Jameson that the poetry of Charlevoix, a European who travelled throughout Upper Canada, and his idyllic portraits of the New World had moulded his desire to relocate to Upper Canada.¹¹ In the same conversation he went on to criticize "the follies and falsehoods and restrictions of artificial life, in bitter and scornful terms: no ascetic monk or *radical* philosopher could have been more eloquently indignant",¹² which hints that it was more than a mere whim that led Talbot back to Upper Canada. This is the first hint that Talbot's decision to create a settlement and begin a new life in Upper Canada went beyond noblesse oblige.

Although some of his well-bred characteristics never fully left him, Talbot's love for the country would serve to strengthen his dedication when simple noblesse oblige would have expired. The effort that he ultimately put into ensuring that his settlement and settlers were prosperous would eventually make this clear.

After making his decision to begin a new life, Talbot made his way back to Upper Canada and immediately set to work on procuring a grant of land with which he could begin a settlement. Before his departure, he had applied for a 5000 acre grant to Colonial Secretary Hobart, but was told that he would have to take his proposal to the Lieutenant-Governor of the province. While in Upper Canada during this period, it is believed that he leased land from a man named Bellinger, perhaps so that he could become accustomed to farming or so that he could scout out good land for himself before choosing a location.¹³ Talbot's initial attempt for a grant from Lieutenant-Governor Hunter was thwarted, as Hunter was concerned about Talbot's intentions and was even hesitant in giving Talbot the 1200 acres that he was entitled to with his military background.¹⁴ Not giving up, Talbot employed his influential links and wrote a letter of appeal to the King's brother for a grant of a full township free from fees and conditions.¹⁵ Learning from Simcoe that Talbot had been given a verbal promise of 5000 acres, the Duke of Kent wrote Hobart to encourage Hunter to give him land, but Hobart gave no definite answer and stalled in his response.¹⁶

The resulting delay led Talbot back to England after 1½ years in Upper Canada. After a meeting with the Colonial Undersecretary Sullivan in which he was encouraged to begin a settlement, Talbot put his proposals on paper and asked for 5000 acres in Yarmouth township. In this proposal, Talbot claimed that he wished to begin a settlement

in order to cultivate hemp and to divert a loyal population to the province from America. Ultimately, while in Upper Canada Talbot showed very little interest in carrying out these specific proposals, which created problems with the provincial government. In the same proposal, Talbot also requested that the remainder of the township that held his 5000 acre grant be reserved and granted to him in 200 acre installments for each family that he located within the township. In order to help the acceptance of his proposals, Talbot also employed the links that he had created in Upper Canada. His experiences under Simcoe not only gave him a familiarity and respect for the Upper Canadian wilderness, but also gave him an important reference when it came time to push his proposals. Simcoe sent a letter to the home government praising Talbot's concern for the well being of the province and outlining his motivations for wishing to undertake such a settlement.¹⁷ Ultimately, Talbot gained his wish, as on February 15 1803 Hobart sent instructions to Hunter outlining the conditions of Talbot's 5000 acre grant.¹⁸ This would not be the last time that Talbot emerged victorious from his battles with various members of the provincial government.

Nevertheless, this grant and the conditions attached were not exactly what Talbot had hoped for. He was given a 5000 acre grant to bring in settlers, but under the condition that for every settler he placed on 50 acres of land *within* this grant, he would receive another 200 acres for himself in adjoining areas.¹⁹ Such conditions ensured him personal control of 20,000 acres, and this was how much land was officially reserved for this purpose. Talbot had wished to have 5000 acres for himself, plus another 200 acres for every settler that he placed within the township that was entirely reserved for his settlement, which would have allowed him personal control of upwards of 50,000 acres.

Other conditions of the grant included that settlers had to be drawn from Europe and America, as the government did not wish to encourage emigration from Britain, and that the cultivation of hemp was to be a primary object of importance.²⁰ Nevertheless, many of the initial conditions would go unheeded by Talbot, which would create extensive conflict in the future and which would illustrate that Talbot did hope to personally gain from his settlement.

Arriving back in Upper Canada in 1803, Talbot immediately set to work. He chose a 5000 acre grant in Dunwich township and had southern sections of this township and neighbouring Aldborough township reserved for his own grants. The first tree was felled on May 21 1803 in Dunwich. Talbot's own dwelling was located at one of the most beautiful spots in the area about 40 kilometers south of London on Lake Erie perched on a high point that he called Port Talbot. It was from Port Talbot that Talbot ran his settlement and it became somewhat of a temporary capital for the infant settlement. Talbot immediately took to settler life and began to build a prosperous farm and dwelling with the help of several hired men. He began to wear and indeed take pride in his homemade clothing, which, when coupled with his haughty ways, must have made for an interesting spectacle. Although his rustic clothing must have overpowered his natural appearance at times, especially to his aristocratic contemporaries, in later years Anna Jameson remarked that "[h]e must have been handsome when young; his resemblance now to our royal family, particularly to the King (William the Fourth), is so very striking as to be something next to identity".²¹ For the rest of his time in Upper Canada, Talbot honed his pioneering skills and lived the life of a settler, and he used these skills to help new settlers who joined his settlement.

Rather than simply taking on the role of supervisor and superior as many in his position would have done, Talbot involved himself in the most menial tasks of settlement, which says a lot about his underlying motives. Indeed, Talbot's motivation of genuine concern and love for the province would ultimately define many of his methods of supervision and his views on the settlement's overall development. His theory of development was firmly based around the needs of the settler, which pushed him to emphasize the basics. Through his experiences in Upper Canada both under Simcoe and as a settler, Talbot came to understand that before extensive development could proceed, the basics of settlement had to be in place. Most importantly for Talbot, this meant the creation of a strong network of roads and the success and prosperity of each settler. It would not be until these basics of settlement were created that Talbot would move on to wider development, such as the development of cities. Nevertheless, even at this point, Talbot continued to base his actions on the changing needs of the settlers, which ensured an ad hoc system of development and adaptation. Thus, with a curious mix of aristocratic characteristics and settler ethos, Talbot began his settlement full of optimism.

In its earliest years, the initial results within the settlement were somewhat disappointing for Talbot, as his lands were not immediately populated by great numbers of settlers. Although his main intention was not to entice the British population to emigrate but to bring in those who had already emigrated, the unstable situation in the British Isles clearly had a negative effect on the number of British settlers arriving in the province. Nevertheless, Talbot remained optimistic and excitedly greeted the few settlers who arrived in search of a location. In 1806, he personally received his first 1200 acres for 6 settlers that he located, as he sent in certificates to the home government with the

settler's signatures. Indeed, his promptness in doing so is a clear indication of the importance that he placed on gaining his own landed estate. It has been suggested that Talbot immediately began ignoring the conditions of his grant by leaving his 5000 acre grant free of settlers in an attempt to keep it for himself.²² Although records are not clear, it is believed that Talbot placed these first settlers on lands outside of his 5000 acres in other parts of Dunwich and Aldborough, which is what he wanted his initial grant to allow him to do. The settler would receive 50 acres of a 200 acre grant, while Talbot would take the rest of the lot, thus surrounding the location with undeveloped lands.²³ Not knowing that this was happening, the government still granted Talbot 200 acres for each settler that he brought into his townships, which set a precedent that would continue in the future.²⁴ As time passed and his settlers developed their land, the value of Talbot's personal lands grew in value. Talbot went on to sell some of these lands for significant amounts, but also retained much land in order to pass it on to his heirs, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Eventually, problems within these townships came to resemble those of the province as a whole, and this would become a key grievance against Talbot. His ability to successfully ignore his initial instructions resulted from a combination of the government's lack of knowledge of the activities within the province, Talbot's isolation, and the increasing amount of land that continued to be placed under his control. The inherent problems of such a situation would soon become obvious.

By 1809 Talbot had greeted only 12 families to his lands. Nevertheless, in 1811, the number of arriving settlers increased and Talbot's optimism about the growth of his settlement was clearly visible in his correspondence. Writing to Major Halton on June 1

1811. Talbot explained: "I have infinite pleasure in stating for his Excellency's information that I have been very successful in procuring settlers and am filling this part of the Province with a most industrious description of inhabitants".²⁵

During this period, despite the lack of extensive or immediate growth, Talbot exhibited his knowledge of what was needed for successful settlement and his ability to create these necessities. In order to bring in settlers and to ensure that they were successful, Talbot knew that there had to be a range of services and transportation routes in place. He quickly took care of the need for accessible mills as he hired men to begin construction of two mills close to Port Talbot that were completed in 1807 and 1808. At the same time, Talbot's experiences under Simcoe had instilled in him an understanding of the importance of good roads. It was during Simcoe's time as Lieutenant-Governor that Dundas Street was begun, an integral road for the development of York that made access to the area's extensive hinterland possible. Talbot believed that the creation of roads in his settlement would allow for the development of a unified and stable population that could then be built upon. To satisfy these demands within his settlement, in 1804 Talbot and three others put forth a proposal to the government for a new road that would run east from Port Talbot to the Long Point area. They argued that the existing road, an Indian trail, was impassable, and that it would be cheaper for the government to construct a new road than to repair the old.²⁶ The four men were granted £250 from the government to hire a surveyor and workers, and Talbot and Robert Nicholl were named commissioners.²⁷

Failing to complete this road with the allotted funds, it was not until three years later that Talbot put forth another proposal to complete it and to remove reserve land

from along its proposed route so that it could be cleared and settled. In this proposal, Talbot argued the benefits that he believed good roads would bring, and he clearly outlined his thoughts on how roads could initiate further development. He pushed the government to “pursue [the creation of the road] yet further as it must greatly add to the value of these reserved townships and be a powerful means of gaining a considerable population in part of the province where there seems no other means of obtaining it”.²⁸ The government accepted the proposal and Talbot was made an unpaid commissioner of what would be known as the Talbot Road East, which was fully surveyed by 1811.²⁹ During the same year of this road’s completion, Talbot received permission and funds to begin the survey of the Talbot Road West, which would stretch all the way to the Detroit River, thus creating a road that stretched the length of the settlement. Talbot also received approval to settle a north-south route that connected Westminster township to what would be the St. Thomas area.³⁰ Almost immediately, the survey of these roads paid dividends as a number of settlers took the opportunity to take locations along their routes. It was during these years that the first settlers in what would be St. Thomas were located by Talbot, and it would be on these lands that the town would eventually grow, which will be discussed in more detail shortly.

At around the same time that the Talbot Road was begun, Talbot began to collect more powers regarding the lands under his supervision, powers that in other areas of the province belonged to the provincial government. In 1810, Talbot was given powers beyond that of commissioner of the roads, so that it was possible for settlers to go directly to him in order to receive a location of land, as they could for locations in Dunwich and Aldborough.³¹ This ostensibly meant that Talbot was responsible for the settlement of the

areas through which his roads passed, and the government would ultimately extend this power to include the settlement of the townships that came under his control. The executive council at York was therefore surpassed in the process as Talbot had full control over the selection process. Although his new powers made the process of settling more convenient for the settler, Talbot's independence, which in the future would constantly increase, began to become a source of hostility for certain members of the provincial government. Although Talbot was lucky to have favourable relationships with high ranking government officials, such as the province's successive Lieutenant-Governors, the growing power that he received from these men caught the attention of members of the executive council and the Family Compact. It was these men who consistently attempted to put barriers in front of Talbot. In this way, Talbot had a rather two-sided relationship with the government, as his influence with higher ranking officials worked to benefit him, while it also worked to create enemies among the lower orders of the same government. Indeed, some of these men had already begun to question Talbot's authority as early as 1809 when they attempted to open Dunwich and Aldborough to regular settlement, and such attempts would intensify in later years. Despite these attempts, in 1811 Lieutenant-Governor Gore put the townships of Bayham, Malahide and Yarmouth under Talbot's control for settlement, but he did so verbally, which would cause problems in the near future.³²

With the onset of the War of 1812, immigration was curtailed further and Talbot's, indeed the entire province's, attention was turned to issues other than settlement. During the war, Talbot commanded a regiment that saw some largely unsuccessful military action, only adding to his negative experiences during the war. His

settlement was a prime target for American marauders and thieves who inflicted serious damage. At several times, Talbot came close to losing his life, the closest of which was when he was spared due to his ragged appearance that allowed him to pass for a farm hand to a group of Americans and Indians that had arrived to kill him.³³ Not only were Talbot's personal dwelling and farm laid to waste, but much of the settlement was also plundered or destroyed, including the mills that had been constructed only a short time earlier. Nevertheless, despite these setbacks, Talbot's personal papers clearly illustrate his genuine loyalty, concern, and action in defending the province during the war.³⁴ True to form, following the war Talbot immediately set to work on repairing the damage and ensuring that the settlement would prosper.

Most importantly for Talbot, rebuilding meant dealing with problems with the executive council of the province and reestablishing control of his lands outside of Dunwich and Aldborough. During Lieutenant-Governor Gore's absence from the province during the war, the executive council had disallowed Talbot to make any more grants outside of his initial townships, claiming that they had no evidence of Gore's verbal promise to Talbot.³⁵ Immediately after Talbot received notification of this, he replied to the Surveyor-General Thomas Rideout and argued: "Lieutenant-Governor Gore, in the first instance without any solicitation on my part, proposed that I should undertake the settlement of the Talbot Roads. I complied solely for the benefit of this part of the country".³⁶ On Gore's return, he gave Talbot back his power to locate settlers, illustrating his willingness to give Talbot the benefit of the doubt in the face of official criticism. However, in the near future this willingness would begin to diminish, as Gore would begin to heed the executive council's criticisms and complaints.

The end of the war not only witnessed the creation of increasingly hostile attitudes towards Americans by those within the province, but it, along with the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars in Britain, signaled the beginning of an important new phase of development in the province, especially within Talbot's settlement. At the same time, however, the increased business in land grants and settlements within the province also created new opportunities for speculators and land jobbers. It soon became a daily hassle for Talbot to separate the legitimate settler from the profit-minded speculator. Nevertheless, with rising numbers of settlers, Talbot's preparations began to pay dividends. With more settlers, the results of Talbot's overall emphasis on roads began to take more shape, as it became clear that this emphasis was creating opportunities for further development. At the same time, however, as Talbot located more settlers, his failure to locate them according to the initial agreement was increasingly questioned.

After Talbot had regained control of his lands upon Gore's arrival, he was instructed to submit a report on how many settlers he had settled and where they had been located. Over the next several years he had to create several of these reports, and they would give the government some insight into the nature of the settlement. Surveyor-General Rideout was disturbed that out of the 350 names on the initial return of 1815, only 77 had deposited warrants for the land with the provincial government.³⁷ Gore ordered Talbot to make another return and inform his settlers that they were to pay their fees immediately. In this 1817 return, out of the 804 settlers that were named, 545 had not paid their fees, which amounted to £4324 in lost revenue for the government.³⁸ On the basis of the complaints arising from these statistics, Gore ultimately decided to send the issue to the executive council for investigation. This was also around the same time that

Talbot began to run into serious problems with a group of Scottish Highlanders who claimed that Talbot was stealing land from them.³⁹

After its inquiries, in 1817 the council began to argue to the home government that Talbot should be limited to the 20,000 acres that the original conditions of his grant allowed. This issue was fundamentally separate from the development of Talbot's lands outside of his initial two townships, where Talbot was receiving little compensation for his efforts. The council ignored his actions in these areas, and argued that Talbot's growing domain should be limited. They justified this claim on the fact that Talbot's actions did not correspond with his initial proposals or the regulations of the time. They argued, and rightly so, that his practice of retaining his 5000 acre grant and locating settlers elsewhere while still gaining 200 acres for each location, would ultimately lead him to collect much more extensive personal holdings than his initial grant had permitted. They argued that the growing of hemp was not fulfilled and that American settlers were still pouring into the settlement, despite the government's restrictions after the War of 1812. They were also angered at the fact that patent fees were not quick in coming from the settlement. Claiming that Talbot was already in control of 15,800 acres of land within his initial townships, they argued that he be given the remaining 4200 acres and that his powers within his settlement be concluded, thus opening lands surrounding the already settled land to the regular system of dispersal. Gore agreed, but decided to send the issue to the Colonial Secretary, and in the meantime informed Talbot not to locate any more settlers.⁴⁰ However, this reaction, rather than hindering Talbot, ultimately resulted in the home government's approval of both his relatively independent control and his actions in

earlier years. The government's first major attempt to limit Talbot's growing authority ultimately became one of the defining moments of his independence.

To counter the provincial government's claims, Talbot returned to London and used his influence with the home government to stifle the provincial government's wishes. Rather than simply countering the provincial government's claims, Talbot returned to Upper Canada more secure in his power than he was when he left. Fully aware of the benefits that Talbot was creating for the province in areas outside of his initial grant, Colonial Secretary Bathurst solidified Talbot's power, and in his letter of February 26 1818, told Gore that:

The successful exertions which Colonel Talbot has made for the improvement of lands under his charge, and for the settlement of the Townships with which he has been connected, entitles him to the most liberal considerations of Government, and I have therefore to signify to you the Pleasure of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent that you should for the next five years and no longer, reserve at Colonel Talbot's disposal under the conditions stated in Lord Hobart's despatch of February 1803, such further proportions of the townships of Aldborough and Dunwich as were vacant at the time of Colonel Talbot's commencing his settlement...I cannot suppose that any measure taken by you can interfere with the arrangement which you are now instructed to make...it does not appear necessary to require from the settler a previous examination at York before they can receive the location assigned to them by Colonel Talbot.⁴¹

Bathurst also went on to criticize the government's methods of collecting fees and instructed it to use similar methods as Talbot. This letter was the crowning example of the home government's willingness to delegate settlement responsibilities to private individuals. Talbot finally had the conditions that he wished to have from the beginning, along with what he believed was full freedom of action within his settlement.

With this justification Talbot felt secure in his power and assured in the righteousness of his policies. He continued to add new lands to those that he already controlled, but in many cases the number of prospective settlers outgrew the supply of land. On his arrival to replace Gore as Lieutenant-Governor, Peregrine Maitland quickly gained respect for Talbot and did not hesitate in putting the township of London under his control. The power that Bathurst had conferred on Talbot in 1818 continued to grow, as he gained more authority in his lands outside of Dunwich and Aldborough. With Maitland's renewal of the Land Boards, Talbot was made head of the board for certain townships within his settlement. However, due to disputes with members of the executive council he resigned this position, only to be personally given the powers of the Land Boards throughout his entire settlement. It would seem that Talbot's influence was still operating with the highest ranking government officials, while still engendering continued hostility from many other members of the government. Indeed, Maitland was so impressed with the results of Talbot's policies that he incorporated some of them into his new plans for the province's land system.⁴²

In its fundamentals, the system that Talbot employed was a very simple one, but one that was strictly enforced. Every day, he was faced with a constant stream of people looking to receive a location within the settlement, including legitimate settlers, devious speculators and all in between. With his independent power, choosing what kind of settlers would receive lands was completely up to him and was based on his impression of the possible grantee and how he presented himself. Expressing a marked distaste for speculators, the lazy, the devious and the shiftless, Talbot chose only those who he believed were legitimate settlers and who would help to create a prosperous settlement.

Outlining his purposes, he once wrote that he had undertaken the settlement of the Talbot roads “in order to ensure to prevent improper characters from getting possession of the Crown lands and to see that each lot should be occupied by an actual settler”.⁴³ For Talbot, this meant choosing settlers with an emphasis on loyalty, general fitness for settlement, moral character and in many cases personal respect, all of which he evaluated based on a short interview and a first impression.

This system ensured a group of settlers with diverse backgrounds but with similar basic characteristics. Obviously, as a result of the system of free grants, it was often those who had little money who were attracted to his settlement. In early years, many of his settlers could barely afford basic necessities, which ensured that Talbot would have to give much needed assistance. Some have suggested that Talbot wished to have no equals within his settlement because he wanted to maintain his position of authority. More likely, Talbot’s failure to recruit well-off settlers can be tied to his general aversion for the privileged lifestyle that he had grown to detest. He also desired to have people in his settlement who had to complete their settlement duties in order to survive and be granted land.⁴⁴ The fact that Talbot had failed to entice settlers from the upper levels of society would eventually be noted by the provincial government.

For those who met with Talbot’s approval, their name was pencilled in on a map at the location that they were given. When Talbot believed that an applicant was a speculator, the type of person who he believed would not succeed, or simply a person whom he disliked, a location would not be issued and the applicant would be dismissed. This dismissal was often quick and rude, which led to constant confrontation. If Talbot became agitated or angered at the applicants’ attempts, his servant would be instructed to

unleash the dogs, which led to many interesting anecdotes. In one particular case, when an Irishman boasted to Talbot that his pedigree was as noble as Talbot's with the hopes of gaining his favour, Talbot simply replied, "My dogs don't understand heraldry, and if you don't take yourself off, they'll not leave a coat to your back!"⁴⁵ This clearly shows that applying for land could not only be nerve racking, but it could also be downright dangerous for those who did not meet Talbot's approval.

Nevertheless, there were still those who got their way despite Talbot's hasty dismissal. When a settler who met with Talbot's initial disapproval went on to prove his desire and earned Talbot's respect, a location of land would be quick in coming. For instance, after being denied a location, a Scottish settler told Talbot that he would go to Talbot's superiors in order to gain the grant that he wanted, which Talbot welcomed him to do. On the settler's return to the settlement from York, Talbot called on him to inquire about his search. The man was unsuccessful, but Talbot, realizing the man's desire, gave him a choice location.⁴⁶ Other settlers took more direct methods of getting their way. For instance, one Highlander who learned that Talbot was going to remove him from his lands because he was not completing his settlement duties boasted that he was going to harm Talbot in order to retain his land. Talbot learned of the man's plans and on his arrival firmly rebuked him and locked himself in his house not giving the man an opportunity to reply. Angered, the Highlander entered the servants' quarters and proceeded to eat dinner at their table. He slept in one of the empty beds in the servants' dwelling and sat down to breakfast in the morning. After Talbot's servant Jeffrey decided to tell Talbot of the strange man, the man told Talbot that he was not going to leave until he got his land back. "Take it and go to the devil with it!" was Talbot's reply.⁴⁷ Other

settlers took to violence to convince Talbot that they deserved a location, such as a stout Highlander named Duncan Patterson who pinned Talbot to the ground until he was granted land in the settlement.⁴⁸ Some settlers therefore managed to find ways to get through Talbot's strict exterior in order to get their locations.

It is believed that the pummeling offered to Talbot by Patterson ultimately gave rise to the infamous 'audience-window'. Having grown tired of the constant stream of would-be settlers, especially those who lacked the respect and deference that Talbot had come to expect, Talbot had a window constructed that could be opened and closed and which would be used for interviewing land applicants. This situation ultimately added another source of anxiety for would-be settlers. It became well known that Talbot would receive applicants at the audience-window with his standard "What do you want?" only before the early afternoon and his daily rendezvous with a bottle of whiskey.⁴⁹ For those unlucky enough to come at the wrong time, a night in the wilderness or a long hike back to the closest tavern would await them. In this way, Talbot's reputation as a hard-nosed man with a rather harsh personality was well earned. However, for those who met Talbot's approval and whom he believed were legitimate settlers, a location of land was their reward, along with the opportunity to see the good-natured side of Talbot, which was in abundance for those who he believed were deserving.

Once located on a grant of land within Talbot's settlement, Talbot ensured that the settler met his end of the bargain. This included a strict enforcement of the settlement duties that were stipulated within the original grant. He was extremely vigilant in carrying out investigation of settlement duties and improvements, and his correspondence contains

continual references to his efforts and difficulties in doing so. He repeatedly expressed to the government the idea that “constant casualties must occur by fraud, speculation, and failure of settlement duties, and actual residence”.⁵⁰ These duties involved the construction of a dwelling and the clearing of land, which included 10 acres, one half of the road in front of the dwelling and 100 feet adjoining the road.⁵¹ On completion of these duties, the grant would not be finalized until the settler had resided on the land for at least five years, which was a stipulation aimed at limiting the land held by speculators and absentees. Once Talbot finalized the grant after the five years of residency, it was up to the settler to take out a patent with the provincial government and pay his fees. Clearly, Talbot was not one to push his settlers for fees, as he realized the financial situation that they were in and that there would be no benefit in badgering them for money that they did not have. He argued to the government that: “I would not recommend a demand for the fees before the settlement duties are performed...there are but very few that would have the means of paying them at the time of location... In fact the lamentable state of the greatest portion of this fine Province as to actual settlements, I attribute to the giving of deeds, before the grantees become residents and improved their land, which must appear obvious to every person who travels through the country”.⁵² Nevertheless, Talbot subsequently received much of the blame for the lack of patent fees going to the provincial government.⁵³

For those who failed to complete their duties or did not put forth the necessary effort, their title to the land was revoked and their name was erased from Talbot’s master map. In encouraging the government to use a similar scheme, Talbot argued that “it may be proper to remove names where the party is dilatory in commencing and performing the

settlement duties, as I have found it absolutely necessary to be thus rigid to enforce the exertions of the settlers. I will therefore beg leave to recommend that you should insert the names in your place in pencil".⁵⁴ This revocation was carried out for a number of different reasons, but was based on rooting out those who were not completing their settlement duties or those who attempted to profit from the sale of their lands. At times Talbot's revocations were carried out with a ruthlessness that earned him a negative reputation. However, his policy was quite simple, as Lieutenant-Governor Bond Head explained in later years:

If [the settler] deserts his lot- if he attempts to sell it, assign it, or if he neglects to perform his settlement duties, Colonel Talbot takes up a piece of india-rubber which is attached to his pencil and as he very justly expresses it 'just rubs him out' from which moment the man becomes as much a nonentity as the flame of a candle which has been blown out⁵⁵

Within his personal papers and correspondence, there does not seem to be any reference to enforcing dismissals or revocations. In many cases, those who lost their claim to the land were often absentees, so that it was simply a case of revoking their titles on the master map. Occasionally a settler would resist, but it would seem that the thought of doing work on land that they would never be able to claim was enough to encourage them to move on.⁵⁶ This simple system was often criticized by members of the provincial government who realized that it automatically gave Talbot full control over his settlers. However, Talbot used this control to fight the growing trend of speculation. For instance, when a dismissal took place, Talbot made sure that the new grantee reimbursed the old for work that had been done on the location, thus ensuring that nobody was profiting

unjustly. Similarly, a transfer of location was not allowed unless Talbot personally approved it in order to ensure that it was not based on profit.⁵⁷

Talbot's emphasis on ensuring that settlement duties were carried out and that land was not in the hands of speculators and absentee owners was related to his basic and primary goal of creating a solid system of roads.⁵⁸ Talbot's desire to supervise the settlement in townships outside of Dunwich and Aldborough was based on this emphasis. He argued that he wanted to entice settlers who would complete their duties because he was "aware of the serious injury that many points of the province have sustained in consequence of individuals holding large tracts who never intended to be settlers and by which means the extents they own remains unimproved so that the roads, a primary object of importance, cannot be worked to any general advantage".⁵⁹ This emphasis epitomized his overriding concern with the creation of the basic necessities of settlement.

The routes of these roads were initially proposed to the provincial government by Talbot and the other commissioners. When they were accepted, it was up to surveyors, especially Mahlon Burwell, to investigate the route and map out its exact path.⁶⁰ Within Talbot's correspondence there is little mention of the routes that he chose, but it would seem that his aim was to link his settlement from east to west. Obviously, in the early stages, linking Port Talbot to other areas of the settlement was an immediate necessity. Early roads, such as the north branch of the Talbot road through Southwold township was created in order to make travel to Port Talbot easier.⁶¹ Cities that grew at a later date however, such as St. Thomas, grew naturally at points along the road routes after settlement duties were complete and settlers were stable. These roads eventually became known as some of the best in the province and earned the praise of its settlers and visitors

alike. They were the first in the province to be improved from corduroy construction to more modern and convenient forms.⁶² The settlers in Talbot's settlement therefore had the advantage of easier access to mills and to the other necessities of settler life, which was in direct contrast to areas of the province where the government failed to enforce settlement duties.

Talbot's major emphasis on roads took precedence over the creation of dense areas of concentrated settlement. Indeed, the initial conditions of Talbot's grant by which 100 locations would have been placed within a 5000 acre area would have ensured the creation of a dense group of settlers that could have become a central point for surrounding areas. However, this possibility was shelved due to Talbot's desire to keep his initial grant free of settlers, and to his emphasis on roads. It was not until the bulk of the work for the roads' creation was complete that he would turn to the creation and development of a central city for the settlement. Until his involvement in the laying out of London, which he had envisioned as the settlement's, and indeed the province's, capital, it would seem that his involvement in the creation of the towns that grew, such as St. Thomas, was not according to an overall plan.

Talbot's plans, and indeed his own lifestyle, were fundamentally built around creating the basics of cultivation, roads and basic improvement, although he did not neglect the settlers' other needs as they developed. Throughout his correspondence there is little, if any, mention of an overall scheme that he envisioned for the future, although he constantly looked forward to the future prosperity and success of his settlement. In Talbot, settlers not only had someone who ensured that basic necessities were created, but also someone who was there to contribute to higher levels of development when

necessary. In the end, Talbot's settlement, although not based on an all-encompassing plan of development, provided its settlers with what they needed for success, as witnessed by their prosperity.

Until the settlement began to grow significantly, Talbot's farm at Port Talbot was the central area of the settlement. His dwelling was used as a temporary hotel for many incoming settlers and a place where his settlers came to hear the church service. More importantly perhaps, the personal stores that he had purchased or that were produced on his farm were used to supply settlers with their needs when they were not available anywhere else. Talbot distributed his supplies to his settlers whether or not they could pay for them, and it was this kind of charity that quickly diminished Talbot's personal wealth. As more settlers made their way into the settlement, and as original settlers began to become stable, it became possible for them to begin to supply their own needs from their farms or from newly established merchants. In 1811, some of Talbot's first settlers were given locations in Yarmouth township along the proposed route of the Talbot Road East. It was on these lands granted to original settlers, especially Daniel Rapelje, that the town of St. Thomas would eventually grow. It was thanks to the efforts of the earliest settlers to supply the infant community's needs that the fundamentals of a town were created. After the War of 1812 and the destruction of many areas within the settlement, Rapelje built the first grist mill in what would be St. Thomas, which would soon attract many settlers to the area. In 1817, as a result of the increased number of settlers entering the settlement, it became possible for James Hamilton to open the town's first general store on lands that he had purchased from Rapelje. Rapelje also donated lands for the establishment of a church, the masonic lodge and other public buildings. In 1820, after

realizing his limited future as a farmer, he commissioned Burwell to survey 35 acres of his land into town lots, and it was on these lots that many of the town's services and dwellings would be located.⁶³ The town of St. Thomas was officially founded in 1817 and was named after and in honour of Thomas Talbot.

In this way, St. Thomas grew in a rather natural and unpremeditated fashion. However, it was the stable group of settlers that had been attracted to the settlement by Talbot's well settled lands and the strong system of roads that connected them that made this prosperity possible. Its early growth and prosperity was based on its location at a busy intersection of the roads that Talbot had created.⁶⁴ In this way, small towns such as St. Thomas grew to become the commercial, social and political centres of the settlement in its earliest years, illustrating how Talbot's emphasis on creating a strong system of basic necessities gave impetus to more intense development. At the same time, although Talbot makes little reference to this town in his surviving correspondence, his involvement in its growth was evident. For instance, when a medical dispensary was opened in 1824, it was named the 'Talbot Dispensary' in honour of Talbot and his patronage that was important for its creation.⁶⁵ Similarly, it was Talbot that advised settlers to request land from Rapelje for the construction of an Anglican church within the town.⁶⁶ Although Talbot was very fond of the city and referred to it as 'his capital', the fact that the city grew up on land that had been granted to settlers through normal channels in earlier years clearly shows that it was not meant to be a city. Nevertheless, when the opportunity presented itself, Talbot's involvement in the creation of London would show that he did have plans for the creation of a central city.

Although Talbot's policies required that settlement duties were strictly enforced and that he could show no tolerance for those who did not fulfil their obligations, he did not neglect to care for the settlers' needs. Although the aid that he gave was in no way systematic, when one of his settlers was in need and he believed that they were deserving, he was quick to help. Talbot was willing to give settlers materials that they needed, such as the blankets and other necessities he gave to settlers that had been robbed during the War of 1812.⁶⁷ Discussing Talbot's treatment of his farmhands, a settler named George Munro wrote: "I saw him piling blankets over his shaking patients, and instead of charging for board and attendance, as many would have done, he paid them full wages for all the time they were sick, which few or none would have done".⁶⁸ Talbot also had many important public duties, as at various times he was a justice of the peace, a Lieutenant in charge of the local militia, a commissioner for the administering of the oath of allegiance, and a trustee for the public schools, among others.⁶⁹ Writing several years after Talbot's death, Edward Ermatinger argued that "many of the settlers to this day, acknowledge themselves indebted to Colonel Talbot's means and foresight, for enabling them to overcome the difficulties which they had to encounter".⁷⁰

Similarly, Talbot ensured that his settlers had access to the services that they required. Before the development of central towns, in earlier years Talbot did what he could to ensure that a sense of community was created. His concern with supplying the settlers with their needs, beyond those of a physical sense, can be seen in his involvement in ensuring that a stabilizing factor of religion was strong in his settlement. Although Talbot was in no way a devoutly religious man, during the early years of his settlement when there were no ministers around he read the service for his settlers and allowed

travelling missionaries to use his house for their services. Talbot worked to get ministers into his settlement and was supportive of the creation of churches throughout the settlement. James Coyne has argued that Talbot “was careful about religious observances, as a sort of weekly drill, a survival of garrison discipline”.⁷¹ All of this was done despite the fact that Talbot sometimes criticized religion and eventually stopped attending church altogether.⁷²

Despite his contributions to the easing of his settlers’ lives, he was also guilty of some of the problems that plagued the province as a whole. Although his ignoring of the conditions of his initial grant was ultimately sanctioned by the home government, this was by no means the end of his problems. Beginning in 1816, Talbot argued that he had been given verbal permission from Gore to promise settlers in his initial townships an additional grant of 50 acres of Crown lands on top of their original 50 acre grant. This made the combined grant equal to what settlers could get in other areas of the province. This promise ultimately brought in many settlers who would not otherwise have settled in his settlement, but it also created a group of his biggest critics and most vocal opponents. In 1816, a group of Scottish Highlanders settled within Dunwich and Aldborough. They encouraged others to come, so that by 1818, 36 other families had arrived looking for land with their compatriots. However, on their arrival they were angered to learn that Talbot would not grant them any more land in Dunwich and Aldborough. Many of the Highlanders were also irritated at a system that gave them only 50 acres and a promise of 50 more, while Talbot received 200 for apparently doing nothing. Not only did they see this system as unfair, but Talbot’s practice of placing settlers on 50 acres within a 200

acre lot and then taking the rest for himself, exposed them to the problems of absentee ownership.

Wanting to settle together despite Talbot's rebuke, the second group of Highlanders approached the government with the hope of being granted the neighbouring township of Mosa. Upon this application, the government learned about Talbot's promise of an additional 50 acres of Crown lands to these settlers, which added to its growing hostility. The council's decision to offer these settlers extra land in other townships at higher fees would not satisfy the Highlanders.⁷³ They were certain that Talbot was illegally holding lands from them and they wanted the 200 acres that they believed Talbot had stolen from them.⁷⁴ They became even more adamant in their assertion that Talbot was holding lands from them when the government personally granted him the remaining reserved lands in Dunwich and Aldborough in light of the first group of Highlanders being located. Thus, Talbot had finally succeeded in earning the estate that he had envisioned from the beginning. Unwilling to accede to the Highlanders' claims and angry at their tone, the provincial government eventually decided to lower the fees on their extra land, which put an end to the immediate problems.⁷⁵ However, what had transpired ensured Talbot the Highlanders' hostility and anger throughout the remainder of his time in Upper Canada, and it also pushed the government to take a closer look at his settlement and methods of supervision. Although Talbot's land grabbing happened only in a small area of his settlement, it cast a dark shadow over his entire settlement, especially in the eyes of his critics.

During the same time as Talbot's problems with the Highlanders, he began to run into serious financial difficulties, which was the first hint of a problem that would plague

him for the rest of his life. In 1824 it was estimated that he had spent close to £20,000 of his own money on creating his own farm and dwelling, purchasing supplies for himself and his settlers, and the payment of fees for his lands. Although there is little mention of how Talbot financed his settlement within his correspondence, it is clear that he exhausted his personal wealth. At the time he could probably only sell his lands, which amounted to close to 30,000 acres for about £12,000.⁷⁶ As a result, Talbot traveled back to England in order to push his claim that he needed a pension.⁷⁷ He carried with him a letter that he was to deliver for Maitland to the home government, and his failure to do so would cause problems in the near future. Despite his efforts, it was not until several years later that he eventually secured a £400 per year pension, which was to be paid out of the funds that the government was to receive after selling a large portion of Upper Canadian land to the Canada Company.⁷⁸

During his trip back to England, Talbot also aimed at gaining more land to supervise and to add to his personal domain. At that time, Talbot had received all of the land within Dunwich and Aldborough, as he had settled the required number of settlers in and around these townships. As stated earlier, with the rising numbers of settlers coming to his settlement, he found himself increasingly unable to find locations for the hordes of would-be settlers that came to Port Talbot. In order to remedy this, he wanted to gain possession of the townships of Zone, Mosa, Ekfrid and Caradoc, north of Port Talbot. At the same time, after his bitter dealings with the provincial government, he also wanted to use his influence in order to decrease its power within his settlement to that of a reporter for the home government.⁷⁹ On a personal note, Talbot wanted a refund on some of the fees that he argued his initial agreement with the government did not require him to pay.

He also wanted to gain a larger personal estate outside of Dunwich and Aldborough amounting to 10,000 acres.⁸⁰

However, high ranking government officials were apparently becoming more hesitant in acceding to Talbot's proposals and applications, as they increasingly heeded the complaints of provincial officials. Bathurst did recommend that Talbot's wishes, except for his pension, be granted, but because this was only a recommendation, Maitland was allowed to put forth his ideas and criticisms.⁸¹ He wrote to Bathurst suggesting that some of the fees that Talbot wanted refunded were simply unavailable. He also argued that Talbot should only be given 2500 more acres for his personal estate, because any further grants went above and beyond Hobart's original grant.⁸² Angered at this offer, Talbot refused to accept it. On his return to Upper Canada, he was immediately faced with a hostile Lieutenant-Governor Maitland, who was angered that Talbot had not presented Bathurst with the letter that he had given him to deliver. It has been suggested that Talbot did not deliver this letter because he was under the impression that its contents may not have been conducive to his getting more grants.⁸³ On top of Maitland's increasing disapproval, changes within provincial land policy were also beginning to make things difficult for Talbot. His wish of gaining several more townships was destroyed when these lands were sold to the Canada Company. The arrival of Colborne as Lieutenant-Governor would also make it increasingly difficult for Talbot to gain more lands.

Although Colborne was impressed by what Talbot had been able to do for the province, he looked at the remaining lands of the province as a means of gaining increased revenue. He visited Talbot's settlement and witnessed the personal benefit that

Talbot had gained by surrounding his lands in the original townships with settlers and then selling them. This led him to believe that the government could find equal benefits if it operated on a similar system. Despite the fact that attempts to manipulate the Crown Reserves had failed miserably in the past, Colborne believed that scattering them throughout the province and letting the surrounding land develop would make them profitable for the first time in their history. As outlined earlier, this was also a time when the sale of land was becoming standard procedure, which also inclined the government to hold on to as much as possible in order to make profits. As a result, Colborne began to become reluctant about putting more land under Talbot's supervision, despite his continued success at settling land. His own ideas were strengthened by the findings of John Richards, who visited the settlement in 1830 in order to report on its progress. He reported that 5215 settlers had not taken out their patents, resulting in close to £40,000 in unpaid fees.⁸⁴ As a result, Talbot's claims for large chunks of land were consistently denied as he was faced with increasingly apprehensive government officials. Those who had criticized Talbot from the very beginning were now being listened to.

Although the time when Talbot constantly extended the boundaries of his settlement had passed, he still had a great deal of work to do to ensure the settlement's prosperity. Most importantly perhaps, it was during this period that he was involved in the development of London as a capital city. Talbot was given permission to settle London township in 1818, and during the 1820s many settlers made the township their new home. In 1826, the government decided to found the new city of London and make it the seat of government for London township. Talbot took the opportunity to become involved in the city that would become the settlement's largest urban centre. While

Burwell surveyed the town lots, Talbot and four others were named commissioners of the new jail and county court house. The court house, which is said to have been based on the design of Malahide Castle, was constructed in 1828, and its construction signaled the beginning of the city's first period of significant growth.⁸⁵ Although town locations were the official responsibility of the government, many settlers came to Talbot in search of land despite the fact that he had not been given any granting authority. This eventually pushed him to propose to the government that he take the superintendance of the town lots. Illustrating the government's increasing hesitance, it took some time before it finally agreed to place the town's settlement under Talbot's system of direction.⁸⁶

After the government gave Talbot the supervision, locations went quickly and the town began to develop rapidly. The benefits of Talbot's strict system continued to be evident, as London grew rapidly and effectively, while cities that were placed under the control of the commissioner of Crown lands and a system of sale by auction, such as Chatham and Port Stanley, were slow to develop. The founding and eventual development of London illustrates that Talbot, despite his lack of direct involvement in the creation of earlier cities, did not ignore the urban needs of his settlers.⁸⁷ It clearly shows that once he had created the basics, such as a strong system of roads, he responded to his settlers needs and became involved in further development. Talbot understood that the nature of Upper Canada in its pioneering stages required constant adaptation and quick response, which precluded the possibility of looking too far into the future. As a result, he did not force development on his settlement and acted only when it became clear that the next stage of development was possible. This allowed for a steady process of development that was built upon a solidly established base.

During the same period as London's initial growth, Talbot also continued to carry out the fundamentals of his supervision. With the completion of the surveys of the Middle Road in 1825, which ran from Essex to Sandwich but on a more northern route than the Talbot Road West, there were more locations to make and more settlement duties to enforce. However, Talbot first had to convince the government to give the supervision to him rather than to the commissioner of Crown lands. The problems of government inattentiveness and ineffectiveness in other townships outside of Talbot's settlement were still rife, such as in the townships of Mosa, Caradoc, Ekfrid and Zone, where absentees and speculators continued to ply their trade. It was not until Talbot was granted their supervision that they began to be settled effectively.⁸⁸ Talbot continued to carry out his vigilant investigation of the completion of settlement duties and his fight against speculation and land jobbing. At the same time, Talbot's interest in successful and continuing settlement was not limited to his own settlement. Throughout this period, he was involved in the planning and development of settlements throughout the province. He not only assisted the government with any information or assistance that they approached him for, but he also involved himself in Horton's settlement efforts. Most importantly, this involved a lengthy correspondence with Peter Robinson, who was responsible for the settlement of a large group at Peterborough.⁸⁹ Despite this interest, in Talbot's own settlement, by 1835 there was relatively little land to grant, and this land was often swampy and unattractive to settlers.

As the growing tide of reform became stronger throughout Upper Canada during the 1830s, Talbot's dislike of democracy became much clearer. He was a strong voice against reform, and his actions matched his words, as he believed the government was

being far too soft on known reformers. Talbot's strong loyalty and concern led him to use his power within his settlement to ensure that loyalty was maintained. Using his power of ejecting those who were not fulfilling their settlement duties, Talbot erased three men from his master map and revoked their locations.⁹⁰ However, after the men's appeal to the government, it soon came to light that there was a political basis to these ejections, as Talbot had come to learn that they had signed the Grievance Petition against the government. Although Talbot claimed that these men were dismissed because they had not completed their settlement duties, the growing influence of the reformers within the government ensured that Talbot would be censured for his actions.⁹¹

Arguing that Talbot had arbitrarily dismissed legitimate settlers, the government began to question the benefits of Talbot's widespread control. Francis Bond Head became Lieutenant-Governor in 1836 and the investigation of the dispossessed men's claims was passed to the reform dominated assembly. After a great deal of confusion, especially due to the system of location that Talbot employed, a committee argued that the settlers should not have lost the title to their lands. Bond Head agreed, and despite the personal admiration and respect that he held for Talbot's achievements, it would seem that he had finally come to the decision that Talbot's personal control was no longer benefiting the province. He wrote to Colonial Secretary Glenelg and explained why he believed that Talbot's authority should come to an end:

I can faithfully declare that I believe it to be quite as requisite for Colonel Talbot's own private interests, as for the public benefit of the province... So long as the settlement was in its infancy, both in theory and practice, it was highly advantageous, that a power of this description should be permitted, but I do assure your Lordship that the province in power of population has obtained a growth which authorizes it to demand a different code.⁹²

It would seem that Talbot's actions in expelling the three men had been the last straw for a government that had grown tired of his power, which seemed to be becoming increasingly arbitrary. Colonial Secretary Glenelg agreed with Bond's arguments and wrote that "[i]t would be superfluous to attempt any addition to the motives which have induced you to suggest that Colonel Talbot should without loss of time, be required by H[is] M[ajesty's] Government to wind up his affairs, and to hand over to the Executive Government the entire management of the Talbot Settlement".⁹³ Bond Head officially ended Talbot's control on February 17 1838. He wrote to Talbot and explained: "I have to use your own phrase 'rubbed you out', but I feel confident that I have done so, not only for the public interest but for your own".⁹⁴ Nevertheless, Talbot's work was not done, as he still had to enforce settlement duties and collect information for a final report. Although the government constantly pushed him to finish quickly, Talbot did not completely tie up his business until 1848.

Much of the hostility that led to Talbot's dismissal was from certain members of the executive council who were suspicious of a person with such a degree of independence. Different agendas can be partially blamed for these disagreements, but there is no doubt that Talbot had a tendency to take on an abrasive and superior tone with government officials. In the insulated and close knit political community that existed in Upper Canada, it is not surprising that a man of Talbot's independence received this kind of attention. His brusque tone and growing freedom served to make this attention increasingly negative. Nevertheless, for the various Lieutenant-Governors that Talbot had to deal with, his personal relationship was often congenial and in many cases

friendly. Talbot's correspondence with these men, and many other high-ranking officials, clearly illustrates the boundary that was drawn between personal matters and business. In some cases, the tone of a letter could change mid-passage, as discussion shifted from personal items to business.⁹⁵ However, despite these friendly personal relationships, they were not always in agreement when it came to business, and conflict soon became standard. Although the government continued to recognize the benefits that Talbot's methods had brought the province, officials began to take a more negative approach to such an arbitrary power.

Correspondence increasingly was not completely positive for Talbot, but government officials took on an apologetic tone in many instances in order to illustrate their appreciation. For instance, in a report based on Stanley's criticisms of Talbot's eviction of settlers on political grounds, Colonial Undersecretary Hay wrote that:

[Stanley] is fully aware of the great public benefit which has arisen to the province from Colonel Talbot's exertions in the settlement of immigrants to Upper Canada, and it is with reluctance that he finds himself compelled to question the propriety of any of the proceedings of a gentleman who one large part of the colony is so much indebted for its prosperity, by he feels imperatively the necessity of at once repudiating decisions concerning grants of land upon political motives.⁹⁶

Similarly, in dealing with these criticisms, Colonial Secretary Glenelg told Bond Head that:

I hope you will assure Colonel Talbot that it is far from my disposition to undervalue his services in this matter or to interfere with a system of management which from the concurrent testimony of successive Lieutenant-Governors would to have had so beneficial an effect on the settlement of that part of the province. The records of this department afford ample evidence of the labours of Colonel Talbot...It would, however, be inconsistent with my duty as a minister of the Crown to pass over the present complaints without acting.⁹⁷

This rather apologetic tone would come to dominate much of the correspondence in the later years of Talbot's supervision, illustrating the government's admiration yet growing hesitance.

Talbot's dismissal in 1838 may have seemed harsh, given his contributions, but it came at a time when the settlement of his lands was reaching an end. During her visit to Talbot's settlement in 1837, Anna Jameson noted the hopeful settlers waiting for locations that did not exist: "On leaving my apartment in the morning, I used to find groups of strange figures lounging round the door, ragged, black-bearded, gaunt, travel-worn and toil-worn emigrants, Irish, Scotch, and American, come to offer themselves as settlers".⁹⁸ At the same time, Talbot's dismissal came at a time of political upheaval and adaptation, as the old system in which Talbot found his success was making way for a new one. Most importantly, the provincial government was beginning to gain more power and was demanding more independence from the home government. It looked to be under more control of the province's operations, and an individual with such unlimited control simply did not fit into this system. Indeed, Talbot's own political attitudes made him a staunch opponent of such political developments.

Nevertheless, Talbot was fully aware that his time had come and that he had served his purpose in the settlement of the province. This realization led him to view his dismissal with rational eyes and without a great deal of bitterness, which the government greatly appreciated. Head wrote to Talbot to commend him on his actions in relinquishing his power and explained: "I tell you that they are exactly what I expected of you. A republican would never have forgiven me, but that for that very reason a gentleman would".⁹⁹ Obviously then, the time had come for Talbot to relinquish control

of his settlement in order to allow room for adaptation to the developments that were occurring throughout the province.

During this time of increasing difficulty for Talbot surrounding his dismissal, he also experienced problems in his attempt to find an heir for the lands that he had obtained in Upper Canada, which amounted to close to 60,000 acres. This was not only made up of a large portion of Dunwich and Aldborough, but also of lands that were scattered throughout developed areas of the settlement. Wishing to find an heir for this land, Talbot invited his nephew Julius Airey to live with him at Port Talbot. Airey arrived in 1834 and remained until 1841 with brief absences for military campaigns throughout the province. However, his stay was not a very happy one, as he simply could not become accustomed to the life of a pioneer, especially after experiencing exciting military adventures. His relationship with Talbot soured, especially in the later years when Talbot took very ill, which ended Talbot's hopes that Julius would be his heir. Julius left Port Talbot in 1841 unable to teach himself to enjoy the isolation and lack of equal company in Upper Canada. Not giving up in his quest for an heir, Talbot wrote to Julius' brother Richard informing him that he could be the heir if he came to live at Port Talbot, which he did with his family in 1847. This arrival came a short time after Talbot's personal servant and friend of over 20 years died, leaving Talbot quite lonely. Richard Airey and his family moved in and soon had taken over the management of Talbot's farm, while Talbot lived in a small cabin built beside his old home. However, his relationship with Richard also began to sour. Already disappointed at having to live outside of the home and farm that he had created, the last straw came when Richard began to demand the title to Talbot's Upper Canadian estate. Talbot quickly reached an agreement giving up half

of his lands to Airey in order to honour the agreement that he had made prior to Airey's arrival. These lands included 1300 acres in Dunwich, including Port Talbot, along with all of his holdings in Aldborough that amounted to 27,650 acres.¹⁰⁰ He would eventually leave the other half of his lands to one of his servants, George Macbeth, a loyal man who would remain with Talbot for the remainder of his life. Disappointed and angered at how he came to give up Port Talbot and his lands, Talbot quickly left Upper Canada for Britain despite his failing health.¹⁰¹

Over the next several years, Talbot toured Britain with Macbeth, but was constantly harassed by a sickness that often threatened his life. On hearing that the Aireys had rented out Port Talbot to another family, Talbot decided to return to his settlement with Macbeth to live out his final days in a small home on land that would eventually become Macbeth's.¹⁰² His sickness kept him close to home, but his business continued to affect him. Until his dying day, Talbot kept his records and location maps to himself, despite government attempts to get him to relinquish the remaining elements of his power.¹⁰³ Perhaps Talbot did not want to lose the last remnants of a settlement to which he had devoted his life. Thus, still in possession of some of the authority that had allowed him such success, Talbot died on February 5 1853. His funeral was not completely fitting for a man who had contributed so much to the prosperity of his settlement. On route to the cemetery, Talbot's body was left unattended in a hearse while the driver stopped in at a local tavern, and it was left in a shed over night.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, Talbot may have taken consolation in the fact that his gravesite had a perfect view of Lake Erie, reminiscent of his adopted home at Port Talbot.

His final years had passed in sickness and disappointment, and it seemed that his accomplishments had already been forgotten. He no longer lived at his beloved Port Talbot and was thwarted in his attempts to find a related heir to bequeath his lands. Nevertheless, by the time of his death, Talbot's accomplishments were unparalleled, and despite his lonely and perhaps under-appreciated position during his final years, he could satisfy himself with what he had accomplished in the province. In his own words from years before, Talbot clearly summarized his legacy:

I was the first person who exacted the performance of settlement duties, and actual residence on the land located, which at that time was considered most arbitrary on my part, but the consequence now is that the settlers that I forced to comply with my system are most grateful and sensible of the advantage they could not otherwise have for a length of time derived by the accomplishment of good roads, and I have not any hesitation, in stating that there is not another settlement in North America which can, for its age and extent, exhibit so compact and profitably settled a portion of the new world as the Talbot Settlement.¹⁰⁵

At the time of his death, this settlement contained upwards of 50,000 people and represented the fruit of the labour of one of the most important individuals in Upper Canada's settlement history.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 2.

¹ Charles Ermatinger, The Talbot Regime, (St. Thomas, 1904), p.5.

² Fred Coyne Hamil, Lake Erie Baron: The Story of Colonel Talbot, (Toronto, 1955). p.3.

³ Anna Jameson, Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada 1838. (Toronto, 1923), p.93.

⁴ During this time, one of the boatmen who accompanied Simcoe and Talbot on their trips wrote that Talbot “was the prettiest, the neatest and most active of the whole party”. quoted in Edward Ermatinger, The Life of Colonel Talbot. 1859. (Belleville, 1972), p.14.

⁵ Most obviously, this proclamation outlined the sprinkling of the Crown and Clergy Reserves throughout townships and around settlers’ lands. It states that these lands should not be “severed tracts...but between the other farms of which the said township shall consist, to the intent that the lands to be reserved may be nearly of the like value with an equal quantity of the other parts to be granted out afore-mentioned”. Public Archives of Canada, RG1 E3, Upper Canada State Submissions, vol.87. “The Talbot Settlement”, p.1; on reel C1201

⁶ quoted in Edward Ermatinger, Life, p.15.

⁷ While in the heat of battle in Holland in 1799, Talbot decided to disobey his orders and march his men a different route than he was supposed to, believing that it was easier and safer. Charles Ermatinger, Regime, p.23.

⁸ James Coyne, “Introduction,” The Talbot Papers, (Royal Society of Canada, 1907), p.26.

⁹ L.C. Kearney, The Life of Colonel, The Late Honourable Thomas Talbot, Embracing the Rise and Progress of the Counties of Norfolk, Elgin, Middlesex, Kent and Essex, Etc. (Chatham, 1857), p.5.

¹⁰ quoted in Coyne, “Introduction”, p.29.

¹¹ As Jameson explained: “‘Charlevoix,’ said he, ‘was, I believe, the true cause of my coming to this place. You know he calls this the ‘Paradise of the Hurons.’ Now I was resolved to get to paradise by hook or by crook, and so I came here”. Jameson, Rambles, p.99.

¹² ibid., p.99.

¹³ Hamil, Baron, p.37.

¹⁴ The 1200 acres that were eventually granted to Talbot were located in Norfolk County and consisted of four lots in Townsend township, one in Woodhouse, and one in Charlotteville. Ibid., p.39.

¹⁵ Talbot wrote “Owing to some neglect of General Simcoe’s, I find that the necessary Warrants for my lands, were not issued previous to his quitting the Government of this province, and since then there have been new regulations adopted which renders the possession of lands more expensive and difficult of obtaining than when I left the Province in 1794, and as I flatter myself, that Your Royal Highness will admit that I am as loyal a Subject and equally entitled to the Degree of *Hidalgo* as other *adventurers* in a new country, I throw myself on Your Royal Highness’s power to have it confirmed...it

will materially assist me, Your Royal Highness's managing so, that the Grant is exempted from the usual fees to Government". Talbot to the Duke of Cumberland, Oct 11 1801. The Talbot Papers, p.76.

¹⁶ He wrote that "Your Lordship should know, [The Duke of Cumberland] is extremely anxious that whatever indulgence can be shown Colonel Talbot should be afforded him and that he will consider himself personally obliged to you by anything done in his favour". quoted in Charles Ermatinger, Regime, p.28.

¹⁷ He wrote that "I cannot but hope that Your Lordship will be struck with the manhood with which Mr. Talbot, whose situation in life cannot be unknown to Your Lordship, after having with great credit arrived at the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, has preferred the incessant and active employment which he has undertaken, and under Your Lordship's patronage may lead to the highest public advantage". quoted in ibid., p.32.

¹⁸ Hamil, Baron, p.43.

¹⁹ On the lands that he would receive, Talbot was to pay £31/3/9 per thousand acres, although he would later argue that he was only supposed to pay £5/11/0 per thousand according to Hobart's instructions. quoted in Wayne Paddon, The Story of the Talbot Settlement 1803-1840: A Frontier History of South Western Ontario, (Canada, 1976), p.83. The settlers would only be responsible for fees concerning taking out their patents, which amounted to £6/9/3. Edward Ermatinger, Life, p.24.

²⁰ Hamil, Baron, p.44.

²¹ Jameson, Rambles, p.93.

²² Hamil suggests that these settlers may even have been either Talbot's employees or even fictional settlers that Talbot used to gain his personal lands, but there is no clear evidence to qualify this. Hamil, Baron, p.44.

²³ Coyne, "Introduction", p.34.

²⁴ Hamil, Baron, p.56.

²⁵ Talbot to Halton, June 1 1811, PAC, RG1 E3, vol.87, p.39; on reel C1201

²⁶ ibid., p 5-7.

²⁷ ibid., p.11.

²⁸ Feb. 9, 1809, PAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, H, p.105; on reel C102.

²⁹ Hamil, Baron, p.63.

³⁰ June, 1811, PAC, RG1 E3, vol.87, p.51; on reel C1201

³¹ Paul Baldwin, "The Political Power of Colonel Thomas Talbot," Ontario History. LXI. 1. (March 1969), p.11. On these lands outside of Dunwich and Aldborough, settlers were granted the same amount of land that they could have received in other areas of the province, which at first was 200 acres but was then lowered to 100.

³² It must be made clear that the work Talbot did in settlement outside of Dunwich and Aldborough was unpaid, as he only received land for the settlers that were located within his two initial townships.

³³ As Edward Ermatinger explained: “The first of the enemy who entered the premises, was an Indian...Other Indians came up, and rushed into the house, when they saw Colonel Talbot walking off. ‘Who that yonder,’ said the Indian, ‘he big officer too?’ ‘No!’ said Paterson, ‘he is only the man that tends the sheep.’ At the same moment, two Indians had levelled their rifles at the Colonel, when the other called to them, not to fire on the poor man that kept the sheep, and they dropt their rifles”. Edward Ermatinger, Life, p.49.

³⁴ Indeed, a large proportion of the papers and records that Talbot personally preserved was related to the war. Some of these have been reprinted: Charles Ermatinger, Regime, pgs.340-346.

³⁵ In a letter dated March 5 1812, Surveyor-General Thomas Rideout informed Talbot that he was to locate no settlers on the Talbot roads until further notification. Rideout to Talbot, March 5 1812, PAC, RG1 E3, vol.87, p.54; on reel C1201. Nevertheless, Talbot had already begun to locate settlers on the route that stretched from Talbotville to the eastern edge of Southwold township, a route that the government had not approved. (see Road #5 on pg.iii)

³⁶ Ibid., p.55.

³⁷ Hamil, Baron, p.85.

³⁸ ibid., p.86.

³⁹ Edward Ermatinger, Life, p.62.

⁴⁰ Gore concurred “with the Executive Council as to its instruction in their Report of the fifth instant of the order in favour of Colonel Talbot limiting his locations to 20,000 acres of land, and also that his settlers should be emigrants direct from Europe since the late instruction prohibiting settlers from the United States”. PAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, vol.497. T 11/13, p.13c; on reel C-2834.

⁴¹ Bathurst to Talbot. PAC, RG1 E3, vol 87, p.182; on reel C1201

⁴² Hamil, Baron, p.96.

⁴³ Talbot to Rideout, May 21 1812, PAC, RG1 E3, vol.87, p.59; on reel C1201

⁴⁴ Talbot once told a prospective settler who dressed fancily for his land interview that “I will grant no land to any who can afford to dress in the rotten refuse of the Manchester warehouses”. quoted in Hamil, Baron, p.161.

⁴⁵ Edward Ermatinger, Life, p.130.

⁴⁶ Charles Ermatinger, Regime, p.304.

⁴⁷ ibid., p.306.

⁴⁸ Hamil, Baron, p.158.

⁴⁹ Talbot’s propensity for alcohol was well known. It is said that he placed a mark on a shed outside of his front window, and when the sun reached that mark he would know that it was 11 in the morning and therefore late enough to start drinking. On one occasion he yelled to a doctor stating: “Damn your calomel, pills, opium and blisters! There is my morning doctor’-pointing to a cold bath in the corner of the room-‘and there is my afternoon physician’-indicating a bottle of his favourite old Canadian whiskey. ‘At night I sleep soundly owing to a clear conscience, for I throw politics and temperance lectures to the devil,’ he added, the doctor being a temperance lecturer”. quoted in Charles Ermatinger, Regime, p.301.

⁵⁰ PAC, RG1 E3, vol.87, p.216; on reel C1201

⁵¹ George Thorman and Ralph Parker, Historical Tour of Central Elgin County, p.34.

⁵² PAC, RG1 E3, vol.87, p.216; on reel C1201

⁵³ Hay to Colborne, Nov.8 1833. PAC, RG1 E3, G70, Upper Canada State Submissions, p.409; on reel C146.

⁵⁴ PAC, RG1 E3, vol.87, p.77; on reel C1201

⁵⁵ quoted in Hamil, Baron, p.162.

⁵⁶ This seemed to be the case with a settler named Thayer who Talbot had erased from his master map for not completing settlement duties. When the next settler took up Thayer's old lot, Thayer threatened to kill him if he did not leave. On hearing of this, Talbot wrote to Thayer and explained to him that he was wasting his time, at which point Thayer seemed to have accepted his fate and met with Talbot to work out the compensation that he would receive for the work that he had completed. Ibid., p.166.

⁵⁷ For instance, in describing his attempts at rooting out fraud on the Longwoods road, Talbot explained to Hillier that "I have had to turn out several already, one for having sold a lot without ever going on it, to a Yankey for two watches, and another for selling another lot under the same circumstances for U.E. right and 70 dollars". quoted in Hamil, Baron, p.164.

⁵⁸ This system was fundamentally based on the system that Simcoe had used, where the settlers' duties were an important element of the work that needed to be done in order to create a solid system of roads.

⁵⁹ Talbot to Rideout, May 12 1812, PAC, RG1 E3, vol.87, p.59; on reel C1201

⁶⁰ In most cases, this worked out to be a fairly straightforward process, although problems did arise when Burwell surveyed a route that had not been approved by the government. On the map attached, this is the road that ran from the edge of Southwold to Talbotville and that ran parallel to part of the Talbot Road East but on a more northern route. It eventually took Lieutenant-Governor Gore's reversal of the executive council's decision to restrict settlement along the road until locations could be made.

⁶¹ In a letter of March 1812, Talbot wrote to Captain Brock and explained that the creation of Talbot road that connected to Westminister "was absolutely necessary for the good of this part of the Province, as the route of transportation by Land from Westminister was a distance of above eighty miles and by the Road that has been surveyed under my directions, it does not exceed 24 miles to Port Talbot, from whence the produce of the country can be sent in vessels". Talbot to Brock, March 1812. The Talbot Papers, p.134.

⁶² Edwin Guillet, Pioneer Travel in Upper Canada, (Toronto, 1933), p.145.

⁶³ Rapelje eventually sold all of his 200 acre grant, gave up his partnership in his mill with his son in law Horace Foster, bought a new lot a few miles east and built a new log cabin. Paddon, Story, p.53.

⁶⁴ Wayne Paddon explains that "The old London Road which passed through Five Stakes (Talbotville) brought travellers from the west to this active little corner; from here they turned east, going up the hill along the Talbot Road". Ibid., p.53.

⁶⁵ ibid., p.56.

⁶⁶ ibid., p.53.

⁶⁷ Edward Ermatinger, Life, p.30.

⁶⁸ quoted in Hamil, Baron, p.156.

⁶⁹ ibid., p.60.

⁷⁰ Edward Ermatinger, Life, p.24.

⁷¹ Coyne, "Introduction," p.46.

⁷² Questioning why Talbot would not allow him a donation for a new church, one clergyman was told, "Because you gather a parcel of you together, sing a psalm, howl and yell like a band of wolves, then go and cheat your neighbour, and come back and sing a hymn over it". Quoted in Edward Ermatinger, Life, p.117.

⁷³ Hamil, Baron, p.102.

⁷⁴ Edward Ermatinger, Life, p.62.

⁷⁵ Hamil, Baron, p.106.

⁷⁶ ibid., p.116.

⁷⁷ It was at this time that Talbot attempted to get the fees he was paying on his own lands reduced, claiming that he should only have to pay the land officer fees of £5/11, instead of these fees plus the crown and survey fees of £25.

⁷⁸ Bathurst informed Maitland on June 8 1826 that "having taken into consideration the prayer of the Memorial and your earlier recommendations that the laudable exertions of Colonel Talbot and the sacrifice which he has made of his Fortune and Profession and the exertion and flourishing Settlement to which he has founded entitles him to reward. I have to convey to you my authority for making a payment of four hundred pounds per annum to Colonel Talbot from the funds which will be placed at the disposal of His Majesty's government by the Canada Company". Bathurst to Maitland, June 8 1826. PAC, RG1 E3, G62, Upper Canada State Submissions, p.163; on reel C143.

⁷⁹ He wanted the home government to inform those who pushed claims critical of him to the provincial government that: "His Majesty's government having placed the Talbot Settlement under the control of the Humble Thomas Talbot, the provincial government does not interfere with the plans and regulations" Hay to Colborne, Nov 8 1833, PAC, RG1 E3, G70, Upper Canada State Submissions, p.409; on reel C146.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.409.

⁸¹ Some have suggested that Maitland was extremely jealous of anyone who created improvements in the province without his help.

⁸² Hamil, Baron, p.107.

⁸³ ibid., p.111.

⁸⁴ ibid., p.124.

⁸⁵ Fred Armstrong, The Forest City: An Illustrated History of London, Canada, (London, 1986), p.35.

⁸⁶ July 11 1827, PAC. Upper Canada Land Petitions, L 15/20; on reel C2128.

⁸⁷ Fred Coyne Hamil, "Colonel Talbot and the Early History of London," Ontario History. XLIII. 4. (October 1951), p.175. This article counters the claim that Talbot ignored the development of London in order to ensure that St. Thomas remained the settlement's capital, as Hamil illustrates that Talbot was instrumental in its early development and took great interest in its prosperity.

⁸⁸ Hamil, Baron, p.130.

- ⁸⁹ Charles Ermatinger discusses this correspondence and reprints some of it in his book. Charles Ermatinger, Regime, pgs.150-161.
- ⁹⁰ The three men were John Nixon, William Jackson, and Levi Lewis, all from London township. Hamil, Baron, p.213.
- ⁹¹ ibid., p.217.
- ⁹² Head to Glenelg, Feb 11 1838, PAC, RG7 G16A, Upper Canada Lieutenant-Governor's Letterbooks 1837-1839, vol.4, p.71; on reel H1200
- ⁹³ Glenelg to Head, Nov 10 1837, PAC, RG1 E3, G83, Upper Canada State Submissions, #243, p.56-8; on reel C150.
- ⁹⁴ Head to Talbot Feb 11 1838, PAC, RG7 G16A, Upper Canada Lieutenant-Governor's Letterbooks 1837-1839, vol.4. p.74; on reel H1200
- ⁹⁵ This is most obvious in a letter Talbot wrote to Colonial-Secretary Hillier on May 30 1833. Talbot began by joking about the party that he attended in his honour and the drinking that was involved writing that "we unanimously voted to rename Port Talbot to Talbot Port". However, he went on change the tone of his letter by stating "now for a bit of business". Talbot to Hillier, May 30 1833, PAC, RG1 E3, vol.87, p.220,221; on reel C1201. Similarly, Bond Head sent two letters to Talbot to inform him of his 'dismissal'. One letter was took on a purely administrative tone, while the other more personal letter complimented Talbot and his personality. Head wrote to Talbot that: "I have a kindred feeling for you, for to tell the truth, the eccentricity of your life habits and opinions are not very different from my own". Head to Talbot, Feb 11 1838, PAC, RG7 G16A, Upper Canada Lieutenant-Governor's Letterbooks, vol.4, p.74; on reel H1200
- ⁹⁶ Hay to Colborne, Nov 8 1833, PAC, RG1 E3, Upper Canada State Submissions, p.409; on reel C 146
- ⁹⁷ Glenelg to Head, Aug 12 1836, PAC, RG1 E3, Upper Canada State Submissions, #83, G77, p.384; on reel C148
- ⁹⁸ Jameson, Rambles, p.101.
- ⁹⁹ Head to Talbot, March 12 1838, PAC, RG7 G16A, Upper Canada Lieutenant-Governor's Letterbooks, vol.4, p.79; on reel H1200
- ¹⁰⁰ Hamil, Baron, p.274.
- ¹⁰¹ ibid., p.275.
- ¹⁰² quoted in Charles Ermatinger, Regime, p.374.
- ¹⁰³ Hamil, Baron, p.289.
- ¹⁰⁴ Edward Ermatinger, Life, p.224.
- ¹⁰⁵ quoted in Charles Ermatinger, Regime, p.98.

CHAPTER 3

Beyond the Statistics: Talbot's True Importance

By the end of his supervision, Talbot's accomplishments represented a significant contribution to the settlement and development of the province. He not only used methods that were both fundamentally sound and centred around the settler, but unlike the governments of the period he also used strict enforcement, which created successful results. Of the close to 500,000 people calling Upper Canada home by 1840, over 50,000 were located within Talbot's settlement. His lands covered 540,443 acres, 28 townships and a substantial area of the southwestern section of the province.¹ These contributions to the settlement of Upper Canada therefore make Talbot an important figure. However, the statistics only represent a small portion of his wider significance. This chapter will show why and how Talbot's achievements placed him at the forefront of successful settlement. It will shed light on the nature of his success by comparing his abilities and attitudes to others who were involved in non-governmental directed settlement. It will also analyze why Talbot was able to find such success by analyzing both his position in relation to the governments of the period and his personal characteristics.

There were clearly several factors at work that contributed to Talbot's success. These factors worked closely together, as his abilities, knowledge and concern for his settlers could have been useful only if he was given the freedom to act. Similarly, if Talbot had not had the knowledge and concern that he did, his independent power could have been abused or misused. Obviously, it would be impossible to pinpoint which factor played the most important role, but it is possible to illustrate how the absence of one of these factors could cause problems for developing settlements. This can be shown using

the experiences, failures and successes of other individuals who were involved in their own directed settlement schemes during this period. This analysis will involve comparing Talbot primarily with John Galt, but will also include briefer discussions of Thomas Douglas and Archibald Macnab.

Compared to Talbot's operations and supervision, the Canada Company on first appearance seems completely different. Where Talbot granted land for free on a reserve that had been granted to him, the Canada Company was strictly a commercial endeavour that sold land and attempted to make profits. More obviously, where Talbot ran his settlement with little help, the Company consisted of numerous people responsible for various elements of the operations. However, the experiences of the Company's founder and first superintendant, John Galt, and those of Talbot share numerous similarities. This makes a comparison beneficial for a deeper understanding of Talbot's success. Although Galt was ultimately responsible to the Company's directors, many of his decisions were made independently. Therefore, he can be treated as an individual who had his own plans for the prosperity of the settlement, and who, despite his subordinate position, used his own ideas to implement these plans.

Born in Greenock, Scotland, Galt was educated for a career in business and spent a good part of his young adulthood in search of wealth and influence. He ultimately became a skilled writer and a famous author who in Scotland was comparable in fame to Walter Scott. Galt's involvement in Upper Canada had its roots in his successful ventures as a lobbyist for various causes. This ultimately led him to become the representative for a group of Upper Canadians who wanted compensation for their losses during the War of 1812. While delving characteristically into his work on behalf of the

claimants, Galt became interested in the situation in Upper Canada. After learning of the detrimental situation of the Crown and Clergy Reserves, he proposed a scheme that would see the sale of these reserves forming a fund from which the war claims could be met. This proposal came at the perfect time, as it was when the provincial government was looking for a new method of administering the reserves, and when the home government was looking for a way to ease the financial burden of its colonies. After several rounds of negotiations, the Canada Company was officially formed on July 30 1824 in the London Tavern.² At a cost of £344,375 7s 2d, to be paid in annual installments, it purchased close to 3 million acres of land, including the Huron Tract, the Guelph Block, and Crown Reserves scattered throughout the province.³ Galt had procured the necessary funding for the Company from a group of London businessmen who formed the board of directors, and who also expected quick profits from their investments. In 1826, Galt was sent to Upper Canada as the superintendent of the Company's Canadian operations, thus beginning his short yet fruitful time in the province.

Galt operated as a representative of the Company for less than three years, but in this time exhibited many of the qualities that drove Talbot's success. Most importantly, Galt had both a firm understanding of what was needed for effective settlement and a deep concern for the success and well being of his settlers. His basic plan was to create the 'skeleton' of a settlement before settlement began in order to promote Company lands and attract settlers. Galt was a firm believer in the importance of town 'planting' and he believed that the growth of towns and cities represented a high level of social evolution.⁴ Thus, despite the directors' hesitance, Galt forged ahead with his far-reaching plans for

the city of Guelph, which he believed would act as a hub for the settlement. He planned on spending large amounts of money to quickly boost the attractiveness of the Company's lands in and around Guelph. This initially involved the clearing of the town site, the construction of several public buildings within the city, and the beginning of construction of some of the province's most impressive roads. Although the 'planting' of towns was not unusual in Upper Canada, certain elements of Galt's plan were quite unique. Most notably, the spoke-like pattern of Guelph's streets was in direct contrast to the grid pattern that was being developed in other cities. Galt also strayed from the norm by allotting prominent city sites to churches and by reserving a large chunk of land for a market ground.⁵ Using these plans, Galt managed to create a thriving settlement at Guelph in a very short time.

Like Talbot, Galt gained much of his knowledge before he began his settlement in Upper Canada. As he passed through New York during his first trip to Upper Canada, he visited the Pulteney Land Company's thriving settlement at Geneva and the Holland Company's holdings at Batavia and became familiar with their policies and procedures.⁶ Like Talbot, his knowledge was supplemented with the hands-on experience that he gained by being at the frontier. He was aware of what his settlers needed and he therefore offered them constant compassion and empathy.

Galt's great expenditures on the settlement around Guelph went directly against the directors' wishes, as they believed that the most profit would come from developing the Company's scattered Crown Reserves. The directors consistently warned him about the amount of money that he was investing in Guelph. They envisioned more important centres developing in their larger holdings elsewhere in the province, especially within

the larger Huron tract. During Galt's tenure as superintendant, steps were taken to develop the Huron tract. The Bridle road that stretched from the Guelph block to the Huron tract was an immense undertaking and ultimately encouraged settlement in Company lands. Goderich was also founded during this time, and its design was more successful in combining the grid and circular road patterns that the Guelph design struggled with.⁷ Despite the directors' concerns about the importance that Galt was placing on the Guelph settlement, he continued to carry out his plans, which worked to the settlement's advantage. Unlike Talbot who held his independence for many years, in Galt's case it evoked a hasty response. This was an especial problem because of Galt's constant conflict with the provincial government.⁸ Despite his contributions, the problems that he encountered with the provincial government and the directors of the Company eventually caused his dismissal.

The foundation of the disputes between Galt and the Company's directors was their different expectations for the Company. Where Galt viewed success in terms of a successful settlement in which the settlers were prosperous and where substantial profit would be realized at a later date, the directors viewed success solely in terms of the quickest profit.⁹ Where Galt wanted to use Company funds to develop its holdings and therefore make the surrounding lands much more valuable, the directors wanted to sell the holdings quickly and take immediate profit, albeit a smaller profit.¹⁰ As Galt pointed out, "[t]hey expect the ship to be earning a freight before she is launched".¹¹ Galt's concern pushed him to serve the settlers' needs before the self-interested demands of the Company's directors.¹² They did not understand the realities of Upper Canada or that quick profit would not be realized without improvement. Because of this, they did not

understand that Galt's plans were in their best interests, as they soon proved to be. The directors attempted to run their Canadian operations from across the ocean without knowledge or understanding of what was needed for success in Upper Canada. As a result, they blamed Galt for his supposed extravagance, lack of communication, lack of deference to authority and his tendency to act without the directors' consent.¹³

The directors' biggest mistake was in not realizing that Galt needed to have discretionary power to do what he felt was best when quick decisions had to be made. One of the clearest examples of this need occurred in 1827 when a group of destitute settlers arrived at Guelph in search of aid and land. These were settlers who had attempted to settle in South America, but who soon realized that they had been given empty promises and that success would be impossible. They made their way to the Guelph settlement after being told of it by one of the Company's agents in America. Galt realized that he was their last hope for survival and had to act quickly. His compassion became evident as he helped the sick settlers and purchased medicine for them out of his own pocket. He tried in vain to get help from the provincial government and the directors but received no response, ultimately forcing him to use the Company's funds to locate these settlers. These settlers ultimately became important contributors to the success of Guelph and paid back all of the money that had been lent them. Nevertheless, upon hearing of what Galt had done, the directors were irate and censured his actions and supposed extravagance.¹⁴ The directors' shortsighted concerns over immediate profit did not allow them to see the advantages of helping people in need for the future benefit of the Company. The case of La Guaryians clearly illustrates that quick and profitless decisions had to be made, which the directors did not understand.

Indeed, others involved in settlement during this period recognized that the biggest barrier facing Galt was his lack of discretionary power. On his dismissal, Joseph Fellows, an agent of an American land company, wrote to the directors of the Company explaining that:

[u]pon the whole, I beg leave most respectfully to state to the Company my decided opinion that Mr. Galt's agency has been conducted with sound judgement, a proper regard to economy and the interest of the company, and his proceedings have promoted their best interest, and I believe the Company cannot more effectually promote their own views, than by delegating to him the most amply discretionary powers.¹⁵

Even at the beginning of the Canada Company's venture, Darcy Boulton, Upper Canada's Solicitor General, wrote that: "I am of the opinion that large capitals might be invested in this country to a certain and great profit...tho...such investment could not take place without some confidential agent on the spot".¹⁶

In the end, Galt's plans proved successful in terms of both his own and the directors' expectations, as Guelph became a successful settlement and as the Canada Company's stocks became the most solvent on the London Stock Exchange. Like Talbot, Galt's efforts also earned him the accolades of his settlers, which were fully expressed in a letter that they presented to him on his dismissal. It read:

We would wish to express to you the obligation which you have conferred upon us, in the prosperity which has flowed upon us ever since we became united with you and the Canada Company...You have set an example to the Province in the formation of proper roads and bridges, and showed by what means the progress of the settlement of the colony can be accelerated an hundred-fold by your measures, which have created this town and township.¹⁷

Galt was unable to enjoy the fruits of his labours, as his plans and predictions for the success of the Company's lands began to pay off a short time after his dismissal.

Galt's experiences clearly illustrate the necessity of independent control for the individual in charge of settlement. Galt possessed all of the prerequisites for success that Talbot had except for this independent control, and it is a testament to Galt's extraordinary abilities that he was able to create the success that he did without such control. If the settlement had remained under Galt's independent control, it is quite possible that his contributions as an individual would have rivaled Talbot's, but he lacked this one element that did much to add to Talbot's success.

The case of Archibald Macnab is in direct contrast to that of Galt's and illustrates that, by itself, independent control and power could not ensure successful settlement. Also born in Scotland, Macnab came to inherit an impressive estate. Nevertheless, thanks to his extravagance and irresponsibility, he grew greatly in debt and was ultimately faced with the loss of his estate and lands. Making a close escape from his creditors, Macnab decided to flee to Canada. His purpose in doing so was simple, he wanted to remake his fortune in Canada and then return to his homeland to reclaim his lost estate.¹⁸ Roland Wild has suggested that Macnab also "still desired more than anything else to be in a position of authority over his own people; only then could he feel that his injured dignity had been salved".¹⁹

Macnab arrived in Canada in 1822, and immediately began to use his persuasive abilities, deception and effrontery to gain favour with the provincial government, which was all too willing to give to one who seemed to conform to its ideals of hierarchy and aristocracy. Macnab used the favour that he earned, along with a set of proposals that corresponded to the government's goals, to gain a township grant on the Ottawa River. Macnab claimed that he wished to bring over his suffering clansmen from Scotland to

settle in Upper Canada at his own expense, but at the same time wanted to ensure that he was reimbursed. He therefore asked the government that he be given the power to retain the settlers' land patents until the terms of their agreements were fulfilled. Bathurst was concerned about Macnab's request, but the Upper Canadian executive was persuaded to give Macnab this kind of control on an 18 month trial basis, at the end of which the government could take control of the township if it desired. On a basic level then, Macnab was actually a government agent administering the settlement of government lands. Nevertheless, as a result of his favour with the government, he came to share an unchecked and independent power on par with Talbot's. Unlike individuals such as Talbot and Galt however, Macnab used this freedom to defraud his settlers.

As they began to arrive, Macnab's settlers laid their complete trust in their director, which turned out to be a grave mistake and misjudgement of character. These settlers blindly accepted the conditions and promises that Macnab proffered, despite their harshness and inaccuracy. Before leaving for the settlement, settlers learned that Macnab would pay for their passage and give them free use of their lots for three years. However, they had to agree that after this period, they would pay him a set amount plus an annual mortgage of a bushel of wheat for each acre that they had cleared. At the same time, the settlers would receive a location ticket, but Macnab would only issue a patent when the settler had paid what he owed.²⁰ These conditions essentially bound the settlers to Macnab and gave them little leverage when he began to break his promises and defraud them.

From the very beginning, Macnab concealed his position as a government agent and made promises that he had no intentions of keeping. He told his unsuspecting settlers

that the lands had been fully granted to him and that he would supply their basic needs for up to a year after they had been located. Macnab not only reneged on his promises and failed to supply his settlers with their basic needs, such as supplies and roads, but he also meted out severe punishments for disobeying his 'orders', which were enforced by his control of bonds and location tickets. Macnab went so far as to require his settlers to get permission before they could leave the settlement.²¹ He took every opportunity to defraud his settlers in an attempt to gain back his lost fortune. One of his favourite methods was to sell timber licenses on locations that had already been granted to other settlers.²² With his persuasive abilities, he even managed to get settlers who had paid their own passages to enter into similar mortgage agreements as those who had their passages paid.²³ For close to fifteen years the settlers were exposed to Macnab's deceit and fraud, which left them with constant hardship and frustration.

The settlers' grievances and complaints slowly began to grow and fester. Nevertheless, as a result of his relative independence from the provincial government, which was based on the isolation of his settlement and his popularity with officials, he was almost able to get away with his transgressions unscathed. With the spirit of reform in the air, many of the settlers' complaints were attributed to political radicalism and disaffection. It was not until 1830 that the government came to listen to the complaints, and an inspector was sent to investigate. The resulting report outlined the difficulties that Macnab's settlers were facing and how these difficulties were largely a result of the conditions of their agreement with Macnab.²⁴ Nevertheless, it was not until the settlers put forth another petition that Lord Durham created a commission to look into the complaints.

The government did eventually come to see the true nature of Macnab's settlement, but then suggested only that it take over the settlement and pay Macnab for his claims to the land. Incensed at the softness of such a 'punishment', the settlers petitioned the government and managed to get an independent person to conduct an investigation. The resulting report of Francis Allan justified all of the settlers' claims and exposed Macnab's chicanery.²⁵ Nevertheless, his undeserved favour continued to work for him, as he was offered payment for his lands, despite the fact that he never actually possessed them. The settlers could find some consolation in the fact that Macnab's transgressions were publicly displayed in a Toronto newspaper, which pushed him to foolishly sue for libel.²⁶ In the trial, the nature of Macnab's supervision became clear, and his reputation and prestige were destroyed. Macnab returned to Scotland where he squandered another small estate that he had inherited, while his settlers eventually worked to create a prosperous settlement. Macnab and his experiences offer a clear example of how a concern for the well-being of the settlers and the province was an important element in the success of settlement. Unlike Talbot, Macnab abused the independent power that he was given and illustrated how easy it was for someone with influence to take advantage of his position.²⁷ This sheds light on Talbot's honesty and concern for the well being of the province.

Obviously then, an honest and genuine concern for the well-being and development of the province was an important aspect that had to be combined with the individuals' independent control. However, by itself this concern could not ensure success, and the case of Thomas Douglas, the fifth earl of Selkirk, clearly illustrates this. Indeed, Selkirk was probably the most philanthropic and empathetical settlement director

in Upper Canadian history. Born in Kirkcudbrightshire Scotland in 1771, Selkirk was raised in an aristocratic family, and eventually became an Earl after the death of his father and older brothers. This eventually gave him the means of attempting to carry out his settlement schemes. Selkirk became interested in the plight of the Scottish Highlanders, and it was this interest that would lead him to Upper Canada. After a tour of the Highlands, he became a proponent of the benefits of emigration for the paupers of Scotland.²⁸ He approached the government with his personal scheme for establishing a settlement in Canada that would be based on a system of indenture. After establishing a fairly successful settlement in PEI, in 1803 Selkirk was given a grant of land in Upper Canada where he would attempt to create a settlement at Baldoon, just north-west of Talbot's settlement.²⁹

At Baldoon, despite Selkirk's philanthropic care for his settlers and the knowledge that he had gained about the necessities of success from his constant research, he and his settlers met with dismal failure. On the most obvious level, the settlement was felled by natural circumstances that made mere survival very difficult. It was soon discovered that Selkirk's grant was dominated by swampy lands that were not only agriculturally poor, but also infested with mosquitoes. Disease took its toll on the weak population, while problems caused by agriculturally inadequate land were exacerbated by flooding and drought in consecutive seasons. Selkirk's plans for basing the settlement on sheep farming also met with disaster, as disease killed off many of the animals and as raids from American rustlers during the War of 1812 depleted the flocks.³⁰ Some of Selkirk's experiences can be used to show that in some cases the success of a settlement was out of the hands of the director.

However, the consequences of natural disadvantage were only one element of the failure of Baldoon as a settlement. Although the settlement was based on Selkirk's plans and motivations, he directly supervised his settlement only until he believed that its success was inevitable, at which point he directed it from outside. Leaving the superintendence to Alexander Macdonnell, Selkirk ensured that Baldoon would experience problems. Macdonnell consistently failed to implement Selkirk's instructions and spent more time in York chasing personal political appointments than tending to the settlers' needs.³¹ Selkirk constantly pushed Macdonnell to carry out his instructions. In a letter of December 1809, Selkirk wrote to him explaining that "[t]he plan of management which I transmitted to you on 3rd May, 1804, appears to be set completely at nought though it could not escape your observations that I place great importance to that message".³² As a result, although natural problems would have created important difficulties even if Selkirk had been present, by not directly supervising the settlement himself, he was partly responsible for its failure. Nevertheless, not giving up on his philanthropy, Selkirk ensured that his settlers had the opportunity to find success in other areas of Upper Canada, and he went on to attempt to create another settlement in the Red River region. Selkirk's experiences in Upper Canada show that being located at the frontier of settlement with the settlers was an integral component of success. They show that an individual with the compassion and knowledge needed for success could not trust another individual to carry out his plans. In light of Selkirk's failures, Talbot's personal supervision and his attention to detail can be viewed as important elements of his success.

The hindrances and failures that other directors experienced can be directly related to the absence of one or more of the important factors that allowed Talbot his success.

Obviously, this does not mean that these individuals would have found success on a similar scale as Talbot. However, it does show that Talbot benefited from factors that, when absent, negatively affected the success and experiences of others. In this way, Talbot was advantageously positioned to create a settlement that, during the bulk of his time in Upper Canada, was unmatched in quality.

Within the existing historiography, historians have recognized that Talbot was successful in settling the province and they have praised him for this. Helen Cowan has argued that “for his work in opening and peopling this western part of Upper Canada, Talbot has received credit as the greatest colonizer of his era...no other large landholder had fostered settlement with the same devotion and success as he”.³³ Gerald Craig has called Talbot “the most remarkable settlement promoter in the province’s history”.³⁴ Similarly, Norman Macdonald argues that “Talbot stands pre-eminently as the greatest single coloniser in the history of Canada...His achievement made the Talbot Settlement synonymous with foresight and success...It was the best administered section in Canada...Government officials and private individuals used it as an illustration or standard of comparison”.³⁵ Similar sentiments run through the analyses of historians who have understood that Talbot made important contributions to Upper Canada. However, this understanding does not allow for a full recognition of Talbot’s significance, which requires that his actions and contributions be considered in relation to what was going on around his settlement.

First of all, Talbot began his operations in 1803, a time when Upper Canada was still in its infancy with a very small and scattered population. Although this was a period of sparse immigration, it was when Talbot began to lay the foundations of his settlement,

making him the first to do so successfully. More importantly perhaps, Talbot's early efforts were the first of their kind in attempting to deal with the paramount problems of Upper Canadian settlement. As discussed in Chapter One, it was not until Gourlay's agitation and the arrival of Maitland as Lieutenant-Governor that the government made its first significant attempts at dealing with these problems. Maitland's new policies did not take effect until close to 1820 when problems had already grown to become widespread. This late reaction was the beginning of years of government ineffectiveness in creating solutions to settlement problems, as officials tended to react to problems instead of preventing them.

At the same time, as a result of the government's lack of success in creating solutions, it was often non-government groups and individuals that were given the responsibility of settling the province. During Talbot's supervision, several individuals and groups with a range of motivations attempted to create settlements, with various results. Talbot was the first to be entrusted with this kind of responsibility, as the only other individual to begin a settlement at a similar time was Selkirk, whose grant was made on almost the exact same day. However, as already outlined, his settlement at Baldoon was an immediate failure. The Canada Company was the only group that came to rival Talbot's contributions.³⁶ Its control of an extensive amount of land, the length of time that it operated for, and a fundamental shift in government policy allowed it to bring in more settlers. However, the Company was not even created until over twenty-five years after Talbot's arrival in Upper Canada. Clearly then, the early period in which Talbot began attacking the problems that hindered provincial growth adds significance to his achievements.

Although Talbot was the first to make such an attempt, and although the statistics outlined at the beginning of this chapter make Talbot's contributions the most significant of any *individual* involved in Upper Canadian settlement, he did not bring in the most substantial number of settlers to the province. Not only did non-government groups such as the Canada Company go beyond these totals, but regular forms of non-directed immigration and settlement clearly brought the majority of settlers to Upper Canada. However, this form of settlement did not come close to equaling the *quality* of settlement within Talbot's lands. Talbot created a settlement in which the legitimate settler was assisted and cared for, while the speculators and shiftless were given the harsh treatment that they deserved. He created excitement regarding the possibilities of the province by developing a thriving settlement that attracted large numbers of settlers at a time when others were simply coming to realize the province's possibilities. In doing so, he created a settlement that was largely free of the settlement problems that plagued the rest of the province. Thus, in the *effective* settlement and development of Upper Canadian land, Talbot was also far ahead of the governments of the period. In all of these ways, Talbot's settlement represented a welcome change for Upper Canada and was a model of success. Nevertheless, the question remains as to how Talbot was able to find such widespread success while surrounded by ineffectiveness and failure. How was he, as an individual, able to begin his settlement before any other and eventually create a thriving settlement?

In an attempt to understand the factors behind Talbot's overall success and great contributions to Upper Canada, the very basics must not be forgotten. On an obvious level, his success was partly based on the fact that he was operating on a much smaller scale than the provincial and home governments. They certainly could not have devoted

the same kind of attention to detail to such a comparably small area as Talbot could. The home government rarely had the time or interest to concern itself with its colonies. This led to ineffective policies that, as outlined earlier, can be traced to the nature of the provincial government and the kinds of policies that it pursued. Concerns over revenue and basic administration were inevitable and necessary, but these concerns sometimes pushed issues that were of fundamental importance to the background. This ensured that the population of Upper Canada, the most important element of the success of the infant province, was rarely given the help that it needed when it came to land settlement and development.

On the other hand, Talbot could not only implement policies relating to the entire settlement, but he could also give an individual the personal attention that was often critical. This attention was related to Talbot's emphasis on creating a solid base of settlers before attempting higher levels of development. It was also illustrative of the kind of compassion and devotion that Talbot had for those that he felt were deserving. He was able to hand pick his settlers and could personally weed out bad apples that could create disproportionate damage. The simple system of administration that was so often criticized allowed Talbot to be personally involved in all of the foundational elements of his settlement. In a period when ignorance of these kinds of details could quickly cause a struggling settlement to fail, Talbot's efforts did not go without their benefits.

Similarly, because he was an individual responsible for all aspects of his settlement, he was able to avoid the stifling administrative framework and much of the confusion and conflict that hindered the governments of the period. For many years, the home government faced the absence of a clear system of colonial administration, as many

different departments had decision-making power in the colonies. Even when a degree of organization was created with the strengthening of the Colonial Office, disagreements between officials and disparities in skill and workload created weaknesses. The provincial government was also in a situation in which disagreements and a lack of cooperation caused problems. A degree of administrative confusion was inevitable given the range of constantly evolving issues that these governments had to deal with. However, at a time when immediate action was needed for success, any kind of administrative bickering or stalling was serious. The hasty decisions and dismissals that caused Talbot constant criticism from those who were negatively affected represented an important solution to the problems that the government faced. They allowed Talbot and his legitimate settlers to get on with the business of creating a prosperous settlement. Talbot's system of administering the settlement of his lands with a map, pencil, and eraser was as simple as it could get, and it was this kind of effective simplicity that gave him success.

The full control that Talbot used to his advantage was not solely based on the fact that he was operating on a smaller scale. One of the most important factors contributing to his success was his influence with the home governments of the period. As discussed earlier, Talbot had used his influence to begin a potentially glorious military career, and he also used this influence to create advantages in Upper Canada. Most importantly, this influence allowed him a high degree of independence and ensured the cooperation of high ranking provincial officials who were closely aligned with the home government. To a certain extent, this independence was partly a result of the isolation of his settlement. It was not surrounded by a settlement of any stature and the provincial government's seat at

York was at such a distance that communication was difficult. More importantly however, regardless of his physical isolation, Talbot was able to consistently use his influence with the home government to remain officially aloof from the provincial government, at least until his settlement and achievements were firmly established. Thus, despite the constant criticism that many members of the executive council offered, Talbot continued to gain power and land.

The claim that Talbot exercised the power of a monarch over his settlement was clearly true, and for his critics, this power was most blatant in his ignoring the conditions of his initial grant. Officials constantly complained of Talbot's collection of a "[p]rincely domain and a princely fortune"³⁷. William Dummer Powell, one of Talbot's most vocal critics, argued that "when the emigrant, possessing an authority to receive one hundred acres of land, finds himself limited to the possession of fifty, and that the Government actually bestows on a *stranger* 200 acres on that account, no reasoning can remove the impression of something worse than mere absurdity".³⁸ Talbot was quite vocal about the extent of his freedom, and this may have been partially responsible for the negative reaction consistently exhibited by members of the provincial government.³⁹ Talbot's critics came to use his power in Dunwich and Aldborough and the personal benefits he gained from this power to represent his actions throughout his entire settlement. Settlers in these townships clearly had a right to complain, but the most important results of Talbot's independent control, which were ignored by the provincial government, created significant advantages for the population of his settlement.

With his relative independence from the provincial government, Talbot could avoid its failing policies and inattention to issues of settlement. At a time when this

government's settlement policies reflected its preoccupation with other issues, this independence was essential. Talbot could avoid policies such as the banning of Americans, the reserve system, the massive alienation and sale of lands, and the emphasis on collecting fees, all of which had negative impacts in other areas of the province. During her tour of Talbot's settlement, Anna Jameson noted Talbot's hostility to the land grabbing tendencies of the officials at York. In explaining Talbot's reaction to his hearing that members of the government looked to establish estates in his settlement, Jameson wrote that Talbot

could not be brought to see the fitness of things in an arrangement which would confer on the next generation, or the next again, the fruits of the labour of the present; and accordingly, though his answer to the proposal was not couched in terms quite so diplomatic as might have been wished, it was brief, soldier-like, and not easily capable of misconstruction; it was in these words- 'I'll be damned if you get one foot of land here;' and thereupon the parties joined issue.⁴⁰

Although he was personally engaged in some of these tendencies in his own holdings, his actions in most areas of his settlement show the benefits of avoiding the provincial government's policies.

Although Talbot possessed such influence with the home government and independence from the provincial government, this did not mean that he did not share several important links. On an obvious level, it was because of the home government's situation at the time that Talbot was given the opportunity to attempt a settlement in Upper Canada. More importantly perhaps, Talbot shared many of the ideals that the home and provincial governments were preoccupied with creating. As outlined earlier, the governments aimed for the creation of a loyal, hierarchically structured and

aristocratically controlled society, and Talbot showed that he was also interested in these British ideals. The most obvious place to look for proof of this interest would be in his initial proposals to secure grants of land for his settlement. Nevertheless, caution must be used in taking these proposed motivations at face value.

During this period, many of those who made proposals to begin settlements ensured that they told the government what it wanted to hear, and Talbot was no exception. He realized that in order to make his proposal appealing to the home government, it would have to conform to their ideals. Both his own applications and those written by Simcoe on his behalf clearly illustrate that his proposed motivations were tailored to please the home government. Within these applications, Talbot emphasized his desire to grow hemp as a key motivation for his grant, a product that was in high demand by the government. Talbot also stressed his overriding concern for creating a settlement with a loyal and industrious population that would strengthen the Empire. In pushing Talbot's claims, Simcoe argued that "[i]t is his object...by precept and example to enforce principles of loyalty, obedience and industry, amongst those with whom he will be surrounded".⁴¹ Nevertheless, Talbot's efforts to produce hemp when his settlement was underway were minimal. In the government's view, Talbot's claim that he would work towards the creation of a loyal population was also ignored, as many Americans found their way into the settlement. In 1820, Powell wrote to Colonial Secretary Hillier to comment on Talbot's practices in Dunwich and Aldborough and complained that "the whole job, from the first proposition to raise hemp" involved constant "encroachments on Justice and Decency".⁴² The provincial government used the fact that Talbot ignored his

initial proposals to argue that his power was unjustified, and this ultimately played a role in his dismissal.

Nevertheless, couching proposals in terms that conformed to government aims was practiced by many of the individuals who approached the government with hopes of beginning a settlement, regardless of their intentions. For instance, despite his overarching philanthropic motivations and his lifelong concern for easing the hardships of others, Selkirk argued to the government that he wished to create a settlement in order to get rid of the rebellious and poverty-stricken population of Britain.⁴³ More obviously, Archibald Macnab's proposed motivations for creating a settlement were completely ignored upon his arrival in Upper Canada. Despite his desire to regain a lost fortune by using any means necessary, Macnab argued that he wished to divert the flow of American bound emigrants to Canada and create a loyal settlement. After pining over the deplorable situation of his clansmen in Scotland, Macnab wrote that he "determined to proceed to Canada to view the country, considering that it was most desirable to direct the emigration to that colony".⁴⁴ For added emphasis, he explained that in Upper Canada he knew his settlers would enjoy "every blessing that a mild and free government can confer".⁴⁵ Both Macnab's subsequent fraudulent actions and Selkirk's Upper Canadian experiences clearly show that proposed motivations should not be considered wholly legitimate. The nature of Talbot's proposed motivations therefore must be recognized when attempting to understand his links with the home government.

Talbot's subsequent actions, although not completely corresponding to his initial proposed motivations, contain elements of British ideals. Most obviously perhaps, he consistently stressed the importance of loyalty and patriotic obedience. From the very

beginning, his settlers were chosen with a view to their loyalty, and he expressed a marked distaste for 'yankees' and republicanism. He consistently used his personal loyalty as an example for his settlers, and his clearest proclamation came on the eve of the rebellion of the 1830s. With the rise of reform and ultimately responsible government, Talbot became increasingly incensed at the influence of republicanism and the home government's ineffectiveness at eliminating it. The actions that this anger evoked ultimately played a key role in the demise of his control, as his ejection of settlers for political reasons pushed the government to act. Nevertheless, Talbot viewed these actions as some of his most important, and he remembered the events of April 23 1832 as one of his crowning achievements. Upon learning of increasing rebellious activity within his settlement, Talbot organized a public meeting in order to quell the discontent.⁴⁶ The speech that he gave was a clear attestation to his beliefs and aims, as illustrated by a brief excerpt:

I have chosen this day as being St. George's day- the Champion of the greatest nation on earth, and all who claim to be her sons either by birth or adoption should feel proud accordingly and with hands and hearts under the sacred banner that is now waving over our heads, determined with our lives to defend our King our rights and our glorious Constitution against all Conspirators and rebels of every Nation and denomination whatsoever. When I undertook the formation of this Settlement between 20 and 30 years ago it was in the hope that I should have none other than sound British subjects for my settlers as to ensure peace and good fellowship amongst us... I am sorry to find I have not been successful, for some black sheep have slipped into my flock and very black they are- and what is worse they have got the rot.⁴⁷

In later years he grew to detest political developments in the province that worked to decrease the province's ties to Britain, and his loyalty continued until the day that he died.

Similarly, Talbot shared beliefs about the importance of aristocracy and hierarchy. Obviously, his anti-republican sympathies illustrate that he supported a pyramidal form of government. Perhaps the most obvious example of his sympathies can be found in the way that he ran his settlement as an autocrat. In her account of Talbot, Anna Jameson described the position that Talbot chose within his settlement and the pity that she felt for him. After praising Talbot, she stated that “[t]here mingles a feeling of commiseration, which has more than once brought the tears to my eyes while listening to him. He had passed his life in worse than solitude. He will admit no equal in his vicinity...All the disadvantages, in short, of royalty, only on a smaller scale.”⁴⁸ Although his position within the settlement may have caused him some hardship, it was a position that he personally cultivated with his strictness and stubbornness. As Jameson was quick to realize, Talbot’s aristocratic notions were difficult to discard and would, in her opinion, haunt him for the remainder of his life.⁴⁹ Thus, despite his virtual independence from the governments of the period, Talbot shared many of their beliefs and attitudes and often acted correspondingly.

However, Talbot did not allow his beliefs to cloud his judgement or dictate his decisions in his settlement. Talbot placed the attainment of these ideals in a secondary position to the well being, prosperity and development of his settlement. Where the governments tended to emphasize their ideals no matter what the situation, Talbot based his actions on the realities of the situation. Talbot’s attitude towards American settlers allows for an example. In earlier years, despite his general dislike for American ideas, Talbot welcomed American settlers to his settlement in the face of the government’s ban. He even promised these settlers more land once the restrictions were lifted. However,

after he had created a prosperous settlement and no longer needed to be concerned about the number of settlers coming in, he had the opportunity to express his true sentiments. As stated earlier, in later years he voiced his anti-democratic views most strongly and in many ways became more conservative than the government, which hints at the emotion that he must have subdued in earlier years in the name of creating a successful settlement.

Understanding that some of his personal beliefs had to be sacrificed in order to create success was one thing, but knowing what was needed for success was clearly another, and it was an ability of Talbot that his settlement consistently benefited from. His knowledge was based on his understanding of the realities of Upper Canadian settlement and life, which came from being at the frontiers of settlement and from his knowledge of the inherent weaknesses of government policy. Talbot was wary of the ungrateful or shiftless, but he understood that the legitimate settler had to be the basis of any plan for successful settlement. He was aware that in many cases settlers had to be given even the most basic instruction, and he was willing to do this for those whom he felt were deserving.⁵⁰ Talbot went out of his way to help deserving settlers because he understood that each failure would create harm for the entire settlement. He realized that because the settler was the fundamental common denominator in his settlement, their failures and mistakes were the settlement's problems. For governments who were located at various distances from the settlers, such an understanding was very difficult.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 3.

- ¹ Edwin Guillet, Pioneer Settlements in Upper Canada, (Toronto, 1933), p.95.
- ² Thelma Coleman, The Canada Company, (Stratford, 1978), p.15.
- ³ Craig, Formative, p.136.
- ⁴ Gilbert Stelter. "John Galt: The writer as town booster and builder," John Galt: Reappraisals. Ed. Elizabeth Waterston. (Guelph, 1985), p.19.
- ⁵ Gilbert Stelter. "Guelph and the Early Canadian Town Planning Tradition", Ontario History. LXXVII. 2. (June 1985), p.83-107.
- ⁶ Coleman, Canada, p.29.
- ⁷ Stelter, "Early", p.96.
- ⁸ Like Talbot, the tone that Galt took with certain provincial officials led to criticism. In a letter to the Colonial Office, Lieutenant-Governor Maitland offered some of this criticism. He wrote: "I beg permission to embrace this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to you for your interference with the Directors of the Canada Company, in order to check Mr. Galt's very improper and offensive correspondence with this Government. I regret to add that I have by me many very unnecessary letter from that Gentleman, which I shall not fail to transmit". Peregrine Maitland, quoted in Jessie Herreshoff, Letters of John Galt: The Canadian Years, (Michigan, 1992), p.317.
- ⁹ In a letter to Major Hillier, Galt shows his lack of interest in the directors' desire for quick profit. He wrote: "The transactions in the Stock of the Company have practically been very detrimental to many persons and its value has actually fallen to a discount... For myself, it will probably surprise his excellency to hear I have no interest in the matter". John Galt, quoted in Herreshoff, Letters, p.235.
- ¹⁰ In a letter to the Company, the writer (who is not identified) argued that "The first object of the Company unquestionably is profit. The queries submitted by them to sundry persons residents of Canada, put the matter beyond a doubt. Indeed, it would be quite ridiculous to suppose otherwise". Englishman resident in Upper Canada, A Warning to the Canadian Land Company, (Kingston, 1825), p.5.
- ¹¹ quoted in Stelter, "booster", p.30.
- ¹² Illustrating his compassion, Galt once wrote that he wanted to "build in the wilderness an asylum for the exiles of society...a refuge for the fleers of the calamities of the old world and its systems foredoomed". John Galt, quoted in James Cameron, "The Early Days in Guelph: Guelph and the Canada Company". University of Guelph (M.Sc. thesis), 1967. p.23. Similarly, Galt's concern for the settler can be seen in his 'new world' novels that he wrote on his return from Upper Canada. These novels were purposefully created to be didactic in order to instruct and inform settlers about what to expect in the new world. In a preface to Lawrie Todd, Galt wrote that "[a] description, which may be considered authentic, of the rise and progress of a successful American settlement, cannot but be useful to the emigrant who is driven to seek a home in the unknown wilderness of the woods...The book, therefore, though written to amuse, was not altogether undertaken without a higher object". John Galt, Lawrie Todd, (London, 1838), p.1.

¹³ One of the directors biggest complaints was Galt's supposed extravagance, but there is evidence to suggest that Galt was aware of the importance of financial frugality. In a letter to William Dunlop, Galt showed his understanding of the need for people to have discretionary power and for financial frugality. He wrote: "As I am under the necessity of leaving much to your own discretion in this matter allow me to beg of you continually to bear in mind that when ever you incur an expense on account of the Company it is to be done with a reasonable prospective view to a profit equivalent to the risk incurred". John Galt, quoted in Herreshoff, Letters, p.231.

¹⁴ This kind of reaction can partly be blamed on the length of time that it took for Galt's communications to reach the directors. Due to the nature of communication in Upper Canada, the directors often did not hear of events until months after they happened, and then panicked when they were finally informed. Ian Gordon, "Galt and Politics," John Galt: Reappraisals. Ed. Elizabeth Waterston. (Toronto, 1968), p.123. Where Talbot's distance from authority benefited him, Galt's distance from the directors was therefore a clear disadvantage, as it did not mix well with the directors' impatience.

¹⁵ Observations and Documentary Evidence Relative to the Address by Mr. Smith. Late Accountant and Cashier to the Company. London: A and R Spottiswoode, 1829. p.10.

¹⁶ quoted in Coleman, Canada, p.23.

¹⁷ quoted in Leo Johnson, History of Guelph 1827-1927, (Guelph, 1977), p.36.

¹⁸ Macdonald, Immigration, p.186.

¹⁹ Roland Wild, Macnab: The Last Laird, (London, 1938), p.59.

²⁰ Macdonald, Immigration, p.191.

²¹ ibid., p.191.

²² Helen Cowan, British Emigration to British North America: The First Hundred Years, (Toronto, 1961), p.121.

²³ Macdonald, Immigration, p.192.

²⁴ ibid., p.194.

²⁵ As Macdonald explains, "In a petition of April 14, 1840, signed by 133 persons, they accused him of having persecuted them for fifteen years, harassed them with lawsuits, and threatened them with eviction from their lands to the impoverishment and financial ruin of many families". Ibid., p.199.

²⁶ Wild, Macnab, p.226.

²⁷ This independent position could also create problems when the director lacked the necessary skills, which can be clearly illustrated with the case of Donald Cameron. In 1824, Cameron was given a grant and promised 1200 acres for himself if he could fulfill his promises of bringing a set amount of settlers from Scotland within one year. However, year after year, he consistently pleaded with the government for more time, as he complained of settler sickness and inability. More importantly, Cameron simply did not have the abilities of men such as Talbot when it came to creating settlement. Unable to meet the requirements set out by the government, he was asked to send in a report on his settlement. Upon receiving this report, the government soon came to realize that Cameron had created false returns for his settlement. He was arrested for perjury in 1830 and eventually for high treason in 1836 for his actions in attempting settlement in Upper Canada. Macdonald, Immigration, pgs.181-186.

²⁸ Cowan, Emigration, p.118.

²⁹ ibid., p.119.

³⁰ A.E.D. Mackenzie, Baldoon: Lord Selkirk's Settlement in Upper Canada, (Petrolia, 1978), p.54.

³¹ ibid., p.46.

³² quoted in ibid., p.54.

³³ Cowan, Emigration, p.116.

³⁴ Gerald Craig, Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841, (Toronto, 1963), p.142.

³⁵ Norman Macdonald, Canada, 1763-1841 Immigration and Settlement, (Toronto, 1939), p.145.

³⁶ Although men such as William Dickson in Galt and Adam Fergusson in Fergus found success in settlement, these settlements came at a later date and were on a much smaller scale than Talbot's.

³⁷ quoted in Fred Coyne Hamil, Lake Erie Baron: The Story of Colonel Thomas Talbot, (Toronto, 1955), p.94.

³⁸ quoted in Edward Ermatinger, The Talbot Regime 1859. (Belleville, 1972), p.72.

³⁹ As Edward Ermatinger explained: "his manner and bearing towards those officials who were in authority, was not always the most conciliatory, or even courteous. Satisfied with the correctness of his proceedings, under the arrangement he had entered into with the British Government, Colonel Talbot was little disposed to submit to any interference on the part of Provincial Officials, who derived their authority, as it were, second hand, while his sprung from the Fountain Head, renewed from time to time as occasion required". Ibid., p.79.

⁴⁰ Anna Jameson, Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada 1838. (Toronto, 1923), p.96.

⁴¹ quoted in Charles Ermatinger, Life of Colonel Talbot and the Talbot Settlement, (St. Thomas, 1904), p.32.

⁴² quoted in Hamil, Baron, p.103.

⁴³ Mackenzie, Baldoon, p.20.

⁴⁴ quoted in Wild, Macnab, p.67.

⁴⁵ quoted in ibid., p.67.

⁴⁶ In a letter that was printed in the St. Thomas *Journal*, Talbot wrote "Having seen the proceedings of different meetings held in the Talbot settlement on the subject of imagined grievances, and finding that it is now necessary to ascertain the real sentiments of the inhabitants so as to at once put down the fever (by a few only) manifested, to encourage disaffection to the British government, I give this notice, recommending a general meeting of my settlers on St. Georges day, the 23rd April next, at the 'King's Arms' at St. Thomas, at noon, when I shall attend. [signed:] Thomas Talbot, Father of the Talbot Settlement". Quoted in Charles Ermatinger, Life, p.162.

⁴⁷ April 23 1832. The Talbot Papers, p.125.

⁴⁸ Jameson, Rambles, p.100.

⁴⁹ ibid., p.100.

⁵⁰ A clear example of this can be found in a popular anecdote about Talbot. After offering freshly arrived settlers a lengthy session of instruction in the basics of settler life, he offered them a pile of blankets and told them to make their beds. On learning that they did not know how, he made them himself and instructed them to “learn to help yourselves, in Canada...I have often made my bed of hemlock boughs, and considered it no hard work”. Quoted in Edward Ermatinger, Regime, p.65.

CONCLUSION

Talbot's place within larger contexts of provincial politics and settlement played an important role in his overall success. However, it is important to recognize that his personality and characteristics played equally significant roles, which has been ignored by historians in the past. As a conclusion to this study, an analysis of these factors is not only necessary in order to fully understand the basis of Talbot's success, but it will also allow for an understanding of many of the criticisms that have been leveled at him. In many cases, those who offer these criticisms often use them to illustrate what kind of person Talbot was, instead of showing how they affected his settlement. They fail to make the connection between Talbot's personal characteristics and his success.

During Talbot's time in Upper Canada, many of the criticisms against him were related to his strict and uncompromising demeanor. The most obvious result of this strictness was his heartless enforcement of settlement duties, which ensured the hatred of those who were negatively affected, along with the criticism of many historians. Those who have criticized Talbot in such a way have failed to understand that this strictness was an important component of his success. Talbot was fully aware of the damaging effects of speculation, absentee ownership and the failure to complete settlement duties. He was also aware that the government's lax enforcement of its 'solutions' to these problems was doing nothing to help the situation. Thanks to Talbot's strictness, he was able to successfully deal with these problems.

In most cases these were problems that required a strong hand and a critical, if not pessimistic eye. Almost everyday he was harassed by land speculators and those looking

to take advantage of his settlers. As his settlement began to fill up, he was forced to deal with those who had managed to wheedle land from him and then refused to fulfill settlement requirements. These kind of people not only severely irritated Talbot, but they also put barriers in the way of the basic requirements of settlement, such as roads. Obviously, the abundance of these kind of unscrupulous individuals throughout the province required a heartless attitude in order to ensure the prosperity of his settlement. At the same time, this attitude would have helped the settlers recognize that they were largely responsible for their own success. Under Selkirk's system of indenture, settlers were inevitably dependent on Selkirk for their livelihood, which stifled initiative and responsibility. In Talbot's settlement, the settlers were in control of their own fate, and they would have known that if they did not put forth the required effort Talbot would not hesitate in extinguishing their locations.

Talbot's strict and overbearing attitude must also be placed in the context of his background and upbringing, which will make many of his beliefs and attitudes easier to understand. He was born and raised within the most influential circles of Irish society, where he was taught to be proud of who he was. He became accustomed to the position of influence that had given him many opportunities throughout his life. He was raised to believe in the natural superiority of his class of people, and it could be expected that he would feel superior to a class that seemed similar to the tenantry of Ireland. His aloofness from his settlers and his disallowance of any equals into his settlement can be seen as results of his background. Nevertheless, Talbot must be given credit for the adaptation that he made. He not only willingly traded his privileged ways for the life of a settler, delving wholeheartedly into the hardship that other pioneers faced, but he treated

those settlers who he believed were legitimate with respect and concern. Edward Ermatinger, an historian but also a contemporary of Talbot's, argued that "few men of his rank and station, would ever have dreamt of undergoing such a change of life, and fewer still would have persevered through every difficulty, like Colonel Talbot, had they undertaken it".¹

Despite some of his actions and attitudes while in Upper Canada, Talbot was not some sort of evil tyrant who dealt rudely and hastily with all those who came across his path. He not only showed an impressive amount of attention to detail, but he also exhibited genuine concern and compassion. This attention to individual settlers was supplemented by a general concern for the well being and prosperity of the province and its future development. Living in Upper Canada for upwards of 40 years, he no doubt gained an affinity for the province and its people. Talbot once wrote that: "[f]or my own part, I cannot describe the happiness I enjoy from being instrumental in adding to the strength and prosperity of this valuable part of the world"². If Talbot had begun his settlement with some feelings of noblesse oblige, they soon made way for an honest dedication to and concern for aiding in the prosperity of the province. As discussed earlier, even outside of his settlement, Talbot showed great interest in schemes that offered the province some kind of benefit. His interest in the prosperity of the province was of great importance to him, and this shone through in his actions while in the province.

In contrast to the views of his critics, Talbot's rudeness was mainly directed towards those who wished to take advantage of him or his settlers. Obviously, many of his critics were those who had been rooted out of his settlement for failure to live up to

their responsibilities. His strong political views and actions also engendered a range of opponents. The case of Simon Zelotes Watson illustrates the kind of men who became Talbot's staunchest opponents. In 1811, Watson partnered with Talbot to bring in settlers along the road that connected the Talbot roads to the township of Westminster to the north. However, Talbot soon learned that Watson was charging the settlers \$100 for patent fees and for his personal efforts. Talbot put an immediate end to this, which ensured him the everlasting hatred of Watson, who went as far as to challenge Talbot to a duel.³ Although Watson's reaction can be considered extreme, there is no doubt that Talbot's mood on any given day could cause innocent targets to feel the rough side of his personality. At times, the reputation that he earned would have seemed completely justifiable to those who were unfamiliar with his actions and dedication. Nevertheless, although Talbot's strictness was sometimes misplaced, his opponents usually had a personal bone to pick with him. Despite his harsh exterior, for those who proved to Talbot that they were worthy of his attention, he devoted himself to ensuring that they were prosperous.

This kind of contextualization is also necessary when dealing with another criticism that has been commonly leveled at Talbot. The land that he personally collected has caused him to be viewed negatively. There is no question that his position as an absentee landowner in his original townships created many of the problems that Upper Canada experienced as a whole, which therefore justifies some of the criticism that he faced. However, Talbot's contemporary critics consistently used his actions within his initial townships to represent the nature of his entire settlement. These criticisms have

created a false portrayal of Talbot's actions, and they have skewed the important role that he played.

First of all, Talbot's upbringing must once again be taken into consideration. The society in which he grew up placed great importance on land as the basis of position and influence, and this would have been firmly instilled in Talbot at a young age. The fact that his family had held the same estate for centuries hints at the importance that they placed on land and its retention for future generations. His dedicated attempts to find an heir for his Upper Canadian lands illustrate that he was affected by these ideas, and also might offer an explanation of why Talbot pursued the collection of a landed estate.⁴ Even during Talbot's times of financial difficulty when the sale of his lands could have brought him much needed revenue, he continued to hold on to them, illustrating that he possessed an aristocratic penchant for land that he could not set aside.

At the same time, by quitting his position as an influential military figure, he automatically gave up a route to influence and wealth that would have awaited him. Indeed, a lucrative military career was in his future when he decided to relocate to Upper Canada. Considering his efforts in settling Upper Canada and his difficulty in gaining recognition in the form of a pension, Talbot can not be criticized for coming to feel that his estate was justified. Given the position that he occupied before settling in Upper Canada and the influence that he had with high-ranking officials, he would surely have been able to purchase or collect a large area of land. Indeed, the money that he personally expended on his settlement could have bought him much of the land that he came to possess. Indeed, even Selkirk who was an extremely philanthropic man throughout his life stood to gain an impressive estate in Upper Canada if his settlement plans succeeded.

Considering these things, Talbot's estate and his attempts to keep his holdings undeveloped to increase their value take on a much less sinister appearance.

It must be understood that Talbot's practice of retaining undeveloped lands for his own benefit was limited to only two out of the twenty-eight townships that he supervised. In every other township he fought strongly and successfully against the practices that were hampering Upper Canadian settlement. To understand how significant this was, one need only look at how others at the time, not nearly as deserving as Talbot, were building vast estates. Governments alienated large amounts of land, as officials, especially members of the executive council, granted themselves large amounts of land. In contrast, Talbot devoted almost 40 years of his life to his settlement in Upper Canada, and in the process ensured the betterment of many settlers' lives. This was a period when it was easy to manipulate the system, but Talbot earned his land by populating a large portion of the province and solving many of its problems. After understanding Talbot's exertions, which, outside of Dunwich and Aldborough, were initially carried out without the expectation of compensation, his actions in his original townships can no longer dominate his portrayal, although they should not be ignored.

His actions in most of his settlement ultimately earned him the respect and praise of those who understood the positive effects of his efforts. In 1817, Talbot's grateful settlers organized a dinner and dance in honour of his arrival in Upper Canada, and the Talbot Anniversary became an annual occasion. On the occasion of the first celebration, an address was presented that illustrated the settlers' sentiments:

Having assembled to commemorate the institution of this highly favoured settlement, we beg leave to present you with the tribute of that high respect, which we collectively express, but which we individually feel. From the

earliest commencement, of this happy patriarchy, we date all the blessings we now enjoy: and regarding you as its founder, its patron and its friend, we most respectfully beg leave to associate your name with our infant institution. To your first arrival at Port Talbot, we refer as the auspicious hour which gave birth, to the happiness and independence we all enjoy, and this day commemorate. In grateful remembrance of your unexampled hospitality, and disinterested zeal in our behalf, and contemplating with interested feelings the astonishing progress of our increasing Settlement, under your friendly patronage and patriarchal care, we have unanimously appointed the 21st of May for the Talbot anniversary, And this public expression of the happiness amongst ourselves, and of our gratitude to you, we transmit through our children to our latest posterity.⁵

It was not only on this day that settlers gave glowing reports of Talbot's efforts. The steady stream of visitors that passed through Talbot's settlement were also quick to praise his successful exertions. Jameson's praise has been referred to throughout this thesis, and her sentiments were echoed by many of those who passed through the settlement. In discussing Talbot's settlement, John Howison argued that:

This settlement is interesting in a double point of view, both as it shows how much can be accomplished by the well-directed energies of an enterprising person, and as it is the land of promise to which emigrants, native Americans, and Canadians, are daily flocking in vast numbers. The excellence of the soil, the condensed population, and the superiority of climate, which characterize this settlement, all combine to render it more agreeable, and better suited to the lower orders of Europeans, than any other part of the Province.⁶

In his account of Upper Canada, William 'Tiger' Dunlop, a prominent figure in the settlement of the province, wrote this of Talbot:

This country owes its settlement to the persevering industry of my worthy and excellent friend, Colonel Talbot. Forty years ago, while exploring the about to be Province, on the staff of its Governor, General Simcoe, he was struck with the beauty and fertility of this tract; and afterwards observing that from the improvident grants of the Colonial Government, to friends and favorites, this fertile country, if left in their hands, would continue for ages a howling wilderness, he procured from the authorities at home, an exclusive power of settling it.⁷

Even the government gave him high praise throughout his time in Upper Canada, even during his dismissal. In the end, the true analysis of his ability and compassion must be found in the praise that was consistently heaped upon him.

Clearly then, Talbot's background, personality and motivations played an integral role in the experiences and successes that he encountered. Nevertheless, while some elements of his personality were well suited to creating a prosperous settlement during that time, this did not mean that Talbot did not adapt himself when they could have created hindrances to success. In the end, the attitudes and aristocratic tendencies that Talbot kept on continual display left much to be desired. However, he had an ability to discard these tendencies when they did not bode well for the prosperity of his settlers.

In some ways, Talbot's success was a case of being in the right place at the right time with the right characteristics. His personal characteristics, background and official relationships all lent themselves perfectly to the formidable task of creating a settlement in Upper Canada in that period. However, as time went on, these elements increasingly went against the grain of provincial developments. His influence with high ranking officials could no longer be used to play against the criticisms of government officials that were suspicious of his increasingly arbitrary power. Ultimately this led to a dismissal that even he accepted with understanding. With this acceptance in mind, rather than looking upon his dismissal as a failure on his part, it must be looked upon as a necessary conclusion to the efforts of perhaps one of the most significant forces in the settlement of Upper Canada. In the end, given the range of successes that he found and the contexts within which he created these successes, historical accuracy demands that he be placed in a positive light.

FOOTNOTES

Conclusion.

¹ Edward Ermatinger, Life of Colonel Talbot and the Talbot Settlement, (Belleville, 1972), p.22. Edward Allen Talbot, in his account of his stay in Upper Canada, expressed similar sentiments: “Is it not rather strange, that a British officer of such high rank in the army, and respectable connections in civil life, should be induced to settle in the pathless wilderness, where he is totally excluded from society”. Edward Allen Talbot, Five Years’ Residence in the Canadas. 1824. (Toronto, 1968), p.105.

² Talbot to Halton, June 1 1811, Public Archives of Canada, RG1 E3, vol.87, “The Talbot Settlement”, p.39; on reel C1201.

³ Charles Ermatinger, The Talbot Regime, (St. Thomas, 1904), p.45.

⁴ Catherine Wilson has argued that colonial lands were increasingly used to ensure that landless children and relatives would have inheritances, as entailment and primogeniture restricted the subdivision of lands. Catherine Wilson, A New Lease on Life: Landlords, Tenants, and Immigrants in Ireland and Canada, (Montreal and Kingston, 1994), p.51.

⁵ Talbot Celebration, The Talbot Papers, p.70.

⁶ John Howison, Sketches of Upper Canada: Domestic, Local and Characteristic 1821, (Toronto, 1965), p.167.

⁷ quoted in Edward Ermatinger, Regime, p.77.

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