

Continental Drift: The Canadian Clubs of New York City and the Question of Canadian–American Relations, 1885–1914

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Article abstract

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Abstract

The three decades leading up to World War I witnessed major shifts in the diplomatic relationship between Canada and the United States. Though attempts to forge a North American free-trade agreement failed, Canada and the U.S. forged unprecedented bilateral ties. This article examines how Canadian expatriates in the United States between 1885 and 1914 perceived the changing relationship between their native land and their adopted home. It focuses on the Canadian clubs of New York City, which provided a space in which well-to-do immigrants fostered Canadian patriotism, cultivated ties with politicians, and debated the Dominion's future with leading intellectuals and diplomats. These clubs, it is argued, articulated a new brand of Canadian nationalism deeply rooted in North America. At times this vision matched sentiments north of the border; at others, it inflamed them. Most notably, during the 1891 and 1911 federal elections, New York's Canadians campaigned fervently for free trade, and in so doing found themselves at odds with a majority of Canadians north of the border.

Résumé

Au cours des trois décennies qui ont précédé la Première Guerre mondiale, des changements majeurs ont été observés dans les relations diplomatiques entre le Canada et les États-Unis. Malgré l'échec des tentatives pour conclure un accord de libre-échange nord-américain, le Canada et les États-Unis ont tissé des liens bilatéraux sans précédent. Cet article étudie comment des expatriés canadiens vivant aux États-Unis entre 1885 et 1914 ont perçu le changement des rapports entre leur terre natale et leur terre d'adoption. L'accent est mis sur les cercles canadiens de la ville de New York qui fournissaient un lieu de rencontre où des immigrants bien nantis alimentaient le patriotisme canadien, cultivaient des liens avec les politiciens et débattaient de l'avenir du Dominion avec des intellectuels et des diplomates en vue. On affirme que ces cercles sont à l'origine d'une nouvelle forme de nationalisme canadien, profondément enraciné en Amérique du Nord. Parfois, cette vision rejoignait les sentiments éprouvés au nord de la frontière; à d'autres moments, elle les enflammait. Plus particulièrement, durant les élections fédérales de 1891 et de 1911, les Canadiens de New York ont milité avec conviction en faveur du libre-échange et, ce faisant, se sont retrouvés en opposition avec la majorité des Canadiens vivant au nord de la frontière.

Outside, hurried pedestrians traversed Madison Square as winter temperatures plunged. Inside Delmonico's Restaurant, revellers warmed themselves with glass after glass of holiday cheer. They had gathered, several hundred of them, for the annual dinner of the Canadian Society of New York, a club dedicated to fostering amicable relations between Canada and the U.S. It was December 10, 1913, and it seemed as if the good times might last forever.

The mahogany columns of New York's most venerable restaurant were draped with Star-Spangled Banners and Union Jacks. Maple leaves and roses adorned the tables. Guests thumbed through gold-trimmed menu booklets featuring portraits of Montcalm, Wolfe, and Pitt. Once seated, these sons of Canada feasted on delicacies from north of the forty-ninth parallel—Lake Superior Whitefish and stuffed tomatoes, Canadian mutton topped with maraschino sherbet—only to rise, again and again, refilling their glasses, for toasts. To the president! To the king! To Empire! America! Canada! Three cheers and a tiger! With gusto, they belted out “O Canada,” “America,” “God Save the King,” and, finally, with feeling, “The Maple Leaf Forever” (CSNY “Year Book, 1911” and “Program”).

But the banquet meant more than cigars and songs. It was a piece of political discourse. Featured speakers included the American secretary of state, William Jennings Bryan; the Canadian minister of finance, William T. White; a former Canadian minister of labour, William Lyon Mackenzie King; and the editor of the Toronto *Globe*, John Willison. Each took on the pressing issues of the day and ruminated on Canada's place within North America, the Empire, and the world. Willison, for instance, ventured onto the uncertain terrain of trade policy.

Everyone in the room knew that Canadian voters had sung a decidedly anti-American tune two years earlier in rejecting a reciprocity treaty that would have dismantled most protectionist tariffs between the two countries. “The attitude of many Canadians toward the United States provides a curious study in human emotions,” Willison mused. “We have a certain placid enjoyment when American policy excites the resentment of other nations . . . but we feel the thrill of a common pride and a common friendship. We cherish certain inherited prejudices against Americans collectively, and yet overwhelm Americans individually with attention and regard” (qtd. in *New York Times* [*NYT*], 11 Dec. 1913).

Bryan was less subtle. Speaking on behalf of President Wilson, he promised nothing less than world peace. “There shall be no cause of war between the United States and any nation in the world so far as this government is concerned,” the great orator declared. Further pleasing his listeners, Bryan issued a full-throated celebration of continental comity. “If Canada and the United States can live side by side for 100 years in peace and good will,” he

intoned, “there is no reason why they cannot live 1,000 years without strife!” Diners leapt to their feet in a thunderous clap of agreement.

The following morning, the *Times* featured a front-page account of the speeches at Delmonico’s. From the vantage point of the twenty-first century, when Canada barely registers in American public discourse, this seems odd. At the time, though, it was not uncommon for the Canadian Society of New York (CSNY) and a rival outfit, the Canadian Club of New York (CCNY), to grab headlines. Indeed, in the three decades leading up to World War I, Canadian–American relations were a hot-button issue. Disputes over fisheries, sealing, and boundaries pushed politicians past the limits of cordiality; vast numbers of migrants poured over the border, most of them heading south and causing consternation in Canada. But it was trade that provoked the loudest debates. Should there exist a commercial union between the U.S. and Canada? Would such a union rupture Canada’s ties with Britain? Would annexation of Canada by the U.S. inevitably result? Ought protective tariffs be maintained? Such questions dominated Canadian politics at a time of great economic and demographic change, and they also made an impact in the U.S. Meanwhile, Canadians tried to define what, exactly, Canada was and what it should be. Was Confederation a failed experiment doomed to splinter? Was the Dominion a nation worthy of true patriot love? Was its place now and forever within the Empire or should it chart an independent course?

Few debated these issues more passionately than the Canadians of New York City. This paper examines a small but vocal group of well-to-do expatriates—businessmen, lawyers, doctors—who took a special interest in Canadian–American trade relations and posed as unofficial ambassadors at a time when Canadian diplomacy was usually dictated from London and conducted by British officials. Their efforts began in 1885 when the entrepreneur Erastus Wiman founded the Canadian Club of New York, an English-speaking outfit in a city where French-Canadians were a minor presence. For the next thirty years, successive generations of clubmen cultivated ties with politicians, fostered Canadian patriotism, and provided a forum for discussion among intellectuals and diplomats. Most notably, during the 1891 and 1911 federal elections, they campaigned fervently for the repeal of the protective tariffs that Wiman dubbed “a barbed wire fence that runs athwart the continent.”

Wiman’s Canadian Club, which predated by almost a decade the first such club to emerge north of the border, expressed a spirited brand of patriotism, one deeply rooted in North America. Yet Wiman found himself labelled a traitor in the land of his birth. His sin? Insisting that Canada’s route to prosperity lay in drifting away from Britain and charting closer ties with the U.S. In this Wiman found himself at odds with most Anglo-Canadians north of the border, who were just then marrying a burgeoning Canadian nationalism to an increasingly robust imperialism. The next generation of Canadian clubmen, influenced by

Anglo-Saxon race ideology, seized on the Spanish–American and Boer wars as evidence that Canadians, Americans, and Britons were engaged in a single mission of global uplift. By 1911 they had once again taken up the cause of North American free trade. Canadian voters, however, took to an emphatic new electoral slogan: “No truck or trade with the Yankees!”

Thus Wiman and his comrades failed to advance their treasured goal of free trade. Yet their activities cast fresh light on Canadian–American relations during the critical decades leading up to 1914. They also provide new insight into the ways in which Canadians were attempting to define themselves at a moment of incipient nationhood. As Canadian-born British subjects living in the U.S., Wiman and his fellow clubmen put forth a unique vision of Canada’s future in North America, the Empire, and the world.¹ At times this vision dovetailed with sentiments north of the border; at others, it inflamed them.

The extent to which Canada should hitch its wagon to the American economic locomotive is a long-standing Canadian dilemma, one intimately bound up with broader questions about what Canada itself represents. In the nineteenth century, Canadians continually toyed with the idea of forging closer commercial relations with U.S., be it through outright annexation, commercial union, or reciprocity agreements. Such schemes, as the historian Donald Warner has shown, tended to gain steam in times of economic distress (249). In 1849, for instance, an eclectic group of Upper Canada radicals, French-Canadian nationalists, and Montreal business elites issued the Montreal Annexation Manifesto in reaction to Britain’s 1846 abolition of the Corn Laws and the ending of Imperial trade preferences. Their stated goal was the absorption of the Province of Canada into the U.S. The annexationist movement proved “as ephemeral as the depression that caused it” (Warner 32), but it did nudge British officials into pursuing closer trade ties with the U.S. on behalf of their restive North American subjects. In 1854, after years of negotiations, the Americans agreed to a reciprocity treaty that dismantled tariffs on Canadian raw materials, allowed free fishing rights in coastal waters above the thirty-sixth parallel and provided for unlimited shipping on the St. Lawrence canals and Lake Michigan. Canadians would mythologize the years that followed as an age of prosperity and peace. But the U.S. abrogated the reciprocity treaty in 1866, on the grounds that it had unevenly benefited Canadian producers. Tensions between Washington and London generated by the American Civil War also influenced this decision; British apprehensions of American anger in turn served as a powerful impetus to Confederation in 1867.²

In subsequent years, Canadian statesmen from both the Conservative and Liberal parties, including John A. Macdonald and George Brown, lobbied U.S. officials for the resumption of reciprocity, to no avail. Macdonald’s National

Policy, inaugurated in 1879, was Canada’s response. “The National Policy was not only made necessary by U.S. trade intransigence,” John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall have written, “it was the mirror image of U.S. policy” (57). High tariffs were meant, ostensibly, to nurture Canada’s fledgling manufacturing sector and to preserve the Dominion’s independence from the U.S.; meanwhile, government-funded immigration and railway-building programs sought to channel Canada’s development onto an east–west axis. Yet the National Policy in fact encouraged the penetration of Canada’s economy by American capital, particularly in the form of branch plants (Bliss 26–42). Macdonald himself hoped in the late 1870s that retaliatory tariffs might pressure the Americans to accept reciprocity of trade. South of the border, however, there was little interest in free trade—and considerable hostility toward Canada.³

By the mid-1880s, the National Policy was attracting increased scrutiny. A struggling agricultural population paid higher prices for lower-quality goods than did farmers directly across the border. A depression hit in 1883. The 1885 Riel Rebellion sparked English–French tensions unprecedented in the post-1867 era. In Nova Scotia, W. S. Fielding’s Liberal Party, promising to remove the province from Confederation, took power in 1886. Tensions in Anglo-American diplomacy lurked beneath a surface calm as disputes over fisheries threatened to escalate.⁴

Further adding to suspicions that the Canadian experiment might be failing was the torrent of migrants moving south. As the U.S. industrialized and pushed relentlessly westward, Canadian-born British subjects sought land in the American Midwest, factory jobs in New England, and wealth in New York and Chicago. Between 1850 and 1890, the number of Canadian-born residents counted in the U.S. census jumped from 147,711 to a whopping 980,938. The latter figure was equivalent to a fifth of Canada’s population at that time—and what’s more, census-takers probably underestimated the number of Americans with Canadian backgrounds (Truesdell 10–12). Some of these migrants later returned to their native land, but many made their homes in the U.S. and quickly assimilated “with scarcely a ripple” (Widdis).⁵

The Canadian presence in New York City was comparatively modest. The census in 1890 counted 15,546 New Yorkers born north of the border; by 1930, there would be 45,423, including 6,863 French-Canadians and 5,305 Newfoundlanders (U.S. Census Bureau, 1890, 1930). As a group, they shared little with the huddled masses disembarking from European ships. Largely English speaking and literate, Canadian immigrants in New York included not only labourers and domestic servants but also doctors and lawyers, merchants and entrepreneurs. French-Canadians, always a small fraction of New York’s Canadians, maintained a distinct identity; mostly clustered in Manhattan’s working-class Yorkville neighbourhood, they built their own church, founded a chapter of the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste, and briefly published *Le Public*

Canadien, a newspaper (Fox 254). Gotham's Anglo-Canadians found it much easier to pass as Americans and assimilate. Thus they formed few mutual-aid societies, fraternal orders, and social networks (Widdis 177).⁶

It was against this backdrop that Erastus Wiman organized the Canadian Club of New York in 1885. Born near Toronto in 1834, Wiman had worked as a print boy and later a business reporter for the Toronto *Globe* before moving to New York in 1867 and prospering as a managing partner of Dun, Barlow & Co., a mercantile firm. In 1882, he teamed up with Jay Gould to found the Great Northwestern Telegraph Company, which at one point held a near-monopoly over Canada's telegraph services. Wiman also dreamed of developing a ten-mile harbour complex on Staten Island; having wrested control of the Staten Island Ferry from the Vanderbilt family, he bought the Staten Island Railway Company, funded the construction of a bridge to New Jersey, constructed a Staten Island amusement park dubbed "Erastina," and moved one of New York City's early professional baseball clubs, the Metropolitans, to Richmond County—thus earning the nickname "Duke of Staten Island" (*NYT*, 11 June 1883; *NYT*, 2 Apr. 1884; *NYT*, 29 Oct. 1884; *NYT*, 5 Dec. 1885; *Washington Post*; Brown "Wiman").⁷

Wiman, who wouldn't become an American citizen until well past his sixtieth birthday, was also an avid promoter of Canadian sports and culture. He brought Canadian lacrosse teams to play in Gotham and organized exhibitions of Canadian art. At his urging, prominent New Yorkers embarked on expeditions to winter carnivals north of the border. On one such trip, in 1887, such notables as Elihu Root, Robert Garrett, and Charles Dana expressed delight at the elegant ice-skating on display at Montreal's Victoria rink. According to *The Washington Post*, Wiman had "done much to establish a Canadian colony in the United States" by hiring Canadians to manage at least fifty of his company's branches (Hodson 33–34; *NYT*, 10 Feb. 1887; *Boston Daily Globe*, 19 Oct. 1886; *Washington Post*).

Wiman, then, was just the man to unite New York's English-speaking Canadians, who, for two decades, had reacted with indifference to sporadic attempts to launch expatriate social clubs.⁸ An April 23, 1885, meeting at the Hotel Brunswick brought together seventy-five of the city's most prominent Canadians. With Wiman presiding, the group heartily endorsed plans for a new club. The roster of elected officers featured, among others, Lucius Seth Huntington (a former Liberal Member of Parliament) and Sir Roderick Cameron, a shipping magnate who had helped to negotiate the 1854 Reciprocity Treaty and who, according to the *Times*, was "the only gentleman of British title who resided permanently in the city." Prime Minister Macdonald and Edward Blake, leader of the Canadian Liberal Party, lent the club added cachet by agreeing to become non-resident members (*NYT*, 24 Apr. 1885; *NYT*, 14 May 1885; *NYT*, 28 June 1885; *NYT*, 20 Oct. 1900; "Cameron").

The Canadian Club set up shop in a townhouse on Washington Square. Its elegantly decorated rooms soon filled with cigar smoke, casual conversation, and, on July 1, 1885, the sounds of popping corks and clinking glasses. Like the Canadian Clubs that would spring up across the Dominion beginning in the 1890s, the New York outfit served as both a social gathering place and an outlet for Canadian patriotism. Banquets featured lectures on Canadian art, science, history, and literature; other events showcased Canadian painting, poetry, and sport. Snowshoeing expeditions proved particularly popular. All this spirited Canadianism was meant to foster “national sentiment” at a time when there seemed too little of it. Clubmen shared the anxieties of many Canadians about the Dominion’s future, and they soon threw themselves into the rich conversation then unfolding on both sides of the border about Canada’s development and about Canadian–American relations (*NYT*, 2 July 1885; *NYT* 13 Dec. 1885; *New-York Tribune [N-Y Trib.]*, 2 July 1885).

At an 1886 dinner, the writer Edmund Collins, author of a celebrated biography of Macdonald and a recent transplant to New York, lectured on Canada’s future. As Collins saw it, Canadians had before them three options: imperial federation, annexation to the U.S., or independence. The latter, Collins argued, was to be prized because it would increase national prestige, allow Canada to negotiate treaties, and remove incentives for political corruption. Around the same time, George Grant, principal of Queen’s University and a noted member of the Imperial Federation League, visited the Canadian Club and gave voice to a different—and, at the time, far more common—brand of Canadian nationalism. In contrast with Collins, Grant believed that Canada could and should “become a nation in reality, with all the responsibilities and privileges of nationhood” while also seeking a future within the Empire (Collins; George Grant 259).⁹

Wiman himself began in 1887 to use the Canadian Club as a platform from which to advocate a commercial union that would dismantle all trade barriers between Canada and the United States and allow the two countries to agree on a common tariff policy. While Canadians in the mid-1880s struggled through a depression, Wiman was seeking ways to develop his Staten Island infrastructure and capitalize on the “opening” of the Canadian West. He had also joined a syndicate run by the American S. J. Ritchie, a vocal continentalist who owned mining rights in Ontario and was jockeying to control iron-ore resources north of the border (Graham 2). The abolition of North American duties on natural products, especially mineral resources, would have benefited Wiman and Ritchie enormously. Other Wiman allies, including the Philadelphia financier Wharton Baker, coveted commercial union because it promised to topple the tariff walls that had barred American manufactured goods from Canadian markets. Profits were clearly on Wiman’s mind as he advocated commercial union. Yet the Duke of State Island, as Ian Grant has argued, was

“more than just a self-interested businessman” (4–5). He was also a patriot who sincerely fretted that the Canadian experiment was failing.

Wiman described the National Policy as one “of slow development, of declining values, of an exodus of population, of increasing indebtedness, and decreased power of payment” (qtd. in Glen 8). The greatest proof of Canada’s decline, he said in a speech before the Canadian Club on March 18, 1887, was the flood of talented young men migrating to the U.S. The only way to rescue Canada was immediately to topple the “Chinese wall” of tariffs between the two countries and, in the long run, to contemplate a more comprehensive continental union. Wiman believed that close commercial ties with the United States would inject the Canadian economy with a desperately needed dose of capital, thanks to American entrepreneurs eager to tap Canada’s boundless resources. Commercial union, Wiman boldly promised the Canadian Club in 1887, would increase Canadian production five-fold in a decade (Wiman “The Advantages”).

Wiman attempted to promote commercial union on both sides of the border. It proved a difficult balancing act. He maintained contact with several prominent Liberals, including party leader Wilfrid Laurier, M.P. Richard Cartwright, and Edward Farrer, the influential editor of the *Toronto Mail*. The Liberals in 1888 adopted a platform calling for “unrestricted reciprocity” with the U.S., but they wanted Canada to continue trading on its own terms with other countries and with Britain. Wiman, on the other hand, would have preferred Canada and the U.S. to set common tariffs vis-à-vis the rest of the world and jointly negotiate trade pacts with other countries. The Zollverein, which united the various German states and principalities after 1834, was often invoked (Pennanen 51).

Critics insisted that Canadian industries would be dwarfed by American capital soon after any scheme of commercial union took effect. Important decisions about the Canadian economy would inevitably be taken in the U.S. Congress, the argument went, thus transforming Canada from a British Dominion into an American vassal. Wiman dismissed such talk as cheap patriotism, but he was cagey about the issue of loyalty to Britain. He often rebuked American politicians who advocated annexation of Canadian provinces. And he never matched the continentalist rhetoric of Goldwin Smith, the most prominent spokesperson for commercial union north of the border, who wrote, “Canadian nationality being a lost cause, the ultimate union of Canada with the United States now seems to be morally certain” (qtd. in Hodson 48).

Wiman, however, did envisage the eventual emancipation of Canada from imperial bonds. He wrote in 1891 that commercial union with the U.S. would win Canada “fiscal freedom from British control” (“Can We Coerce” 100). Wiman mused that an independent Canada might, generations down the road,

voluntarily join the U.S. But he was not oblivious to the politics of the moment. Wiman knew that any talk of annexation would doom commercial union. “It should always be borne in mind,” he warned, “that the whole body of politics in Canada is permeated through and through with loyalty to the British throne” (“Can We Coerce” 94).¹⁰

Wiman spent much of 1887 and 1888 touring North America promoting commercial union. He often travelled alongside Goldwin Smith, the British-born journalist who had fashioned himself into a “deflator of Canadian self-esteem” *par excellence* (Berger 42). Among Wiman’s closest allies south of the border were a pair Republican Congressmen, Representatives Benjamin Butterworth of Ohio and Robert Hitt of Illinois, both advocates of commercial union. Wiman barnstormed the Midwest with Butterworth at his side, urgently preaching to bankers and merchants that Canada was “a treasure house of needed natural resources” which, if opened up to American capital, promised “general advantages ... almost beyond estimate” (*Daily Inter Ocean* “Congressman”; “Mr. Erastus Wiman”).

On May 19, 1887, Butterworth spoke before the Canadian Club. Wiman introduced him to an audience sprinkled with members of the Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Trade, and the Stock Exchange. “For all purposes of trade, barter, and exchange, the two countries shall be as one,” Butterworth declared. “The territory of Canada is interlocked with our own. The location of our rivers, the facilities for conducting exchanges, all suggest and protest in favour of unhampered and reciprocal trade.” Butterworth argued that it was “absurd” for Canadians to fear annexation. Rather, the question was “whether [Canada] shall stand among the nations of the earth, great, rich and independent” (*Boston Daily Globe*, 20 May 1887; *Chicago Tribune*, 21 May 1887). In short, it was not unpatriotic for Canadians to pursue closer ties to the United States—it was unpatriotic not to.

The prospects for commercial union brightened after the seeming resolution of the fishing dispute. As Wiman wrote in 1888, the festering row over American privileges in Canadian waters had been “a barrier to a favourable discussion of commercial union” (qtd. in *Milwaukee Sentinel*). Thus it was cause for great celebration when the Canadian Club hosted Joseph Chamberlain on March 2, 1888, to celebrate the British diplomat’s successful negotiation of a new fisheries treaty with U.S. Secretary of State Thomas Bayard. The lavish banquet, which drew the biggest crowd in the club’s history, seemingly marked a new dawn in North American continental relations. The Hotel Brunswick’s handsome dining room was bedecked with Union Jacks, Star-Spangled Banners, and crisscrossed toboggans—the latter representing the flagless Dominion. Chamberlain, flanked by a portrait of Queen Victoria

and an enormous stag's head, declared that the treaty should "draw closer and tighter the bonds of amity that should always unite all branches of the English-speaking people" (qtd. in *NYT*, 3 Mar. 1888). The U.S. Senate decided otherwise six months later.

During this time, Wiman continued to cultivate Hitt, who chaired the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Perhaps with some exaggeration, Wiman later recalled that he was travelling to Washington every weekend to meet with Hitt and to "consult with him regarding Canadian matters." According to Wiman, two hours every Sunday were spent discussing the "Canadian question" at Hitt's home, often in the company of James G. Blaine, the Republican presidential nominee in 1884 and a future secretary of state, as well as Richard Cartwright, the pro-reciprocity Liberal M.P. and former Canadian minister of finance. Free trade, Wiman claimed, was on everyone's lips (*Chances of Success* 51–53). In March 1888, Hitt proposed a U.S. House resolution in favour of commercial union, while Cartwright called for unrestricted reciprocity in the House of Commons. Hitt's resolution passed the House a year later but failed in the Senate; a Tory-dominated Parliament rejected Cartwright's measure. Just as important, many American officials—notably Blaine—continued to begrudge Canada the 1854 reciprocity treaty and had little inclination to offer Canada a favourable trade pact so long as the Dominion remained within the embrace of the British Empire (Stewart 93–94).¹¹

Wiman also met resistance at the Canadian Club. Tensions over his political activities erupted at a banquet held on May 10, 1889. The feast had been planned to honour Wiman, who was retiring as president in favour of Sir Roderick Cameron, the wealthy merchant and onetime Canadian diplomat. But a dispute erupted when Sir Roderick opined that, "in all social and mercantile ways Mr. Wiman was safe and sound, but when he touched politics he proved himself to be loaded with dynamite." Wiman took this as his cue to launch into an animated defence of commercial union and, according to the *Boston Daily Globe*, "began to breathe fire and brimstone against the old foggy notions in Canada." This was too much for Cameron, who jumped up, his face flush, and shouted: "You are disloyal to the spirit of British institutions!" Practically stammering with anger, Cameron continued that the principal blessing of Canadian existence lay in the very isolation Wiman decried. Cameron had lived south of the border for four decades and had achieved a position of rare prominence in New York business and social circles. "Of the many thousand Canadians living in and about New York, Sir Roderick was perhaps the most prominent," read an obituary published in the yearbook of the CSNY upon his death ("Year Book, 1901–02"). Once upon a time, Cameron had even taken up arms to defend the Union, volunteering to serve in a regiment of Scotch-Americans known as the "Highlanders" ("Cameron"). But on this occasion, he fumed that there was nothing worthy of admiration in the United States, "from politics up, or politics down!" This outburst caused pandemonium among the assembled gentlemen:

the Canadians of New York could not suffer such anti-Americanism in their midst (*Boston Daily Globe*, 11 May 1889).¹²

What of Canadians north of the border? Would they have sided with Wiman or Cameron? The 1891 federal election revealed their ambivalence. The campaign was contested largely on the terrain of trade. Both the Liberals of Wilfrid Laurier and the Conservatives of John A. Macdonald had favoured reciprocity of some sort with the U.S. during the 1880s: “The difference between them,” Robert C. Brown has written, “was one of degree, not of kind” (Brown, “Canada’s” 10). But the Liberals’ 1891 scheme of *unrestricted* reciprocity implied North American trade relations more intimate than anything envisaged by Macdonald. Laurier and his party’s main advocate of free trade, Richard Cartwright, argued that reciprocity promised future prosperity. They also hoped that the issue would invigorate the Liberals’ chances of unseating a prime minister who had held office for all but five of the twenty-four years since Confederation (Graham 15–18).

From Wiman’s perspective, it was clear that the Liberals’ program fell short of his vision of North American commercial union. The Duke of Staten Island nonetheless campaigned energetically on their behalf. “The conflict that impends in Canada in the next thirty days decides the commercial destiny of half a continent for half a century,” he told an audience in Louisville (*Chicago Tribune*, 4 Feb. 1891). Wiman implored U.S. politicians to make pro-Canada gestures that would increase the plausibility of reciprocity and defuse anti-Americanism north of the border. His immediate goal was the repeal of the staunchly protectionist McKinley tariff bill of 1890, which caused a 50 percent drop in Canadian agricultural exports to the U.S. between 1889 and 1892.

Macdonald suspected that the issue of trade could be conflated with the issue of “loyalty to Dominion, Crown, and Empire.” He and his Conservative allies—manufacturing interests in Montreal and Toronto, the Tory press, the fledgling Imperial Federation League—ably used statements by Wiman Butterworth, Smith, Farrer, et al., to portray the Liberals’ reciprocity proposals as the thin edge of an annexationist wedge. In the campaign’s signal moment, Sir John proclaimed, “A British subject I was born, a British subject I will die!” That sentiment resonated with enough Canadian voters to keep “the old man, the old policy, and the old flag” in place (Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home?* 46–51). But the 1891 election left much unsettled. The voter turnout of 64.4 percent was the lowest in Canada’s short political history. And while the Tories’ share of the popular vote ticked up slightly, the Liberals added ten seats to their 1887 total of eighty and earned more than 45 percent of all votes.

Talk of a sinister conspiracy linking Laurier to Wiman and the American annexationists was fanciful. Yet Wiman’s peripatetic campaigning probably harmed his allies north of the border more than it helped. On one hand, he

was guilty of downplaying American Anglophobia and over-selling his Liberal allies on the Harrison administration's enthusiasm for reciprocity with Canada. On the other, he tweaked sensibilities north of the border by lobbying American officials to intervene in the Canadian election. His hyperbolic writings also provided easy pickings for opponents eager to prove treason in their midst. In the run-up to the election, Wiman had penned a series of incendiary articles under such titles as "The Capture of Canada" and "Can We Coerce Canada?" Though the articles carefully denounced annexation, they also abounded in impolitic passages.

"A verdict in favor of the Liberal party of Canada," Wiman wrote in 1890, "would be a decision looking to the most intimate relations with this country, to the opening-up of every resource that Canada possesses for American energy, ingenuity, and capital . . . to advantages quite as great as the creation of a new series of States and territories" ("The Capture" 222). Though Wiman argued in an 1891 article that Canada in fact could not and should not be coerced, that didn't prevent Sir Charles Tupper, the Canadian High Commissioner in London and a future Tory Prime Minister, from writing a rejoinder that accused Wiman of being "engaged in a treasonable conspiracy to subvert British institutions in Canada" ("Can We Coerce"; Tupper 556). Conservative campaign literature made similar allegations (Macdonald).¹³

Further, as Robert Brown argues, a fundamental contradiction lingered within the commercial-union movement Wiman had worked so hard to build. Its major American boosters—the likes of Butterworth and Hitt—were not in fact free traders: they were protectionists. The American commercial unionists wished only to remove the "barbed wire fence that runs athwart the continent" and to wrap it around the edge of North America (Brown, "Canada's" 130). This was unacceptable to most Canadians and to Britain since it would disrupt commercial ties between them at a time when the mother country remained the biggest market for Canadian products and the main source of foreign investment in the Dominion (Marchildon 153–54).¹⁴

Although Wiman had spent years singing the virtues of Canada for American audiences, he was tarred as a traitor in his homeland. The critics were partly right: Wiman believed that only American capital could exploit Canadian resources to their full potential, and he personally coveted the windfall a continental market would bring. Yet he was hardly alone in prizing profit above patriotism. Pro-Tory manufacturing interests despised commercial union in part because it promised competition with bigger, more efficient American businesses; the National Policy they supported depressed wages while raising prices on manufactured goods. To preserve their privileges and win elections, they stoked fears of American encroachment—the Canadian version of waving the bloody shirt. This, as J. L. Granatstein has argued, is a recurring theme of Canadian history. Time and again, most notably in 1891 and

1911, Tories invoked a “Loyalist myth,” the idea that Canada was founded on “beliefs and institutions essential to the preservation of a way of life different from that in the United States.” Anti-Americanism, Granatstein argues, “was largely the Tory way of keeping British attitudes uppermost in the Canadian psyche” (*Yankee Go Home?* x).¹⁵

Ultimately, Wiman failed to grasp Canadians’ determination to forge ahead within the orbit of the Empire. Having launched his business career during the “golden age” of reciprocity, he had lived in New York City throughout the post-Confederation decades. His ideas had drifted away from those of most Canadians. Most notably, he misapprehended the ways in which English-speaking Canadians of his era were learning to fuse imperialism with celebrations of distinctly Canadian customs and national symbols. Most saw no contradiction in simultaneously affirming a burgeoning Canadian nationalism and a desire to strengthen the British Empire; if anything, one set of loyalties tended to buttress the other (Buckner 5–7). As the British Empire League expressed it, “We are Canadians, and in order to be Canadians we must be British” (qtd. in Saywell 132). British-Canadians in the 1890s treasured the imperial connection as a guarantor of technological progress, economic growth, self-government, and cultural prominence. Imperialism provided them with an ideology through which to imagine themselves as members of a superior race. “Virtually all English Canadians in the late nineteenth century were enthusiastic imperialists,” Phillip Buckner writes, “and virtually all hoped that Canada could play a more important role in Imperial affairs” (72–82). Wiman, on the other hand, tended to view Canadian loyalty to Britain as a relic, an artifactual sentiment that impeded economic progress. His nationalism was instinctively anti-Tory and anti-Empire. Nor did he have any sympathy for the oft-heard argument that Canada’s position within the Empire was the best guarantor of independence vis-à-vis the behemoth to the south.¹⁶

The continentalist movement was not entirely a spent force in Canada after 1891, but its leaders in Ontario and Quebec—including Goldwin Smith and Honoré Mercier—only served to discredit it with talk of annexation. A new group founded in 1892 in Toronto and New York, the Continental Union League, attracted the likes of Theodore Roosevelt and Andrew Carnegie, along with Goldwin Smith. But its efforts to promote North American integration petered out soon after the onset of depression in 1893 (Thompson and Randall 62). The Canadian Club, meanwhile, slumped off the public stage and disbanded in 1897 (Hugh Anderson 5).

Laurier’s Liberals won election in 1896 with a revamped version of the National Policy, which they maintained for the next fifteen years. In 1897, Laurier’s Minister of Finance, W. S. Fielding (the erstwhile Nova Scotia

separatist), announced a new tariff policy, in response to the Dingley Tariff that had raised American rates earlier that year. Canada would offer a 12.5 percent preference, to be raised to 25 percent the following year, to countries that didn't discriminate against Canadian goods. In practice, the new tariff regime turned into a system of Imperial preference. "The feeling in Canada on the subject of reciprocity," Laurier wrote to Wiman in 1897, "is very far from what it was some years ago" (Brown and Cook 19–21). Still, U.S. manufacturers captured an ever-increasing share of Canadian imports (McCalla 254).

For Wiman, the mid-1890s were a trying time: he engaged in one project too many, lost much of his fortune, and saw his Staten Island properties transferred into trusteeship (*NYT*, 30 Apr. 1893). Nonetheless, it would have been hard to imagine anyone else delivering the keynote speech on July 1, 1897, when a new Canadian club, the Canadian Society of New York, hosted its first Dominion Day banquet. Now pushing sixty-five and a naturalized U.S. citizen, Wiman held out little hope for the future of Canadian–American relations. He recalled in his speech how three decades earlier the U.S. had possessed a great opportunity "to win a region far greater than was won by the Civil War." Yet American policies had alienated Canadians at every turn, thrusting the Dominion back into the British embrace. "In this great game for half a continent," Wiman mused wistfully, "had Great Britain chosen the cards, she would have selected a hand containing the very cards the United States has played." Now a more sinister version of Manifest Destiny was carrying the day. Wiman warned the Canadian Society that the U.S. had "commenced a career of annexation, going out of its way 2,000 miles to include Hawaii and her exceedingly mixed population." Cuba, Wiman predicted, would be next; Canada would follow. "But there never was a greater mistake!" (qtd. in *Chicago Tribune*, 22 June 1897).

Wiman's dark ruminations notwithstanding, the political climate was changing rapidly. Anglo-American relations in the late 1890s began a rapid transformation historians have dubbed the "great rapprochement." In 1895 the Venezuela boundary dispute had threatened to spark an Anglo-American skirmish; thereafter the former rivals decided that any future war would constitute fratricide. As tensions eased, intellectuals and diplomats found common ground in race thinking. Anglo-Saxonism, as Stuart Anderson has argued, "provided the primary abstract rationale for the diplomatic rapprochement between the two countries" (12). In both countries, turbulent times had old WASP elites feeling besieged; racism offered a comforting prism through which they could justify their perch atop the social hierarchy. Anglo-Saxonism also allowed Americans to reconceive Canada as a kindred nation. "Not only did Americans stop viewing Canada as a threat," Edward Kohn has written, "they actually viewed the Dominion—a fellow Anglo-Saxon state—as a good and trusted friend on the republic's northern frontier" (15). Further, British-Canadians of all classes could temporarily lay aside longstanding fears of their neighbours

to the south by celebrating the accomplishments of the Anglo-Saxon “race” in its global struggle against “barbarism.” No longer was anti-Americanism a necessary corollary to Canadian imperialism.¹⁷

British-Canadian New Yorkers in the late 1890s relished the opportunity to emphasize the racial bonds they claimed to share with Yankees. They simultaneously celebrated Canada’s place within the British Empire and cheered the emergence of an American empire. At the outbreak of the Spanish–American War in April 1898, the men of the Canadian Society of New York caught a serious case of war fever. One of the CSNY’s first activities was to organize a Canadian–American regiment to aid in the invasion of Cuba (*NYT*, 28 Apr. 1898). On Victoria Day, 1898, the Society hosted a raucous banquet at which Andrew Pattullo, an M.P. from Ontario, pledged stout Canadian support for the American cause in Cuba. As Pattullo explained, Spanish comportment in Cuba was a “danger to civilization,” one which called for “Anglo-Saxons the world over to stand together” (qtd. in *NYT*, 25 May 1898).

Pattullo’s speech was hardly the first call for Anglo-Saxon unity at a meeting of Canadian New Yorkers. In 1888, when Wiman had hosted Joseph Chamberlain, the future Secretary of State for the Colonies had begun his remarks by reading a poem that referred to the thickness of “Saxon blood.” He then delivered a stirring speech in which he proclaimed to the assembled grandees that friendship between the United States and England (and thus Canada) was “demanded by a common origin, by the ties of blood and history, by our traditions, and by everything that connects us” (*NYT*, 3 Mar. 1888). A decade later, with Canadian national ambitions on the rise, racism gave Anglo-Canadians a way of repositioning themselves within the Empire. As members of the great Anglo-Saxon race, they could position themselves as equal partners in a global imperial mission.

The Canadian clubmen of New York rarely, if ever, discussed where French-Canadians might fit in. In the new schema of celebratory Anglo-American amity, supposedly defined by Anglo-Saxon blood, French-speaking Catholics clearly merited inferior status. True, there were strands of Canadianism in the late nineteenth century that attempted to put British- and French-Canadians on an even keel. Some Canadian nationalists emphasized, in particular, the unifying aspects of the northern climate, which was said to have melded French- and British-Canadians into an energetic, rugged, and homogenous “race” while discouraging the immigration of less vigorous peoples (Berger 131; Sturgis 102). But the surge in Anglo-Canadian imperialism around the turn of the century left French-Canadians singularly unmoved (Coates 194).

Nor did more than a smattering of French-Canadians choose to join the CSNY until much later in the twentieth century. Most French-Canadian New Yorkers came from working-class backgrounds and would have found little

common ground with the wealthy British-Canadian clubmen. They were much more likely to join the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste, whose New York branch had been founded in 1850. The nineteenth-century version of the Société, according to H. V. Nelles, was “a patriotic movement dedicated to the celebration on any and all occasions of the survival of a Catholic, French-speaking people in Canada, and the preservation of what was rightfully theirs against Anglophone incursions” (50). In the spring of 1900, the New York chapter marked its fiftieth anniversary by hosting a three-day festival of picnics and balls attended by some 2000 visitors from Quebec and 600 delegates representing far-flung French-Canadian organizations from across North America. Interestingly, the New Yorkers welcomed their guests with speeches calling for closer, more harmonious relations between Canada and the United States (*NYT*, 10 June 1900). It was a goal closely aligned with what the city’s Anglo-Canadian clubs put forth—but little exists in the historical record to suggest that members of either group saw themselves united in a common cause. More likely, they regarded each other with mutual suspicion, especially given the tensions stoked by the Boer War.¹⁸

Events hosted by the Canadian Society of New York at the turn of the century inevitably erupted in boisterous outpourings of patriotism and Anglo-Saxon good feeling. At the 1900 Victoria Day dinner, “the walls fairly shook” every time the Queen’s name was mentioned, and the Society’s president, Thomas Bartindale, led a chorus of cheers in honour of Boer War heroes. Premier George Ross of Ontario, followed with an ode to the “cordial and deferential” relations between Canada and the U.S., and then linked the British struggle in South Africa to the American struggle in Cuba and the Philippines. These skirmishes, Ross claimed, were two fronts in a single “conflict between the forces of civilization and barbarism” (CSNY “Year Book, 1901–02”; *NYT*, 25 May 1900).

The most serious source of Anglo-American tension remained the Alaska boundary dispute. Though the exact delimitations of Alaska’s territory had been a matter of long-simmering disagreement between them, the matter threatened to come to a head in the years following the discovery of gold in the Klondike in 1896. Suddenly, disputed territory and contested shipping routes took on added importance. Several years of negotiations ensued. In 1899, a Joint Anglo-American High Commission aimed at bringing about a comprehensive settlement of outstanding issues in North American affairs (including North Atlantic fisheries, Bering Sea sealing, and trade) foundered due to mutual intransigence over access to the Yukon. After 1900, however, British diplomats strove above all to ensure Anglo-American amity, even if it meant sacrificing Canadian interests. When, in 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt’s administration wielded its “big stick” and ramped up bellicose rhetoric of a kind not heard in decades, London acceded to American demands, despite Canadian objections. The settlement fell far short of what Prime

Minister Laurier had hoped for, and Canadians responded with what Brown and Cook dub “[s]elf-righteous recriminations against both Great Britain and the United States” (48).

A new, anti-imperial strand of Anglo-Canadian nationalism was born in response to perceived British perfidy. At the same time, Canadians resented Roosevelt’s high-handedness and fretted once more about Yankee belligerency. “Canadian nationalism, long developing and deeply rooted,” historian Charles Tansill has written, “became a factor of increasing importance in the equation of Anglo-American relations” (xiv). When the hubris had died down, a new era dawned in North American relations, as Ottawa and Washington increasingly maintained direct diplomatic ties with little British involvement (Thompson and Randall 79).¹⁹

Among the Anglo-Canadians of New York City, disagreements arose about how to channel the new mood, which Dr. John MacPhee of the Canadian Society of New York termed a “national awakening” (qtd. in CSNY, “Year Book, 1910” 25). The new society founded in 1897 differed in important ways from the old Canadian Club. Where industrialists and bankers had dominated Wiman’s group, the CSNY was largely the preserve of intellectuals, professionals, and physicians. Prominent members included writer Charles G. D. Roberts, sometimes referred to as the “Father of Canadian Poetry”; Elgin R. L. Gould, a political scientist and housing reformer; and Dr. Wolfred Nelson, an expert in tropical diseases who would later serve as the Special Sanitary Commissioner of Cuba (*NYT*, 13 May 1897; *NYT*, 16 Jan. 1913). Lacking a leader who could match Wiman’s vigour, the CSNY initially took a less active approach to politics than had the Canadian Club. But it also set goals similar to the old club’s: to further amity among Canada, the U.S., and Britain, and to serve as a representative body for Canadians in New York City.

In the meantime, Canadian Clubs had begun popping up across the Dominion. The first one, based in Hamilton, opened in 1893 (eight years after Wiman’s group had come together) as a place for men to relax, drink, imbibe Canadian culture, and talk politics. Its founder was W. Sanford Evans, a journalist in his mid-20s who would launch a Toronto chapter soon thereafter. Evans hoped that the clubs would stimulate Canadian patriotism and promote the emergence of a Canadianism that, while firm in its attachment to Britain, supported “the idea of an autonomous and self-respecting Canada” (Henry, par. 13). Like Wiman’s old Canadian Club of New York, the new associations strove to stimulate informal discussion and hosted banquets at which a range of distinguished guests spoke on Canadian topics. By 1910 the Canadian Club had sprouted more than sixty branches, with perhaps a score more in the U.S. (Hopkins 304–10).

Less than a decade after the demise of Wiman's group, the Canadian Club of New York had its second coming. The reborn outfit owed largely to the efforts of another young journalist from Ontario, William Robson, who convinced some 150 friends to join him in a club where they could receive "inspiration from men who were able to address them intelligently on the current topics of the day" (qtd. in *The Maple Leaf*, July 1926, 6–7). It is unclear why the upstarts rejected the well-established Canadian Society of New York, but the split was probably equal parts politics and generation gap. John MacPhee, a onetime president of the CSNY, dismissed the new Canadian Club as "a moderate secession ... by a few young men whose conception of a national organization was a social club where they could meet for personal convenience and conviviality, rather than a society based upon national sentiment and charity" (qtd. in CSNY, "Year Book, 1910" 25–29). Yet the new club would soon take up Wiman's old role as the self-proclaimed oracle of Canadian opinion in the U.S. According to a future Canadian Club president, Neil McPhatter, the group was "the representative organization of Canadians south of the border, and most truly can represent the sentiment of Canadians upon such great matters as the tariff, annexation, alliances by treaty, and other matters affecting both countries" (qtd. in *NYT*, 16 Nov. 1910).²⁰

The Canadian Club also gave voice to the freshly assertive nationalism the Dominion's English-speaking subjects had begun to espouse. At the club's annual dinner on May 16, 1907, the guests of honour were R. F. Sutherland, Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons, and Leslie Shaw, a former secretary of the U.S. Treasury. The two men engaged in a heated debate over the issue of reciprocity. It began when the assembled Canadians apparently took umbrage at Shaw's call for single-priced North American markets based on "commercial unity between the United States and Canada" as well as "uniformity in immigration and labor laws." The American's remarks were met with head shaking in the audience and cries of "Rotten!" Sutherland then snapped that such proposals rang hollow coming from a politician whose government had repeatedly rejected free trade with Canada. After years of pursuing reciprocity with the Americans, Sutherland continued, Canadians had finally "given it up as a bad job and have drifted off to trade with other nations." Justice J. J. MacLaren of the Ontario Court of Appeal, agreed. Speaking of commercial union, he explained that, "formerly one class had a strong aversion, while the other looked upon union with her as destiny. Instead there is a more general feeling of practically unanimous belief that Canada has a destiny of her own to work out" (qtd. in *NYT*, 17 May 1907; *N-Y Trib.*, 17 May 1907).

MacLaren spoke too soon. In the early years of the twentieth century, a wheat boom and increased exploitation of Canada's mineral resources helped lead Canada out of its long depression. While Canadians continued to migrate en masse to the United States, this movement was more than offset by the arrival in the Dominion of ever-increasing numbers of Americans

and Europeans. Tariff walls still stood, but Canadian trade with the U.S. and American investment in Canada were both increasing substantially. The question of free trade resurfaced in earnest after William Howard Taft, a convinced continentalist, arrived in the White House in 1909 and began facing pressure from Congress to dismantle the edifice of protectionism (Brown and Cook, 179–80).

In January 1911, Laurier and Taft reached a comprehensive agreement on reciprocity, subject to concurrent legislation. Almost all duties on natural products would be abolished, while most manufacturing tariffs would remain intact. Liberals rejoiced. But to some Canadian eyes, it seemed a deal too good to be true. Suspicions deepened when seemingly overeager American legislators quickly whisked a reciprocity bill through Congress, earning whopping majorities in both chambers. Laurier, whose Liberals had been re-elected only three years earlier but who now found himself besieged in Parliament over his creation of a Canadian Navy, called an election for September and made reciprocity the central plank of his platform. The Liberals felt confident they would finally avenge the 1891 result; Conservatives and their business allies rallied to denounce the deal (Thompson and Randall 87–92).²¹

The Canadians of New York City, as they had 20 years earlier, came out overwhelmingly in favour of free trade. One Canadian Club man estimated in 1911 that 96 percent of members favoured reciprocity. In the fall of 1910, the duelling Canadian clubs ratcheted up their competition to attract big-name speakers for lavish political dinners. Most of these focused on reciprocity. On November 15, 1910, the Canadian Club hosted W. L. Mackenzie King, the minister of labour in Laurier's pro-reciprocity government (*NYT*, 16 Nov. 1910). Three weeks later, the Canadian Society, 300 strong, dined and cheered a pro-reciprocity statement by the American railroad magnate James J. Hill (*NYT*, 9 Dec. 1910). By early 1911, the Canadian Club, led by Neil McPhatter, a surgeon, and the Progressive reformer E. R. L. Gould, had become the rallying ground for many of the most prominent pro-reciprocity advocates south of the border.

“No single thing could so thoroughly cement the two people as the passage of this great measure,” McPhatter said at one of a string of pro-reciprocity dinners sponsored by the Canadian Club. At this particular feast, held on Valentine's Day, diners spontaneously leapt up and cheered for several minutes when news broke that the reciprocity bill had passed the U.S. House. “We are kindred peoples,” McPhatter told his excited fellows once the celebration had died down. “It will inaugurate better feeling and increased prosperity, not only in Canada but in the United States as well” (qtd. in *N-Y Trib.*, 15 Feb. 1911). McPhatter, who devoted considerable energy to publicizing the issue in the American press, also lampooned opponents of free trade on both sides of the border who, he argued, cancelled each other out by raising precisely the same

objections to the effect that domestic manufacturers and labourers would be hurt by competition (*NYT*, 2 Apr. 1911).

Perhaps with 1891 in mind, some Canadian New Yorkers took pains to prove that free trade with the U.S., far from betraying the mother country, would in fact tighten the imperial connection. Reciprocity, they argued, would help unleash Canada's economic might in a way the current regime of tariffs had not. The resultant prosperity would benefit the Empire as a whole. "Any true colonial hoping to be strong to help the mother country can't afford to overlook an opportunity to grow strong in trade," Gould said in 1911. "Reciprocity will develop Canada as nothing else can, and a developed Canada is what the mother country needs" (qtd. in *N-Y Trib.*, 15 Mar. 1911).

The major coup for the CCNY came on June 22, 1911, when Taft himself agreed to attend a banquet held in tribute to King George V. Speaking late into an evening of many toasts, the president said few words but made himself clear. "I believe in reciprocity with all my heart," he declaimed (qtd. in *N-Y Trib.*, 23 June 1911). Canadian voters didn't. That fall they delivered a majority to Robert Laird Borden's anti-reciprocity Conservative Party, rejecting continentalism and ending Laurier's political career. The Tories' rousing electoral slogan—"No truck or trade with the Yankees!"—would resonate for decades to come.²²

Historians disagree over the meaning of the 1911 result, variously portraying it as an affirmation of Canadian nationalism, a moment of anti-American hysteria, a triumph for certain sectors of the economy, or a simple rejection of a tired and out-of-touch Liberal Party that had been in office for fifteen years. As far as Anglo-Canadian New Yorkers were concerned, the 1911 result proved yet again how difficult it was to act as brokers of Canadian opinion in the U.S. Their effect on the election was minimal; if anything, their actions probably undermined the goal of reciprocity for which they had so hopefully campaigned. In their efforts to promote free trade, they deluded themselves and their American allies about Canadian enthusiasm for closer ties to the United States. Above all, they failed in their efforts to convey the "sentiment of Canadians" to men like Taft. As Wiman had pointed out two decades earlier, even vague references to annexation could turn skittish Canadians against reciprocity—but U.S. politicians did just that in 1911. The most notorious statement came from Champ Clark, the incoming House Speaker, who said, "I hope to see the day when the American flag will float over every square foot of the British-North American possessions clear to the North Pole." Taft was less vulgar, but he damaged Laurier's campaign by declaring that the Dominion was at a "parting of the ways," faced with a stark choice between North American "commercial union" and the old British tie (qtd. in Clements, 6, 14).

Such rhetoric raised the spectre of Yankee imperialism, and Borden pounced. "It is beyond doubt," Borden said in launching his campaign, "that

the leading public men of the United States, its leading press, and the mass of its people believe annexation of this Dominion to be the ultimate, inevitable and desirable result of this proposition, and for that reason support it” (qtd. in *NYT*, 16 Aug. 1911). The Canadians of New York can hardly be blamed for such perceptions. But they were undoubtedly naïve in their interpretation of American intentions. American desire for a new reciprocity agreement stemmed not from a desire to trade with Canada on an equal footing but from a realization that protectionism vis-à-vis the Dominion had been counterproductive. Canada was quickly becoming a prosperous, self-confident rival, one closely tied to Britain (Stewart 102–103). As Robert Hannigan has argued, U.S. policymakers “wished to block Canada’s development into a core state, to guarantee for the American economy a cheap and continuous supply of Canadian natural products, and to secure for American firms the Canadian market for industrial goods” (3). Such goals were hardly in keeping with the benevolent spirit men like McPhatter ascribed to American continentalists.

The Canadian clubmen of 1911, like Wiman in 1891, had again underestimated Canadian fears of the American colossus. Since Wiman’s day, the Canadian clubs of New York had expressed a robust nationalism that in some ways prefigured the Canadianism evolving north of the border. At the same time, in working to bring Canadians and Americans closer together, they had emphasized and celebrated the ways in which the Dominion and the Union were alike. In so doing, they continually risked stoking the ancestral prejudices of their compatriots—the “Loyalist Myth”—at a time when many Canadians were proudly defining their emerging polity in contrast with what they perceived to be unstable and corrupt American institutions (Berger, ch. 6). As the *Toronto Telegram* wrote in 1903, “Continentalism always and ever must be the enemy and assassin of Canadianism” (qtd. in Sturgis 99).²³

Though disappointed by the election result, the Canadian Society of New York invited Borden to attend their annual dinner on December 8, 1911, at Delmonico’s. The newly elected Prime Minister accepted, and the Society staged one of the best-attended feasts in its history. Borden spoke of goodwill, peace, and friendship between Canada and the United States. But he also spared a moment to revisit the issue of free trade—and to heap blame on the Americans. As Borden told it, between 1878 and 1897 Canadian governments had repeatedly offered the United States reciprocity in natural products, only to be repeatedly rebuffed. Going even further back in time, Borden spoke of the “feeling of despair” that had fallen over Canada after the unilateral abrogation of reciprocity by the U.S. Congress in 1866. As a matter of national survival, Canada had developed a set of tariffs and protections—but let it not be said that Canada had discriminated against her neighbour. Borden laid out his evidence in figures: “During the past ten years we have bought your products

to the amount of 1,784 millions of dollars and sold to you our own products to the amount of 869 millions, leaving in your favour a trade balance of 915 millions. In other words, one Canadian buys from you as much as twenty-six of your citizens buy from us" (CSNY "Year Book, 1912"; *NYT*, 9 Dec. 1911; *N-Y Trib.*, 9 Dec. 1911).

Tellingly, Borden's speech repeatedly referred to Canadians as "us" and to his audience as "you." The message was clear: the Prime Minister considered the members of the Canadian Society to be as good as Americans. No longer could the Canadian clubmen of New York credibly claim to represent Canadian opinion in the U.S. Their moment had passed. World War I would give birth to a new Canadian nationalism while helping shape the modern Canadian state; in 1919, at Borden's insistence, Canada earned a seat at the table of international diplomacy. The war over, the Canadian clubs of New York curtailed their political efforts and focused on charity and social activities.²⁴ High-profile guests continued to speak at their dinners, but the stakes had lowered. With the arrival in 1926 of the first Canadian ambassador to Washington, Vincent Massey, an era officially ended for the Anglo-Canadians of New York. They would no longer be unofficial ambassadors—merely immigrants trying to get rich in the world's metropolis.

Notes

1. In this paper, the term "North America" is understood to include only Canada and the United States. Mexico almost never merited mention in discussions among continentalists during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As for Newfoundland, which did not join Canada until 1949, it occasionally entered into discussions about fisheries and territorial waters, but is not considered here as a separate political entity.
2. For a detailed account of continentalist thinking during these years, see Warner ch. 1. For more on the 1849 annexationist movement, see Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home?* 40–43. For more on the American influences on Confederation, see Winks; Ged Martin. Overviews of Canadian–American relations include Granatstein's *Yankee Go Home?*; Lawrence Martin; Thompson and Randall; and Stewart. An insightful take on the issue of free trade is Granatstein's "Free Trade between Canada and the United States: The Issue that Will Not Go Away."
3. On hostile American attitudes toward Canada during this period, see Stewart ch. 3. On the National Policy, see also Brown *Canada's National Policy 1883–1900*.
4. For more on the fisheries and sealing disputes, see Brown, *Canada's National Policy 1883–1900* chs. 2–4.
5. For more on the history of Canadian migration to the United States, see Hansen and Brebner; Ramirez; and on Canadian writers moving to New York see Mount.
6. See also Woodsworth 200–201.
7. The most complete accounts of Wiman's background and politics are contained in Hodson and Ian Grant.

8. In 1864, 1867, and again in 1882, New York’s Canadians assembled to discuss founding a club and planning Dominion Day celebrations but accomplished neither (*NYT*, 14 Sept. 1864; 11 June 1882; 18 June 1882).
9. For more on Grant’s thought, see Berger 24–33.
10. For a more detailed comparison of Wiman’s continentalism with Smith’s, see Pennanen.
11. For more on the politics surrounding the issue of commercial union on both sides of the border in the 1880s, see Tansill ch. 13.
12. An elderly Cameron again caused a stir in 1899 when he offered an odd prophesy at a CSNY dinner. “Some day, the Canadian people will be the ruling power on this continent,” he declaimed to calls of “Hear, hear,” adding that the Dominion would one day annex New England, New York, and parts of the Western plains. The *Los Angeles Times* retorted: “Let those who own stocks, bonds, lands, toboggan slides, or any other sort of Canadian property, hang on to them, for they are all sure to rise mightily —just as soon as Sir Roderick’s dream materializes” (5 Jan. 1900).
13. An anonymous pamphlet published in Montreal in 1891 reprinted selected excerpts of Wiman’s writings under the headline, “Conjuration Wiman-Laurier contre le Canada: Le Canada pour les États-Unis, Complot Démasqué.”
14. See also Pennanen 53–54.
15. For a classic discussion of the loyalist legacy on the Canadian character, see Lipset.
16. For more on Wiman’s relationship with imperialism, see Ian Grant. For more on the interrelationship of Canadian nationalism and imperialism in the late nineteenth century, see Berger; Hastings 92–110; and Sturgis 95–117.
17. On the role of Anglo-Saxonism in Anglo-American relations, see Stuart Anderson. For a more recent reckoning with the Canadian–American relationship in light of “the Anglo-Saxon idea” see Kohn. For case studies of Canadian publications that embraced Anglo-Saxonism, see Arenson; Hastings.
18. In 1900 English-Canadian supporters of the war clashed with antiwar French-Canadians on the streets of Montreal (Coates 194).
19. For more on the sources of Anglo-American conflict at the turn of the century, see Brown *Canada’s National Policy 1883–1900*; Granatstein *Yankee Go Home?*
20. For more on the evolution of the clubs, see Hugh Anderson; Canadian Club of New York, 1953.
21. See, also, Brown and Cook 179–187. For a look at how American motives in pursuing the 1911 reciprocity proposal, see Stewart ch. 4. On the British response, see Potter.
22. For varying interpretations, see Bliss 28–29; Clements 32–52; Tansill 465–66; Granatstein, *Yankee Go Home?* 57–65; Beaulieu and Emery 1083–1101; Thompson 94–95.
23. For contrasting views on the place of the United States in nineteenth-century articulations of Canadian nationalism, see Preston; Smith ch. 3; Cox 667–670.
24. In 2005, the Canadian Society of New York and the Canadian Club of New York officially merged to form the Canadian Association of New York, which performs roughly similar functions to what each of the organizations took up beginning in the interwar years.

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