Searching for the “vanguard of an army of Scots” in the early Canadian book trade¹

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From the Gaelic culture on Cape Breton to tartan skirts in Victoria and Celtic rock music in the prairies, aspects of Scottish culture are in clear evidence across Canada today. Historically, Scottish influences in Canada have been documented by many writers, from early relatively anecdotal writings,³ to more recent scholarly studies which attempt both to quantify and qualify the role of Scots in the development of Canada’s economic, cultural and political life.⁴

The involvement of Scots in Canadian print culture, whilst alluded to by such scholars as George Parker,⁵ is not revealed in the imprints of items printed in Canada in this early period. This paper is drawn from a study which systematically researches the input of the Scots in English-language book availability in six Canadian towns in the period 1752 to 1820: Halifax, Saint John, Quebec, Montreal, Kingston and York, with the emphasis on Halifax.⁶ The input is examined from the perspective of the personnel involved in the book trade in its broadest sense. The paper provides a glimpse of the myriad

1 George L. Parker, *The Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 25. Parker was referring to both Scots and Ulstermen who “dominated nineteenth-century printing and bookselling.”

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3 See, for examples, J.M. LeMoine, “The Scot in New France, 1535-1880,” *Transactions of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec* New Ser., 15 (1880): 3-58 ; and, W.J. Rattray, *The Scot in British North America*. (Toronto: Maclear, 1880). Much of the information in these texts is not sourced.

4 Examples include: Frances G. Halpenny, “Scots in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*,” in *The Immigrant Experience*, Catherine Kerrigan, ed. (Guelph: University of Guelph, 1992), 21-30; and, David S. Macmillan, “Scottish Enterprise and Influences in Canada, 1620-1900,” in *The Scots Abroad: Labour, Capital, Enterprise, 1750-1914*, R.A. Cage, ed. (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 46-79.

5 Parker, *The Beginnings of the Book Trade*, 25.

6 Fiona A. Black, “Book Availability in Canada, 1752 to 1820, and the Scottish Contribution.” Ph.D. dissertation. (Loughborough University, 1999).

contributions made by Scots, both within and outwith the trade. As the paper will demonstrate, it was the separate efforts of relatively small merchant enterprises which formed the early infrastructure for the dissemination of books from Scotland to Canada.

"It is astonishing how often 'trade follows the book'," the publisher Stanley Unwin wrote concerning the effect of British Council activities in the late colonial period.⁷ In the early colonial period the opposite was the case—the book followed trade. Books and periodicals were shipped where tobacco, wines, textiles or fish were shipped. Books were never the lucrative defining cargo, they were an adjunct packed in bales, crates, or barrels, tossed in the hold or lashed on the deck. Regardless of these relatively ad hoc shipping arrangements, they were vital, longed-for cultural commodities, written about in colonial diaries, bought, sold, resold, lent and discussed.⁸

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Canada had no burgeoning national distributive system for books to match that of Mathew Carey of Philadelphia.⁹ This was due in part to the economic separateness of the Canadian colonies which in turn was sustained by the lack of land transportation. The coming of the railways in the mid to late nineteenth century would eventually lead to national distributive networks for books, first from Montreal and then from Toronto.

In the Georgian period, the different trading routes to the various regions of Canada affected both the geographic sources and the frequency of the arrivals of book shipments. Niagara, Kingston and York could, due to the interior water routes used, receive books in

7 Quoted in Donald Donald, "Introduction to the 1996 Edition," in Geoffrey Ashall Glaister, *Encyclopedia of the Book*. 2nd ed. (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press; London: The British Library, 1996), xiv.

8 A diary example is from Anna Kearny of Halifax, the young wife of an army officer. Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM). MG1 No. 526A. Entry for 3 October 1795. "Read the Banish'd Man till Bed time." The worth of books to colonial readers is evidenced in newspaper advertisements appealing for the return of items borrowed from personal collections.

9 Rosalind Remer, *Printers and Men of Capital: Philadelphia Book Publishers in the New Republic*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), chapter 6; James N. Green, "From Printer to Publisher: Mathew Carey and the Origins of Nineteenth-Century Book Publishing," in *Getting the Books Out: Papers of the Chicago Conference on the Book in 19th-Century America*, Michael Hackenberg, ed. (Washington, DC: Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 1987), 26-44.

any month of the year, often from American towns. Quebec and Montreal could receive books from American sources, but often their supplies came up the St. Lawrence, which precluded any shipments after winter freeze-up. Halifax and Saint John received books usually only once or twice a year from Britain, with the spring and autumn arrivals of transatlantic shipping, and the dominance of those with London, as opposed to Scottish-only, connections is indisputable, as shipments of books from London far outnumber those from the Clyde.

Within the British export trade in books in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, is it reasonable or feasible to single out the Scottish element for study? Books are international objects: this has been the case since before the advent of printing, but the complexity of the production and distribution methods which had evolved by the eighteenth century mean that to distinguish the nationality of a particular book is not always straightforward. Edinburgh and, to a much lesser extent, Glasgow were the centres of Scottish book production in the period,¹⁰ and within the book trade itself (as opposed to general trade) overseas shipments from Scotland were interwoven, and in some cases dependent on, the trade of the London booksellers. Indeed, costs, dead-ends and constraints may characterize the export trade to Canada from the perspective of the Scottish publishers and booksellers.¹¹ Due to these complexities, several factors, both related and unrelated, are examined here, including Scottish publishers' export practices and Scottish merchants in Canada. In this way, a preliminary picture may be sketched of some of the methods by which Scots contributed to book availability in early Canada.

If none of the Canadian towns had a pro-Scots intellectual of the stature of Benjamin Franklin,¹² the combined effect of Scottish

¹⁰ Glasgow was well behind Edinburgh (notwithstanding the high quality productions of the Foulis brothers and Urie) in terms of numbers of printers and booksellers; Roy A. Gillespie, “The Glasgow Book Trade to 1776,” in *A Glasgow Collection: Essays in Honour of Joe Fisher*, Kevin McCarra and Hamish Whyte, eds. (Glasgow: Glasgow City Libraries, 1990), 53–63.

¹¹ James Raven, “Selling Books Across Europe, c1450–1800: An Overview,” *Publishing History* 34 (1993): 5.

¹² Franklin was renowned for his enthusiasm for Scottish university education, and for Scottish books, and he did much to promote both in the American colonies; Benjamin Franklin, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin*. (Philadelphia: Printed by T.S. Manning, [1808–] 1818).

churchmen, professors and medical doctors undoubtedly played a large part in creating a general awareness of things Scottish.¹³ Concerning Canadian book trade personnel in general (i.e., not just printers), the lives and work of a few of these men have received some biographical attention,¹⁴ but there are others, such as Alexander Morrison, bookbinder and bookseller of Halifax, about whom little is known (see section below on Morrison). There were still other emigrants, especially Scottish merchants, whose contributions have not yet been considered at all from a book trade perspective; this paper begins to fill that gap.

Some of the agents of print culture in Canada, of Scottish origin, are cited in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (DCB). These include those indexed as “Publishers” in the DCB; men such as William Brown and the Neilsons in Quebec. There are others, however, such as Alexander Brymer, whose Dictionary descriptions give little hint that they contributed to book distribution in early Canadian towns.¹⁵ Barry Cahill indicates Brymer’s intellectual interests and in fact he sold books from his store in Halifax—though these do not seem to have been “high brow” as they were mainly novels, school books and periodicals—sure sellers in a young colonial town.¹⁶ It is contemporary newspapers which provide information on such book distribution and this discussion is based primarily on the use of a database developed from newspaper advertisements and other business records (see Appendix A for a listing of newspapers used in this study).

Information in the database indicates that at least twenty-five percent of those who distributed books in Canada were Scottish.¹⁷ This figure suggests the relative importance of Scots in the print culture of Canada, compared with the English, as the countries of

13 See, for example, James S. MacDonald, *Annals North British Society, Halifax Nova Scotia, 1768-1903*. (Halifax: McAlpine Publishing Company, 1905).

14 The *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (DCB) is the primary source for relatively brief scholarly biographies of some of the early Scots in the trade. DCB provides access by occupation.

15 J.B. Cahill, “Brymer, Alexander.” DCB, VI, 89-90.

16 An example of an advertisement by Brymer and his partner Belcher is *Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser* (March 9, 1790): [3], which included 23 titles.

17 The Scottishness of sellers of books in the research database was measured by a) known place of origin where discovered, and b) surname. Of the current total of 161 names in the file, 40 are judged as Scottish.

origin were considerably different in population—Scotland having only about ten percent of the population of England.¹⁸ On the Canadian side, Scots formed a small proportion of the overall population in urban centres, which were the book distribution points. For example, the Nova Scotia census of 1767 indicates that less than five percent of the population of Halifax was Scottish.¹⁹

Scots involvement in book availability—supply and demand

Since at least the mid-eighteenth century, networks of Scots in London and the American colonies moved tens of thousands of pounds worth of books to Philadelphia and other colonial towns.²⁰ These links often involved a Scottish printer in America, who would sell books as an adjunct to their primary business function.²¹ Of the towns in this study, only Quebec had printers prior to 1820 who were Scottish by birth and, neither the businesses of Brown and Gilmore, nor those of Samuel or John Neilson favoured direct Scottish business links or Scottish publications. In Nova Scotia, the two earliest printers were John Bushell, from America with English roots; and Anthony Henry, who was German.²² The best known

18 Useful summaries of population data are provided in Appendix 3 of Ian Donnachie and George Hewitt, *A Companion to Scottish History: From the Reformation to the Present*. (New York: Facts on File, 1989). A more detailed study, providing data by county, is James Gray Kyd, ed., *Scottish Population Statistics Including Webster's Analysis of Population 1755*. (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1975).

19 R. Cole Harris, ed., *Historical Atlas of Canada, Volume 1: From the Beginning to 1800*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), Plate 31.

20 See, for example, Robert D. Harlan, “William Strahan’s American Book Trade, 1774-76,” *Library Quarterly* 31 (1961): 235-44; and, Robert D. Harlan, “David Hall’s Bookshop and its British Sources of Supply,” in *Books in America’s Past: Essays Honoring Rudolph H. Gjelsness*, David Kaser, ed. (Charlottesville, NC: University Press of Virginia, 1966), 1-24.

21 David Hall is the best known, due to his surviving correspondence and the secondary literature arising from it; American Philosophical Society (APS). David Hall Letter Books, 1750-1771 [microform]. For an indication of the number of Scottish printers in America, see Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America with a Biography of Printers*. Reprint of 1874 edition. (New York: Burt Franklin, [n.d.]).

22 All of the early printers printed either the official Gazette for the government, or other newspapers. They are all therefore included in Lynn Murphy and Brenda Hicks, compiler and cataloguer, *Nova Scotia Newspapers: A Directory and Union List, 1752-1988*. (Halifax: Dalhousie University. School of Library and Information Studies, 1990).

Scottish printers in Nova Scotia were the Robertson brothers, James and Alexander, who came as Loyalists to Shelburne and printed a newspaper there for a few years before Alexander's death and James's removal of his press to Charlottetown where he acted as King's Printer for a few years before returning to Scotland.²³

Nevertheless there were Scots in several Canadian communities who played a key role in importing books, Scottish and otherwise.²⁴

Scots on the supply side (Scotland)

In the Georgian period, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Canadas were new colonies for English-speaking settlement, and offered fresh trading opportunities for those in Britain. It would be easy to assume that these colonies would be an obvious choice as a destination for British books. However the evidence suggests that Canadian towns were far from being considered a market segment worthy of much investment by Scottish booksellers. In the 1750s this is not at all surprising as the population of Nova Scotia was only a few thousand compared to 250,000 for Pennsylvania and over one and a half million overall in the United States.²⁵ Two decades later the population of Canada was still only four percent that of the combined population of the American colonies.²⁶

23 See Douglas C. McMurtrie, *The Royalist Printers at Shelburne, Nova Scotia*. (Chicago: Privately printed, 1933); and, F.L. Pigot, "Robertson, James" *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, V, 716-717. The most detailed research to date on the Robertsons was carried out by Marion Robertson. PANS. MG 1, vol. 3640, Marion Robertson Papers, #28, "The Loyalist printers: James and Alexander Robertson." (typescript).

24 For details of Scottish connections in Halifax, see Fiona A. Black, "'Advent'rous Merchants and Atlantic Waves': A Preliminary Study of the Scottish Contribution to Book Availability in Halifax, 1752-1810," in *Myth, Migration and the Making of Memory: Scotia and Nova Scotia c.1700-1990*, Marjory Harper and Michael E. Vance, eds. (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing; Edinburgh: John Donald, 1999), 157-188.

25 *The Halifax Gazette* (August 23, 1755): [1]. This source indicates contemporary estimates of population which would be the information available to those in Britain. Historical statistics appear in Wayne W. McVey and Warren E. Kalbach, *Canadian Population*. (Toronto: Nelson Canada, 1995), 33-35, especially Tables 2.1 and 2.2. More details concerning population by district in Upper Canada are found in Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784-1870*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

26 McVey, *Canadian Population*, 33.

Archibald Constable, one of the major Scottish publishers of the early nineteenth century, offers a useful example of the supply side of the book trade. The firm’s letter-books provide vital information concerning this publisher’s attitude to exporting in the second decade of the nineteenth century. While Constable sent books to the American colonies when asked to do so by other booksellers, he never engaged in direct proactive transatlantic trade himself in the period prior to 1820. His rare shipments to Canada were always in response to a firm order from an individual (sometimes a librarian); he did not ship general collections to booksellers. His letterbooks do not indicate that he knew or had any correspondence with booksellers in Canada. Constable’s behaviour regarding shipping books to the United States but not to Canada followed a pattern already set by Bell & Bradfute, whose letters reveal links with several booksellers and merchants in American towns, but none in Canada.²⁷

As Constable’s letter-books make abundantly clear, he and his colleagues were wholly unwilling to engage in financial dealings with unknown companies, nor did he deal with merchant houses in Scotland or in England.²⁸ The Strahan-Hall correspondence²⁹ and the work of McDougall and others regarding booksellers’ links with America points to the importance of colonial contacts, who were often expatriots.³⁰ Direct personal knowledge of the colonies was not a realistic business objective for most in the book trade in Britain, but the importance of personal and business contacts should not be underestimated in eighteenth-century transoceanic trade. Booksellers could deal with another firm or they could deal directly with individuals. Scottish book trade members who were in Scotland itself tended to work through colleagues in London who suggested contacts in the American colonies.³¹ Two examples are the King’s Printers in Scotland, Adrian Watkins and Alexander Kincaid, who

27 National Library of Scotland (NLS). MS 790. Archibald Constable & Co. Letter-book, 1817-1820; and, Acc. 10662. Bell & Bradfute. Business Correspondence and Financial Papers, 1778-1941.

28 NLS. MS 790. Archibald Constable & Co. Letter-book, 1817-1820; and, MS 791. Archibald Constable & Co. Letter-book, 1820-1822.

29 APS David Hall Letter Books, 1750-1771.

30 *Ibid.* Harlan, “David Hall’s Bookshop”; and, Warren McDougall, “Scottish Books for America in the Mid 18th Century,” in *Spreading the Word: The Distribution Networks of Print, 1550-1850*, Robin Myers and Michael Harris, eds. (Winchester: St. Paul’s Bibliographies, 1990), 21-46.

31 See McDougall, “Scottish books for America,” 37.

shipped Bibles, Testaments and Prayer Books to David Hall in Philadelphia on several occasions. Kincaid and his partner John Bell sent a variety of other titles to Hall and to others.³² The Edinburgh men sent the Bibles after a recommendation from Strahan in London.³³ John Bell does not seem to have had any contacts in the Canadian colonies, and extant records do not indicate that either Watkins or Kincaid ever shipped any books to any town in Nova Scotia or Canada.³⁴ As late as 1819, T. Fairbairn's Halifax advertisement³⁵ hints at the perception of a limited Maritime print culture by purveyors of it in Scotland (see section on Fairbairn below).

Canadian orders to Constable, referred to above, were placed by managers of libraries in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and this information begs the question of why booksellers were not ordering, if libraries could and did. Why, in particular, did John Neilson, not order directly from such a well-established Scottish publishing firm? The answer is related to the importance of London partners and associates for Scottish publishers and booksellers. Neilson carried several titles published by Constable. Examples include *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, *The Edinburgh Review or Critical Journal*, Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Sir Tristram, A Romance, by Thomas of Ercildoune*, edited by Scott.³⁶ This information coupled with that gleaned from the Neilson papers, that his book buying trips were to London and America and not to Scotland, leads to the conclusion that they were purchased via Constable's London partner, the firm of Longman. In addition, by 1808, the Quebec Library had acquired Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* and this too had probably been purchased through the London partner.³⁷

Scots on the demand side (Canada)

The Scottish sellers in Canada illustrated in this section did not fit a single model, although they all contributed greatly to the

32 Bodleian. MS Eng. Lett. c. 20 and c. 21. Kincaid and Bell Letter Books, 1764-1773.

33 McDougall, "Scottish books for America," 27-34.

34 Bodleian. MS Eng. Lett. c. 20 and c. 21.

35 *Free Press* (July 20, 1819): 115.

36 *Quebec Gazette* (October 3, 1811): 2; and John Neilson, *Catalogue of Books Imported from London and for Sale at J. Neilson's Shop, No. 3, Mountain Street, Quebec*. (Quebec: John Neilson, 1811).

37 *Catalogue of English and French books in the Quebec Library*. (Quebec: Printed at the New Printing Office, 1808), Appendix of Books Added November, 1808.

general book availability of the towns and regions in which they operated. Their input ranges, throughout the seventy years, from the apparent intellectual interest of the merchant Kidstons in selected Scottish works to the physical arrival in Canada of a representative of an Edinburgh wholesale bookseller, Fairbairn. Only John Neilson has been extensively researched, and very few secondary sources make even passing mention of any of the others. Unsung they may now be, but as distribution agents they were once instrumental in the print culture of Canada.

Alexander Morrison³⁸

Alexander Morrison was possibly Halifax’s first bookseller who was not a general merchant—he was a book-binder and stationer. He was from Glasgow, and may have been born in 1746.³⁹ His early life and career are unknown,⁴⁰ but by 1786, he was in Halifax and his earliest known advertisement, from that year, describes him as a binder and a paper cutter.⁴¹ Thirteen years later, he was advertising “A large collection of Books and a general assortment of paper and other stationary...”⁴² The only surviving newspaper advertisement for Morrison which offers title information is for “One set of the *English Encyclopedia*” to be sold for “first cost and charges” in the spring of 1808.⁴³ Around this time, the portrait painter Robert Field

38 A preliminary sketch of Morrison’s business appears in Fiona A. Black, “Newspapers as Primary Sources in Canadian-Scottish Book Trade History: The Example of Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1752-1820,” *Épilogue* 10.1/2 (1995): 48-49.

39 *International Genealogical Index* [CD-ROM]. (Salt Lake City: Family History Library, 1993). My thanks to Kenneth G. Aitken, of Regina Public Library, for his searches of this tool on my behalf.

40 Alexander Morrison does not appear in the Scottish Book Trade Index (SBTI). The Index is available online at www.nls.uk

41 *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle* (December 5, 1786): 1. In the Poll Tax records for Halifax in 1792, Morrison is referred to as a bookbinder; NSARM, RG 1, Vol. 444, #1, entry 350. I am grateful to Allan Dunlop of NSARM for alerting me to this reference.

42 *Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser* (June 18, 1799): 3.

43 *Nova Scotia Royal Gazette* (April 19 1808): supplement. *The Nineteenth Century Short Title Catalogue* (NSTC) lists such a ten volume encyclopedia, published in London in 1802; NSTC E885. Morrison’s statement that he would sell it for “first cost and charges” implies that he had imported it for sale, rather than acquiring it second hand locally.

established his studio in Morrison's shop, and it is probable that the "government officials, military officers, merchants and assorted members of the Halifax 'gentility'" whom Field painted, were at least occasional visitors to Morrison's bookshop.⁴⁴ Scant though these references are, they are nevertheless important because they provide evidence of Halifax's earliest Scottish member of the book trade, and they prove that his business satisfied a sufficient local need to keep it active over more than two decades.

Morrison's route to Halifax is not known and he probably married after arriving in Halifax, as his wife was the daughter of a Halifax mariner. Initially, his business was at the corner of the Parade, but he moved in 1799 to a potentially better site for business—the corner of Granville and Duke Streets.⁴⁵ There are hints in such sources as early histories of the city and province that his role as bookbinder, stationer and bookseller provided a comfortable living.⁴⁶ As well as binding account books and journals for merchants, by the early nineteenth century he was binding the locally printed Statutes for the Legislative Assembly.⁴⁷ By the time of his death in January 1814 he was able to provide not only for his wife, but to leave annuities for his widowed sister in Glasgow besides bequeathing moneys to his six nephews and nieces in Scotland.⁴⁸ His obituary referred to him in conventional, unexciting though clearly respectful terms as "a sincere Christian, steady friend and an honest man."⁴⁹ He was active in the civic life of Halifax, and he was a subscriber to

44 Sandra Paikowsky, "Field, Robert," *DCB*, V, 313-314. A Robert Field was advertising books, maps and charts, imported from London, in 1814, *Nova Scotia Royal Gazette* (June 29, 1814): 3 [microfilmed copies appear out of order and, as the first page of this issue missing, the date given may be incorrect].

45 *Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser* (June 18 1799): 3.

46 Morrison was probably typical of stationers in provincial Britain at that time. See John Feather, "John Clay of Daventry: The Business of an Eighteenth-Century Stationer," *Studies in Bibliography* 37 (1984): 198-209.

47 Patricia Lockhart Fleming, *Atlantic Canadian Imprints, 1801-1820: A Bibliography*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), Entry NS37. Fleming states that Morrison was paid £100 by the Assembly, to bind eighty sets for public use and to sew the remainder of the edition in blue paper covers for general sale.

48 Alexander Morrison's Will is held in the Office of the Registrar Probate District of the County of Halifax, #M-163. I am grateful to Allan Dunlop of PANS, who alerted me to Morrison's will. The will is extensive, but relates mainly to Morrison's land holdings, and there is no estate inventory.

49 Recorded in *Reminiscences* (February 1, 1896) a scrapbook of clippings in the Legislative Library of Nova Scotia. I am grateful to Shirley Elliott for this information.

the short-lived literary periodical *The Nova Scotia Magazine*, published by John Howe.⁵⁰ He became a member of Halifax’s North British Society in 1791⁵¹ and he has been described as the “only bookseller” in Halifax, when he resigned in 1811 in favour of his successor George Eaton.⁵² However, he was by no means the only “seller of books” in Halifax; and he was not even the only “bookseller”—one of Halifax’s earliest historians puts him in a more realistic context when he says that, in 1806, an item was “offered for sale at the book stores of Messrs. Morrison, Bennet, Edmund Ward und [sic] William Minns.”⁵³

Did Morrison use his family contacts in Glasgow to arrange for shipments of books and stationery? His brother-in-law was John McCallum, and the linking of the names “Morison and M’Allum” was present in Glasgow at least in the 1770s.⁵⁴ In 1789, the Scottish customs accounts indicate a £40 value on book exports leaving Scottish ports for Nova Scotia. It is possible that this refers to a shipment to Morrison.⁵⁵ Such a valuation would refer to a collection of approximately 540 volumes.⁵⁶ This number could have been termed “a large collection” which was a phrase used by Morrison in his advertisements. Morrison may have received his book stocks from London, or he may have received books from the Clyde, possibly shipped as “stationery” rather than as “books” in the Customs accounts. With no extant records from Morrison’s business it is not possible to know whether his Scottish roots informed his sources of supply over a period of nearly twenty years. Whatever his sources,

50 Morrison’s name appears on various lists of town officers and notables, for example, the list of signatories to the “Address to Lieutenant-Colonel Edwards...” *Nova Scotia Royal Gazette* (September 30, 1802): 3. His subscription to the literary periodical is listed in *The Nova Scotia Magazine* 1 (1789): v.

51 MacDonald, *Annals North British Society*.

52 Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, *History of King’s County, Nova Scotia, Heart of the Acadian Land*. (Salem, MS: Salem Press, 1910), 451.

53 Thomas Beamish Akins, *History of Halifax City*. (Halifax: Nova Scotia Historical Society, 1895), 139.

54 SBTI.

55 This Customs reference could not refer to Richard Kidston’s stock which he imported in that year, as his shipment had come from London.

56 The method for calculating numbers of volumes from valuation and weight is drawn from Warren McDougall, “Copyright Litigation in the Court of Session, 1738-1749, and the Rise of the Scottish Book Trade,” *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions* 5.5 (1988): 15.

his business is worth noting as it was an integral part of the book trade of early Halifax.

The Kidston Family⁵⁷

Kidston Road in Halifax offers one testament to the early importance of this family of Scottish merchants.⁵⁸ A sketch of their genealogy appears in one of the standard early Nova Scotia histories while more recent, and better researched, genealogical indexes offer evidence of the births, Christenings and marriages of several members of the family.⁵⁹

The first of the family to arrive in Halifax was Richard who was born, possibly in 1736, in Logie which was a centre of the Scottish timber industry. He died in Halifax in 1816, having contributed steadily for nearly three decades to the economic life of the still struggling colony.⁶⁰ Richard's earliest surviving book list appeared in 1789 and indicates that his stock had come from London.⁶¹ On

57 This section, on the Kidstons, could not have been written with any confidence without the considerable aid of Kenneth G. Aitken.

58 Richard Kidston gained a grant of five acres (tiny when compared with many other grants) on the Halifax Peninsula in 1785; Marion Gilroy, *Loyalists and Land Settlement in Nova Scotia*. ([Halifax]: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1937; Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Reprints, 1990), 48.

59 Eaton, *The History of Kings County Nova Scotia*, 720-722. This account is rather muddled and my research indicates that some of the relationships Eaton refers to are incorrect. A more reliable source for Kidston marriages is Terrence M. Punch, *Religious Marriages in Halifax, 1768-1841, from Primary Sources*. (Halifax: Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia, 1991).

60 Richard Kidston's will of 1815 includes a bequest to his eldest son, William, who had returned to live in Scotland, of "my Gold watch and the sum of one thousand pounds of lawful money of Nova Scotia"; NSARM. Halifax County Original Estate Papers, K1-K57 [microfilm]. Film #19410, Kidston Family Estate. 1813-1836. William Kidston is referred to both as a Halifax merchant and, later, as a Glasgow merchant-banker, in David A. Sutherland, "Stairs, William Machin" *DCB*, IX, 738-740. From Glasgow, William retained business ties with firms in Halifax. The firms of William Kidston and Sons, and Richard Kidston, are both listed at 6 Queen Street, Glasgow, in the section on Merchants in *The Commercial Directory of Scotland...for 1820-21 and 1822* (Manchester: J. Pigot, 1820). There is evidence of William's business in the customs records; see for example Scottish Record Office (SRO), E504/15/101 Greenock July 29th, 1813. On board the Jubilee (Captain John Morrison) British woollens were shipped to Halifax on behalf of William Kidston "merch[an]t in Glasgow." However, no similar customs evidence has been located to date regarding book shipments.

that occasion he advertised 249 titles which included the histories of William Robertson, the sermons of Hugh Blair and the popular family medical handbook by the Edinburgh physician, William Buchan.⁶² Seven years later, Richard’s son, James imported books from both London and Glasgow, an indication that he (or his British agents) used whichever book suppliers were geographically close at hand when he had a major shipment of general goods being loaded for him.⁶³ The 1796 book shipment from London, on the *Enterprize*, included 41 distinct titles or genres (e.g., children’s books), including several novels, music books and Burns’s *Poems*; whereas only Bibles, Testaments, Spelling books and primers had been loaded for him on the *Neptune* at Glasgow.

Newspapers offer evidence of seven book shipments, to the Kidstons, of widely ranging sizes in an eleven year period (1789-1799); two from London, three from Glasgow and the remaining two possibly from Glasgow.⁶⁴ The Kidstons were probably importing some books every spring they were in business, but it has not been possible to pinpoint which year they ceased book imports.⁶⁵ The evidence suggests that they were importing a greater variety of titles than any other Halifax merchant in the 1790s. Indeed the only other

61 *Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser* (June 23, 1789): 3. Richard Kidston (elder) migrated from Logie in Scotland to New York “in 1781[?]” and thereafter moved north with the Loyalists; PANS. MG 100 Vol. 172 #5-5d. Kidston Family—Genealogy. Letter from John Kidston to unknown recipient, January 1, 1824. It is not likely that the 1781 date is correct, as genealogical evidence suggests that Richard was still in Scotland at that time.

62 For detailed discussion of this particular shipment see Fiona A. Black, “Book Distribution to the Scottish and Canadian Provinces, 1750-1820: Examples of Methods and Availability,” in *The Reach of Print: Making, Selling and Using Books*, Peter C.G. Isaac and Barry McKay, eds. (Winchester: St. Paul’s Bibliographies; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1998), 103-120.

63 The two advertisements appeared in the *Halifax Journal* (May 5, 1796): 3 and *Halifax Journal* (June 16, 1796): 3.

64 The first Kidston advertisement appeared in Anthony Henry’s *Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser* (June 23, 1789). Five of the advertisements appeared in the newspaper of John Howe, the King’s Printer, the *Halifax Journal*: January 7, 1796; May 5, 1796; June 16, 1796; May 24, 1798; and May 2, 1799.

65 The auctioneer Charles Hill, auctioned “all [the] remaining stock in trade” of James Kidston on September 28, 1802 which included a list of 32 book titles; *Nova Scotia Royal Gazette* (September 9, 1802): 3. The latest advertisement located for any of the Kidstons is that inserted by William Kidston Junior in the *Acadian Recorder* (May 18, 1816): 3. However this is a brief notice only to state that he had “received by the late arrivals from England and Scotland, his spring supply...” There is no reference to books.

firms or individuals, in the Maritimes, for whom there is evidence of imports covering such a wide array of subjects, in the period 1752 to 1800, were those within the book trade: the Rivingtons⁶⁶ and the printer Robert Fletcher.⁶⁷ The Kidston's Scottish background may have had some bearing on their apparently distinctive interest in importing books. For example, in 1799 James Kidston advertised a book stock which, to judge from the Scottish authors named, would have warmed the hearts of educated, expatriot Scots and on this occasion, the shipment probably came from Glasgow.⁶⁸

For their general business, the Kidston's dealt with a variety of merchant houses in Scotland and England, but the newspaper evidence does not pinpoint from which British booksellers they purchased supplies. Sometimes in the same year more than one of the Kidstons would import books from the same location;⁶⁹ in other years a single member of the family would import from more than one location.⁷⁰ Even if the books were shipped from the same port, there is no evidence to prove that they came from the same supplier. The Kidstons may have had some control over the selection of their book stock as they did not usually import consignments. The Kidstons may have had book trade links in Scotland—their connections through marriage include names such as Ure, Laurie and Glen and the Scottish Book Trade Index (SBTI) includes such names.⁷¹

The Kidstons numbered amongst their customers some of their fellow members of the North British Society⁷² which was in many

66 *Halifax Gazette* (May 14, 1761).

67 See, for example, *Nova Scotia Chronicle* (June 20-27, 1769): 207.

68 See *Halifax Journal* (May 2, 1799): 2.

69 Both James and William Kidston imported books in 1799 which were sent to them from Greenock on the Ship Hunter. Examples are James's shipment of 158 titles and William's shipment of 103 titles, 24 of which were common to both lists. William's list appears in the *Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser* (April 30, 1799): 2; James's in the *Halifax Journal* (May 2, 1799): 2 and in the *Weekly Chronicle* (May 4, 1799): 4.

70 For example, in 1798 James Kidston imported 38 titles from Greenock and 90 titles from London; *Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser* (April 17, 1798): 3, and *Halifax Journal* (May 24, 1798): 1.

71 For example, information from the *Scottish Church Records* [CD-ROM]. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1995) suggests links with the Laurie family of Stirling from 1789—however none of the Lauries in the SBTI, who were active in that period, hailed from Stirling.

72 NSARM. Kidston Family—Genealogy. See also MacDonald, *Annals North British Society*.

regards “a Scottish mercantile brotherhood.”⁷³ Five of the Kidston men were members of the Halifax branch of this society between 1782 and 1815, when Richard Kidston Junior became President.⁷⁴ Some of the members met regularly “to read and discuss papers on learned subjects”⁷⁵ and would almost certainly have bought books locally as well as placing private orders by letter, and purchasing books whilst on business trips to Britain or America. The intellectual chaplain to the Society, Andrew Brown, lived in Halifax from 1787 to 1795 and may have appreciated having a local supplier of historical works, as he was writing a history of North America himself.⁷⁶

The Kidstons provided the Maritime town’s residents with a reasonably wide array of books, from some of the relatively intellectually challenging works of the Scottish Enlightenment to selections of new novels. Their general merchant business was by far the most important in the Maritimes, in terms of the subject range of books stocked. Their business may be compared with that of Quetton St. George who made regular trips from Upper Canada to New York, returning with books amongst his other goods, which he appears to have selected himself.⁷⁷ The Kidstons certainly made various business trips, but evidence indicates that such visits were always to Britain, not to America. However, some pricing evidence suggests that, on at least one occasion, the Kidstons received Scottish titles from an American supplier. A few weeks after receiving his large shipment on the Ceres from London, Richard Kidston inserted an advertisement for a further collection of 14 titles for which he supplied price information, but no information regarding the source.⁷⁸ Some of the prices, which are listed apparently in Halifax currency, seem remarkably low compared with contemporary prices in Britain.⁷⁹

73 J.B. Cahill, “Brymer, Alexander.” *DCB*, VI, 89-90.

74 NSARM. Kidston Family—Genealogy. #5d. “Family Tree with Notes” lists the following family members of the North British Society: Richard Kidston, 1782; William Kidston, 1787; James Kidston, 1794; Richard Kidston, Jr., 1810, President in 1815; and William Kidston, Jr., 1810.

75 *Ibid.*

76 Brown’s history remained unpublished; George Shepperson, “Brown, Andrew.” *DCB*, VI, 87-88.

77 An example of an advertisement by Quetton St. George, in which he refers to his source being New York, is in the *Upper Canada Gazette* (September 15, 1804): 4.

78 *Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser* (July 21, 1789): 1.

79 I am grateful to Rick Sher for his suggestion that these titles could only have been advertised at that price if they had been cheap American editions (or, as Dr Sher engagingly expressed it, they had “fallen off the back of a boat”); Rick Sher. E-mail to author, 16 January 1998.

The Kidstons are important because they apparently saw themselves as having a cultural role as well as an economic role in the growing settlements of the Maritimes, particularly in Halifax itself. This may have been due to their Scottish background, although not all profitable Scottish merchants in Canada saw such a role for themselves. James Dunlop, who had the potential advantage of having a brother in the book trade in Scotland (see below), did not take on such a role in Montreal, even though he had direct links with Leith as well as Glasgow.⁸⁰

John Neilson

"[Edinburgh] is a pleasantly situated town; not so fine as we are given to understand. It is far below either London or Paris. The University looks something like a Brewery..."⁸¹

These words by Canada's best-known early printer, written to his son in 1816, encapsulate a view of his homeland apparently reflected in his business practices, which involved close book trade ties in London and Paris and none whatsoever in Scotland. Neilson is important in this study for three reasons: his unparalleled importance in the Canadas, the feasibility of examining his business networks in some detail, and as a comparison with the other Scots involved in book distribution in Canada.⁸²

Of all of the men recorded in this study, only William Brown and his eventual successors, Samuel and John Neilson, were Scottish by birth and printers by training. William Brown learned his craft in William Dunlap's shop in Philadelphia in the late 1750s.⁸³ In 1763, Brown and his new partner Thomas Gilmore made an adventurous journey via Albany, Lake Champlain and Montreal to Quebec where, in the rue Saint-Louis, they established a newspaper the *Quebec*

80 David S. Macmillan and A.J.H. Richardson, "Dunlop, James" *DCB*, V, 284-287.

81 National Archives of Canada (NAC). MG 24, B 1, Volume 42, Letters received by Samuel Neilson the younger, 1792-1837. Letter from John Neilson, Edinburgh, November 18, 1816.

82 NAC. MG 24. Neilson Collection; National Archives of Canada (NAC). Manuscript Division. Finding Aid no. 119. Revised in 1981-1982 by David Walden et al.

83 Brown may have been the nephew of William Dunlap, printer and bookseller in Philadelphia. Jean-Francis Gervais, collaborator, "Brown, William" *DCB*, IV, 105.

Gazette/La Gazette de Québec with a press and type shipped from London.⁸⁴

Shortly after the appearance of the newspaper, Brown and Gilmore opened a bookshop which has been claimed “sauf erreur, le premier établ[i]ssement du genre au Canada”⁸⁵ although the firm’s blotter books indicate sales mainly of grammars, spelling books, etc., in the early years.⁸⁶ Gilmore died in 1773, but Brown carried on and expanded his business, until by the late 1780s, his English booklists in the *Quebec Gazette* were lengthy and included many subjects.⁸⁷ Brown himself died in 1789 and his business passed to his nephew Samuel Neilson who had joined his uncle some years before.⁸⁸ In 1791, Samuel’s younger brother John Neilson joined him as apprentice and took over the firm in 1793 after Samuel’s short-lived but highly successful tenure was cut short by his death of tuberculosis.⁸⁹ John, being only sixteen, remained for a time under the guardianship of Alexander Spark a Presbyterian minister and newspaper editor, who had edited the innovative but short-lived *Quebec Magazine/Le Magasin de Québec* for Samuel.⁹⁰ John possibly felt constrained by business or political pressures because he ran away as a seventeen year old, to New York, saying he wanted to go back to Scotland from there, apparently for health reasons, though Spark persuaded him otherwise.⁹¹ Neilson’s place of residence remained Quebec and its

84 Brown and Gilmore’s business is relatively well documented and a useful summary appears in Gervais, “Brown, William” *DCB*, IV. See also Francis-J. Audet, “William Brown (1737-1789) premier imprimeur, journaliste et libraire de Québec. Sa vie et ses oeuvres.” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3rd Series, 26.1 (1932): 97-112; and, Jean-Francis Gervais, “Gilmore, Thomas” *DCB*, IV, 294-295.

85 Audet, “William Brown, (1737-1789),” 99.

86 For example, NAC. MG 24. B 1. Brown and Gilmore Blotter Book 1775-1778 includes such sales as: June 14, 1775 3 children’s books to “Henry’s little son” for 1/6; and, July 19, 1777 1 Boyer’s Dictionary 8vo for 11s 8d.

87 An example is the listing in the *Quebec Gazette* (September 25, 1788): 2 which included 243 titles.

88 Gervais, “Brown, William” *DCB*, IV, 107 and John E. Hare, “Neilson, Samuel” *DCB*, IV, 580-581.

89 Hare, “Neilson, Samuel” *DCB*, IV, 581.

90 James H. Lambert, “Spark, Alexander” *DCB*, V, 768. The *Quebec Magazine* was the “first illustrated periodical published in Quebec”; Hare, “Neilson, Samuel” *DCB*, IV, 580.

91 Sonia Chasse, Rita Girard-Wallot and Jean-Pierre Wallot. “Neilson, John.” *DCB*, VII, 644; and, Lambert, “Spark, Alexander” *DCB*, V, 769. These two accounts do not agree on Neilson’s reasons for leaving Quebec.

environs for the rest of his life, but his correspondence indicates that he travelled widely and regularly, to America and Britain especially.

John Neilson's contribution to Lower Canadian print culture was large and long-lasting and is reflected in the research of several scholars, notably John Hare and Jean-Pierre Wallot.⁹² Neilson printed English and French works (the latter were difficult to import) for a mainly Lower Canadian market,⁹³ and also imported and sold works in both English and French, through his "highly profitable" bookshop.⁹⁴ His 1800 catalogue is considered the first bookseller's catalogue published in Canada⁹⁵ and he is known to have supplied other printers, booksellers and stationers in Lower and Upper Canada with stock which "he imported or went in person to get from...the United States or Great Britain."⁹⁶ For example, John Bennett who had apprenticed with Neilson, advertised a book list "Just Received and For Sale at the Printing Office" in York in October 1802, a proportion of which matches Neilson's known stock from his 1800 *Catalogue*. Bennett's list included both British (and some Scottish) items such as Edinburgh pocket Bibles, and American items such as the novel *Arthur Mervyn*.⁹⁷

Neilson's correspondence offers insights into the regional networks within the trade in Lower Canada and beyond. Individuals in small towns and villages would order titles directly from Neilson, but would pay through their geographically closest bookseller. An example

92 John Hare and Jean-Pierre Wallot, "Le livre au Québec et la librairie Neilson au tournant du XIX^e siècle," in *Livre et lecture au Québec, 1800-1850*, Claude Galarneau and Maurice Lemire, dirs. (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1988), 93-112.

93 The most complete listing of John Neilson's publications is provided in Marie Tremaine, *A Bibliography of Canadian Imprints, 1751-1800*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952) and Patricia Lockhart Fleming and Sandra Alston, *Early Canadian Printing: A Supplement to Marie Tremaine's A Bibliography of Canadian Imprints, 1751-1800*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

94 Chasse, "Neilson, John" *DCB*, VII, 644.

95 Sandra Alston, "Canada's First Bookseller's Catalogue," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada/Cahiers de la Société bibliographique du Canada* 30.1 (1992): 7-26.

96 Chasse, "Neilson, John" *DCB*, VII, 645; see also Hare, "Le livre au Québec et la librairie Neilson."

97 *Upper Canada Gazette* (October 23, 1802): 4. The American novel was by Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810). Although NSTC does not indicate any edition for the turn of the century, the editions given are from Boston and Philadelphia, and it is very likely that the edition advertised by Bennett would have been from America; NSTC 2B51806.

of this is the Reverend J.B. Boucher, who lived in LaPrairie. Early in 1812 he ordered some additional titles from Neilson, writing “which I pray you to send me...by the way of the post and I will deliver the money to Mr James Brown” [of Montreal].⁹⁸ Neilson was contacted by the inveterate promoter of schools, the Scot John Strachan (see below), who asked him to print a range of school books for sale and distribution in Upper Canada, presumably because Neilson’s printing business was considerably larger than that available locally to Strachan in York. He asked Neilson to print them “as low at least as they can be imported”⁹⁹ but due to Strachan’s subsequent request to his brother in Aberdeen to send the books, it seems that Neilson could not or would not meet the requirements.¹⁰⁰ An indication of the importance of Neilson as a central figure in the distribution of print is the request from the printer Edmund Ward of Halifax. Ward wrote in 1818, “Not having a correspondent in Quebec I hope will be sufficient reason for troubling you” to distribute a recent statute relating to American fishing vessels.¹⁰¹ Neilson advertised the availability of these statutes in the *Quebec Gazette* for six weeks and sent twenty copies to James Brown in Montreal for distribution there.¹⁰² Prior to 1822, when he handed the reigns to his eldest son in order to concentrate more on his political life in the House of Assembly,¹⁰³ Neilson was seen to be, and acted as, the hub of the wheel of book advertisement and distribution in Lower and Upper Canada. The Maritimes differed in that there was no central figure there who handled regional distribution.

The Neilson papers are invaluable because they confirm that one should make no assumptions concerning any inevitability of business links within the Scottish diaspora. Neilson had some such links, but they were only a small component in a broad cosmopolitan business network in Canada, America and England. Neilson was a Scot who

98 NAC. MG 24, B 1, volume 2, p. 231. Boucher to Neilson, 16 January 1812.

99 NAC. MG 24, B 1, volume 3. John Strachan to Neilson, 16 April 1816.

100 John Strachan to James Strachan, 4 February 1817; George W. Spragge, ed., *The John Strachan Letter Book: 1812-1834*. (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1946), 127-128.

101 NAC. MG 24, B 1, volume 3, p. 255a. Edmund Ward to Neilson, 2 September 1818.

102 *Ibid.* p. 255b.

103 Neilson was first elected, for Quebec City, in 1818, as a member of the Canadian Party; Chasse, “Neilson, John” *DCB*, VII, 647.

sent his son to Glasgow for his education¹⁰⁴ and who visited Gatehouse of Fleet and Glasgow regularly.¹⁰⁵ He showed sufficient interest in Scottish concerns to become involved in the settlement of Scots and Irish emigrants in Lower Canada,¹⁰⁶ and his preference for Scottish or American, rather than Canadian apprentices, has been documented,¹⁰⁷ and is evidenced in his correspondence with his nephew Robert Palmer, for example.¹⁰⁸ His Scottish background and respect for education, reflected in his political and business connections, were indicated in his letters such as one to his son:

you see in [Scotland] they far surpass us in a thousand things that are advantageous to mankind. It is partly the effect of superior general knowledge¹⁰⁹

He was involved as a member of the committee “to encourage and promote education in rural parishes” and “took an interest in education for the working classes, particularly with regard to agriculture”¹¹⁰ this latter interest bringing him into contact with the Scottish agriculturalist in Halifax, John Young.¹¹¹

Neilson therefore had distinctive Scottish characteristics and his opinions and standards were, at least in some regards, shaped by his Scottishness. Certainly many of his letters (though, significantly, not a majority overall) are with Scottish correspondents in various locations. However, regardless of his friends and relatives in Scotland, his international book trade network was almost wholly connected

¹⁰⁴ There are numerous letters between John Neilson, his son, and his son's Glasgow guardian William Chrystal. For example, NAC. MG 24, B 1, volume 3. William Chrystal to Neilson, 24 May 1819.

¹⁰⁵ Some of John's travels can be tracked through his correspondence with his francophone wife, with whom he corresponded in French. For example, he sent letters to her (in Quebec) between 1810 and 1817 from Montreal, Boston, Three Rivers, Greenock, Glasgow, London, Gatehouse-of-Fleet and Liverpool. NAC. MG 24, B 1. Volume 40, Letters received by Mrs John Neilson, Sr., 1797-1862.

¹⁰⁶ Chasse, “Neilson, John” *DCB*, VII, 646.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 645.

¹⁰⁸ NAC. MG 24, B 1, volume 37. Robert Palmer to Neilson, Greenock, 24 October 1814, and Southwick, 31 December 1816.

¹⁰⁹ NAC. MG 24, B 1, volume 42. John Neilson to Samuel Neilson, 13 November, 1816.

¹¹⁰ Chasse, “Neilson, John” *DCB*, VII, 646.

¹¹¹ NAC. MG 24, B 1, volume 4. John Young to Neilson, 25 July 1822 concerning subscribers to the agricultural “Letters of Agricola.”

with London and America. He apparently never used direct connections with Scottish booksellers. He may have used indirect connections on occasion, as his sizeable business network in North America included such correspondents as John Duncan, a Scot in New York, who offered on at least one occasion to fulfill any orders Neilson might have in Britain.¹¹²

London wholesalers, such as William Cowan, Thomas Boosey and Peter Wynne, regularly supplied Neilson's store with a wide array of British books.¹¹³ Peter Wynne had been a regular supplier of stationery and books to Quebec, since his own business was established, in the 1770s.¹¹⁴ On the American side, Neilson purchased materials from suppliers in Philadelphia, Albany, Shenectady, New York and Boston.¹¹⁵ He visited these suppliers in person, taking some books, reviews and magazines back with him and having others shipped to him either “by stage” or by ship to Halifax and then onward to Quebec via the St. Lawrence.¹¹⁶ American booksellers such as Bradford and Read viewed him as a reliable client, keeping him informed of local political developments, sending him various titles on speculation, and stating “We offer you anything on liberal terms and will transact any business for you with pleasure.”¹¹⁷

112 NAC. MG 24, B 1, volume 3. John M. Duncan to Neilson, 12 February 1819. “I have resolved to leave America by the Albion for Liverpool...Should you find it agreeable to furnish us with an order I shall be happy to hear from you...”

113 Hare, “Le livre au Québec et la librairie Neilson,” 95, note 12. Thomas Boosey was a French bookseller on Old Bond Street; Ian Maxted, *The London Book Trades, 1775-1800: A Preliminary Checklist of Members*. ([S.l.]: Dawson, 1977), 24. Boosey established a music branch in 1816, but it was almost certainly as a supplier of French works that Neilson used him. Peter Wynne was a general bookseller and stationer on Wood Street and then on Paternoster Row who was in partnership for a time with Robert Scholey; *Ibid.*, 255 and 200.

114 The earliest date for Wynne's business, provided by Maxted, is 1772, and he was exporting to Quebec by at least 1775. Maxted, *The London Book Trades* and NAC. MG 24, B 1, Volume 57. William Brown Accounts, September 10, 1775.

115 Hare, “Le livre au Québec et la librairie Neilson,” 95, note 13.

116 NAC. MG 24, B 1, volume 2, p. 227-229. Bradford and Read to Neilson, 11 January 1812. The Halifax route is referred to in a letter from the same Boston booksellers, in which they state “We regret that we cannot get the Geography and the Reviews conveyed: but ‘tis so late in the season we are informed no more vessels will go to Quebec from Halifax.” MG 24, B 1, volume 2, p. 262-263. Bradford and Read to Neilson, 7 December 1812.

117 NAC. MG 24, B 1, volume 2, p. 262-263. Bradford and Read to Neilson, 7 December 1812.

Within Canada, Neilson's cosmopolitan business contacts included Scots. His closest connections were with those who worked, however briefly, in his printing shop. One was James Brown (mentioned above) who was born in 1776 in Glasgow, and who worked in the late 1790s as a bookbinder for Neilson in Quebec¹¹⁸ before opening his own bindery and bookstore in Montreal where he sold imported works as well as items printed by Neilson and shipped to him up the St. Lawrence.¹¹⁹ Brown in turn became important to Neilson as the former became first an agent, then a shareholder and finally sole owner of the paper mill established in 1804 at St. Andrews (Argenteuil, Lower Canada).¹²⁰ In September 1806, Neilson secured a discount on paper from Brown's mill, and Brown secured a five per cent commission on paper sold by Neilson.¹²¹ In addition to this working relationship, Brown obviously felt that he could rely on Neilson's support in a time of business need. Early in 1807, Brown had decided to establish a newspaper in Montreal, but so had an American, Nahum Mower, and Brown was keen not to let a delayed shipment of printing equipment from Glasgow hold up his efforts.¹²² He therefore had Neilson print a bilingual handbill to announce his forthcoming paper.¹²³

In published discussions of the early book trade of Canada, Neilson's business is given pride of place.¹²⁴ The well-educated, bilingual, politically active John Neilson was a good businessman in

118 There is no evidence in the SBTI that Brown had worked in Glasgow (or anywhere in Scotland) before moving to Canada in 1797.

119 Lucie Chéné, "Brown, James" *DCB*, VII, 111-112. Examples of book advertisements for Brown's bookstore include a short list inserted in the *Montreal Gazette* (June 19, 1809): 4 and, school books received from London and Liverpool, as well as a consignment of law and travel accounts received from New York in the *Montreal Gazette* (December 10, 1810): 3.

120 Chéné, "Brown, James" *DCB*, VII, 111; and Parker, *The Beginnings of the Book Trade*, 49.

121 Neilson's discount was "not more than twelve and one half per cent discount from the price of similar articles to be sold wholesale on com[m]ission." NAC. MG 24, B 1, volume 2, Memorandum, Quebec, September 18, 1806.

122 Chéné, "Brown, James" *DCB*, VII, 111.

123 NAC. MG 24, B 1, volume 2. James Brown to Neilson, 28 February 1807. "I did not wish to publish the prospectus before the arrival of our presses; but as there is an American who wishes to come in for a similar purpose...by printing it, you will do me a very great favor..."

124 A notable exception is Parker, who accords Neilson only four brief mentions in his detailed synthesis *The Beginnings of the Book Trade*, 14, 49, 98, 122.

terms of managing a printing and bookselling business over a number of decades.¹²⁵ His accounts and letterbooks attest to a network of correspondents who were relatively focussed geographically, and this suggests that Neilson, while he must surely have been aware that he had the largest book and printing business in British North America, had no ambitions to create a British North American network for book distribution. His newspaper was certainly found in the coffeehouses and printing shops in the Maritimes, but he did not place advertisements for books in Maritime newspapers, other than occasional notices for works from his own press.¹²⁶ While he was a member of the Quebec Library,¹²⁷ he did not show any inclination to operate a library himself, such as Dawson did in York, or his competitor Thomas Cary did in Lower Canada.¹²⁸ He did show a keen interest in the development of schools, and his own printing and bookselling included a large percentage of school books.¹²⁹ In addition, he donated books as well as money to several schoolmasters who were primarily French-Canadian teachers, and Catholic, not Scots Presbyterians.¹³⁰ Although he supplied various printers and booksellers in Upper and Lower Canada, he does not appear to have been ambitious to the extent that booksellers to the south were, such as Mathew Carey, who deliberately fostered a very wide

125 Neilson in particular is noted for his meticulous book-keeping. “His account-books were detailed to an extent seldom seen. He even kept a note of time lost, in hours and minutes.” Chasse, “Neilson, John” *DCB*, VII, 644. When John’s son Samuel’s estate was valued, the printing and bookselling stocks were appraised at over £2,700; *Ibid.*, 646. Neilson’s book-keeping methods are described in Patricia Kennedy, “What Marie Tremaine Did not Find: An Exploration of Archival Back Rooms,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada/Cahiers de la Société bibliographique du Canada* 30.1 (1992): 30–35.

126 Due to the parameters of the larger study, the research database, at present, includes information on the movement of books *into* the Canadian colonies, not the movement *within* the colonies.

127 Chasse, “Neilson, John” *DCB*, VII, 646. Neilson belonged to the Quebec Library from 1799 to 1824.

128 “Cary got a return by renting his books for a few pennies in a subscription circulating library...In 1797 Cary commissioned Neilson to print 1,300 copies of a *Catalogue* of books to be loaned from one month to a year, and Cary soon advertised that he would mail books anywhere in the province as long as users paid the postage”; Parker, *The Beginnings of the Book Trade*, 14.

129 Chasse, “Neilson, John” *DCB*, VII, 645–646.

130 *Ibid.*, 646. For example the teachers named in this essay are all French: Louis Labadie, Louis Vincent and Antoine Coté.

geographic market.¹³¹ Nevertheless Neilson, who married a French-Canadian Catholic, forged connections between the anglophone and francophone communities through his business. In terms of contributions to early book distribution, Neilson was

one of the earliest exemplars of the “Canadian” in the modern sense: bilingual, connected with people of various origins, optimistic about the country’s future.¹³²

For the perspective taken in this study, his primary importance regarding Scottish connections was his practice of hiring apprentices and other staff from Scotland, who in turn moved on to other towns in Upper and Lower Canada, establishing their own businesses and so spreading the networks of Scots in the trade.

Developments by 1820—the examples of George Dawson and T. Fairbairn

Dawson and Fairbairn both had book trade connections in Edinburgh in the second decade of the nineteenth century, to judge from the advertisements they placed in Upper Canadian and Maritime newspapers.¹³³ The business efforts of these two men are useful examples as they were apparent contemporaries in Edinburgh, but their interaction with the book trade in Canada was notably different. One chose to make a permanent move to establish a business there and the other chose to visit, carrying with him a selection of books from Edinburgh suppliers, hoping to establish a transatlantic connection with individuals.

Fairbairn’s brief stay in Halifax¹³⁴ may have been part of a longer itinerary to other towns, possibly including some in the United States, or may have been the first of annual visits by him (see

¹³¹ Green, “From Printer to Publisher.”

¹³² Chasse, “Neilson, John” *DCB*, VII, 648.

¹³³ It is, however, interesting to note that neither T. Fairbairn, nor George Dawson, are listed in the SBTI or contemporary Edinburgh directories. They may have been apprentices rather than journeymen or Guild members, prior to their journeys to Canada. Fairbairn may have been the son of James Fairbairn; a Christening notice for a Thomas Fairbairn of Saint Cuthbert’s Edinburgh is listed in *Scottish Church Records* [CD-ROM], from November 14, 1780.

¹³⁴ The brevity of his stay is evidenced in his advertisement: “...as his stay in Halifax will be for a short period only...” *Free Press* (July 20, 1819): 115.

Figure 1).¹³⁵ Fairbairn claimed that he had “just arrived from Edinburgh”.¹³⁶ Although there is no reference to a T. Fairbairn in the SBTI, the long-standing Fairbairn bookselling business which, by 1820 was known as Fairbairn and Anderson, of North Bridge-Street, Edinburgh, is very probably the connection. T. Fairbairn offered, in this Halifax advertisement, to receive orders for titles to be shipped the following spring and it would seem reasonable to deduce that he had a book trade connection.

Fairbairn was atypically proactive in making the transatlantic crossing for the express purpose of widening his firm’s market reach. He is the only Scottish example of such a business practice discovered in the course of this study and it echoes the behaviour of James Rivington six decades earlier.¹³⁷ Its very rarity makes Fairbairn’s example notable and further research may reveal whether the firm he represented found a market in Canadian towns which, by that time, each had several resident stationers and at least one specialist bookseller. A perceived lack of local resident booksellers and the concomitant apparent need for temporary bookselling operations such as Fairbairn’s may have been the impetus behind his arrival in Canada. Fairbairn’s advertisement is therefore useful for drawing attention to potential Scottish-Canadian book trade links, even though the potential, within the trade itself, was largely unfulfilled in the period of this study. His example encourages an appreciation of what was achieved by many Scots involved in book distribution in Canada—Scots who were often outwith the trade, such as the Kidstons.

Dawson’s decision to move from Edinburgh to York can be viewed as akin to earlier Scots who had moved to American towns.¹³⁸

135 I am grateful to Barry Cahill of NSARM for his search for further evidence of Fairbairn (none located) and for his suggestion that Fairbairn may have moved on to other towns. Barry Cahill. E-mail to author, 6 February 1998.

136 *Free Press* (June 29, 1819): 102 provides the only evidence regarding a direct journey from Leith which would justify Fairbairn’s statement. The evidence is the arrival notice of the Ship Agincourt in 54 days from Leith, carrying 135 passengers.

137 *Halifax Gazette* (May 14, 1761).

138 Scots bookbinders in America have been described by Hannah D. French, “The Amazing career of Andrew Barclay, Scottish Bookbinder, of Boston,” *Studies in Bibliography* 14 (1961): 145-162. In this paper French refers to other Scottish bookbinders in pre-revolutionary America; pp. 153-154. She also documents Barclay’s removal, with other Loyalists to Shelburne Nova Scotia, although apparently he never practised as a binder there; pp. 158-159. There is no equivalent work for Scots binders in Canada.

Figure 1

T. Fairbairn's Advertisement
Free Press [Halifax] (July 20, 1819): 115.

BOOKS – BARGAINS

T. Fairbairn begs to acquaint the public of Halifax and its vicinity, that he has just arrived from Edingburgh [sic], with an extensive and choice collection of Books, comprising almost every work of merit in general Estimation in the old Country, which he has for Sale, at the Shop lately occupied by Mr. Marsters, next door Mr. George Innes', Sackville Street; as his stay in Halifax will be for a short period only, he will dispose of his present Stock at the lowest London and Edinburgh prices, and thereby offers to the Public an opportunity of making up their Libraries on conditions that may probably never again occur in this Province.

A liberal allowance will be made to schools and Country dealers who will find their advantage in an early application.

Catalogues are ready for delivery (Gratis) at Shop as above.

N.B. T.F. will be happy to receive orders for such books for the Library or Counting-House as may not be amongst his present collection, and have them ready for delivery early in the Spring at the lowest rates.

July 17th 1819.

Dawson joined other binders who had moved to York¹³⁹ to fill a gap which had been filled previously by binders in other towns such as James Brown who advertised in the *Upper-Canada Gazette* from his business in Montreal.¹⁴⁰ Dawson established a circulating library, which may have been a way to ensure at least some early return on the books he had imported. His first known advertisement is from February 1818,¹⁴¹ and an analysis of it suggests that he brought some of the books with him from Edinburgh, but that others may well have been shipped to him from America, not from Scotland.¹⁴² The advertised books indicate that Dawson may have had contacts amongst American booksellers prior to his arrival in Upper Canada, unless he was supplied by Neilson, a possibility not yet confirmed from the Neilson Papers.¹⁴³ In short, although very little is known of Dawson, he offered the most extensive book collection available at that time in York and may, like Fairbairn, have had direct business ties in Edinburgh.

Developments by 1820—indirect and direct connections

Scottish books, and Scottish agents, moved to Canadian towns via various routes, principally London and America. Canadian

¹³⁹ Dawson was a rarity as a bookbinder amongst Scottish book trade members in York. Of the forty Scots listed by Hulse for the nineteenth century, only two were bookbinders by trade, Dawson and Peter McPhail. From Hulse's research, McPhail was the one with the more lasting business, being active from 1821-1831. Elizabeth Hulse, *A Dictionary of Toronto Printers, Publishers, Booksellers and the Allied Trades, 1798-1900*. (Toronto: Anson-Cartwright Editions, 1982).

¹⁴⁰ Brown ran advertisements over several months in the York newspaper. Examples of his advertisement dated September 29, 1801 appeared in the *Upper-Canada Gazette* (November 14, 1801): 4; and (January 2, 1802): 4.

¹⁴¹ *Upper-Canada Gazette* (February 26, 1818): 1. This is an earlier newspaper reference than the one provided for Dawson in Hulse, *A Dictionary*.

¹⁴² Several of the titles listed in Dawson's newspaper catalogue were available in American as well as British editions by 1817, when his collection must have been ordered. An example is Hector MacNeill's *The Scottish Adventurers, or the Way to Rise, an Historical Tale* which was published in both Edinburgh and New York in 1812; NSTC M547. However, other titles appear to have had only American editions prior to 1817. An example is the Carolina physician David Ramsay's *Carolina* which had been published in Charleston in two volumes in 1809; NSTC R147.

¹⁴³ NAC's main finding aid *Archivia* [CD-ROM] has also been searched, but there are no references to Dawson.

connections with book trade members in Scotland itself were therefore often indirect, such as Neilson's stock of books published by Constable (see above). Direct connections on the other hand, are found amongst smaller players, or amongst those outwith the trade. For example, Mr Dun, bookseller in West Niagara, sold an array of Scottish works. Dun advertised, with extensive puffs, two titles in September 1797, analysis of which show his business links with a Scottish printer, John M'Donald in Albany.¹⁴⁴ Connections such as that between Dun and M'Donald might have been due to these players' reliance on personal contacts, rather than on wholesaling business links.

Another example of a direct contact is that between James Dunlop of Montreal and his bookselling brother, Alexander, in Glasgow.¹⁴⁵ Dunlop's bookselling endeavours were on a very small scale, compared to his significant merchant enterprise. In 1798, he wrote to Alexander requesting further supplies of Bibles, Prayer Books and spelling books for sale in his store.¹⁴⁶ He also requested that his brother procure, from Glasgow or London, several items required to fill special orders including Duncan's *Annals of Medicine* for 1798, required by Dr John Rowand, and about £5 worth of harpsichord

144 *Upper Canada Gazette* (September 27, 1797): 3. The titles were R. Walker's *Sermons*, which Dun explained were from a late minister of Edinburgh and Gilbert Burnet's *Life of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester*. The only editions published in 1797, in ESTC, are those of John M'Donald, printer and bookseller, 18 State Street, Albany; ESTC w002970 and w019909. This was the first American edition of Walker's *Sermons*, 2 vols, 8vo, 1796-1797.

145 SRO. GD.1/151. James Dunlop Letters, 1773-1815. Dunlop did well in Montreal and "[by] 1802 his headquarters on Rue Saint-Paul [the main business thoroughfare] were among the largest mercantile premises in the colony." His brothers were not his only Scottish agents; he dealt primarily with Allen, Kerr and Company of Greenock, who were leading suppliers to the Canadas. MacMillan, "Dunlop, James" *DCB*, V, 284-287; and "James Dunlop" in J. Douglas Borthwick, *History and Biographical Gazetteer of Montreal to the Year 1892*. (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1892), 508. Alexander Dunlop of Glasgow is not listed in SBTI.

146 SRO. GD.1/151. James Dunlop to Alexander Dunlop, 16 December 1798. "Should this get to hand in time you will further add to my [order] ½ doz more Dilworth's Spelling Books, 4 doz Common Prayer Books at 15/-, 4 doz Common Bibles, no Psalms." Dunlop was continuing the same business dealings with his brother which he had established when he first emigrated. He went first to Gray's Creek, Virginia, and ordered single and multiple copies of a variety of titles in 1774; James Dunlop to Alexander Dunlop, 1 May 1774.

music for Captain Gordon, who wanted it as a gift for his wife.¹⁴⁷ Such orders offer evidence that readers in Georgian Canada used a variety of means to acquire books from Britain—they did not necessarily use the most obvious suppliers, such as specialist booksellers. There were other Scottish general merchants, in other Canadian towns, who would supply books from Scotland. For example the saddlers Sinclare and M’Lean, in Halifax, advertised that they had “Just received...a valuable collection of books, which have been purposely selected in Edinburgh...a few of the most recent publications which have obtained celebrity amongst the literary circles of that city...”¹⁴⁸

Some Scottish colonial merchants took special advantage of Scottish book information which came their way. The highly successful Hugh Johnston’s main mercantile interests in New Brunswick involved lumber and fish,¹⁴⁹ but he was able to acquire current information, presumably from contacts in Scotland, about new Scottish publications which might have relevance and therefore a market in a newly settled colony. In the autumn of 1796, at his wharf on the west side of Water Street in Saint John, Johnston’s staff unloaded “several hundred” copies of *Agriculture, or the Present State of Husbandry in Great Britain*, a new specialist work written by James Donaldson of Dundee.¹⁵⁰ The books arrived on the Ship Lucy from Glasgow and Johnston claimed that the book was “worthy the attention of every farmer, particularly those in this infant country.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ SRO. GD.1/151. James Dunlop to Alexander Dunlop, 25 October 1798. “...perhaps you had better apply to London for the Music but the more early it comes out it will be the more acceptable.”

¹⁴⁸ *Acadian Recorder* (November 13, 1819): 3.

¹⁴⁹ Hugh Johnston is one of the better-known Scottish merchants in the Maritimes; he arrived in Saint John in 1784, from Morayshire, “in a vessel owned by himself and laden with the merchandize with which he commenced business;” William Franklin Bunting, *History of St. John’s Lodge, F. and A.M. of Saint John, New Brunswick, Together with Sketches of all Masonic Bodies in New Brunswick, from A.D. 1784 to A.D. 1894*. (Saint John: J. & A. McMillan, 1895), 221. See also T.W. Acheson, “Johnston, Hugh.” *DCB*, vol. 6, pp. 354-356.

¹⁵⁰ ESTC t096464. The four volume work was printed in Edinburgh for Adam Neill, 1795-1796.

¹⁵¹ *Saint John Gazette and Weekly Advertiser* (November 4, 1796): 1. Johnston may have heard about this work from contacts in Scotland, or he may have seen the single sheet prospectus which was published, possibly in Edinburgh in 1795; ESTC t096483.

James Beith's company in Nova Scotia imported "a large collection of books" on the Brig Charlotte from Glasgow, which arrived in Halifax in June 1802.¹⁵² His history books, ready reckoners, dictionaries and song books might have been published in any part of Britain, but the "Children's Toy Books" he referred to in his advertisement could very easily have come from the local Glasgow publishing house of James Lumsden and Son which specialized in tiny chapbooks and children's books.¹⁵³ Books shipped from Glasgow, while they may not have been published locally, would have been likely to have been purchased locally.¹⁵⁴

In addition to merchants there were also examples of teachers with Scottish connections ordering books from Scotland. One was John Strachan who, in arranging book supplies for the provincial schools he had worked tirelessly to promote, contacted his brother James Strachan, bookseller and bookbinder in Aberdeen.¹⁵⁵ John wrote to him from York, Upper Canada early in 1817, requesting six parcels of specific titles to be made up for schools in York, Kingston, Cornwall, Long Point and Sandwich.¹⁵⁶ Copies of six titles were requested for the students and five for the teachers, and a total of over £400 was spent. John Strachan's insistence on the provision of school books from his native country was not only due to a family connection and should be viewed in light of his clear wish to avoid use of American works with their abhorrent political biases. Very unusually it seems, for an Aberdeen bookseller, James Strachan

¹⁵² *Nova Scotia Royal Gazette* (June 17, 1802): 3.

¹⁵³ The business records of the Lumsden firm have apparently not survived. "...there is no hint that any serious attempt was made to invade the English market which was already well provided for by Newbery, Harris, Marshall and others..." S. Roscoe and R.A. Brimmell, *James Lumsden & Son of Glasgow: Their Juvenile Books and Chapbooks*. (Pinner, Middlesex: Private Libraries Association, 1981), xi. However, shipping their books from a local wharf may indeed have occurred. The only Canadian advertisement, located to date, which includes the Lumsden firm, is a subscription notice for a print of "The Jolly Beggars" from Burns's poem; *Weekly Chronicle* (November 12, 1819): 3.

¹⁵⁴ For an overview of the Glasgow trade, especially figures to support the contention that bookselling rather than printing was paramount in the trade after the 1770s, see Gillespie, "The Glasgow Book Trade to 1776," 53-63, especially p. 63.

¹⁵⁵ James Strachan is listed in the SBTI as being in business on School Hill in Aberdeen from 1804 to 1830.

¹⁵⁶ John Strachan to James Strachan, 4 February 1817; Spragge, *The John Strachan Letter Book*, 127-128.

visited Upper Canada. This private familial visit contrasts with that of Fairbairn from Edinburgh, whose visit was for business purposes.¹⁵⁷

A further example, of direct connections between Scotland and Canada, was William Millar of Quebec who had connections with Edward Lesslie of Dundee.¹⁵⁸ In 1810, Millar advertised religious works and school books “just received” along with “E. Lesslie’s much approved of Genuine Black Ink Powder, wholesale or retail.”¹⁵⁹ Lesslie was unusual as a Scottish provincial supplier to a Canadian retailer, but he had personal interests in Canada as he eventually moved to Canada himself and set up business in York.¹⁶⁰ Edward Lesslie’s main claim to fame in Canadian history is that it was in his book and drug company in York that William Lyon MacKenzie, “journalist, politician, and rebel”, first worked in Upper Canada, having had book trade connections with the Lesslies at home in Scotland.¹⁶¹ Lesslie’s son John arrived in Canada in 1820, and the family settled into business in various towns in Upper Canada including Dundas and Kingston.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ G.M. Craig, “Strachan, John” *DCB*, IX, 755.

¹⁵⁸ Lesslie is included in W.J. Rattray, *The Scot in British North America*, vol. 4, 1145-1148.

¹⁵⁹ *Quebec Mercury* (June 11, 1810): 191. Lesslie is listed in the SBTI as an ink maker as well as a bookseller and printer. Not all of Millar’s advertisements referred to Lesslie, but a Scottish connection often was apparent. For example in his advertisement in the *Quebec Mercury* (June 17, 1811): 187, he listed “*Edinburgh Almanacks* for the present year” along with school books, military memoirs and the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

¹⁶⁰ Hulse, *A Dictionary*, 146. Edward Lesslie also brought his sons to York where they became active in the business. The SBTI gives Lesslie’s business dates in Dundee as 1792-1820. Lesslie’s first bookseller’s catalogue in Canada (1823) is identified in Patricia Lockhart Fleming, *Upper Canadian Imprints, 1801-1841: A Bibliography*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in co-operation with the National Library of Canadian and the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, 1988). Hulse states that he was active in York from 1823, but it would seem possible that he was in Canada before that date.

¹⁶¹ Frederick H. Armstrong and Ronald J. Stagg, “Mackenzie, William Lyon” *DCB*, IX, 496-497.

¹⁶² James Lesslie (1802-1885), for example, became a bookseller, stationer and druggist in Kingston after 1820. One of his trade notices advertising new stock and his willingness to take special orders is listed in Fleming, *Upper Canadian Imprints*, entry #200.

Philanthropy versus commerce

While publishers in Scotland may have been slow to develop Canada as a market, there were others in the old country who had the intellectual and moral welfare of new Canadians at heart and who promoted, within Scotland, the collection of books for emigrants. Robert Lamond, for example, sent a letter to the *Glasgow Chronicle* in 1820 in which he explained that donations of books for emigrants travelling under the auspices of five different emigration societies would be received by Chalmers and Rollins, the booksellers on Wilson Street in Glasgow.¹⁶³ Such philanthropic activities on behalf of 'emigrants' or 'settlers' (as opposed to the more financially secure 'colonists') became the norm in the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁴ The books provided tended to be of a morally uplifting and educational nature, although in his plea Lamond referred broadly to "the science and intelligence of old Scotia."¹⁶⁵ Such small collections of books did not (and were not intended to) compete with the array of books which might be available eventually for sale or loan in the town or region of destination. Indeed, many of the emigrants would not have been able to purchase books or pay for membership in a circulating library.

Another well-established society, which catered largely to the emigrant rather than the colonist group was the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS). Founded in 1804, this Society rapidly established agents in each Canadian province, beginning in Nova Scotia in 1807, and notices appeared regularly in Canadian newspapers.¹⁶⁶ Such notices announced the arrival of new shipments

163 Letter to the *Glasgow Chronicle* entitled "Emigration to Upper Canada" dated June 14, 1820, reprinted in Robert Lamond, *A Narrative of the Rise and Progress of Emigration from the Counties of Lanark and Renfrew to the New Settlements in Upper Canada*. (Glasgow: Printed for Chalmers and Collins, 1821), 13-14.

164 Bill Bell has demonstrated the involvement of several Scottish societies in book provision for emigrants to both Canada and New Zealand; Bill Bell, "Print Culture in Exile: Scottish Emigrant Readers in the Nineteenth Century," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada/Cahiers de la Société bibliographique du Canada* 36.2 (1998): 87-106.

165 Lamond, *A Narrative of the Rise and Progress of Emigration*, 14.

166 NSARM. V/F v. 194 #27. *Colportage in Canada* [s.d.], 2-3. Halifax, Saint John and Quebec were seen as especially important, by the Society, as they were ports of entry for immigrants.

of Bibles and Testaments which were made available at low cost, or free to the very poor.¹⁶⁷ Unlike the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), which sponsored the distribution of many religious items,¹⁶⁸ the BFBS published only the Bible, in part or complete.¹⁶⁹ In Canada, Scots residents were amongst those notable for their involvement in such distributive societies. William Millar, “next door to the Post-Office” and Colin Campbell “at the head of the steps leading to Champlain Street” are examples of Scots who were subscription receivers in Quebec for the BFBS.¹⁷⁰

Conclusion

Book distribution by Scottish merchants was important in most Canadian regions. The role of Scots within the book trade was beginning to increase by 1820, with the activities of such members of the trade as Dawson in York and Fairbairn in Halifax. Most book shipments to Canada (to merchants or printer/booksellers) came from London.

Some patterns emerge concerning the Scottish contribution in Canada which contrast with the contemporary situation in the American colonies. Between 1750 and 1820 Canada’s population was sparse and very scattered compared with that of the American

¹⁶⁷ An example is the advertisement inserted by Francis Dick in 1811; *Quebec Mercury* (October 28, 1811): 343. This advertisement offers English, Gaelic and French Bibles and/or Testaments “for Sale at low prices, or gratuitous distribution, according to the circumstances of the applicants.”

¹⁶⁸ There were numerous small notices in the newspapers relating to the SPCK. An example for Quebec is the *Quebec Mercury* (November 20, 1818): supplement, p. 1, in which the Secretary J.L. Mills states that various books and tracts are available at the bookstore of Thomas Cary, “at the prices charged respectively to Subscribers and to the Public.”

¹⁶⁹ The SPCK, for example, sent a shipment of fifty-one tracts and books to New Brunswick in 1819, which were advertised by the treasurer of the local branch, Jedediah Slason; *New Brunswick Royal Gazette* (November 16, 1819): 3. The list included nine of Sarah Trimmer’s abridgements and instructive tales as well as the still popular tracts by Josiah Woodward. This advertisement was relatively unusual in listing individual titles. It was much more common for brief advertisements to be placed such as that inserted by J.L. Mills, Quebec SPCK Secretary in the *Quebec Mercury* (November 20, 1818): supplement, p. 1, “The Bibles...and...Books and Tracts of this Society, are opened for sale...”

¹⁷⁰ Millar and Campbell are referred to in the notice regarding the BFBS which appeared in the *Quebec Mercury* (October 28, 1811): 343.

colonies. Direct business links existed between booksellers who migrated from Scotland to the American towns and their associates in Edinburgh and London. Canada's early book provision is in marked contrast due to the lack of such major links. The example of Fairbairn's visit to Halifax is distinctive for its uniqueness in this period. Immigration of book trade personnel, such as George Dawson from Edinburgh and Edward Lesslie from Dundee, only occurred at the close of this period. Book shipments from Scotland to Canadian towns in this period were piecemeal, usually reactive (with the probable and notable exception of books sent as stationery shipments), and much fewer than shipments from London.

In contrast to the supply side, this paper has shown that there were many Scots involved, on the demand side, in varying aspects of book distribution well before Canada was viewed by the trade in Scotland as a market worthy of systematic development through personal migration and trade. Several figures imported directly from Scotland, although the key figure within the Canadian trade, John Neilson, did not. The demand side (which more often imported from London than from Scotland) included Scottish merchants, stationers, bookbinders, booksellers and circulating librarians who, in spite of the generally small scale and localized nature of their businesses, contributed to the distributive networks of print in early Canada and formed the vanguard of that "army of Scots and Ulstermen" who were so instrumental in the development of the nineteenth-century Canadian book trade.¹⁷¹

Studies of the early distribution of English-language books in Canada are still in their infancy and gaps in our understanding of the trade remain to be filled. These include research into the role of wholesalers in general, and especially wholesaling stationers. Further work is required to correlate customs accounts and advertisements in order to delineate the scale of books moving as stationery. A desideratum is a database of book and stationery import and export figures, gleaned from records in Britain and in the various colonies.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Parker, *The Beginnings of the Book Trade*, 25.

¹⁷² For example, from the mid to late nineteenth centuries onward there are potentially very useful import records for Canada (which are unfortunately not matched for the earlier period). See, for example, Canada. Customs Department, *Trade and Navigation. Unrevised Monthly Statements of Imports Entered for Consumption and Exports of the Dominion of Canada*. ([Ottawa: Customs Department], 1915).

The crucial significance of general merchants as retailers will, it is hoped, earn them a place in any directories of the Canadian trade. Merchants have hitherto been largely excluded from serious consideration for their contribution to the Canadian trade, and yet, in terms of quantities of materials distributed and sold, they were arguably more important than the small number of printers.

Politically, economically and culturally, post-colonial English Canada is not simply a mirror of Scotland, England or America, but its demographic history and geographic location has led it to reflect influences from all three countries (amongst others), including influences affecting book availability. Much further work lies ahead to fill in the picture so that valid comparisons might be made with other colonial regions.

RÉSUMÉ

La contribution écossaise à la vie économique, politique et culturelle du Canada a été documentée par de nombreux chercheurs. D'autre part la contribution des Écossais à la culture de l'imprimé au Canada n'a pas fait l'objet d'analyse sérieuse. Cet article offre une analyse préliminaire de plusieurs facteurs reliés à de telles contributions en examinant les personnes impliquées des deux côtés de l'océan dans la disponibilité du livre de 1752 à 1820. Des exemples choisis à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur du commerce sont utilisés pour aider à définir des pratiques commerciales communes et le rôle important des marchands généraux à cette époque ancienne est signalé. Les changements dans les pratiques commerciales des libraires écossais à partir de 1820 en regard du commerce transatlantique suggèrent une évolution commerciale qui appuie la déclaration de Parker au sujet « d'une armée d'Écossais ».

Appendix A

Newspapers read in entirety or sampled
(during months of ship arrivals)

Halifax

Acadian Recorder

Free Press

Halifax Gazette

Halifax Journal

Nova Scotia Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser

Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle

Nova Scotia Royal Gazette

Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser

Weekly Chronicle

Fredericton and Saint John

Gazette and New Brunswick Advertiser

New Brunswick Royal Gazette

Royal Gazette and New Brunswick Advertiser

Saint John Gazette and General Advertiser

Royal Saint John Gazette and Nova Scotia Intelligencer

Saint John Gazette and Weekly Advertiser

Quebec

Quebec Mercury

Quebec Gazette

Montreal

Canadian Courant

Montreal Gazette

Montreal Herald

Kingston

Kingston Chronicle

Kingston Gazette

Niagara and York

Upper Canada Gazette

Upper Canadian Gazette and American Oracle