

A Study of Disaffection in Upper Canada in 1812-5.

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Travellers from the United States who visited Upper Canada during the first decade of the nineteenth century generally agreed in reporting that they had observed among the inhabitants "a determined partiality to the United States and a decided and almost avowed hostility to the British Government." One of these, Christian Schultz, related that while he was in a tavern at Niagara in 1807, he heard a man say in the presence of ten or twelve others who gave no sign of disapproval that "if Congress will only send us a flag and a proclamation declaring that whoever is found in arms against the United States shall forfeit his lands, we will fight ourselves free without any expense to them."

War was then believed to be almost inevitable in consequence of the collision between the frigates *Leopard* and *Chesapeake*.

Indeed, Lieutenant Governor Gore wrote officially to Sir James Craig about the same time:—

"I think I may venture to state that the generality of the inhabitants from Kingston to the borders of the lower province may be depended upon, but I cannot venture to assert from the industry that has been used by certain characters now and lately in the province that the inhabitants about the seat of this government, Niagara and Long Point are equally to be relied on. I have also to observe that excepting the inhabitants of Glengarry and those persons who served in the American War and their descendants, which form a considerable body of men, the residue of the inhabitants of this colony consist chiefly of persons who have emigrated from the States of America, and of consequence retain those ideas of equality and insubordination much to the prejudice of this government so prevalent in that country."

Of these immigrants a majority had certainly been allured by the promise of free grants of fertile lands, but no small number had fled to escape punishment for their crimes or to evade the pursuit of their creditors. Among the latter were at least two politicians of some note, Barnabas Bidwell and Garnett.¹ It was also estimated that more

¹ "Barnabas Bidwell was made member of Congress, Attorney General and Treasurer of Berkshire and at the time of his exit was heir presumptive to Gerry's governorship and if he had not chosen to change relations, he would undoubtedly have received the judgeship Judge Story now enjoys."—*Salem Gazette*, March 3, 1814.