Collective Memory in Transition: Macdonald, Cornwallis and Statue Removal in Canada

By

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Abstract

This thesis documents the 2018 removals of the John A. Macdonald statue in Victoria, British Columbia and the Edward Cornwallis statue in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Writings on memory by Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora form the central theoretical basis of the thesis. These authors have examined memory as a group-based phenomenon, as well as the connection between collective memory and physical objects such as statues. They have also addressed the issue of presentism, how our interpretation of the past is shaped by present concerns. The destruction of cultural sites in times of social change, which results in the vulnerability of memory tied to these sites, is also explored. Portraits are examined as a category of art that is especially vulnerable to targeted destruction. The Balkan Conflicts of the 1990s, the end of communism in Eastern Europe, and the Spanish colonization of the Americas provide examples of cultural destruction where collective memory has been targeted, contested or lost.

This thesis argues that the Macdonald and Cornwallis statue removals are connected to a shift in Canadian collective memories towards acknowledging the perspectives of Indigenous peoples. Macdonald and Cornwallis traditionally have been remembered favourably as founders of Canada and Halifax, respectively. In contrast, many Indigenous people view Macdonald primarily as an architect of residential schools, and see Cornwallis in the context of his scalping proclamations against the Mi'kmaq during his governorship of Nova Scotia. The historical basis for the conflicting memories of each man, and the history of each statue's commission, raising, and more recent removal are examined. Further insight into the Canadian public's perspectives regarding the commemoration of these figures, and the removal of their statues, is provided by a review of public opinion polling.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In recent years, public statues commemorating historical figures in Canada have become the subject of considerable controversy. This thesis addresses the removals of two such statues in 2018: the Sir John A. Macdonald statue in Victoria, British Columbia, and the General Edward Cornwallis statue in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Traditionally, Sir John A. Macdonald and General Edward Cornwallis have been represented positively in the mainstream discourse as early leaders who helped found Canada and Halifax, respectively. This is certainly the interpretation presented to the public when their statues were initially installed. In contrast, the recent removal of these statues shows a shift in society towards recognizing the perspectives of Indigenous peoples, who see Macdonald as an early architect of residential schools, and Cornwallis in the context of the scalping proclamations he issued against the Mi'kmaq during his governorship of Nova Scotia.

In these two statue removals, it is Indigenous memories that have gained wider purchase, challenging the previously dominant memories of these historical figures. This clash of memories has provoked questions about Canadian history, raising awareness of the different experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples during the long process of colonization. Chapter 2 of this thesis provides a literature review of authors whose writing provides insight into the processes leading to statue removal in these cases. The history of these statues, and the contrasting memories they evoke, are interpreted based on the theory of collective memory proposed by sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945), and related ideas developed by historian Pierre Nora.[1] Halbwachs and Nora argue that memory is not only an individual

[1] For the sake of consistency, the term "collective memory" will be used in this thesis to refer to Halbwachs' specific theory, as well as to any mention of group-based memory by other authors.

experience, but is shared and shaped through interactions within social networks. These interactions lead to distinct memories held by different groups within society. Halbwachs and Nora also examine two additional points that are especially relevant to recent statue removals: the connection between collective memory and physical objects, and the issue of presentism, or to what degree our interpretation of the past is shaped by the concerns of the present. Public statues are excellent examples of efforts to cultivate memories with present concerns in mind, usually in an attempt to create a unifying memory for all of society. This memory is often one that endorses the perspective of those who raise the statue.[2]

Other authors, including Robert Bevan and Dario Gamboni, have studied the vulnerability of memory when it is invested in physical things. They suggest that targeting artwork as an expression of societal change is not a new phenomenon. The commemorative, political and memorial value of public statuary has led to its destruction throughout history. The latter half of the literature review will consider three major periods of cultural destruction: the conflict in the Balkans of the 1990s, the end of communist rule in Eastern Europe, and the Spanish colonization of the Americas. The significance of statues as works of portraiture is also explored. Gamboni, Richard Brilliant, and Hans Belting have all produced similar findings in this area. Portraits and other likenesses have a history of provoking negative and sometimes violent reactions if the figures they depict fall into disfavour.

Following the literature review, the case studies of Macdonald, Cornwallis, and their statues are presented in chapters 3 and 4, respectively. The bases for the conflicting memories of

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Different authors have unique ways of relating history and memory, and often disagree on how boundaries between the two should be drawn.

[2] David Morgan, "Soldier Statues and Empty Pedestals: Public Memory in the Wake of the Confederacy," *Material Religion* 14, no. 1 (2018): 154.

each man are explored in depth, as they are of central importance to understanding the statue removals. The history of each statue's commission, raising, and more recent calls for removal are presented. Historical newspapers, letters and other primary documents provide a record of how the statues were presented to the public when they were commissioned and erected. For the recent removals, current newspaper reports are key primary documents, as these events have not yet had time for extensive academic treatment. The case studies end with an examination of public polling that has measured public sentiment concerning the removals.

Although some commentary has been provided on these removals by historians, politicians, journalists and activists, it must be remembered that these statues are works of art. This calls for greater engagement by art historians, especially those who have expertise in pertinent areas that are not commonly addressed in the news media. This thesis addresses some of these areas, including the role of figural sculpture as an anchor for collective memory, specific cases of statue removal in times of social change and, to a more limited extent, the unique psychological responses viewers have for art incorporating the human likeness.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This literature review examines writings that provide insights pertinent to the processes and motivations underlying the 2018 removals of the John A. Macdonald statue in Victoria, British Columbia, and the statue of Edward Cornwallis in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The review begins by exploring theories of collective memory developed by Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora, whose work forms the central theoretical basis of the thesis. These authors have examined memory as a group-based phenomenon, as well as the connection between collective memory and physical objects such as statues. Halbwachs and Nora have also addressed the subject of presentism, considering how our interpretation of the past is shaped by present concerns. Presentism is relevant to the reinterpretation of historical figures, a process that has underpinned the Canadian case studies of this thesis.

The review then shifts to examine the vulnerability of collective memory demonstrated during the purposeful destruction of cultural heritage sites. Examples of destruction from the Balkan Conflicts of the 1990s and the end of communism in Eastern Europe are taken from the writings of Robert Bevan, Dario Gamboni and Brian Ladd. A brief consideration of portraiture, and especially portraits of leaders as a particularly vulnerable type of art, is presented at the end of this section. The review then finishes with two instances of cultural destruction and loss of Indigenous collective memories in Central and South America, redressing the lack of American examples in the works of the previously mentioned authors.

2.1 Collective Memory, Sites of Memory and Presentism

The concept of collective memory is the central theoretical basis of this thesis. Maurice Halbwachs first elaborated his concept of collective memory in a series of papers in 1925.[3] Halbwachs' main insight in these papers is the idea of memory as a social phenomenon, residing in networks of individuals rather than solely in individual experience. Halbwachs' view of memory contrasts with the prevailing treatment of the subject by psychologists at the time, many of whom studied memory as a product of isolated individuals. Halbwachs believes this evaluation is a flawed view of memory, as people do not form their memories in isolation but rather as members of their society. Halbwachs' theory suggests, therefore, that individual memory is impossible, as our memories are influenced and partially created by our interactions with the various individuals, groups, and institutions that make up society. To be clear, Halbwachs is not saying that we have no recollections of our own lives, but rather that all memories are influenced by external sources. Therefore, no recollection can ever be "purely interior."[4] Halbwachs uses the example of second-hand memories concerning significant events that are attained from news reports or gossip. In these cases, we take on memories that do not derive from our own direct experience, but rather from the observations of other people.[5]

[3] When citing Halbwachs, this thesis mostly uses *On Collective Memory*, which is a translation by Lewis A. Coser of sections from two of Halbwachs' works: *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, published by Presses Universitaires de France, Paris in 1952, and *La topographie légendaire des evangiles en terre sainte; Etude de mémoire collective*, published by Presses Universitaires de France, Paris in 1941. The contents of *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* was originally published by the journal *Les Travaux de L'Année Sociologique*, in 1925.
[4] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 169.
[5] Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper & Row Colophon Books, 1980), 51.

The groups Halbwachs discusses as holding collective memory range in size from the whole of society, down to the intimate memories of an old married couple. These social networks are called upon to help recall and reinforce memory.[6] In Halbwachs' view, this need for reinforcement means we cannot think about our past without connecting it to the ideas and opinions found in our social circles. Collective memory thereby binds our most intimate memories to other people.[7] Halbwachs believes dreams are evidence of what happens when we are cut off from accessing these networks of collective memory. Unable to interact with other people when we are sleeping, our dreams are the result of the mind relying solely on its own remembrances. With nothing external for the mind to check itself against, confusion is the result.[8]

While memory formation within groups of people is the main focus of Halbwachs' writing on memory, he also highlights how memory can form around sites in the physical world. He uses the example of the church sites chosen after the First Crusade in Jerusalem as places where the process of collective memory formation is obvious. The First Crusade was launched by a speech from Pope Urban II in 1095.[9] Urban called for the crusade to liberate Christians in the Levant from alleged oppression under Muslim governance, and to bring the city of Jerusalem, as the "epicentre of Christian Tradition," under Christian control.[10] When Jerusalem was taken by the

[6] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 38.
[7] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 53.
[8] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 41–2.
[9] Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1.
[10] Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, 2.

Crusaders in 1099, Halbwachs claims the Christian victors desperately sought to recover sites of biblical importance in a city much altered since the time of Jesus. The crusaders identified sites of significance and built churches on them to mark locations on the route of Christ's Passion. These sites were often selected based on little evidence besides the uncertain beliefs of the local Christian population. These local Christians had been confined to a small area of Jerusalem prior to the Crusades, and were therefore unfamiliar with much of the city's geography. In Halbwachs' view, many of the sites the Crusaders identified with the help of these locals were based on little more than rumour, likely resulting in many erroneous attributions of biblical significance that were thereafter cemented into the collective memory of Christian Jerusalem.[11]

Linking the new church sites to Christian beliefs gave religious meaning to these locations. Such linkages also strengthened the original Christian beliefs by connecting biblical events to existing physical locations. Believers could point to these sites as evidence that the events tied to them had actually occurred. The religious geography of believers was altered by this process, and the geography thus transformed has continued to be potent today, as religious tourists encounter these sites. The fact that important religious locations were identified, built upon, and incorporated into religious memory, based on uncertain evidence, shows the power of collective memory to transform the understanding and experience of our physical surroundings.

Halbwachs' recognition that the tangible world plays a part in memory formation laid the groundwork for later theorists who have examined memory as related to an expanded range of *things*, rather than just fixed locations, such as Halbwachs studied in his writing on Crusader Jerusalem. This idea of the physical world as an anchor for collective memory also appears in the writing of French historian Pierre Nora. However, Nora, in his concept of *lieux de mémoire*, or

[11] Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 231–32.

sites of memory, goes beyond Halbwachs' focus on geographic location. Though his choice of terminology, "sites of memory," is explicitly locational, Nora expands the scope of the term *lieux* to show that memory can develop around a wide range of cultural experiences and objects that act as "embodiments of a memorial consciousness."[12] Nora believes memory can attach to a wide range of cultural touchstones, including historical figures, buildings, music, and physical objects such as statues. This thesis examines two sites around which memory has formed; namely, the statues of John A. Macdonald in Victoria, and General Edward Cornwallis in Halifax. My objective is to move beyond Nora's analysis of sites of memory by focusing on places where multiple memories are currently in conflict, and where previously dominant collective memories are being seriously challenged.

Significantly, Halbwachs and Nora have offered insight into the processes by which these new interpretations may emerge. Both authors address the subject of presentism: "the tendency to interpret past events in terms of modern values and concepts."[13] The concept of presentism aligns well with Halbwachs' observation that: "depending on its circumstances and point in time, society represents the past to itself in different ways."[14] Halbwachs sees society as inherently presentist, with collective memories that are not fixed but rather continuously being reshaped. Halbwachs describes the past as a social construct shaped mainly by the concerns of the present, as groups select their memories to explain current issues and concerns.[15] Halbwachs' view of presentism, as it relates to memory, recognizes that if memory is social, it is also changeable, just

[12] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989): 12.
[13] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "presentism," accessed February 6, 2019, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/presentism.
[14] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 172–73.
[15] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 29.

like society. Traditional memories give way when they no longer reflect the experiences of the present population.[16] Reinterpreting the past this way gives precedence to contemporary values and ideas.

The reshaping of memory by presentism has also been explored by Nora, who believes relatively small events can lead to changes in national collective memories. As an example of such an event in France, Nora pinpoints the death of General de Gaulle in 1970 as a clear moment of change. De Gaulle was a towering national figure, as the general who rallied the French resistance efforts in the Second World War, and as the President of France for most of the 1960s.[17] Nora believes de Gaulle's death marked the moment when the French could cast off the official version of their Second World War history, which had asserted that the whole French nation, besides a few traitors, had resisted the German occupation. After de Gaulle's death, this narrative could be explored and questioned. The complicity of the Vichy Regime with the Nazis was allowed to resurface in the French memory of the war.[18] By 1995, the airing of history had progressed to the point that French President Jacques Chirac formally admitted the active role played by some French authorities in the Holocaust.[19] The death of de Gaulle changed the context in which French society formed their collective memory of the war, and signalled an opportunity for this memory to be refashioned with newfound honesty.

Halbwachs and Nora, then, are in agreement that collective memories are not static. Memories change as society changes. While Halbwachs and Nora discuss such change, it is not

[16] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 184.
[17] Sudhir Hazareesingh, *In the Shadow of the General: Modern France and the Myth of De Gaulle* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), xiii.
[18] Pierre Nora, "Reasons for the Current Upsurge in Memory," *Eurozine* (April 19, 2002), 2–3. https://www.eurozine.com/reasons-for-the-current-upsurge-in-memory/?pdf.
[19] Nora, "Reasons Upsurge in Memory," 8.

the main subject of their writing. In contrast, David Lowenthal helpfully provides a wide-ranging exploration of how our view of the past changes in his book *The Past is a Foreign Country*.[20] Lowenthal summarizes his view of presentism and its influence on memory, saying that by looking at the past on our own terms, "we necessarily revise what previous interpreters have seen in their terms, and reshape … memories accordingly."[21] For Lowenthal, the past fulfils many functions, a vast entity readily available to be shaped and reinterpreted in the service of the present.

Lowenthal specifically addresses the role of public statues in shaping how we view the past. He believes monuments tend to exaggerate those aspects of the past we think of as positive, such as success, beauty, and virtue, while downplaying anything ugly or shameful. As he puts it, the "monuments of all peoples highlight supposed glories; relics of failure are seldom saved and rarely memorialized."[22] The celebratory aim of a statue is not certain to be successful, however. Lowenthal believes statues are imperfect interventions into the process of collective memory formation. He contends that while statues may attempt to shape collective memory towards a certain interpretation of the past, the "changing needs and insights" of the present day will "refashion the memories they evoke."[23]

The divergence between changing collective memories and static cultural sites is further explored in a metaphor provided by Nora. Sites of memory, such as statues, can become "moments of history torn away from the movement of history … like shells on the shore when

[20] Two versions of David Lowenthal's book have been used in this thesis: the original *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and the more recently revised version *The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
[21] Lowenthal, *Foreign Country* (1985), 325.
[22] Lowenthal, *Foreign Country* (1985), 332.
[23] Lowenthal, *Foreign Country – Revisited* (2015), 399.

the sea of living memory has receded."[24] This poetic quote speaks to the tensions that may accrue to commemorative statues with the passage of time. Public statues typically present a memory of their subject in an unchanging way. Usually this memory serves the historical interpretation of the people who erected the statue.[25] However, these statues soon become objects out of time, purposefully looking to the past and prompting their audience to remember the significance of past figures and events. Changes in society can leave a monument isolated. The public may no longer share the values that the statue embodies. Nora's metaphor of the seashell stranded at low tide fits well with the case studies undertaken in this thesis. The tide that deposited the statues, the historical and ideological circumstances that led to their raising, no longer exists, and the collective memories that supported their creation have been challenged by new interpretations of history.

Considering the anachronistic nature of many statues, it is not surprising that significant numbers of both supporters and opponents of statue removal call for the statues to be placed in a museum setting, accompanied by an explanation of historical context. These statues are understood as past objects, representing history more than modernity. They therefore have the potential to be displayed with other objects that exemplify a past time and, for this reason, have an educational value.

2.2 The Vulnerability of Memory, Cultural Destruction and Portraiture

Nora has provided more than a metaphor when it comes to societal changes that isolate sites of memory. He has also developed a typology of large-scale social changes that have

[24] Nora, "Between Memory," 12.
[25] Morgan, "Soldier Statues," 154.

destabilized the historical narratives of many contemporary societies. These changes are significant for this thesis since they often result in statue removals. Interpreted as three kinds of decolonization, these social shifts lead to a greater interest in history and historical reinterpretation. The three types of decolonization outlined by Nora are: international decolonization, wherein a foreign power withdraws from a colonized area; ideological decolonization, wherein a political system is removed; and domestic decolonization, wherein the power of minority groups has grown with their increasing rights.[26] The literature of heritage destruction includes many examples of destruction during international and ideological decolonizations. The statue removals presented in this section focus mostly on ideological decolonization following the fall of the Soviet Union in eastern Europe.

Many examples of Nora's decolonizations, and accompanying destruction, have been outlined by journalist Robert Bevan in his book *The Destruction of Memory*.[27] Like Halbwachs and Nora, Bevan makes a connection between memory and the physical world. Bevan takes memory, and its investment in sites of built heritage, as his central theme. He demonstrates the importance of built heritage to the memory of groups that are targeted during conflicts including war, revolution, forced migration, and genocide. He argues that given the common co-occurrence of heritage destruction and genocide, the destruction of cultural sites and objects should be considered evidence of ethnic cleansing and genocide.[28] Bevan extensively documents the purposeful destruction of built heritage in the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s throughout the book. He explores other examples of targeted heritage destruction, including conflicts in Israel-

[26] Nora, "Reasons Upsurge in Memory," 5.
[27] Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2006).
[28] Bevan, *Destruction of Memory*, 17.

Palestine, Northern Ireland, Tibet, and in Poland during the Holocaust. Bevan's central observation is that the targeting of a population and their cultural heritage are two parts of the same violent process.

Bevan has chronicled the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s in great depth. Yugoslavia was a federation of many territories in the Balkans, with different ethnic and religious identities existing in relative peace, under the control of a central federal government. With the death of the dictator Tito, who had managed to keep these many identities from conflict, the federation began to come apart in 1991. In the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, three major identity groups existed, with the population divided by religion into Croats (Catholic), Serbs (Orthodox Christian), and Bosniaks (Muslim).[29] In Bosnia, both Croats and Serbs fought for control, backed by the new countries of Croatia and Serbia. The architectural heritage of Bosnia's Muslims, caught between these two rivals, suffered the most of the three communities. A 1995 report, cataloguing 3226 destroyed or damaged buildings on the national historic register, identified 1415 as Islamic, 309 as Catholic, and 36 as Orthodox Christian.[30]

An important point Bevan advances from his examination of the former Yugoslavia is that the connection between material heritage and memory leaves memory vulnerable to erasure. Removing heritage structures destroys evidence that the group who built them ever existed. Without the presence of these structures, it is then easier to rewrite history in a way that obliterates the group from local history and denies their claim to an area. The attempt to obscure the historical extent of Bosnia's Muslims was demonstrated by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. A map of Bosnia and Herzegovina, produced as evidence of

[29] Ian Oliver, *War and Peace in the Balkans: The Diplomacy of Conflict in the Former Yugoslavia* (London: I.B. Taurus & Co. Ltd., 2005), 10.
[30] Bevan, *Destruction of Memory*, 42.

war crimes in the trial of Serbian general Slobodan Milošević, revealed the destruction of Bosnian mosques in Serb occupied areas.[31] The map showed that the line between destruction and survival of mosques corresponded closely to the maximum extent of Serb control during the conflict.[32] In Serbian occupied areas of Bosnia, over 90 percent of mosques were destroyed or damaged, representing three-quarters of the total mosques in all of Bosnia.[33]

Bevan opens his first chapter with a chilling quote that makes the aim of such geographic erasure clear. Branko Grujić, mayor of the town of Zvornik in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is quoted as saying in 1992 that there had never been a mosque in the town. This statement was made after the genocide of the Muslim population and the destruction of local mosques.[34] In reality, before the war, Zvornik's population was 60 percent Muslim and was home to a dozen mosques.[35] The false statement from Grujić underlines how the destruction of cultural heritage served a purpose in the ethnic cleansing of the town. Mosques were destroyed in an attempt to expunge the Muslim memory from Zvornik, erasing the memory of their existence in the area.

In a manner comparable to Bevan, Dario Gamboni takes cultural destruction as a central theme in his book *The Destruction of Art*.[36] Gamboni discusses several events of destruction, including: the French Revolution, the tearing down of statues after decolonization in various

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[31] International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, transcript for trial of Slobodan Milošević: Andras Riedlmayer testimony, July 8, 2003, http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/trans/en/030708ED.htm. Pages 23819 to 23821 discuss the map directly. The map was created by Bekir Bešić, a refugee from Banja Luka, and presented in court by Andras Riedlmayer. As of May 2019, a copy of the map can be obtained at http://d2d71hfj198g28.cloudfront.net/05-bosnia/sg-5-04-unisteni-osteceni-objekti.zip.
[32] Bevan, *Destruction of Memory*, 46.
[33] International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, July 8, 2003, p. 23821.
[34] Bevan, *Destruction of Memory*, 7.
[35] Bevan, *Destruction of Memory*, 47.
[36] Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

countries, and the removal of communist monuments in the 1990s. The end of communism in East Germany provides an example of a statue removal in Berlin's Leninplatz (Lenin Square). The Leninplatz removal is also well documented by Brian Ladd in *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*.[37] Ladd takes a similar view to Gamboni regarding the operation of group memory in this example. Following the end of World War II, Berlin was divided into East Berlin, which became part of Soviet-controlled East Germany, and West Berlin, which became an enclave of NATO-aligned West Germany. In 1970, to mark the hundredth anniversary of Lenin's birth, a sixty-three foot tall statue of Lenin, by Nikolai Tomsky, was dedicated in the Leninplatz of East Berlin.[38] Germany was reunified in 1990, after which West Germany, with its greater population and much stronger economy, was the dominant part of the country. The difficulties of managing the cultural reunification of Germany were exemplified in the reunification of the city of Berlin. East Berliners, and East Germans generally, worried that their public life would now be controlled by West German interpretations of the past.

In this conflicted environment, the statue of Lenin was removed from the Leninplatz in 1991. The decision was made by Berlin's City Council, with a vote of 40 to 33 in favour of removal. Berlin Mayor Eberhard Diepgen criticized the honorific nature of the statue, and felt it was unacceptable for Berlin to memorialize the "despot and murderer" Lenin.[39] However, at least one thousand residents around the Leninplatz petitioned that the statue be kept.[40] Both sides of the debate claimed public support, especially the support of the local neighbourhood residents.

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[37] Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
[38] Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin*, 196.
[39] Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin*, 197.
[40] Gamboni, *Destruction of Art*, 83.

The government was surprised that its campaign to remove the statue had become deeply divisive. The city government saw itself as fulfilling the will of the people, and the centrist parties in the city's governing coalition likely felt only unreformed communists could oppose the statue's removal.

While some support for the statue would have come from Leninists, communism and Lenin actually receded from the debate. One journalist, writing in the *Berliner Zeitung*, observed that, for both opponents and supporters of the removal, "the statue [had] instead become the symbol of [East German] history."[41] A local resident also spoke to this symbolism, saying that for him Lenin was not the issue, but that resistance to the removal was "rather about demonstrating our power and not letting ourselves be pushed around."[42] As Ladd has pointed out, in this case, the statue debate went from an exchange of views on the appropriateness of commemorating Lenin, to a struggle between factions within German society over whose collective memories would retain their public sites of memory.

When Gamboni discusses the removal of the Leninplatz statue in *The Destruction of Art*, he does not use the words "collective memory," but does address this statue removal in terms of group-based memory. Gamboni concurs with Ladd that many residents of the Leninplatz neighbourhood had worried that their collective memories, and the memories of East German citizens generally, were going to be erased. The East Germans worried that in the name of national unity, only the collective memory of West Germany would remain on public display. Gamboni additionally notes that East Germans who had opposed communism worried that in removing the Lenin statue, life under communism would be more easily forgotten.[43] There was

[41] Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin*, 197.
[42] Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin*, 197.
[43] Gamboni, *Destruction of Art*, 83.

some basis for this worry, as with the statue of Lenin removed, only those who held historical knowledge of the area would be aware of its Soviet-era history. Importantly, parallels can be drawn between the Leninplatz and its sculpture and the debates now occurring about the future of Canadian statues, as this thesis later explores.

In the broader trend of post-Soviet statue removal that Gamboni presents, the importance of government support for statues to remain standing is similarly clear. Upon Ukrainian independence from the USSR in 1990, Soviet statues within the country no longer had the ideological support of the new government and were removed. Collective memories held by different cultural communities again came into play. In western Ukraine, which had only come under Soviet rule in 1939, nearly all Lenin statues were removed by 1991. In eastern Ukraine, with a longer history of Russian rule and the Russian language more widely spoken, the process of statue removal was slow and probably never completed.[44] In Russia as well, Soviet statues were taken down in large numbers. Gamboni evocatively refers to Russia after the fall of communism as a "land of empty pedestals," as frustration with the former Soviet regime was vented on Soviet statues, resulting in many removals.[45] These statues had served the Soviet government's attempts to influence the collective memories of a population towards a positive perception of the Soviet system. Upon the collapse of that system, the statues lost their original purpose, and were now counter to Russia's need to create a sense of nationhood separate from its former role as the largest state within the USSR.

The examples of statue removal presented thus far are similar to the Canadian case studies still to come, in that they concern sculptural works bearing the likeness of historical

[44] Gamboni, *Destruction of Art*, 54.
[45] Gamboni, *Destruction of Art*, 51.

figures. Dario Gamboni, Hans Belting, Richard Brilliant, and David Freedberg have written about the responses that portraits, such as these sculptures, can provoke. Their writings provide possible explanations as to why statues of historical figures have recently been common targets of political action. It is to the subject of portraiture and viewer response that the thesis now turns. For this thesis, it is not the ways in which these authors' findings differ that are informative, but rather some of their common observations: first, that portraits, by displaying the likeness of a real person, engage viewers in ways not seen in other art forms; second, because of the close relation of the portrait to its subject, the portrait can act as a surrogate, such that symbolic actions may be taken to express approval or displeasure with the person depicted; third, that portraits of politically powerful individuals are often targeted for destruction when the person falls out of power or public favour. A brief examination of these points follows.

The functional purpose of a portrait, its reason for existing, is to remind viewers of the existence of the original person. After all, one of the main qualities used to judge a portrait is how closely it resembles its subject.[46] As a result, there is a melding of identity when it comes to portraiture. One may pull back from a portrait, and say "here is a portrait *of* John A. Macdonald," or one may give in to the psychological dynamic that portraits produce, and say as a shorthand "here *is* John A. Macdonald."[47] As Richard Brilliant points out, because of this dynamic, portraits relate to viewers on "a much deeper level of personal involvement and response" than is commonly seen with other kinds of visual imagery.[48]

Because of the strong mental connection people make between the portrait image and the original person, a portrait may take on the role of a surrogate. The portrait can be acted upon to

[46] Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London: Reaktion Books Limited, 1991), 19.
[47] Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 24.
[48] Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 19.

express how a viewer feels about the real person. As Belting puts it, images are equally capable of "being displayed and venerated and … being desecrated and destroyed. As surrogates for what they represent, images function specifically to elicit public displays of loyalty or disloyalty."[49] Belting made this point in the context of Christian imagery, and how veneration of the images, and sadness at their destruction, helped show Christian devotion, while accusations of image desecration were at times made against Jews.[50] The holy images were, therefore, used to define in-group and out-group, an interesting point for this thesis, which examines group-based memories and how such memories affect reception of public art that honours historical figures.

David Freedberg has posited that in the act of damaging a portrait, damage is somehow thought to be inflicted on the person represented. At the least, some of the disgrace done to the likeness is felt to be transferred to the original.[51] Portraits of despised political figures are common targets for such damage. Richard Brilliant likewise believes that images of political leaders who have lost power are destroyed to express the anger of the viewer against the person represented. Brilliant sees the destruction of a leader's image as an intervention in memory. Destroying the image of a leader also destroys the possibility that the targeted image will remind someone of the original person, destroying one piece of evidence of their existence.[52] Gamboni also has written about the targeting of leader-portraits, saying that the portrait of a sovereign will have a fate that fluctuates with the fortune of the figure it represents, liable to be adored or destroyed depending on the trajectory of the person portrayed. Today in Canada, Macdonald and

[49] Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1.
[50] Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 1.
[51] David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 412–13.
[52] Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 19.

Cornwallis are two such leaders, whose public image is in flux as their actions as leaders are re-evaluated. These men's statues have been made to atone for their actions.

Gamboni expands on this point, to say that images can be used to express discontent with whole political systems: "it is because images are used to express, impose and legitimize a power that the same images are misused in order to challenge, reject and delegitimize it."[53] This observation underlines the political function portraits can have as a manifestation of the systemic power a leader may hold. These authors provide a few examples of defiled leader-images. Freedberg shows a protestor attacking a poster of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines in 1986, and Brilliant writes of a sculpted face of Stalin left to lie in leaf litter in Yerevan after the complete statue was torn down.[54] Gamboni, as mentioned, examined the Leninplatz statue, the destruction of which was an organized and methodical expression of sentiment by Berlin City Council, one governing body destroying the symbols of a previous political order.

In recent years, statues bearing the likenesses of leaders and other prominent historical figures have been at the centre of a number of removal movements that have mobilized in different countries. Since 2015, these movements have targeted public monuments to figures associated with colonialism and slavery, and in the United States, the Confederacy. One of the first of these movements to garner major international attention was in South Africa, where on April 9, 2015, a bronze statue of Cecil Rhodes at the University of Cape Town was removed. Protestors there argued that the Rhodes statue represented white supremacy and the slow pace of the university's efforts to address a legacy of racism. Called "Rhodes Must Fall," this movement expanded to several other universities and targeted statues around South Africa, subsequently

[53] Gamboni, *Destruction of Art*, 27.
[54] Freedberg, *Power of Images*, 413; Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 24. An image of Stalin's face resting in leaf litter in Yerevan can be seen on page 33 of *Portraiture*.

gaining attention from students at universities in Britain and the United States.[55] Similarly, Confederate monuments have become the subject of protest movements in the United States.[56] The most famous and notorious of these events was the white nationalist "Unite the Right" rally at Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 12, 2017. The rally was sparked by a municipal decision to remove an equestrian statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee from a city park.[57] The centrality of the statue as the original flash point for the protests has been overshadowed, with the rally taking on larger significance in American culture as a symbol of rising political and racial extremism on the right.

As in Canada, statues in the United States celebrating colonial figures have become objects of controversy, and in some cases have been removed. The State of California alone provides three examples of removed sculptures with colonial associations: a statue of Christopher Columbus in San Jose, the *Early Days* statue in San Francisco (which depicted a Native man sitting at the feet of a Spanish cowboy and a Catholic missionary), and a statue of President McKinley in Arcata.[58] In contrast, a statue of Columbus in Central Park, Manhattan,

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[55] Morgan, "Soldier Statues," 153.
[56] Jess Bidgood, Matthew Bloch, Morrigan McCarthy, Liam Stack and Wilson Andrews, "Confederate Monuments are Coming Down Across the United States. Here's a List," *The New York Times*, August 28, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/16/us/confederate-monuments-removed.html.
[57] Morgan, "Soldier Statues," 153.
[58] Emily Deruy, "Christopher Columbus Statue in City Hall Finds a Temporary Home," *The Mercury News*, March 6, 2018, updated March 11, 2018, https://www.mercurynews.com/2018/03/06/christopher-columbus-statue-in-city-hall-finds-a-temporary-home/;
Daniela Blei, "San Francisco's 'Early Days' Statue is Gone. Now Comes the Work of Activating Real History," *Smithsonian.com*, October 4, 2018, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/san-francisco-early-days-statue-gone-now-comes-work-activating-real-history-180970462/;
Bill Disbrow, "Arcata Removes Controversial McKinley Statue that Stood for Century after Surviving 1906 SF Quake," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 28, 2019, https://www.sfchronicle.com/news/article/humboldt-statue-controversy-removed-13653140.php.

has been kept in place due to support from the Italian community, for whom Columbus represents a historical link between Italy and the Americas.[59] Similarly, when the Columbus statue in San Jose was removed from city hall, it was transferred to the Italian America Heritage Foundation, with the plan that it eventually would be displayed in a museum in San Jose's Little Italy.[60]

2.3 Loss of Indigenous Collective Memories: Saqsaywamán and *Coatlicue*

Cultural heritage destruction and resulting losses in collective memory have occurred world-wide, although much of the related literature focuses on Europe and Asia. Such destruction and loss has also been experienced by cultures native to the Americas. Robert Bevan makes a brief mention of the Americas and the destruction inflicted on Native cultures during the European conquest, which he terms a genocide, noting the lack of coverage these cultures and their destruction receive in world history textbooks.[61] Bevan's work linking heritage destruction with genocidal intent adds credence to his genocide designation, given the destruction perpetrated on both Indigenous American populations and their built heritage during colonization. The discussion in this section centres on cultural remains from South and Central America: the Inka walls of Saqsaywamán near Cuzco, Peru, and the statue of Coatlicue in Mexico City. These objects demonstrate the vulnerability of memory during colonization, and how objects that have lost their collective memories through colonization are left open to reinterpretation.

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[59] William Neuman, "No Traveling for New York's Columbus Statue, Mayor Decides," *The New York Times*, January 12, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/12/nyregion/no-traveling-for-columbus-statue-mayor-de-blasio-decides.html.
[60] Deruy, "Columbus Statue Temporary Home."
[61] Bevan, *Destruction of Memory*, 20–1.

In the article "Inka Ruins and the Discourse of Mystery," Carolyn Dean provides an example of a collective memory successfully severed from an Indigenous American cultural site.[62] The Inka site of Saqsaywamán sits on an outcrop overlooking the city of Cuzco, Peru. Originally, the site included storehouses, walls, and a temple. Saqsaywamán's stonework is notable for the precision with which massive, irregularly shaped stone blocks are fitted together without mortar. Colonial Spanish observers were astonished by this technique, while noting the lack of familiar technological achievements by the Inka, who used no iron tools and whose buildings lacked the arches seen in supposedly superior Spanish architecture.[63] In order to build new Spanish-style architecture, a sixteenth-century resident of Cuzco recorded that the Spanish "demolished [Saqsaywamán] to build private houses in Cuzco … There is indeed not a house in the city that has not been made of this stone."[64] Despite their appreciation of the Inka stonework, the desire for building materials led to the destruction of much of the site.

Today, Saqsaywamán has lost its original significance and function, and has become a site for commercial tourism. How the stonework at the site was created is now the subject of debate. The lack of knowledge of the Inka stone-working technique has left room for many theories to develop. Early Spanish observers often attributed the stonework to the devil, while giants became a favoured explanation of 19th- and early 20th-century visitors. Sometimes it was speculated that a population more technologically advanced than the Inka must have lived in the area and built the walls. Modern New Age adherents have suggested extraterrestrials as a

[62] Carolyn Dean, "Inka Ruins and the Discourse of Mystery," *Third Text* 25, no. 6 (November 2011), 737–49.
[63] Dean, "Inka Ruins," 739.
[64] Dean, "Inka Ruins," 739.

possible explanation for the stonework, driving tourism by those seeking evidence of extraterrestrials' existence.[65]

Dean believes it is because Indigenous American cultures are thought of as too primitive to have created such walls that outlandish theories are often proposed for their construction. She couples this theory with the experience of taking a guided tour at the site. Tourists find humour in the similar sounds of Saqsaywamán and sexy woman, a similarity exploited by the guides.[66] Tourists are also encouraged to play a game of finding "animal shapes" in the irregular stonework.[67] Dean sees the game of shape finding as a trivial means of interpreting the stones without actually understanding them, a way to distract viewers of the site from the negative reality of its historical destruction. Dean convincingly demonstrates that once a cultural group's memory for something is lost, in this case the technical process of creating the walls of Saqsaywamán, other theories and interpretations are used to fill the void. As Dean suggests in her title, a ruin becomes a mystery when severed from the collective memory of those who once built and sustained it.

The connection between artifacts and memory is also poignantly demonstrated in an example from Mexico City. Following the Spanish conquest of the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan in 1521, the city was destroyed and buried, with a new colonial capital, modern Mexico City, built on top of it. Elizabeth Boone has written extensively about a massive statue of the Aztec deity Coatlicue. The statue was unearthed in 1790, and exhibited at the University of Mexico. Professors eventually ordered the statue reburied, as they felt it was not worthy to be displayed beside the copies of Greek and Roman statues at the university. They also worried that the statue

[65] Dean, "Inka Ruins," 745.
[66] Dean, "Inka Ruins," 748.
[67] Dean, "Inka Ruins," 747.

would spur a resurgence in the Aztec religion among Indigenous peoples, as offerings of flowers had been placed at the foot of the statue.[68]

Coatlicue was finally disinterred in 1824, so that William Bullock, an English traveller and antiquarian, could make a cast to be displayed in London.[69] Bullock noted the divergent reaction among the workers unearthing the statue, who were of two ethnic groups. The Criollos, people of fully or mostly Spanish descent born in the Latin American colonies, "expressed the most decided anger and contempt, [while] the Indians watched with silence and attention, one old man remarking 'It is true that we have three very good Spanish gods, but we might still have been allowed to keep a few of those of our ancestors!'"[70] Here we have two groups within Mexican society, bringing their collective memories to bear upon the statue. To the workmen of primarily Spanish descent, it represented a pre-Columbian past they held in contempt. For the Indigenous workers, the statue represented a tangible link to their past before colonization, inspiring their contemplation and respect. This example of reverence was predictive of things to come. Pre-Columbian art would later be central to developments in some Latin American countries that sought to reject their colonial situation by emphasizing their culturally distinct Indigenous pasts.[71]

Coatlicue was believed to be a unique piece of sculpture from 1790 to 1933. This ended in 1933, with the exhumation of another sculpture, now known as the *Yolotlicue*. The discovery

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[68] Elizabeth Boone, "Collecting the Pre-Columbian Past: Historical Trends and the Process of Reception and Use," in *Collecting the Pre-Colombian Past: A Symposia at Dumbarton Oaks October 6–7, 1990,* ed. Elizabeth Boone (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Pre-Columbian Symposia and Colloquia, 1993), 320–21.
[69] Boone, "Collecting," 321. The statue had also been unearthed in 1803 for study by Alexander von Humboldt, and then reburied.
[70] Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770–1840: 'From an Antique Land'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 143.
[71] Boone, "Collecting," 342.

of the new, more damaged statue compelled a reinterpretation of *Coatlicue* as one of a pair of statues. This would again be revised as three further fragmentary remains were uncovered, indicating the existence of one to possibly three additional sculptures.[72] Today, the meanings of *Coatlicue*, and its more recently uncovered sculptural kin, are the subject of academic scholarship. So thorough was the destruction by the Spanish that artifacts from the heart of the Aztec's capital city and civilization, from a society that was thriving as recently as 1521, are now in need of interpretation. The Aztec's pre-contact collective memories for these sculptures no longer exist. Instead, what is left is an attempted understanding of the sculptures, which changes as new evidence emerges and new arguments are made by academics. The original memory will never be recovered. This is in no small part due to the destruction of the context of the statues, of the temple where they were housed and their original configuration. As with many Aztec objects, the physical and social context of *Coatlicue* has been lost. Its memories are now, like the stonework of Saqsaywamán, largely mysteries.

Obviously, attacks on Indigenous cultures by European colonization did not end in the 16th century and are not confined to the cultures of Central and South America. The following two chapters provide examples from the 18th and 19th centuries in what is now Canada. In chapter 3, the assimilationist policies of the Canadian residential school system, put in place in the 1880s, mostly under the tenure of John A. Macdonald, are examined. Chapter 4 focuses on General Edward Cornwallis, founder of the British settlement of Halifax, and his conflict with the native Mi'kmaq peoples, including his calls for their extermination and his notorious scalping proclamations. Chapters 3 and 4 show how, in the cases of Macdonald and Cornwallis, the

[72] Elizabeth Boone, "The 'Coatlicues' at the Templo Mayor." *Ancient Mesoamerica* 10, no. 2 (July 1999): 192.

memory of their actions taken against Indigenous peoples has recently emerged to challenge the previously dominant positive interpretations of these men. The case studies of Macdonald and Cornwallis centre around the removal of their statues in Victoria and Halifax, respectively, and bring together the main themes developed in the literature review: the collective aspect of memory, the vulnerability of memory when invested in physical objects, presentism, and, less overtly, these statues as further examples of portraiture that have been made to atone for the actions of their subjects.

Chapter 3

Case Study I: *J.A. Macdonald* Statue, Victoria, British Columbia

The connection between collective memory and art, and the vulnerability of public art to shifts in memory, are demonstrated in the history of the statue *J.A. Macdonald*. In this case study, two collective memories of John A. Macdonald have clashed, with an emerging negative memory leading to the removal of the statue, which once stood in front of the City Hall of Victoria, British Columbia. To understand the basis for these clashing memories, the history of Macdonald must be explored. This exploration will be done first by looking at his favourable memory as an early leader of Canada, with emphasis given to the positive themes inspired by his legacy as a founder. This will be followed by the history of residential schools and Macdonald's involvement in their early development. The connection between Macdonald and residential schools is the main source of the emerging negative perspective of Macdonald, stemming from the collective memory of Indigenous groups who experienced the harsh assimilationist policies in place at the schools.

After examining these two aspects of Macdonald's legacy, the removal of the statue *J.A. Macdonald* in Victoria is scrutinized. The history of the sculpture demonstrates the shift in collective memory that has occurred between the statue's 1978 commission and its 2018 removal. The chapter then outlines other actions across Canada that have occurred as a result of the re-evaluation of Macdonald's legacy. A review of public opinion polling concerning Macdonald's continuing public commemoration, and the degree of support for or opposition to the removal of his statue in Victoria is presented at the end of chapter 4. This quantitative, rather than qualitative, reporting of public opinion is lacking in most media stories concerning the statue's removal.

The statue *J.A. Macdonald* was created by sculptor William Dann in 1982 (see fig. 1). The bronze statue stands slightly more than life-sized, at eight feet in height.[73] The sculpture was installed outside the main entrance doors of Victoria City Hall on a low, plain plinth, raising the statue about a half-foot above the level of the surrounding area. No accompanying plaque was installed for the statue's unveiling. Dann has said his statue occupies "its space with dynamism [and] vigor" and it offers viewers "diverse themes of calm, thoughtfulness and action."[74] Macdonald is not idealized. His prominent features are emphasized, and perhaps exaggerated, with bulbous nose, heavy brows, and deep-set eyes. His stance is relaxed, his weight on his left leg, belly protruding slightly, with his hands clasped behind his back, leaning slightly forward and to his left. His gaze looks down to the level of the viewer, with his mouth closed and tensed, brow slightly furrowed, suggesting a contemplative air. His clothing is simple, with no buttons or laces or other small details included. He is wearing a wide-lapelled coat that ends at his knees, a wrinkled vest, baggy pants that fall in folds below his knees, and plain shoes. His long coat flies away from his back, as though caught by the wind. The leaning pose and wind-caught coat contribute to a sense of movement.

3.1 The Traditional Positive Memories of Sir John A. Macdonald

The man whose likeness is reproduced in the sculpture, John Alexander Macdonald, was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1815. His family emigrated to Kingston, Ontario in 1820. As an

[73] Troy Sebastian, "Comment: Macdonald's Statue Removal is Classic Macdonald Politics." *Vancouver Courier*, September 2, 2018, https://www.vancourier.com/2.2066/comment-macdonald-s-statue-removal-is-classic-macdonald-politics-1.23419688.
[74] John William Dann (@johwilldann), "Just Learned My Sculpture of John 'A' Macdonald is to be Removed from @CityofVictoria. Here's My Letter to Mayor Helps," Twitter, August 10, 2018, https://twitter.com/johwilldann/status/1027928561452167168. See figure 7.

adult, he became a lawyer and entered politics. Macdonald served as Prime Minister for 19 years, from 1867–1873, and again from 1878–1891.[75] Two sources have been particularly helpful for examining Macdonald's traditional collective memory. The first source is Yves Pelletier's 2010 PhD thesis, "The Old Chieftain's New Image: Shaping the Public Memory of Sir John A. Macdonald in Ontario and Quebec, 1891–1967." Pelletier explores how Canadian federal governments have shaped Canada's collective memory of Macdonald for their own political ends since his death in 1891. The second source is an informational newsletter produced by the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) in 1983, found in the City of Victoria archives.[76] Together, these sources document collective memories of Macdonald, and show that these memories persisted to 1983, a year after the Macdonald statue in Victoria was unveiled in 1982.

The most consistent collective memory of Macdonald, identified by Pelletier, can be summarized with the phrase "the Father of Confederation." Confederation involved the unification of the former British colonies of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Canada (a colony comprised of the antecedents of the provinces of Ontario and Quebec) into the Dominion of Canada in 1867. While many politicians were involved in negotiating Confederation, Macdonald was, from early on, identified as the leading figure among these "fathers." His image as leader among the nation's founders was cemented during his long tenure as a post-Confederation prime minister.[77] Macdonald's collective memory as the principal founder of Canada was emphasized with a variety of terms that designated his leading role, including: "architect of Confederation,

[75] Yves Y. Pelletier, "The Old Chieftain's New Image: Shaping the Public Memory of Sir John A. Macdonald in Ontario and Quebec, 1891–1967" (PhD thesis, Queen's University, 2010), 154.
[76] The Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), "The Great John A.," *RBC Letter* 64, no. 4 (July/August 1983). (AC4-CL-07179, City of Victoria Archives).
[77] Pelletier, "Chieftain," 284.

the father of Confederation, father of Canada and founder of Canada."[78] This memory of Macdonald has been acceptable to, and emphasized by, both Liberal and Conservative governments since Confederation.[79] In the RBC newsletter, Macdonald is similarly presented as the main force who brought about the federation through his "peculiar mixture of talents."[80] The newsletter notes that with his knowledge of constitutional law, Macdonald was personally responsible for 50 of the 72 resolutions of the British North America Act, the document that created the Dominion of Canada.[81]

A related theme identified by Pelletier was Macdonald's image as a nation builder.[82] This term refers both to his work to bring about Confederation, and to his actions as he governed Canada for nearly two decades afterwards. Under his federal administrations, Canada moved towards the geographic extent and provincial boundaries that are in place today. His tenure oversaw the admittance and creation of new provinces and territories, the transfer of Rupert's Land to the federal government from the Hudson's Bay Company, and the building of national infrastructure projects.[83] The most ambitious of these projects was the transcontinental railroad. The building of a railroad connecting the Pacific coast with eastern Canada had been a condition for British Colombia to enter Confederation, which it did in 1871. The railroad also facilitated

[78] Pelletier, "Chieftain," 291.
[79] Pelletier, "Chieftain," 292. Pelletier cites one notable exception: between 1891 and 1911, the Liberal Party highlighted the shortcomings of Macdonald's policies as a means of increasing their own electoral chances. They used Macdonald's legacy as required, mostly denigrating it, but sometimes pointing to it to support their own policies.
[80] RBC, "Great John A.," 3.
[81] RBC, "Great John A.," 3.
[82] Pelletier, "Chieftain," 286.
[83] Pelletier, "Chieftain," 293.

the movement of immigrants onto the Canadian prairies.[84] Additionally, the RBC newsletter praises the population growth Canada experienced during Macdonald's tenure, reporting that at the start of Macdonald's political career Canada was: "a scattering of muddy towns and scrub farms with about 1 million residents," but that by the time of his death "he headed a burgeoning industrial nation of 5 million occupying the second-largest land mass on earth."[85] The RBC newsletter suggests these accomplishments "as a nation-maker alone give ample cause to honour his name."[86]

The themes of Macdonald as the "Father of Confederation" and "nation maker" have persisted in Canadian collective memory. During research for this thesis, a wide range of non-academic written materials about Macdonald were consulted, including biographies, Canadian encyclopedias, and children's books. Macdonald's role as a "nation maker" is a common theme, evidenced by biographical titles like *Sir John A. Macdonald: The Rascal Who Built Canada* and journalist Richard Gwyn's *Nation Maker*.[87] The evaluations of his legacy in these works align with the traditional view of Macdonald as a politician of great achievement. Gwyn calls his accomplishments "staggering," both in his work towards Confederation and in undertaking the building of the railway across the continent despite the financial risk it presented.[88] Professor James Laxer summarizes Macdonald's contribution by describing him as "a consummate deal

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[84] James H. March, "Election 1891: A Question of Loyalty," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, February 1, 2011, last edited September 2, 2015, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/election-1891-a-question-of-loyalty-feature.
[85] RBC, "Great John A.," 1.
[86] RBC, "Great John A.," 1.
[87] Jacqueline Brown, *Sir John A. Macdonald: The Rascal Who Built Canada* (Toronto: JackFruit Press Ltd., 2005);
Richard Gwyn, *Nation Maker: Sir John A. Macdonald; His Life, Our Times, Volume Two: 1867–1891* (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2011).
[88] Gwyn, *Nation Maker*, 3.

maker, a Canadian visionary, and an adept participant in the complex ritual of imperial politics."[89] The comments of these authors show that Macdonald's political ability remains a celebrated aspect of his legacy. So far, this ability has not been called into significant question, even as other facets of his reputation have depreciated.

Pelletier noted that the loyalty Macdonald expressed for Britain was once a cornerstone of his public image, though it has become less prominent over the years. As will be seen in chapter 4 with General Cornwallis, Macdonald was praised as a symbol of the Canadian attachment to Britain. Politicians, celebrating Canada's British connections, often quoted Macdonald: "A British subject I was born, a British subject I will die."[90] However, as Canada has drifted further from the cultural influence of Britain and closer to the United States, Macdonald's public representation has changed. Pelletier demonstrates that while Macdonald had previously been compared favourably to British war heroes, he has more recently been compared to American presidents.[91] For example, Laxer, in *Staking Claims to a Continent: John A. Macdonald, Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, and the Making of North America*, compares these politicians and the similar territorial developments of Canada and the United States in the 1860s.[92] In the RBC newsletter, Macdonald is compared to American presidents, described as: "George Washington and Abraham Lincoln rolled into one, and then some. Like the former, he was the principal founder of his nation; like the latter, he held the state together in times of stress and peril."[93] Significantly, in comparisons of this kind, Macdonald's memory has shown

[89] James Laxer, *Staking Claims to a Continent: John A. Macdonald, Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, and the Making of North America* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc., 2016), 297.
[90] Pelletier, "Chieftain," 295.
[91] Pelletier, "Chieftain," 296.
[92] Laxer, *Staking Claims.*
[93] RBC, "Great John A.," 1.

resiliency to cultural change. He has continued to be juxtaposed with flattering examples of heroic figures, whether British or American, to suit the cultural taste of the times.

Another aspect of Macdonald's collective memory is as a symbol of national unity, and Pelletier shows that this is another part of his legacy that has diminished with time. Macdonald was praised for his work with French-Canadian politicians to bring about Confederation, overcoming their linguistic and religious concerns. The wording in the RBC pamphlet provides evidence that this memory as a unifier survived in English Canada into the 1980s at least, attributing to him: "our political tradition of living with our differences and resolving the conflicts among us through peaceful conciliation and compromise."[94] This symbolism was largely abandoned federally in the 1960s, as nascent Quebec nationalism made such a characterization less politically advantageous. French language newspapers in the 1960s in Quebec paid little attention to Macdonald-related events, while English papers in Quebec and Ontario continued to give him substantial attention. Thus, in Canada's two largest language communities, the symbolism of Macdonald as a figure of national unity went in different directions.[95]

The differing status of Macdonald may still be seen in the public reaction to the removal of his statue in Victoria. Public polling indicates that Quebec is the province with the least opposition to the removal.[96] This suggests that Quebec, compared to other provinces, may hold a different collective memory of Macdonald. The fault lines in Canadian society, which

[94] RBC, "Great John A.," 1.
[95] Pelletier, "Chieftain," 290–91.
[96] Angus Reid Institute, "In Debate Over First PM's Legacy, Vast Majority Say John A. Macdonald's Name, Image Should Stay in Public View," September 5, 2018, http://angusreid.org/macdonald-reconciliation/. The poll found that in Quebec 38 percent were against the removal, 31 percent in favour.

Macdonald had been credited with working to overcome, have re-emerged in this instance, with Quebec and other provinces divided on his importance.

3.2 Re-evaluating Macdonald's Memory in Light of Residential Schools

Missing from the themes identified by Pelletier, which focus on political history, is Macdonald's involvement in residential schools. This aspect of his legacy is crucial to understanding the fate of his statue in Victoria, as it is the main reason given for the removal. The formal system of residential schools for Native children was established in 1883, when the federal government entered into an agreement with the Anglican and Catholic churches to open the first of the schools in western Canada. While the operation of residential schools was controlled by the churches, the federal government was responsible for funding and regulating the schools.[97] There were only two residential schools in operation at the time of Confederation, both in Ontario.[98] These schools were seen as a failed experiment where they had been tried in eastern Canada. In spite of this failure, this style of schooling was expanded in western and northern Canada by the new federal government.[99] The residential school system was aligned with the aims of the missionaries in these areas, who wished to "civilize" Native peoples.[100] Civilizing meant the Native students were to learn French or English, be converted to Christianity, and "adopt a settled European lifestyle."[101] Concurrently, the children's aboriginal

[97] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; Volume 1, The History, Part 1, Origins to 1939* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 83.
[98] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 63.
[99] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 81–82.
[100] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 83.
[101] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 93.

culture was supressed in the schools by prohibiting students from using Aboriginal languages and forbidding the practice of Native religions and lifestyles.[102]

International trends influenced the decision to expand residential schooling in Canada. Internationally, these types of schools were seen as a means to control the children of the "dangerous classes," including children from urban slums in the industrial world and Native children in the colonized societies of the British Empire.[103] In locations as diverse as Nigeria and Australia, missionary schools were established to separate Indigenous parents and children.[104] Perhaps the most important influence on the Canadian decision to expand schools was the example of the United States. In January 1879, the Macdonald government commissioned Nicholas Flood Davin to examine the boarding school system in the United States and report on whether it was a good model for implementation in the Canadian Northwest.[105] Davin took little time to prepare his report, finishing it in March 1879. He travelled to Washington, where he was briefed by federal officials on the history and economics of their "Indian" boarding schools. Davin noted the belief among these American officials that Aboriginal adults could not be assimilated, and that day schools were ineffective at overcoming the influence of Aboriginal parents on their children. Industrial schools were therefore preferable.[106]

Davin endorsed the belief that it was through aboriginal children that assimilation would have to occur. The best means to achieve this was to separate the children from their parents, which would require boarding schools. Davin endorsed a church-run model for the schools, as

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[102] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 164–65.
[103] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 134.
[104] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 134.
[105] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 154. Davin did not travel extensively. The only actual school he visited was the White Earth School in Minnesota, on his way to Winnipeg, the only community in the Canadian Northwest he visited. TRC, *The History Part 1*, 156.
[106] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 155.

church-led schools would help replace Native spirituality with Christianity, a goal Davin acknowledged would be central to the education provided at the schools.[107] Macdonald agreed that the separation of Aboriginal parents and children was a positive feature of the boarding school model. In creating the residential school model, the Government of Canada was declaring that Aboriginals were unfit to be parents.[108] Residential schools were seen as a necessary intervention to ensure that students were thoroughly separated from the cultural influence of their families and community.

In 1883, Macdonald spoke in the House of Commons of his belief that parenting by Native peoples was a negative influence on their own children:

> When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages… though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department [of Indian Affairs], that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men.[109]

Clearly, such sentiments show a very different side of Macdonald, especially in terms of his legacy as a man who worked across cultural lines to bring about Canadian Confederation. Macdonald had worked masterfully to overcome cultural distance and distrust between the divergent language and religious groups of European Canadians. He did not take the same approach to the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. Assimilation rather than accommodation was the policy Macdonald favoured when it came to Native peoples.

Under Macdonald, Aboriginal policy moved in a paternalistic direction. Even as he denigrated Native parenting, Macdonald described the relationship of the federal government to

[107] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 157.
[108] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 163.
[109] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 164.

the Native peoples as one of "guardianship as of persons underage, incapable of the management of their own affairs."[110] The federal government would not only try to replace the parents of Aboriginal youth, but also exert control over the whole of the Indigenous population. This expanded control was legislated by the federal government with The Indian Act of 1876.[111] Alongside this paternalism, assimilation was an explicit government aim, as stated by Macdonald in a memorandum: "the great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion, as speedily as they are fit for the change."[112]

It is clear from the discussion thus far that Macdonald's legacy is more complicated than the nation-builder memory that has dominated until recently. He was instrumental in building the country, but this was in part at the great expense of Indigenous peoples. As a more complete picture of his legacy emerges, honours and public memorials, including the statue that previously stood at the doors of Victoria City Hall, are now being called into question. This chapter will now move from the discussion of residential schools and the part Macdonald played in them, to the recent history of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada. The work of this Commission has raised public consciousness about residential schools and contributed to the growth of the new collective memory of Macdonald, challenging the dominance of his previous

[110] TRC, *The History Part 1*, 106.
[111] Emily Russell, "This Founding Father's Legacy is Darker than Some Canadians Care to Remember," *PRI's The World*, December 4, 2018, https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-12-04/founding-fathers-legacy-darker-some-canadians-care-remember.
[112] John A. Macdonald, Memorandum, 3 January 1887, Sessional Papers, First Session of the Sixth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1887, No. 20b–4, Vol. 20, No. 16, p. 37, (Ottawa: Printed by MacLean, Roger & Co., Parliamentary Printers, 1887), https://archive.org/details/sessional1836s1887cana/page/n505.

positive collective memory as "Father of Canada." This emerging negative memory may be seen as ultimately responsible for the removal of his sculpture in Victoria.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was launched in 2008 for the purpose of examining the history and legacy of residential schools in Canada, gathering stories from survivors, and creating an official record of the school system. When the TRC released its findings in 2015, it acknowledged the federal government's assimilative policy as an attempt to break the transfer of memory between generations of Native peoples: "one of the most significant harms … was the attack on indigenous memory … that connected the hearts, minds, and spirits of Aboriginal children to their families, communities, and nations."[113] The TRC was an important development in the broader Canadian collective memory as well. Part of the underlying mandate of the TRC was to address the lack of knowledge about residential schools in Canada. For generations, knowledge about the schools had been "hidden, repressed, disregarded, discounted, and discredited."[114] In the words of Phil Fontaine, a three-term National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, the revelations of school survivors have demonstrated "the reality that Canada was not the nation we wished it to be."[115] The work of the TRC has cast the dominant memories of Macdonald, and of Canada generally since Confederation, into question.

Another part of the TRC's mandate was to receive documents from individuals, and from government and church archives concerning residential schools. The TRC also received 7000

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[113] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; Volume 6, Reconciliation* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 157.
[114] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *A Knock on the Door: The Essential History of Residential Schools from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2016), 189.
[115] TRC, *Knock on the Door,* ix.

digitally-recorded witness statements from a range of people who had experience of the schools, including former students, their descendants and church officials.[116] To preserve the submissions to the TRC, including "documents, audio and visual recordings, and physical objects," an archive was established, housed today in the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) at the University of Manitoba.[117]

It is interesting at this point to revisit the writing on memory by Pierre Nora. He has commented on the relationship between memory and modern archives such as the NCTR. In his view, the job of remembering has been passed onto institutions like archives, museums and libraries. He believes our modern memory has become based in the material traces of the past, relying "on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image."[118] In terms of volume, of new technological means, and by the degree to which we venerate these material traces, Nora believes our current practice of archives is a new development in the conception and function of the archive.[119] The process of building the NCTR aligns well with this observation, and speaks to the impulse towards preservation as a means of combating the vulnerability of memory. By gathering together an archive of sources that were held by separate institutions and individuals across Canada, the NCTR has purposely sought to establish a sturdy foundation for a collective memory that has, until recently, been suppressed. By bringing together this documentation, the NCTR will facilitate research to strengthen and inform the new memory of residential schools taking root in Canada.

[116] TRC, *Knock on the Door*, 190.
[117] TRC, *Knock on the Door*, 191.
[118] Nora, *Between Memory*, 13.
[119] Nora, *Between Memory*, 13.

3.3 The History of the Statue *J.A. Macdonald* and Its Removal from Victoria City Hall

Having examined the aspects of Macdonald's history that have formed the basis for his competing collective memories, the consequences of the emergent negative memory can now be discussed. One result of this memory has been the removal of the statue *J.A. Macdonald* from Victoria City Hall. From the years 1982 to 2018, the bronze statue of Macdonald by John Dann was situated outside the City Hall building, in close proximity to the entrance doors.

The statue was commissioned by the Sir John A. Macdonald Society, a Vancouver-based group for business and professional men "of the conservative persuasion."[120] Incorporated in 1967, on the hundredth anniversary of Canada's Confederation, the Society met once a year on January 11, Macdonald's birthday.[121] In 1978, the Society met in Victoria for the first time, to mark 100 years since Macdonald's election as Member of Parliament (MP) for the city. Though he served as their MP from 1878 to 1882, Macdonald visited Victoria only once, in 1886. He spent three weeks in the city, and reportedly found it slow-paced and sleepy.[122] At the 1978 Society meeting, a decision was made to present a statue of Macdonald to the City of Victoria. The Progressive Conservative MP for Victoria, Allan McKinnon, was the Society member who recommended Montreal-based sculptor John Dann for the project. McKinnon had met Dann previously to look at a finished bronze head of John Diefenbaker, of which he approved. He thereafter discussed the possibility of Dann working with the John A. Macdonald Society. McKinnon spent two years persuading, and finally convincing, his Society colleagues to

[120] Audrey Johnson, "Sir John: Victoria's Gift to Last," *Times Colonist*, June 26, 1982, 29. (File CL-00143-Statues, City of Victoria Archives).
[121] Johnson, "Sir John: Victoria's Gift," 29.
[122] Gwyn, *Nation Maker*, 504.

commission a work from Dann.[123] This venture was an uncharacteristic undertaking by the Society. In a letter from Society chairman John Hodgins to Victoria Mayor Peter Pollen, Hodgins asked for guidance as to planning the unveiling of the statue, as the Society had no experience with such events, and had "in fact spent all our 17 years avoiding any contact with the public."[124]

On Canada Day, July 1, 1982, the completed statue was draped with the Union Jack and the Canadian Maple Leaf flags, awaiting unveiling. British Columbia Lieutenant Governor Henry Bell-Irving unveiled the statue outside the main entrance doors of Victoria City Hall (see fig. 2). Mayor Pollen placed the mayoral chain of office around the statue's neck for pictures (see fig. 3). John Dann and Allan McKinnon were both in attendance. Over the scene of the unveiling, a sign reading "From Sea to Sea" was hung (see fig. 2). These words are the English language version of Canada's official motto, "*A Mari usque ad Mare*," and in this instance can be safely interpreted as celebrating the geographic breadth Canada achieved during Macdonald's time in office. The motto is especially meaningful for British Columbia, as its entrance into Confederation in 1871, during a Macdonald administration, provided the rest of Canada with access to the Pacific Ocean, the second sea referred to in the motto.

The Macdonald statue is now the subject of significant public debate. On Saturday, the 11th of August, 2018, spurred by Victoria's recent efforts at reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, *J.A. Macdonald* was removed from the front entrance of Victoria City Hall. The decision to remove the statue had been presented to Victoria City Council for approval and voted

[123] Johnson, "Sir John: Victoria's Gift," 29.
[124] John Hodgins to Peter Pollen, letter, 24 February 1982. (File CL-00143-Statues, City of Victoria Archives).

on only two days earlier, August 9, passing 7 to 1.[125] The recommendation to remove the statue was given by the City Family, an advisory group on reconciliation, comprised of councillors Charlayne Thornton-Joe and Marianne Alto, Mayor Lisa Helps, and members of the Songhee and Esquimalt First Nations.[126] The removal cost was $30,126,[127] which was paid for by the city's previously existing reconciliation budget.[128]

The City of Victoria's reconciliation webpage stated that the statue's removal would ensure that the "family members and other Indigenous people do not need to walk past this painful reminder of colonial violence each time they enter the doors of their municipal government."[129] Newspapers reported that for some Indigenous people, passing the statue to enter City Hall was a negative experience.[130] Ktunaxa Nation member Troy Sebastian wrote in an opinion piece that he found entering city hall was "a much less hostile experience" after the removal of the statue.[131] Perhaps the discomfort felt in passing the statue may be attributed to the

[125] Kristyn Anthony, "Removal of Macdonald Statue Prompts Confusion over City Process," *Victoria News*, August 9, 2018, https://www.vicnews.com/news/removal-of-macdonald-statue-prompts-confusion-over-city-process/.
[126] Anthony, "Removal Prompts Confusion."
[127] City of Victoria, "*Sir John A. MacDonald Statue Removal Costs: Costs to Date, November 1, 2018*," https://www.victoria.ca/assets/City~Hall/Sir%20John%20A%20MacDonald%20statue%20removal%20costs.pdf.
[128] Keili Bartlett, "Sir John A. MacDonald Statue Cost $23,000 to Remove," *Oak Bay News*, September 26, 2018, https://www.oakbaynews.com/news/sir-john-a-macdonald-statue-cost-23000-to-remove/.
[129] City of Victoria, "Reconciliation (web page)," accessed February 27, 2019, https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/city/reconciliation.html.
[130] Andrea Woo, "Victoria to Remove Statue of Sir John A. Macdonald," *The Globe and Mail*, August 8, 2018, updated August 9, 2018, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-victoria-to-remove-statue-of-sir-john-a-macdonald/;
Liz Haq, "Removing Statue of 1st PM Reignites Fierce Debate in Victoria, B.C.," *HuffPost Canada*, August 8, 2018, updated August 23, 2018, https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2018/08/08/removing-statue-of-1st-pm-reignites-fierce-debate-in-victoria-b-c_a_23498763/.
[131] Sebastian, "Statue Removal Classic Macdonald Politics."

mental connections it creates as a likeness. The allusion a portrait makes to a specific person is a reminder that the person actually existed. Indeed, the reason for the creation of a likeness, its functional purpose, is to remind a viewer of the original person.[132] Furthermore, as a portrait of a powerful leader, Macdonald's statue joins a long history of political portraits whose fortunes have risen and fallen depending on the valuation of their subject by society.[133] Today, the former site of the statue is marked only with a simple sign explaining why the statue has been removed.[134] Since June 21, 2018, the City Hall entrance area has displayed the mixed-media work *Releasing the Light*, by Coast Salish artist Qwul'thilum (Dylan Thomas).[135] This work of bright red, blue, yellow and black is eye-catching against the muted colours of City Hall's exterior, and has transformed the space into one that immediately evokes an Indigenous presence. The configuration of the entrance to City Hall, with the plaque and Thomas's artwork, can be seen in figure 4.

Opponents of the Macdonald statue have drawn a direct link between John A. Macdonald and the historical figure the statue depicts. In contrast, the sculptor of the statue, John Dann, has downplayed the statue's connection to the historical Macdonald in a public letter, written upon learning of the statue's impending removal. He argues that the sculpture is not of the singular John A. Macdonald, but rather a universal figure:

> [The statue is] a work of art, representing all humanity … As a portrait, again I am pleased with it. I would ask people to look at it not as a specific person (an odd request perhaps for a portrait). I think this sculpture works as a human expression, an expression of a common humanity. Here we see a confidence, not untouched by vulnerability, arrogance not without humility, swagger not devoid of humour. We have here the

[132] Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 2.
[133] Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 19.
[134] See Figure 5 for a photo of the plaque, and Figure 8 in the Appendix which has reproduced the wording of the plaque for easier reading.
[135] "Releasing the Light," Capital Region District LandMarks Public Art, accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.crd.bc.ca/landmarks/artworks/releasing-the-light.

> strengths and flaws of Macdonald and of ourselves. It is important to recognize those strengths and flaws in Macdonald and those of his time, yet to be aware of them also in ourselves.[136]

Dann's interpretation of his statue sees it both as Macdonald, and not Macdonald. In one respect, he clearly admits it has the specificity of a portrait. In another, he talks of it as a figure that represents human imperfection, the flaws of Macdonald's character, and the flaws of Macdonald's time, all representative of flaws still present in people alive today. Dann envisions a more nuanced interpretation of the statue than a passerby would likely recognize, especially as memorializing public statuary has overwhelmingly positive connotations.[137] Dann may see his statue as an exploration of human frailty, present even in one of the "great men" of history, but the public is more likely to see it as another statue created in the uncomplicated tradition of honouring historical figures as examples to be emulated, remembered and praised.

The reconciliation framework, approved by Victoria City Council in the summer of 2017, explicitly stated that unusual practices could be expected to emerge during the reconciliation process: "to do more than talk about Reconciliation, we must be prepared to question convention, learn from Indigenous custom and tradition, and risk doing things differently than our usual routines and processes."[138] One such unusual process was the unexpected vote in City Council on August 9, which authorized the removal. Two councillors were quoted as saying the inclusion of the removal vote on the council agenda was a surprise. The lone vote against the removal was by Councillor Geoff Young, who criticized the decision to remove the statue with "almost no notice."[139]

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[136] Dann, "My Letter to Mayor Helps." Dann's letter has been retyped in full as Figure 7 in the Appendix.
[137] Lowenthal, *Foreign Country* (1985), 332.
[138] Anthony, "Removal Prompts Confusion."
[139] Anthony, "Removal Prompts Confusion."

The surprise vote led to criticism that there had been inadequate transparency, consultation, and advance warning for the public at large. Mayor Lisa Helps initially countered these sentiments, saying that no matter when the decision was made, it would be a contentious one. She later recanted, and apologized for the lack of public engagement on the issue.[140] Helps' decision to remove the statue did not obviously harm her bid for re-election as mayor in the municipal election of October 20, 2018, just a few months after the removal. Both her raw number of votes and percentage of votes increased between the 2014 and 2018 municipal elections: 9200 votes and 38 percent in 2014 increasing to 12642 votes and 43 percent in 2018.[141]

After months of little news, in March 2019, the statue again made headlines when it was suggested in City Council that the city explore the possibility of moving the statue to outside the provincial parliament buildings. This was suggested as a more appropriate location, as Macdonald had had a greater impact in bringing British Columbia into Confederation than he had had as MP for Victoria. One councillor suggested that the provincial government was better equipped to deal with the statue, given the provincial resources devoted to heritage that the city lacked. Therefore, he proposed the statue might be relocated to the provincial legislature grounds. British Columbia Premier John Horgan, noting that he had not played a game of hot potato since his school days, joked that although he had not discussed the future of the statue

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[140] Lisa Helps, "Mayor Lisa Helps: Reconciliation is a Learning Process for Us All." *Times Colonist*, August 29, 2018, https://www.timescolonist.com/opinion/op-ed/mayor-lisa-helps-reconciliation-is-a-learning-process-for-us-all-1.23415941.

[141] City of Victoria, *Council Report, 2014 Municipal Election – Official Results*," December 18, 2014, https://pub-victoria.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=9874;
City of Victoria, *Declaration of Official Election Results, City of Victoria 2018 General Election*, October 24, 2018,"
https://www.victoria.ca/assets/City~Hall/Elections/OFFICIAL%20RESULTS_Declaration2018.pdf.

with Mayor Helps, "if I see her coming I may well run the other way."[142] This marks a striking change of fortune for Macdonald, of whom it has been said: "No Canadian politician was ever better loved."[143] For Helps and Horgan, in contrast, his statue has become a liability not worth the controversy it now inspires. The suggested solution of moving the statue to the provincial legislature grounds does not address the root cause of the controversy. Moving the statue may shift responsibility from the city to the province, but it will not remove the historical debate that surrounds it.

The removal of the Macdonald statue had been undertaken for reasons of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. This left other groups harmed by Macdonald's policies overlooked during the discussions of his legacy and his statue's removal. One such omission was the history of Macdonald and Chinese Canadians. This oversight was addressed by Victoria City Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe, who has both Chinese and Indigenous heritage.[144] She once held a job of guiding tours through Victoria's Chinatown. While her tour acknowledged that the Chinese were barred from voting and made to pay a head tax, Macdonald had escaped notice. Her tour group would pass by the statue without making the connection that a Macdonald administration had implemented these measures.[145] Many Chinese had come to Canada to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the purpose of the tax was to discourage further immigration from China

[142] The Canadian Press, "Horgan Hopes to Avoid 'Hot Potato' of Sir John A. Macdonald Statue," *The Star Vancouver*, February 28, 2019, https://www.thestar.com/vancouver/2019/02/28/talks-to-begin-in-victoria-on-new-home-clearer-context-for-macdonald-statue.html.
[143] RBC, "Great John A.," 4.
[144] *Victoria News*, "15 Questions: With Victoria Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe," January 25, 2016, https://www.vicnews.com/community/15-questions-with-victoria-councillor-charlayne-thornton-joe/.
[145] Anthony, "Removal Prompts Confusion."

upon the railway's completion.[146] British Columbia is home to the second largest Chinese community in Canada, and at 11.8 percent, it is the largest Chinese community as a percentage of a provincial population.[147] The presence of the Macdonald statue at the city hall of the provincial capital may reasonably be seen as an affront to the Chinese population of the province, including the five percent of Victoria's population that is of Chinese descent.[148] In 2006, Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper made an official apology to Chinese Canadians from the Canadian government, and announced compensation to those surviving citizens who had paid the tax.[149]

It is worth noting that the Victoria statue removal is but one of a number of actions resulting from the re-evaluation of Macdonald's legacy in light of his connection with residential schools. In 2018, the Canadian Historical Association (CHA), the main organization for Canadian history scholars, renamed its John A. Macdonald Prize to the CHA Prize for Best Scholarly Book in Canadian History. Significantly, the responses to this decision encapsulate the divergent opinions of Canadians on the treatment of flawed historical figures. The present re-

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[146] Government of Canada, "Prime Minister Harper Offers Full Apology for the Chinese Head Tax," News Release, Ottawa, Ontario, June 22, 2006, https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2006/06/prime-minister-harper-offers-full-apology-chinese-head-tax.html.

[147] Statistics Canada, *Census Profile, 2016 Census: British Columbia [Province] and Canada [Country]*. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=PR&Code1=59&Geo2=PR&Code2=01&Data=Count&SearchText=british%20columbia&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=Ethnic%20origin&TABID=1.

[148] Statistics Canada, *Census Profile, 2016 Census: Victoria [Census Metropolitan Area], British Columbia and Capital, Regional District [Census division], British Columbia*. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMACA&Code1=935&Geo2=CD&Code2=5917&Data=Count&SearchText=Victoria&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=Ethnic%20origin&TABID=1.

[149] Government of Canada, "Full Apology for Chinese Head Tax."

evaluation of Macdonald has led some to condemn him fully. For example, historian James Daschuk of Regina, a former recipient of the CHA prize, approved of the name change, commenting: "It's often the argument that Macdonald did a lot of good things.… He built the country. But he built the country on the backs of the Indigenous people."[150] In contrast, Christopher Dummitt, Professor of History at Trent University, ended his CHA membership after the name change, calling it: "a bad idea, because it is essentially against history, against recognizing the full complexity of the past. It's about eradicating figures of honour from the past."[151] Raymond Blake, Head of Canadian Studies at the University of Regina, pleaded for a balanced evaluation: "We have to deal with these things as historians and try to understand them in context, in the period in which people were living.… People are complicated. If we go looking for people who are racist or who don't have the views we have … we're going to find those people very easily."[152]

Clearly, these historians are divided on how Macdonald's legacy should be evaluated. Many historians see presentism as something to avoid in their work, as the moral and intellectual climate surrounding a contemporary scholar may get in the way of understanding the past. This view, that the past should instead be researched "on its own terms," is known as historicism.[153] Historicism is not universally favoured among those working in the humanities. Other scholars take a more activist approach, and welcome presentist concerns. For them, the point of study is

[150] Graeme Hamilton, "'A Key Player in Indigenous Cultural Genocide:' Historians Erase Sir John A. Macdonald's Name from Book Prize," *The National Post*, May 29, 2018, https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/a-key-player-in-indigenous-cultural-genocide-historians-erase-sir-john-a-macdonalds-name-from-book-prize.
[151] Hamilton, "Key Player."
[152] Hamilton, "Key Player."
[153] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*, 5th ed. (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2010), 1.

not only to understand the past and present world, but to change the world in the present for the better. These two views of how to interact with history are observable in the monument debates. An argument commonly heard against removal of statues is that the actions of figures from the past should not be judged by the moral standards of today, while the statue detractors demand removal to improve relations with marginalized groups in the present day.

It seems that in a state of divided opinion, honours previously accorded to Macdonald are no longer secure. The emergent collective memory has succeeded in removing honours given to Macdonald, even before it has become the dominant societal memory. That the Macdonald name itself is under scrutiny suggests that the root of the statue removal is not a narrow discomfort with the commemoration of Macdonald in statuary, but rather a broader re-evaluation of Macdonald's legacy. Statues, then, are not the central controversy of this social shift, but rather are prominent targets for this broader social change.

Figure 1. Jim Ryan. *Mayor Peter Pollen and sculptor John Dann at unveiling of Sir John A. Macdonald statue in front of City Hall, July 1, 1982*. Photograph. File number AC1-M09077, City of Victoria Archives. https://archives.victoria.ca/mayor-peter-pollen-and-sculptor-john-dann-at-unveiling-of-sir-john-a-macdonald-statue-in-front-of-city-hall.

Figure 2. Jim Ryan. *Lt.-Gov. Bell-Irving unveils statue.* Photograph, July 1, 1982. Fonds PR-2163, Royal BC Museum and Archives.

Figure 3. Jim Ryan. *Macdonald "collared" with Mayor's chain of office.* Photograph, July 1 1982. Fonds PR-2163, Royal BC Museum and Archives.

Figure 4. Ben McHutchion. *Entrance to Victoria City Hall after removal of Macdonald statue*. Digital Photograph. January 19, 2019. The plaque on the site of the former statue can be seen in the centre of the image.

Figure 5. Ben McHutchion. *Plaque erected on former site of Macdonald statue at Victoria City Hall*. Digital Photograph. January 19, 2019.

Chapter 4

Case Study II: General Edward Cornwallis Statue, Halifax, Nova Scotia

In Halifax, a situation similar to that observed in Victoria occurred with the removal of a statue of General Edward Cornwallis. Again, the collective memory of a First Nations people, the Mi'kmaq in this case, had entered public consciousness and challenged the previously positive memory of Cornwallis as the founder of the City of Halifax. This chapter largely follows a chronological framework used by John Reid in his article "The Three Lives of Edward Cornwallis," which traces the development of collective memories around Cornwallis through three stages of history and remembrance.[154] The first stage is the factual record of Cornwallis's life and the actions he is known to have taken while serving as Governor of Nova Scotia. The second stage began in 1899, when a paper was presented to the Nova Scotia Historical Society depicting Cornwallis in a positive light, interpreting him with the enthusiasm of the era for Britishness and imperialism. The result was that Cornwallis came to be seen as more than a minimally successful and somewhat forgettable governor. He gained a collective memory as a notable figure who had founded Halifax and advanced the British Empire. As a result of this memory, a sculpture of Cornwallis was commissioned and raised in Halifax in 1931.

The third stage took root in the 1990s, when themes of imperial and racial superiority were no longer acceptable means of embellishing Cornwallis's short time in Nova Scotia. Instead, the negative actions he had taken against the Mi'kmaq population, the Indigenous inhabitants of the Halifax area, became the central focus in evaluating and contesting his legacy. This chapter prominently incorporates the observations of Mi'kmaq historian Daniel Paul, whose

[154] John Reid, "The Three Lives of Edward Cornwallis," *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society* 16, (2013), 19.

book *We Were Not the Savages* was instrumental in bringing about the "third life" of Cornwallis in the 1990s.[155] Alongside Paul, an increasingly strong chorus of voices has advocated for a re-evaluation of Cornwallis's legacy, and has been successful in effecting the removal of his statue as well as his name from several features of the Halifax area. This stage continues, as his statue remains in an undisclosed storage location, currently awaiting a decision on its ultimate fate. The chapter finishes with a review of public opinion polling concerning the Macdonald and Cornwallis statue removals, voting patterns linked to opinion, and what can be learned from nuanced questions asked in the polling.

Scottish-American sculptor Massey Rhind (1880–1936) was commissioned to create the Cornwallis statue, completed in 1931. Rhind, who often summered in Chester, Nova Scotia, had already produced a body of public artwork in the province, as sculptor for the World War I memorials in Chester, Halifax, and New Glasgow.[156] The commission of such a prominent piece of public sculpture was one of the most important in his career. His work on the Cornwallis sculpture won him associate membership in the Royal Scottish Academy, and a model of the statue was displayed at the Academy in Edinburgh.[157]

General Edward Cornwallis (1713–1776), leader of the expedition that founded the British settlement at Halifax in 1749, is the subject of the work. The bronze figure, now weathered to a green tone, stands nine feet tall (see fig. 6). The statue was originally placed on a ten foot tall granite plinth in the middle of Cornwallis Park, located on the southern edge of

[155] Daniel Paul, *We Were Not the Savages: Collision between European and Native American Civilizations*, 3rd ed. (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2006).
[156] Garry Shutlak, "Cornwallis Square: A Park at Risk," *The Griffin*, March 2000, p. 4. (File VFE-187-V-HPL, Halifax Municipal Archives).
[157] Donna Logan, "The Founder's Monument," *Halifax Mail Star*, Aug 24, year illegible. (File VFE-187-V-HPL, Halifax Municipal Archives).

downtown Halifax, close to the waterfront. Cornwallis is depicted as an impressive, self-assured figure. John Reid quotes *The Evening Mail* of June 20, 1931, characterizing the statue as looking seaward with "a virile, strong, steadfast face with a touch of sternness in it which is usually to be found in the faces of all men who achieve—all leaders of men and all pioneers."[158] His gaze suggests self-importance, as he looks out to the Halifax Harbour rather than down at the viewer. Rhind said he had found it difficult to put a sense of action into the statue, and tried to capture Cornwallis as though "stepping away just after giving a command."[159] While the statue does appear lifelike with its high degree of detail, the impression it gives is one of solidity as opposed to action. Cornwallis stands with straight posture, his feet braced apart, and arms at some distance away from his body due to his bulky coat. One hand rests on his sword, the other on his hip holding a tricorn hat. He wears his hair in the style of the day, with side-roll curls and a queue tied with a ribbon. His clothing is realistically detailed, with braid and many buttons. Cornwallis wears a caped greatcoat, draping over his shoulders, a cravat, waistcoat, breeches, and knee-high spurred boots. At the statue's unveiling, the plinth held a simple plaque reading "Edward Cornwallis Founder of Halifax." A more detailed plaque was added in 1985, giving further information on Cornwallis, and the strategic purpose behind Halifax's founding.[160]

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[158] Reid, "The Three Lives," 31.

[159] *The Halifax Herald*, "Honor Memory of Man Who Founded City of Halifax," June 23, 1931, p. 2. (File VFE-187-V-HPL, Halifax Municipal Archives).

[160] Jon Tattrie, "Cornwallis Statue," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, January 23, 2018, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/cornwallis-statue. The English portion of the plaque read: "After an active career in the British army, Cornwallis, the founder of Halifax, was appointed governor and captain general of Nova Scotia in 1749. Ordered in that year to establish a fortified settlement as a buffer between New England and New France and as a counterpoise to the Fortress of Louisbourg, he arrived in Chebucto Bay with a large body of settlers and proceeded to clear land and lay out the town of Halifax. He returned to England in 1752 leaving behind the beginnings of a thriving town. He later resumed his army career and in 1762 was appointed governor of Gibraltar."

4.1 First Life: The History of General Edward Cornwallis

The subject of the statue, Edward Cornwallis, was born in London in 1713. As the sixth son of Baron Cornwallis, he was unlikely to inherit the title, and so needed to distinguish himself through a career.[161] He studied at Eton College, and entered the British military in 1730. Cornwallis was a major by 1742, and took the family's seat in Parliament in 1743. Notably, he fought against the Jacobite rebellion raised by Charles Edward Stuart at the Battle of Culloden in April 1746. Thereafter, he led soldiers to pacify an area of the Scottish Highlands.[162]

Cornwallis was appointed Governor of Nova Scotia in 1749, arriving at the site of the future city of Halifax in June of that year, with a fleet carrying roughly 2500 settlers. He stayed for just over three years. Nova Scotia at that time was a British colony, but British authority carried little power. The British had established the colony in 1713, but their presence had remained peripheral. Most of the territory was controlled by the Mi'kmaq, while most of the Europeans in the colony were Acadian, a population of French-speaking Roman Catholic settlers.[163] An earlier governor, Richard Phillips, had described the degree of British control in the colony in 1720 as never having extended beyond the cannon range of Annapolis Royal, the capital of the colony before Halifax was established.[164] The purpose of Cornwallis's mission was twofold: to establish a major military and naval base to counter the French fort at Louisbourg, and to begin a concerted effort at British settlement of the colony.[165] Settlement at Halifax was overseen by the Board of Trade, an administrative body in London set up to consider means of

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[161] Reid, "The Three Lives," 20.
[162] Jon Tattrie, "Edward Cornwallis," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, January 13, 2008, last edited May 28, 2018, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/edward-cornwallis.
[163] Judith Fingard, Janet Guildford, and David A. Sutherland, *Halifax: The First 250 Years*, (Halifax, Formac Publishing Company Ltd., 1999), 9.
[164] Reid, "The Three Lives," 21.
[165] Reid, "The Three Lives," 22.

promoting British trade interests, including overseeing colonial enterprises. The Earl of Halifax, for whom the new settlement was named, had taken control of the agency in October of 1748.[166] It was hoped Nova Scotia could become a source of strength for the British in North America.

Unfortunately for British interests, Cornwallis had difficulties navigating the complex politics of the colony. He signed a treaty with the Mi'kmaq, which promised the "friendship and protection" of the Crown, as had been the standard instructions for Nova Scotia governors since 1719.[167] However, Cornwallis's understanding of the treaty differed from the Mi'kmaq's interpretation. For the Mi'kmaq, the terms of friendship and protection did not mean they would submit to British control, which was Cornwallis's expectation. As well, no treaty signed by Cornwallis included an explicit surrender of land by the Mi'kmaq.[168]

As the building of the fort at Halifax commenced, Cornwallis believed he had intelligence that an attempt would be made by the Mi'kmaq against the settlement.[169] Cornwallis listed a number of incidents in his first scalping proclamation, including the taking of 20 British prisoners at Canso, the theft of two boats, attacks on two English sloops that killed several crew, and, on September 30, 1749, a raid in Dartmouth that killed four military woodcutters.[170] The Mi'kmaq were successful in using this raid warfare, capturing boats and making short incursions into settled areas, as a means of preventing British expansion beyond Halifax during Cornwallis's governorship. The episode that "caused the greatest British consternation" was a

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[166] Andrew D. M. Beaumont, *Colonial America and the Earl of Halifax, 1748–1761* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 48.
[167] Reid, "The Three Lives," 21.
[168] Reid, "The Three Lives," 22.
[169] Reid, "The Three Lives," 22.
[170] Paul, *We Were Not the Savages*, 115–16. Paul has characterized these incidents as legitimate military actions, in contrast to the civilian-targeting measure of the scalping proclamation. He also questions the woodcutter incident, asking why this group of woodcutters was so apparently defenceless in a time of hostilities. Paul, *We Were Not the Savages*, 117.

raid on Dartmouth in May 1751, which killed between ten and twenty settlers, a mix of civilians and soldiers, depending on the source.[171] Cornwallis's solution to the Mi'kmaq threat, as proposed in a letter to the Board of Trade, was "to root them out entirely."[172] The Board of Trade warned against such extreme measures. They were concerned that by "totally extirpating" the Mi'kmaq, Cornwallis would create an indelible example of British severity and cruelty against Indigenous peoples, which could lead to "a dangerous spirit of resentment" and potentially threaten peaceful Indigenous–imperial relations for all the British colonies in North America.[173]

The Nova Scotia Council, the unelected administrative body located in the colony, was frustrated by this obstacle to their settlement ambitions. It was resolved that ranger companies should be formed to take the conflict to the Mi'kmaq. The council purposefully declined a formal declaration of war. A war declaration was appropriate between sovereign nations, but not between Britain and the Mi'kmaq, who were seen as an internal part of the empire. Instead, the Council described the Mi'kmaq as criminals: "…to declare war formally against the Micmac Indians would be a manner to own them a free and independent people, whereas they ought to be treated as so many Banditti ruffians, or Rebels, to His Majesty's Government."[174] The council was asserting their belief that the Mi'kmaq, in assenting to the traditional terms of friendship and protection, had given up their sovereignty to the British Crown. To meet this "rebel" threat, the Council moved that a volunteer company be raised, the woods around the settlement be scoured, and 10 guineas be paid for "every Indian Micmac taken, or killed."[175]

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[171] Reid, "The Three Lives," 23–4.
[172] Reid, "The Three Lives," 22.
[173] Reid, "The Three Lives," 23.
[174] Paul, *We Were Not the* Savages, 115.
[175] Paul, *We Were Not the Savages*, 115.

The bounty was not an invention unique to Nova Scotia or Cornwallis. Colonies in New England had issued bounties as far back as the 1670s. The presence of former New Englanders on the Nova Scotia Council may have been a major influence on the adoption of the bounty policy. While this decision to offer the bounty was not Cornwallis's alone, as leader of the colony's government and with final decision-making power, he ultimately bore the responsibility for issuing the scalping proclamations.[176]

Cornwallis issued three proclamations concerning scalping. The first came on October 3, 1749, and authorized subjects to "annoy, distress, take or destroy the savage commonly called Micmac" and offered "a reward of ten Guineas for every Indian Micmac taken or killed, to be paid upon producing such Savage taken or his scalp[.]"[177] Unhappy with the lack of success from this first proclamation, a second proclamation in 1750 raised the bounty to fifty guineas.[178] The bounty policy, however, was not successful. In 1752, the Board of Trade sent Cornwallis a letter suggesting that the ranger companies should be dismissed, as Cornwallis had never given the Board an example of their usefulness. On July 17, 1752, Cornwallis issued a third proclamation, ending the scalp bounty and forbidding further hostilities against the Mi'kmaq except as was necessary for defence.[179]

Cornwallis resigned as Governor of Nova Scotia and returned to England in 1752. The remainder of Cornwallis's life history presents a checkered record. Later in his military career, Cornwallis was court martialled once, and called as a witness at another court martial trial. He

[176] Reid, "The Three Lives," 24.
[177] Paul, *We Were Not the Savages*, 116.
[178] Paul, *We Were Not the Savages*, 122.
[179] Paul, *We Were Not the Savages*, 123.

was able to escape punishment both times. His last post was as Governor of Gibraltar, where he died in 1776.[180]

4.2 Second Life: The Memory of Cornwallis as Founder of Halifax, and the History of the Cornwallis Statue

Historians paid limited attention to Cornwallis and his time in Halifax until 1899, when James S. Macdonald delivered a paper to the Nova Scotia Historical Society entitled "Hon. Edward Cornwallis, Founder of Halifax."[181] The paper given by Macdonald began a process that salvaged Cornwallis from obscurity and raised him to the status of a memorable founding figure for Halifax. Canadian nationalism in the late nineteenth century was tied closely to the British Empire, with a strong focus on the role settler societies, including Canada, played in spreading British civilization and law around the world.[182] In this milieu, the new collective memory of Cornwallis as founder of Halifax was formed, celebrating his place in colonial history. He was said to have personally advanced the cause of the empire, and commemorating him was a means of celebrating the importance of Halifax's place within the history of the British Empire, and of promoting Halifax's value to the empire as well.

The impetus for the Cornwallis statue came from business and political leaders. Nova Scotia Premier E.N. Rhodes set up the Cornwallis Memorial Committee to plan for a statue that would recognize Cornwallis as the founder of Halifax and also be a means to promote tourism.[183]

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[180] Tattrie, "Edward Cornwallis."
[181] James S. Macdonald, "Hon. Edward Cornwallis, Founder of Halifax: A Paper Read by James S. Macdonald, on June 21st, 1899, the 150th Anniversary of the Settlement of Halifax," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society* 12, (1905, Halifax, Nova Scotia: The McAlpine Publishing Company, Limited): 1–17. James S. Macdonald was of no known relation to John A. Macdonald.
[182] Reid, "The Three Lives," 28.
[183] Halifax Military Heritage Preservation Society, *Cornwallis Park and Statue*, 2018,

The memorial was seen as a modest project in scale, but with high visibility that would "boost city pride and confidence."[184] The project cost $20,000, with half the amount contributed by the Canadian National Railways, and the remainder coming from the provincial government, the City of Halifax and public donors.[185]

Edward Cornwallis was unveiled June 22, 1931, at a ceremony attended by crowds and dignitaries. Rhetoric surrounding the statue celebrated Halifax and its role in the British Empire. Two days before the unveiling, a journalist writing for *The Halifax Herald* had praised Halifax for its unique place among provincial capitals, as only Halifax had been "founded as an outpost in the forward march of Empire… an event of Imperial significance" for British military and colonial planning.[186] This interpretation is questionable, given how many provincial capitals in Canada have been founded under British direction.

The article in *The Herald* gave passing reference to the Mi'kmaq, infantilizing them with childish language to mention that at the founding of Halifax they had "opposed the ominous big camp of the white men."[187] In contrast, the journalist positively emphasized British heritage and ethnicity in describing the unveiling to readers. Those assembled represented "church, state and city," which proved the "tenacity with which this city has held to the traditions of the British race."[188] When *The Herald* quoted Ivan Rand, King's Council for the Canadian National Railways, Rand was featured using similarly racial language. Rand theorized that if Cornwallis were to return to Halifax and look into the minds and hearts of its citizens, he would see they had

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https://hmhps.ca/sites/cornwallis-park-and-statue.
[184] Shutlak, "Cornwallis Square: A Park at Risk," 4.
[185] Logan, "The Founder's Monument."
[186] *The Halifax Herald,* "To Pay Honor to Cornwallis," June 20, 1931, 1. (File VFE-187-V-HPL, Halifax Municipal Archives).
[187] *The Halifax Herald,* "To Pay Honor," 1.
[188] *The Halifax Herald*, "Honor Memory," 2.

"been faithful to the traditions of the British race" and that generations of Haligonians had "lived up to the obligations of forward looking and forward thinking British Citizens."[189]

In reading these reports of the statue's unveiling as presented in newspapers and speeches, it is notable that the historical figure of Cornwallis, and his actions and personality, recede. In raising the statue, the memory of Cornwallis was used to underline the connection of Halifax to the British Empire. This is not surprising, when one considers the raising of the statue to be an act meant to bring tourist dollars and greater civic pride to Halifax. The empire was popular at the time, and so it was the connection to empire, rather than Cornwallis, that gave the city of Halifax a source of dignity and honour. Cornwallis was merely a convenient symbol for the history of the empire in Nova Scotia, a memory now given a site in the physical manifestation of the statue. The conception of the statue and its presentation to the public was aligned precisely with the British-infused identity of Nova Scotia in the early 1930s, and English Canada more generally. The statue was most definitely a product of its time, an attempt to manipulate collective memory in the service of present concerns.

Twenty years later, the founder image of Cornwallis had not shifted. A Halifax guidebook of 1951 makes no mention of Cornwallis's conflict with the Mi'kmaq. Cornwallis is merely mentioned as founder and law giver. The guidebook reads: "Cornwallis brought 2000 settlers to build the early city and directed the plans which brought Halifax into being. He also formulated the first laws… drawn up aboard ship in the Harbour."[190] This shows that the

[189] *The Halifax Herald*, "Honor Memory," 2. Rand would become a significant figure in Canadian legal history, appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada on April 22, 1943.
[190] City of Halifax Tourist Bureau, *City of Halifax: Guide Book and Personal Diary*, Halcraft Printing Ltd., 1951. (Call number 917.1622 C58, Halifax Municipal Archives).

memory of Cornwallis as a founder persisted to the 1950s. Indeed, it can still be heard in the rhetoric of those defending his statue in 2018, as will be seen in the next section.

4.3 Third Life: Mi'kmaq Memory and the Removal of the Cornwallis Statue

Modern historians take a dim view when evaluating Cornwallis's legacy. Both John Reid and Daniel Paul see his accomplishments as fulfilling the minimal requirements of his instructions and little else. Reid, for example, notes the significance of Cornwallis as the first governor to be based in Halifax, but suggests that his other efforts fell short of success in terms of both personal ambition and the plans of the empire.[191] The colony did not thrive in its early years, with a population that had dropped from a high point of roughly 6000 to only 2670 by 1755.[192] Cornwallis had successfully overseen the beginning of a permanent British settlement at Halifax, but he had failed at expanding settlement beyond a small area. However, it was not unusual in the context of the empire at the time for colonies to consist of outposts unable to project their power far beyond their own walls. Still, his eagerness to depart from the traditional pretext of peace and friendship with the Indigenous peoples was not the preferred policy of the empire at the time, and concerned the Board of Trade overseeing the venture from London. His progress in Nova Scotia may also suffer by comparison to the successfully settled New England colonies nearby.[193]

Controversy over the statue of General Cornwallis simmered for many years. The statue had at least one long-time advocate for removal, Mi'kmaq Elder and historian Daniel Paul. Paul brought attention to the issue of Cornwallis's prominence in Halifax with his book *We Were Not*

[191] Reid, "The Three Lives," 27.
[192] Beaumont, *Colonial America and the Earl of Halifax*, 68.
[193] Reid, "The Three Lives," 25–6.

the Savages, originally published in 1993. The first protest documented in the Halifax Municipal Archives, however, was not until June 29, 2008, when a small number of young adults from the Mi'kmaq community assembled for the second annual Aboriginal Day of Action. These protestors requested the removal of the statue. According to protestor Alana Lee, the painful history of the Mi'kmaq people had not been taught adequately in Nova Scotia's schools: "There's that whole piece that's cut out, Canada's shame… You don't hear about all the social injustices within the Indian Act and people don't know why we're facing issues."[194] This sentiment has been a persistent feature of reactions to the Cornwallis statue from the Mi'kmaq community. Protestors have repeatedly voiced the concern that the Indigenous collective memory of Cornwallis has not been adequately exposed, represented or recognized in Canadian society.

Calls for the removal of the Cornwallis statue were again voiced the following year, in 2009, in an online petition. It demanded that the Cornwallis statue be removed, or that a plaque addressing Cornwallis's role in Indigenous history be installed. It also requested the renaming of Cornwallis Street, Cornwallis Park, Cornwallis Junior High School, Cornwallis Street Baptist Church, and the Cornwallis River. Signatories of the petition included Nova Scotia's then Minister of Tourism and Culture, Bill Dooks.[195] In June 2011, the Halifax Regional School Board agreed to the request to change the name of Cornwallis Junior High School.[196]

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[194] Robyn Young, "Cornwallis Statue 'Hurtful:' Remove Governor Who Ordered Scalping: Mi'kmaq," *Metro Halifax*, May 30–June 1, 2008. (File VFE-187-V-HPL, Halifax Municipal Archives).
[195] Perry King, "Petition Takes Aim at Cornwallis Name," *no newspaper name visible*, January 16–22, 2009, 1. (File VFE-187-V-HPL, Halifax Municipal Archives).
[196] J. R. Miller, *Residential Schools and Reconciliation: Canada Confronts Its History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 270.

Commenting on the petition in 2009, Paul echoed Alana Lee's concerns that there was silence on the issue of Cornwallis's treatment of the Mi'kmaq: "There has to be an admission somewhere. Up until this point in time, 'Anglos' are not willing to own up to it and admit it was a horrible wrong and this man shouldn't be idolized."[197] Paul felt the Cornwallis statue symbolized "the depth of systemic racism in Nova Scotia."[198] He suggested the Cornwallis statue be replaced with a statue of Donald Marshall Jr., a Mi'kmaq man wrongfully convicted of murder in 1971, who served 11 years before his conviction was overturned. An inquiry into the conviction of Marshall blamed systemic racism, and found that the justice system had failed Marshall in this instance.[199]

In opposition to the petition, the question of erasing history was raised. Halifax Mayor Peter Kelly made the connection between memory and the material, suggesting that removing the statue or the name of Cornwallis would be an attempt to alter history, with these words: "We can't change our past. It is what it is. The events that occurred then were the events of the day and certainly would never occur now."[200] Paul disagreed with Mayor Kelly's assertion that removing the statue was a move to change history: "We are not saying to delete [Cornwallis] from history—you can't delete Hitler or Stalin or Pol Pot—but at least remove the symbols that are honouring the man."[201] At first, the comparison of Cornwallis to these three figures may seem extreme. However, it does underline Paul's view that, according to the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the term "genocide"

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[197] King, "Petition Takes Aim," 1.
[198] Jon Tattrie, "'We Can't Change Our Past:' Government Won't Consider Request to Replace Cornwallis Statue," *The Weekly News*, August 14, 2009. (File VFE-187-V-HPL, Halifax Municipal Archives).
[199] Tattrie, "Can't Change Our Past."
[200] Tattrie, "Can't Change Our Past."
[201] Tattrie, "Can't Change Our Past."

can be applied to the actions of the British in colonial Nova Scotia.[202] Article II of the Convention, defines the term genocide thus:

> Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:
> (A) Killing members of the group;
> (B) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
> (C) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
> (D) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
> (E) Forcefully transferring children of the group to another group.[203]

Paul asks readers of *We Were Not the Savages* to keep these points in mind as they read the book.[204] Cornwallis's scalp bounty and raising of ranger companies with a stated goal of "extirpation" certainly aligns with points A and B.[205]

Protests around the statue occurred again in the summer of 2017.[206] On July 15, city crews shrouded the statue in black canvas while about 200 protestors in Cornwallis Park called

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[202] Paul, *We Were Not the Savages*, 113.
[203] United Nations, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. Office of the High Commissioner, January 12, 1951. https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crimeofgenocide.aspx.
[204] Paul, *We Were Not the Savages*, 113.
[205] Paul notes, on page 113 of *We Were Not the Savages*, that several of the definitions can be applied to Canadian government actions after 1867. Point E may be relevant to the action of the residential school system. The TRC stopped short of calling the residential school system or Canadian actions post-1867 a genocide, but did call the actions a cultural genocide: "Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to [residential schools], families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. In its dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things." TRC, *The History Part 1*, 3.
[206] A minor event, noted here for the sake of chronology, occurred in 2014 when Halifax looked to revamp Cornwallis Park with money for a new playground. A planning meeting was taken as an opportunity to open the discussion around the Cornwallis controversy. The Facebook page created to advertise a meeting about the renovation became dominated with comments about the Cornwallis name and the statue, while at the meeting, both playground planning and the

for the statue's removal. Protestor Duncan Gould, member of the Membertou First Nation (part of the Mi'kmaq Nation) on Cape Breton Island used the same three historical figures as Paul for comparison to Cornwallis, asking: "Would we honour Stalin or Pol Pot or Hitler? If you want to honour hatred and racism, fine, but it doesn't belong in a public venue. It belongs in a museum or a cellar."[207] An anonymous counter protestor, carrying a British flag, stated his reasons for supporting the statue: "The only reason I'm here is because I don't think it's right for them to tear a statue down. I just want to show that there's another point of view here and there's a lot of people that share my point of view. I'm here to support the founder of the city."[208] As seen with John A. Macdonald, status as a founder has strong cultural currency. Cornwallis's founder status is evidently still used to argue for the appropriateness of his continued commemoration to this day.

Cultural geographer Karen Till has noted that elite members of society are at an advantage in their power to create public sites of memory. In the case of Halifax, these would be the political and business leaders who commissioned the statue. However, these people cannot control what happens at the sites, or how they are "perceived, understood, and interpreted by individuals and various groups."[209] The two protestors, stating their views of Cornwallis at the base of his statue in 2017, present an excellent example of divergent collective memories

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Cornwallis issue were discussed. Ruth Davenport, "Meeting to Address Revamp of Park, Not Its Name: Councillor," *Metro News*, May 27, 2014. (File VFE-187-V-HPL, Halifax Municipal Archives).

[207] Lindsay Jones, "Halifax Covers Controversial Cornwallis Statue in Response to Protests," *The Globe and Mail*, July 15, 2017, updated July 16, 2017, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/halifax-covers-controversial-cornwallis- statue-in-respose-to-protests/article35701179/.

[208] Jones, "Halifax Covers Statue."

[209] Karen Till, "Places of Memory," in *A Companion to Political Geography*, eds. John Agnew, Katharyne Mitchell and Garad Toal (Malden, MA: Wiley & Sons, 2008), 297.

existing at the same site. It is worth pointing out that the statue acts as a site of two competing memories of Cornwallis. To designate something a *lieux de mémoire* should not, therefore, suggest that it holds a singular memory. Memories do not exist in a static state; they are liable to change and compete as people argue for the validity of the collective memories they hold.

A shifting understanding of the statue was again on display on August 15, 2017, when another demonstration was held in Halifax in reaction to the Charlottesville riots in Virginia. At Charlottesville, far-right groups had staged a large rally against the removal of a statue memorializing Confederate general Robert E. Lee, and a counter protestor had been killed when a car drove into the crowd. The Halifax demonstration was meant to call attention to the ability of historical figures to become a "rallying point for racism."[210] Connections were drawn between the Confederate monument in Charlottesville and the Cornwallis statue by Professor Alex Khasnabish of Halifax's Mount Saint Vincent University, who espoused that the men portrayed in both statues could be understood as complicated historical figures, but still "represent histories of white colonization, white displacement, and in fact genocide."[211] Khasnabish neatly summed up the new memory of Cornwallis that had been slowly gaining prominence. The old ways in which Cornwallis had been praised, suffused with approval of British imperialism and British racial superiority, have today become outmoded and a liability rather than a strength for the Cornwallis legacy.

The memory of Cornwallis held by the Mi'kmaq, as a man who advocated their "extirpation" and authorized a scalp bounty, has now gained credence among both the

[210] Jeff Lagerquist, "Protesters Gather at Halifax Cornwallis Statue in Reaction to U.S. Violence," *CTV News*, August 15, 2017, https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/protesters-gather-at-halifax-cornwallis-statue-in-reaction-to-u-s-violence-1.3547475.
[211] Lagerquist, "Protesters Gather."

Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Halbwachs had commented on how new ideas are able to replace traditional memories because they find backing in a new collective experience "held in common not only by the members of the group under consideration, but also by other contemporary groups."[212] It would appear that more members of Canadian society are going through this process, as awareness of the experiences of Indigenous peoples grows, and are bringing the memories of Indigenous groups into their consideration of colonial history.

In October of 2017, the Halifax Regional Council moved to establish an arms-length Special Advisory Committee to investigate how to commemorate Cornwallis and, at the same time, recognize Indigenous history in the Halifax area. Four members were to be appointed by the council and four by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs. In January 2018, frustrated that this advisory group had yet to meet, the Mi'kmaq chiefs withdrew from the committee and called for the statue to be removed immediately. In a press release from the Assembly, Chief Deborah Robinson argued that the story of Halifax "has been one sided for far too long[.] …Continuing to celebrate and commemorate only one part of history, and people like Cornwallis, is what we should all want to move away from."[213] Robinson has stated again the Mi'kmaq concern that their history has been inadequately acknowledged. On January 30, 2018, the Halifax Regional Council voted 12 to 4 to remove the statue, bypassing the Special Advisory Committee. The vote was spurred on by concerns that a planned protest at the Cornwallis statue could turn violent. A memo from the Halifax Regional Council explained the rationale for removal, noting the statue had become a flashpoint for protests and represented an obstacle to

[212] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 184.
[213] Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs, "The Assembly Calls for Cornwallis Statue to be Removed Immediately," Facebook, January 26, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/AssemblyNSChiefs/photos/a.200481517137184/334456147073053/?type=3.

engaging Indigenous communities "in dialogue about how to commemorate our shared history and how to engage in dialogue on reconciliation."[214] The Cornwallis statue was removed from its plinth on January 31, 2018, and taken to an undisclosed municipal storage location to prevent vandalism.[215] Daniel Paul was pleased the Halifax Regional Council had finally voted to remove the statue, even though the statue's future was not yet certain: "It took an awful long time for them to make the right decision, but I figured sometime they would. I've been at this for over 30 years."[216] After 30 years, the memory Paul had brought to greater public attention had gained a significant concession in the removal of the statue.

In both Victoria and Halifax, a sudden vote preceded removal. Unlike Victoria, the Halifax removal was the result of pent up frustration as a result of the inaction of the Regional Council. In a Facebook post by The Assembly of Mi'kmaq Chiefs, Chief Bob Gloade of Millbrook First Nation stated: "We have been more than patient to see movement on this… The Mi'kmaq need to see action now, and this is why we voted for the statue to be immediately removed."[217] Taking down the statue in this situation changed from an end goal of the chiefs to a demand, as a sign of commitment to reconciliation on the part of Halifax. Such sudden shifts in policy are not ideal. For years, campaigners in Halifax had suggested that removal, or a plaque

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[214] Halifax Regional Council, *Action Summary: Item Number 17.1 Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis*, January 30, 2018, https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/as180130ca.pdf.
[215] Zane Woodford, "Cornwallis Statue Removed from Halifax Park," *The Star*, January 31, 2018, https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2018/01/31/cornwallis-statue-removed-from-halifax-park.html.
[216] Justin Brake, "'Save our Statue' Posters Appear as Halifax Prepares to Remove Cornwallis Statue," *APTN National News*, January 31, 2018, https://aptnnews.ca/2018/01/31/save-statue-posters-appear-halifax-prepares-remove-cornwallis-statue/.
[217] Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs, "The Assembly Calls for Cornwallis Statue to be Removed Immediately," Facebook, January 26, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/AssemblyNSChiefs/photos/a.200481517137184/334456147073053/?type=3.

with a more complete history of the figure, would be acceptable options. Earlier action in addressing Indigenous concerns may have avoided some of the current acrimony.

As with the Chinese community in British Columbia, there are other groups in Nova Scotia that have reasons for supporting the removal of Cornwallis's statue. Cornwallis was a notorious figure for Scottish highlanders. During his time fighting to suppress the Stuart Rebellion, he led 320 soldiers in the western Highlands. His soldiers looted property, destroyed crops and livestock, and burned Jacobite families in their homes.[218] About one-third of Nova Scotians are descended from Gaelic-speaking settlers from the islands and highlands of Scotland.[219] Acadians in Nova Scotia likewise suffered at the hands of Cornwallis, as British policy makers wished to see them, like the Mi'kmaq, assimilated into a new English-speaking and Protestant colony. Their population often intermarried with the Mi'kmaq, and there are some reports that bounties were also paid for Acadian scalps.[220] It has been the collective memories of Indigenous groups that have led to the statue removals in both Halifax and Victoria, rather than a general historical reckoning with all groups in Canadian society.

Thus far, the statue removals have been explored as a matter of qualitative analysis, presenting different views and opinions about the removals and the historical figures of Macdonald and Cornwallis. This is partly due to the majority of media reporting focusing on statements of opinions to show the different sides of the debate, without giving any measure of the degree to which these opinions are held by the Canadian public. The case studies now

[218] Tattrie, "Edward Cornwallis."
[219] Michael MacDonald, "New Foes Emerge Against Halifax's Cornwallis Statue: Highlanders Descendants," *Global News*, April 16, 2018, globalnews.ca/news/4146750/new-foes-emerge-against-halifaxs-cornwallis-statue-highlanders-descendants.
[220] Paul, *We Were Not the Savages*, 122.

conclude with the quantitative findings of several polls of public opinion across Canada, and local polling in Halifax, concerning the removals.[221]

4.4 Measures of Public Opinion on Statue Removal and Commemoration

Polling helps illustrate the extent to which the emergent memories of Macdonald and Cornwallis have shifted public opinion against these figures, and to what degree the public, as the intended audience of the statues, remains supportive of the statues. The quantitative findings of these surveys are useful in providing wider social context and a more nuanced look at public opinion than is commonly found in media reports on this subject.

Several polls measuring the public's opinion on the statue removals in Victoria were conducted in Canada in 2017 and 2018. An Angus Reid poll, conducted during August of 2018, questioned respondents on the Victoria removal. The numbers showed that the removal was not merely a local issue, as it garnered a high degree of national awareness. Only 22 percent of respondents were unaware of the controversy.[222] To gauge opinion on the removal, respondents were asked: "based on whatever you have read, seen or heard about this issue, do you support or oppose the removal of the statue of John A. Macdonald from city hall in Victoria?" Canada-wide, 55 percent opposed the removal, 25 percent were in support, and 20 percent were unsure. In British Columbia itself, the results closely mirrored those of Canada overall: 57 percent of

[221] No local polling for Victoria was found during the research for this thesis. One unrepresentative sample of public opinion came from *The Times Colonist* letters to the editor page. It reported that by 6 p.m. of August 9, the day of the removal vote in Victoria City Council, the newspaper had received 67 letters, with 64 letters opposing the move of Macdonald's statue. Bruce MacKenzie, ed., "Comment: Statue of Macdonald to be Removed," letters to the editor, *Times Colonist*, August 10, 2018, A11. (File CL-00143-Statues, City of Victoria Archives).
[222] Angus Reid Institute, "Questions V4 to V8 (QV4–8)," accessed March 2, 2019, http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018.08.31-MacDonald-Holiday-ReleaseTables.pdf.

British Columbians opposed the removal, while 25 percent supported it. Those opposed to the removal outnumbered those in support in every province, ranging from a high of 81 percent opposed in Saskatchewan, to a low of 38 percent opposed in Quebec. In all provinces, except Quebec, more than half of respondents opposed the removal. Support for the removal ranged from a low of 11 percent in Saskatchewan, to a high of 31 percent in Quebec.[223]

Levels of support and opposition differed based on who respondents had voted for in the 2015 federal election. Just over 80 percent of Conservative Party voters opposed the removal. Centre-left voters were more split on the issue, with 47 percent of 2015 Liberal voters opposing removal, compared to 33 percent supporting. Among 2015 New Democratic Party (NDP) voters, slightly more supported than opposed the move, with 40 percent in favour and 37 percent opposed.[224] This partisan divide on the issue, in which Conservative voters are most opposed to removal and NDP voters most in favour, has played out in public policy positions. The Progressive Conservative government of Rob Ford in Ontario offered to take the statue from Victoria shortly after the removal.[225] In contrast, as mentioned previously, the NDP premier of British Columbia expressed reluctance to take the statue in March 2019. The federal riding of Victoria has been held by the NDP since 2006; in the 2015 election, the Conservative party candidate finished in fourth place. Likewise, the federal riding of Halifax had been an NDP riding from 1997 to 2015, at which point it was won by the Liberal Party. Therefore, the statue

[223] Angus Reid Institute, "In Debate Over First PM's Legacy, Vast Majority Say John A. Macdonald's Name, Image Should Stay in Public View," September 5, 2018, http://angusreid.org/macdonald-reconciliation/. The poll has stated a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.
[224] Angus Reid Institute, "Debate Over Legacy."
[225] Wendy Stueck, "Victoria Rejects Ontario Government Offer to Take Ownership of Controversial Statue of Sir John A. Macdonald," *The Globe and Mail*, August 13, 2018, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-victoria-rejects-ontario-government-offer-to-take-ownership-of/.

removals in Victoria and Halifax may be more acceptable to the political leanings of the local population than to national opinion at large.

The Angus Reid poll also asked respondents what they would do with the statue. When the question was posed this way (compared to a binary question in favour of removal or not), more openness was shown for removing Macdonald's statue. Overall, 44 percent would choose to put the statue in a museum with information about its history. Another 13 percent would relocate the statue to another public place in the city. Returning the statue to its original placement at City Hall was the preferred option of 37 percent of respondents. Only six percent would not display the Macdonald statue in public again.[226] This finding may speak to an underlying dynamic, lost in media reports that only discuss support or opposition to the statue remaining in place. What respondents want to see happen to the statue beyond this binary choice is not usually explored.

The Angus Reid poll showed that a great majority of respondents did not want the statue to be removed permanently from public display, and that a museum option was a choice with broad support. Only 15 percent of those who support the removal of the statue would not display it in public again. Of those who support the removal, 68 percent want to see the statue placed in a museum. Significantly, 26 percent of those who initially opposed the removal would also prefer a museum option when given that option.[227] An earlier poll by Angus Reid, conducted in August 2018 shortly after the Macdonald statue removal, also found that 71 percent of Canadians overall agreed with the statement that statues like Macdonald's would be better displayed in a museum,

[226] Angus Reid Institute, "Debate Over First PM's Legacy."
[227] Angus Reid Institute, "Debate Over First PM's Legacy."

where they could be viewed with "proper historical context."[228] In other words, Angus Reid's polling shows that most people who favour removal of the statue from Victoria City Hall still want it to be displayed publicly. As well, many who say they oppose removal would actually favour moving the statue to a museum if that option were presented to them.

Exploring public opinion in this more nuanced way suggests possible means of navigating statue controversies to produce less acrimony. Taking down the Macdonald statue without a stated plan for future display has led to fears that it would be permanently removed from public view, the least popular option. Those who are responsible for making decisions about removing statues might do well to take note of this concern, and present plans for future display before removals occur, if they wish to build wider support for removal. A removal with no plans for future display does not fit with public opinion: communicating a museum or other display possibility with broad public support before removal occurs would likely lessen public tensions. It may be true, as Mayor Helps said, that these decisions will always be contentious, but there are pathways available to decision makers that have the potential to achieve broad public support and diminish the likelihood of future controversy.

On the wider question of Macdonald's name and image remaining in public view, respondents were more uniform in their opinions. The August 2018 poll by Angus Reid asked respondents which of two options was closer to how they felt: the name and image of John A. Macdonald should be removed from public view, or should remain in public view. Remain was chosen by 70 percent, remove by 11 percent, and 19 percent were unsure. On the question of

[228] Angus Reid Institute, "What's in a Name? Call to Remove John A. Macdonald's from Schools Meets Firm Opposition," August 28, 2017, http://angusreid.org/indigenous-macdonald-monument/. This poll did not ask about support or opposition to the removal of the Macdonald statue. The poll has stated a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

how to judge historical figures generally, Canadians were sympathetic to an historicist approach. It was agreed by 69 percent that: "we should not judge historical figures by today's concepts of racism," and 88 percent agreed that: "we should take into account the entire life of an individual and principal legacy they left behind."[229] Given the continuing public support for Macdonald, as demonstrated by the polling, it is striking that the statue of a figure whose collective memory in Canada had once been so overwhelmingly positive has now become a political liability, unwanted by both Mayor Helps and Premier Horgan.

As with the Victoria removal, a number of polls were done to measure public opinion about the Cornwallis statue removal. These polls were taken in 2017, before the statue was removed. A Corporate Research Associates (CRA) poll conducted within the Halifax area, done in April and May, found 58 percent of respondents disagreed that Edward Cornwallis's name should be removed from public infrastructure, such as parks, buildings, and street signs, and only 31 percent agreed that the name should be removed.[230] Another CRA poll, conducted in October and November of 2017, found little movement from their previous survey, with disagreement with removing the statue and name at 56 percent (down two percent), and agreement still at 31 percent.[231]

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[229] Angus Reid Institute, "What's in a Name."

[230] Corporate Research Associates, *Majority of Halifax Residents Disagree with the Removal of Edward Cornwallis' Name from Public Infrastructure*, May 23, 2017, https://cra.ca/majority-of-halifax-residents-disagree-with-the-removal-of-edward-cornwallis-name-from-public-infrastructure/. Both CRA polls cited in this thesis give a margin of error of ± 4.9 percent, 95 out of 100 times. Both CRA and Angus Reid have been deemed to have acceptable methodology by the CBC polling expert Éric Grenier for his work. Polling results must of course be taken with caution.

[231] Corporate Research Associates, *Majority of Halifax Residents Continue to Disagree with the Removal of Edward Cornwallis' Name from Public Infrastructure*, November 28, 2017, https://cra.ca/majority-of-halifax-residents-continue-to-disagree-with-the-removal-of-edward-cornwallis-name-from-public-infrastructure/.

Angus Reid also polled national opinion in 2017 regarding the Cornwallis statue controversy. In this case, support for removal was much higher nationally than was seen with the Macdonald statue. Respondents were asked whether they supported or opposed removing the statue and changing the name of Cornwallis Square. Nationally, 36 percent opposed the proposed changes, while 41 percent were in support. In the Atlantic region, 40 percent opposed the removal, while 32 percent supported removal. The Angus Reid press release suggested that a lack of familiarity with Cornwallis among Canadians may be the reason for a lower level of support for his statue remaining in place compared to Macdonald. Greater familiarity may also be the reason why Atlantic Canadians would be most in support of his statue remaining. Breakdown of opinion by 2015 federal vote followed a similar pattern for Cornwallis as it did with Macdonald. Only 26 percent of Conservative voters supported the removal, while 50 percent of Liberal and 57 percent of NDP supporters were in favour.[232]

This divergence between public opinion and the outcomes in these statue disputes is a significant point. This may make sense in the context of reconciliation, an aim many political entities in Canada are currently addressing. Politicians may be making decisions not on the basis of popular will, but rather on a policy-decision framework that centres on the grievances of Indigenous groups. Pierre Nora's idea of domestic decolonization, in which the narratives of contemporary societies have been destabilized by the voice and power of minority groups, can be recognized in the efforts towards reconciliation seen in the Victoria and Halifax statue removals.[233]

[232] Angus Reid Institute, "What's in a Name."
[233] Nora, "Reasons Upsurge in Memory," 5.

Maurice Halbwachs' theory of how the dominant collective memories of society can change accords well with the described events:

> If the ideas of today are capable of being opposed to recollections and of prevailing over them to the extent of transforming them, this is because such ideas correspond to a collective experience … What a group opposes to its past is not its present; it is rather the past … of other groups with whom [it identifies].[234]

Halbwachs, then, might identify the current monument removals as evidence that a change is happening, with one set of ideas, one collective memory, being replaced by another. Phil Fontaine suggests it is time for such a change in his foreword for the book *A Knock on the Door*. He writes that the TRC report shows that Canada needs "transformation…to embrace our true, shared culture and history—to understand that we are all, in fact, in this together."[235] Despite continuing discrimination against Indigenous peoples in Canadian society, the current support for moving monuments to museums suggests that a significant portion of non-Indigenous society is prepared to revisit their previous, wholly positive views of figures like Macdonald and Cornwallis, and learn about and accommodate the Indigenous experience of these figures.

[234] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 184.
[235] TRC, *Knock on the Door*, viii. *A Knock on the Door* is a condensed version of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, meant to provide a more accessible format. The TRC remains the author, with Fontaine providing a new foreword.

Figure 6. Hantsheroes (Wikimedia contributor). *Edward Cornwallis Statue*, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Digital Photograph. 8 July 2011. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CornwallisStatueHalifaxNovaScotia.jpg

Chapter 5

Conclusion

At the heart of these statue disputes is the issue of appropriately judging and commemorating historical figures whose actions are deeply flawed by modern standards of morality. This thesis examined the relevance of Maurice Halbwachs' and Pierre Nora's work on collective memory to this question. Differing, and in these cases conflicting, memories can exist around the same site, held by different groups within society and competing for public recognition. Conflicting memories have been identified as the main motivating factors in the removal of the statues of John A. Macdonald and Edward Cornwallis, with the Indigenous experiences of these men challenging the more positive and long-standing memories that have previously dominated their public images. Two interpretations of these figures are competing to determine who is honoured in Canadian public spaces. As the process of reconciliation continues in Canada, it is likely that similar reinterpretations of historical figures will occur.

The case studies of this thesis also demonstrate a point about *lieux de mémoire*; namely, that a site of memory does not necessarily hold a single memory, but rather can be a place where multiple memories converge and compete. The collective memories of a site are neither singular nor static. While Halbwachs and Nora have addressed how collective memory can develop and shift, this thesis examines cases in which memories are actively being advocated and argued for, to determine which memories will be endorsed in public spaces by statuary. The concept of competition between simultaneous collective memories is underexamined in the writings of Nora and Halbwachs. The concept of competing memories could be expanded by scholars interested in the recent spate of monument removals in Canada, South Africa, and the United States.

Alongside these recent examples, the thesis also pointed out historical precedents of cultural destruction in times of social change. Most clearly analogous to the Victoria and Halifax statue removals is the removal of the Leninplatz statue, a municipal decision taken against the backdrop of divided public opinion in a situation where two competing memories were brought to a focal point in the statue. Just as Germans grappled over the question of whose memory would be represented in the public sphere, members of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities are now debating how to commemorate Canadian history, while holding divergent memories of historical figures.

In the Canadian case studies and the Leninplatz example, a relatively small number of politically powerful people actually made the decisions about raising or removing the statues. Although separated by fifty years and the entire breadth of Canada geographically, the commissions for the Macdonald and the Cornwallis statues were organized by politicians and business people. It was the opinion of city councillors that determined whether the statues stayed or were removed in Berlin, Victoria and Halifax, rather than a decision taken by local residents. According to opinion polling, the decision to remove the Macdonald statue appears to lack popularity nationally, and the Cornwallis statue removal lacked approval locally.

In these cases, opponents of removal have expressed the concern that by removing the statues, history itself (be it seen as positive or negative) is being erased or hidden. Such an assertion again demonstrates the perceived connection between memory, history, and the physical markers of the past that a society creates. The statues of Macdonald and Cornwallis are imbued with significance beyond their material or aesthetic value. They are seen to contain a portion of history, which is lost when they are removed. This is not to conflate the severe experiences of cultural destruction described in Bevan's examples with recent Canadian

removals. Rather, it is to note that even in the Canadian case studies presented in this thesis, the connection between a physical object and an immaterial memory is made.

The recent visibility of Indigenous issues in Canada, which has increased since the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, has created a greater awareness of Indigenous relations. This visibility is having an effect on policy-making in Canada. While the Canadian case studies of this thesis have been well-publicized, they are not the only examples of statues, memorials, names of buildings, streets and schools, and even gravesites in Canada that have become the centre of controversy and protest because of Indigenous concerns in recent years. John A. Macdonald statues in Montreal, Regina and Kingston have been targeted repeatedly with paint attacks.[236] In 2015, a planned walkway of prime ministerial busts at Wilfrid Laurier University was terminated over concerns it would be culturally insensitive to Indigenous Canadians.[237] In Ottawa in 2017, Sir Hector-Louis Langevin's name was removed from the Langevin Block building, which houses the offices of the Prime Minister and the Privy Council. The federal government made this decision based on the role Langevin, a lesser known "father of Confederation," played in the establishment of the residential school system.[238] In 2018, a plaque

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[236] *CTV News Montreal*, "Sir John A. Macdonald Statue Vandalized for Fourth Time," December 24, 2018, https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/sir-john-a-macdonald-statue-vandalized-for-fourth-time-1.4230319;
Regina Leader-Post, "Statue of Sir John A. Macdonald in Victoria Park Vandalized Again," August 21, 2018, https://leaderpost.com/news/local-news/statue-of-john-a-macdonald-in-victoria-park-vandalized-again;
Ian Austen, "Canada, Too, Faces a Reckoning with History and Racism," *The New York Times*, August 28, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/28/world/americas/canada-john-a-macdonald-kingston.html.

[237] Tristin Hopper, "Statues to Memorialize Canada's Prime Ministers Would be 'Culturally Insensitive': University," *The National Post*, October 21, 2015, https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/statues-to-memorialize-canadas-prime-ministers-would-be-culturally-insensitive-university.

[238] Bruce Campion-Smith, "In Deference to Indigenous Peoples, Trudeau Strips 'Langevin Block' Name from PM's Office," *The Star*, June 21, 2017,

was erected at Ryerson University, a short distance from the statue of Egerton Ryerson, explaining his part in the beginning of the residential school system.[239] The statue removals of Macdonald in Victoria and Cornwallis in Halifax are, therefore, not isolated incidents, but rather two examples in a nationwide debate about the appropriateness of honouring figures in Canadian history linked with colonialism.

The fact that statues have simultaneously become the most prominent flashpoint of similar debates worldwide cannot be overlooked. Statues have acted as magnets for public protest in a way that other landmarks and plaques generally have not. A number of factors may explain why public statues are such potent symbols for their detractors and supporters alike, including their high visibility, their honorary nature, and their psychologically provocative quality as likenesses of specific, powerful people. This phenomenon may also be due in part to the limited area of the statue sites; it is easier to protest around the base of a statue than to find an appropriate place along the banks of the Cornwallis River to protest against the use of the name, Cornwallis.

The impression should not be given, however, that Canada is at a place where opinion has shifted so strongly that calls for removing public honours are automatically successful. For example, in 2018, a call to remove the Macdonald name from schools in Ontario by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario was rejected by the Liberal Government of Kathleen

https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/06/21/in-deference-to-indigenous-peoples-trudeau-strips-langevin-block-name-from-pms-office.html.

[239] "Ryerson Unveils Plaque Next to Egerton Ryerson Statue," Ryerson University, June 28, 2018, https://www.ryerson.ca/equity/news/ryerson-unveils-plaque-next-to-egerton-ryerson-statue/.

Wynne.[240] Moreover, at this time, public opinion seems to support Macdonald remaining on view, and in many cases, continuing to be commemorated.

The relatively small number of concessions that have been made to Macdonald's new memory must be weighed against Macdonald's iconic status. To quote again from the RBC pamphlet, no Canadian politician has ever been "better loved" than Macdonald has been until recently.[241] His many decades at the forefront of national politics make Macdonald an inarguably important figure in Canadian history. In comparison, the three years of limited success Cornwallis experienced in Halifax, and his indifferent career thereafter, is a legacy more easily brushed aside.[242] That both Mayor Helps and Premier Horgan are looking for solutions to a "Macdonald problem" shows the degree to which Macdonald's former positive memory has been challenged.

The future of Macdonald's many remaining statues, and the statues of other figures from Canadian history, remains to be seen. Perhaps like Nora's seashell, they may now be stranded, outdated, and destined for removal, as the tide of social approval ebbs away. Alternatively, 2018 may have been a high mark for removal sentiment in Canada, especially given the lack of wide support for removals in public opinion. The future of these statues will depend on how collective memory in Canadian society continues to develop. If the next stages take a presentist approach

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[240] Graham Slaughter, "Premier: Union 'Missed the Mark' in Call to Rename Sir John A. Macdonald Schools," *CTV News*, August 24, 2017, https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/premier-union-missed-the-mark-in-call-to-rename-sir-john-a-macdonald-schools-1.3559577

[241] RBC, "Great John A.," 4.

[242] *The Junior Encyclopedia of Canada* humorously describes his life after Nova Scotia: "He was criticized by the authorities in Britain for spending too much money [during his time in Nova Scotia]. Never one to give in to criticism, Cornwallis had a stormy career in the years that followed. But he was son of a lord and had powerful friends, so continued to get important appointments." That he is described with such derision in an encyclopedia aimed at youth shows his reputation may have already been on the wane by 1990. *The Junior Encyclopedia of Canada*, s.v. "Cornwallis, Edward," (Edmonton, AB: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1990).

that favours outright condemnation, many more statues will likely be removed. Alternatively, Canadian memory may find a new equilibrium. New solutions that leave statues in place but are mindful of Indigenous memories may be found, such as in situ reinterpretation as a means of education. Canadian society might also come to favour removal to museums with full historical context, which is already a popular option. What does seem clear is that uncomplicated, fully positive views of figures like Macdonald and Cornwallis are no longer tenable, and are being reworked as Canadian society grapples with its increasing awareness of Indigenous history. In these statue removals, we may be observing Canada's public art in the first stages of coming to terms with this reworking of memory.

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Appendix

Figure 7. Letter from artist John Dann to Lisa Helps, Mayor of Victoria, dated September 9, 2018, released on his Twitter account @johwilldann. https://twitter.com/johwilldann/status/1027928561452167168:

Dear Mayor Helps,

I learned today that the city of Victoria intends to remove on Saturday the bronze sculpture of John Macdonald which I made in 1981 and which was installed before Victoria City Hall on 1 July 1982. I do not know how the City came to this decision, or when, but you are quoted as saying:

"We will remove the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald from the front doors of city hall so that the family members and other Indigenous people do not need to walk past this painful reminder of colonial violence each time they enter the doors of their municipal government." (Vancouver Sun)

If my sculpture can engender a discussion about the violence inflicted on Native Peoples, then frankly, I am honoured. I am not sure that removing the sculpture is the best way to accomplish this, however the sculpture belongs to the city and it may do with it as it pleases, governed, of course by law, including artists' rights. I do not stand in the way of the removal, if you indeed go ahead. I would have prefered (sic) to have been able to be there to exchange ideas with those who wish it removed. I created it, I stand by what I created.

It is not a representation of a single person, J.A. Macdonald, the title of the piece, but it is a work of art, representing all humanity. I suspect that any artist, particularly those concerned with universal concepts as most Native Canadian artists are would concur with me.

As far as this controversy in concerned, there is no question that a genocidal wave over a few centuries swept away Native cultures in the New World, which had existed long before the invention of monotheism or Western Civilization.

It was the notion of religious and cultural rectitude which gave the European empire builders the unflagging hubris to impose their beliefs on those they viewed as savages. According to European norms they must be savages as they had not 'God', nor 'education', nor 'culture'. To see them otherwise would have required Europeans to question their own identity, to set themselves at odds with prevailing thought.

John A. Macdonald did not disagree with prevailing thought, he was a leading exponent of it. These ideas are repugnant to us today, they offend us. We abhor the genocide, the spreading of smallpox, the theft, the racism, yet we are reluctant to acknowledge that the wealth we enjoy, which is deprived to the Native People, is directly proportional to the

degree of theft and oppression they suffered. It is a small wonder a descendant of this oppression, one who feels it is alive even today, is hostile to my sculpture, at least at first.

I was pleased with this sculpture when I made it in 1981, and I am pleased with it now. First and foremost as a sculpture. It occupies its space with dynamism, vigor, it offers the viewer diverse themes of calm, thoughtfulness and action. It is contradictory, ambiguous and provokes a reasoned response, if one looks at it with attention. I am pleased with it as a sculpture.

As a portrait, again I am pleased with it. I would ask people to look at it not as a specific person (an odd request perhaps for a portrait). I think this sculpture works as a human expression, an expression of a common humanity. Here we see a confidence, not untouched by vulnerability, arrogance not without humility, swagger not devoid of humour. We have here the strengths and flaws of Macdonald and of ourselves. It is important to recognize those strengths and flaws in Macdonald and those of his time, yet to be aware of them also in ourselves.

Macdonald is gone, his time is gone. We are those who must disavow racism, cultural hegemony… perhaps find common ground with those whose cultures lived in harmony with a once pristine paradise.

Sincerely,

John Dann

Figure 8. Wording of plaque on former site of Sir John A. Macdonald statue. City Hall entrance door, Victoria, British Columbia, January 9, 2019:

In 2017, the City of Victoria began a journey of Truth and Reconciliation with the Lekwungen peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, on whose territories the city stands.

The members of the City Family – part of the City's Witness Reconciliation Program – have determined that to show progress on the path of reconciliation the City should remove the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald from the front doors of City Hall, while the City, the Nations and the wider community grapple with Macdonald's complex history as both the first Prime Minister of Canada and a leader of violence against Indigenous Peoples.

The statue is being stored safely in a city facility. We will keep the public informed as the Witness Reconciliation Program unfolds, and as we find a way to recontextualize Macdonald in an appropriate way.