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MACKENZIE'S

OWN

**NARRATIVE**

OF

**THE LATE REBELLION,**

WITH

**ILLUSTRATIONS AND NOTES,**

*CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY:*

EXHIBITING THE ONLY TRUE ACCOUNT OF WHAT TOOK PLACE

AT THE

**MEMORABLE SIEGE**

OF

**TORONTO,**

IN THE MONTH OF DECEMBER,

**1837.**

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Price 1s.

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1838.

## INTRODUCTION.

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UNTIL a more compendious History of those important Events which have occupied the attention of, and given the most serious excitement to, the Canadian Public, for the last few months;—together with more extensive details, and copies of all the documents relating thereto—can be prepared; all which will form a volume of considerable dimensions, the following NARRATIVE, originally written for, and sent to, the Editor of the *Jeffersonian*—a newspaper published at *Watertown*, in the State of New-York, by the *Arch-Traitor* MACKENZIE, himself, will be read with the deepest interest by all classes of Society in the Canadas, and even beyond the boundaries of the British Provinces in America. It is authentic; and contains more truth than MACKENZIE, generally threw into his injurious compositions.

Our Canadian Editor of this work, however, cannot permit it to go forth in this country, without explanatory Notes, corrective of the errors fallen into by the original writer of the *Narrative*, where they evidently occur; together with a few introductory remarks.

The seeds of dissatisfaction towards the Executive in Upper Canada were first extensively sown by ROBERT GOURLAY, Esq., the well known Scottish Reformer; whose objects, however, it cannot now be well doubted, were HONEST. Those seeds were greatly advanced towards maturity by the unfortunate agitation of the ALIEN QUESTION; but the Chief, most deeply rooted, and incessantly active, cause of all the principal mischief lies in the OLIGARCHY, which has been suffered to mature itself into the most frightful and calamitous power that ever afflicted an extensive, rich, and beautiful Province; and a brave and otherwise loyal people. The system of exclusiveness, and the merciless persecution of all those who refuse to bend the knee to the narrow-minded policy, and arbitrary power of the FAMILY COMPACT; the consequent favoritism; and the baneful spirit of monopoly; with countless evils beside,—which have resulted from the combined interests of a few upstart families, unfortunately entrusted with power at an early period in the Government of the Colony,—have caused, and will continue to cause, without the immediate interference of the strong arm of the IMPERIAL POWER—the most serious discontents, and a general paralysis in the affairs of the Country.

So skilfully are the snares of this destructive *Compact* laid, that it seems to matter but little *who* is sent out as Governor; for Governor after Governor invariably falls into their hands, and becomes a mere instrument to effect their own purposes—abundant evidence of this fact, even under the *vaunted firmness justice*, and decision of *character*, of SIR F. B. HEAD—may be seen in the greater part of the late civil, and especially in the late military, appointments.

With the knowledge of all these facts we must not be surprized at the conduct of Governor HEAD, a little previous to, and during the outbreak; nor must we censure *him* for *all* the blindness and imbecility which characterized the Executive on that occasion. As the MONARCH of ENGLAND, politically, can do no wrong—so are we willing that the REPRESENTATIVE here shall be protected behind the *dark curtain* of his Councillors!



GOVERNOR HEAD, AND HIS COUNCILLORS TOO, WERE IN POSSESSION OF ALL THE NECESSARY FACTS TO PUT DOWN THE LATE INSURRECTION IN ITS STATE OF INCIPIENCY!!! They did *not* put it down; nor *attempt* to put it down; but laughed at, or treated with contempt their informants;—no matter how respectable, or deserving of credence, those informants were; *ergo*, their doctrine is, that if a man does *not* wish his house and family blown into atoms and himself destroyed—he permits an immense quantity of gunpowder to be put into his cellar; the torch which is destined to cause its explosion, to be lighted; and the assassin, who bears it, actually to enter the said cellar, whilst he, himself, very quietly, “*poor easy man,*” goes to sleep, in the mantle of his precautions, immediately above the aforesaid combustibles!!!—According to such a doctrine, too, people who wish to live in domestic peace and harmony, must be kept in continual, and alarming agitation; and in civil broils and discord; and, further, that the best way to clear off the incumbrances of an already deeply mortgaged estate is to burthen it with an additional debt of FOUR MILLIONS of DOLLARS!!!—Well, well, the “*School-master is abroad;*”—and, clearly *not* without his *cat-o’-nine tails*; and the elders of our land must at length confess that *their* elders, from Adam downwards—knew nothing!!!

It may be scarcely now necessary to remark that, up to Sunday evening, the 3rd of December last, no precautionary steps of any kind were taken to defend the City of Toronto—the first-avowed object of attack on the part of the rebels—although rumours of their immediate approach were rife—and there is *not the smallest doubt*, in all human appearance, and by all ordinary rules of calculation, that the City might have been taken and sacked; and burnt; the Banks plundered; public archives destroyed; and all persons obnoxious to the rebels, *butchered* in the short space of an hour or two—in either of the nights of December 3rd or 4th, without let or hindrance, had their leaders pushed on to the catastrophe, when hanging on the skirts of the City—during the awful interval of those two nights; nay, it is a *fact*—that the greater part of the very arms brought for the defence of the City, many weeks before, *were not even unpacked until Tuesday morning, the 5th of December*—but two days before the decisive engagement at Montgomery’s Hill, on Thursday, the 7th instant!!!

The manifestations of Divine Favour have been most striking, and many, throughout the scenes herein narrated—and claim the deepest, and most lasting gratitude of our people. But, under the protecting favour of the ever GRACIOUS and ALMIGHTY GOD, no one can read the following pages without feeling convinced that our much respected, high-spirited, yet unassuming CHIEF MAGISTRATE of the City—was the main instrument in its preservation; for *Anderson* whose career was checked so opportunely, and so effectually, was the General upon whom Mackenzie relied for success; and, had he not fallen, the attack on the City would undoubtedly have been made that night. Since neither the Executive, nor the Parliament have seen fit to reward Mr. POWELL for his gallant conduct, and for the very essential service he has rendered,—we hope a public meeting will be called to give some lasting testimony of the meritorious light in which that service is viewed by the whole community.

Proceed we, now, to the Narrative.

**AN ACCOUNT**  
OF THE  
**REBELLION NEAR TORONTO.**

BY WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE.

*Addressed to the Editor of the Jeffersonian Newspaper, at Watertown, in the State of New-York.*

NAVY ISLAND, U. C., 14th January, 1838.

DEAR SIR,

I received yesterday three or four of your latest papers, with a couple of the *Upper Canada Herald*s of last month, and letters from Messrs. McLeod and Fletcher, dated at Watertown, the 2d instant. In one of these *Herald*s, I find a very incorrect narrative of the insurrection at Toronto; and as your journal probably circulates in the same section of the country, and there is no likelihood the Kingston editor would permit me to correct his errors, I request that you will publish this statement, at your leisure, in the *Jeffersonian*. I also send for your perusal the *ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT* of last Tuesday, with a long article over my signature, entitled "*Reasons for a Revolution in Canada*," the perusal of which might perhaps be acceptable to the old friends and neighbors of your fellow citizen, John G. Pater.

**NARRATIVE, &c.**

ON the 31st of July last, the Reformers of Toronto responded to the request of their fellow sufferers in Lower Canada, by the appointment of ward committees of vigilance,<sup>1</sup> the passage of resolutions of sympathy and co-operation, and the adoption of a declaration of rights and grievances, which only differed from your great Declaration of 1776, in that it did not at once proclaim the Province independent, nor enumerate, in all cases, the same complaints.

[1] Early in September last, the Governor was made acquainted with the nature, extent, and objects of these secret Committees in one of the most seditious quarters of the Home District, by an active Magistrate of Pickering, who had taken measures to watch their every motion. But it was all without any useful effect. Sir F. B. Head was in such hands, that, if a prophet had risen from the dead—his admonitions would have been equally ineffectual!



The Reformers had taken great pains to inform the British Government of the true state of affairs in Upper Canada, and many believed that Sir Francis Bond Head would do what he could to remove the chief causes of discontent, until the proceedings of the executive previous to, and at the last general election of a House of Assembly, convinced them that nothing but a revolution would relieve the country. This opinion I was confirmed in, by observing that when the Assembly of Lower Canada deferred granting supplies until their wrongs would be redressed, the House of Commons of England, by a vote of about ten to one, and the Lords unanimously (Lord Brougham alone dissenting,) resolved, that the proceeds of the revenue raised in that colony, both by Provincial and British Statutes, should be expended without the consent of the Representatives of the People, or the form of law, in keeping up a costly form of government in which the governed had no share.<sup>2</sup>

In the declaration of grievances of the 31st of July, the British Government were distinctly given to understand that revolt might be the consequence of its base duplicity. And that declaration was read, considered and approved at 200 public meetings in the country; 150 branch associations, agreeing to its principles, were speedily organized, and Sir F. B. Head was informed through the press, that the officers of these societies *might* be used as captains and Lieutenants of companies, for resistance by force, in case a change of his measures did not soon take place.<sup>3</sup>

The many scenes of violence and outrage which occurred at our public meetings between July and December I need not recount.<sup>4</sup> Let it suffice to say, that we kept up a good understanding with the Reformers of Lower Canada; and conclud-

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[2] All this is in the usual canting terms of the rebel party—to produce an effect amongst persons who are ignorant of the vast power which the representatives of the people possess in this Colony; and the rebels, themselves, cannot pretend to call their own representatives *Foreigners*, nor are they ignorant, though they pretend to be so, that every representation made through the Legislature, to the Imperial Government, is instantly attended to.

[3] Here is another "*palpable hit*" at the *wise* Councillors of His Excellency, who, so many months afterwards was caught "*napping*"!

[4] No; but those scenes ought to have convinced little *Mac* and his *Executive* of the resistance that would be made to any attempt towards an overthrow of the Government.

ing that arbitrary imprisonments and a declaration of military execution would follow the anticipated outbreak at Montreal, we resolved to second the Lower Canada movements by others, equally prompt and decisive.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the members of our branch societies were kept in ignorance of the intended revolt. Others were fully aware of it. Some whose names were attached to no association were leaders in the revolution—other very active republicans took no part.<sup>6</sup> The presses under my control sent forth nearly 3000 copies of a periodical filled with reasons for revolt, and about the third week in November it was determined that on Thursday the 7th of December, our forces should secretly assemble at Montgomery's Hotel, three miles back of Toronto, between six and ten at night, and proceed from thence to the city, join our friends there, seize 4000 stand of arms, which had been placed by Sir Francis in the city-hall,<sup>7</sup> take him into custody, with his chief advisers, place the garrison in the hands of the liberals, declare the Province free, call a convention together, to frame a suitable constitution, and meantime appoint our friend Dr. Rolph, provincial administrator of the government. We expected to do all this without shedding blood, well knowing that the vice regal government was too unpopular to have many *real* adherents.<sup>8</sup>

Only in one instance did we forward a notice of the intended movements beyond the limits of the County of York, and to Whitby<sup>9</sup> and some other towns in it; no circulars were

[5] The prelude to these secondary, or rather *simultaneous*, movements, we rather think might be traced up to the period when the *be-raised* BIDWELL, clandestinely introduced PAPINEAU's celebrated letter on the table in our House of Assembly.

[6] How could they be *very active* and yet *take no part*? Those Presses alluded to may be easily recognized. One of them, with the most extensive establishment, is fortunately now in other hands.

[7] One of the most extraordinary instances of infatuation on the part of the authorities, throughout the whole affair—is the *fact* that the greater part of those arms were actually *not unpacked* until Tuesday morning, the 5th of December, although they had been received many weeks before—and it was known that the rebels were assembling.

[8] This pretended humanity is too ridiculous for the credence of any one. One of the principal rebels in Young Street declared, that they were to begin by hanging Sir Francis B. Head from the top of his own flag-staff!!!

[9] Is it not most extraordinary that HUNTER, who is here alluded to, and who was, next to Mackenzie himself, the most active traitor of them all, in the country, should have been permitted to go at large on bail, after his arrest for *Treason*? The consequence was, that he immediately *absconded*, after writing a threatening letter to the Editor of this pamphlet.



sent. We never doubted the feeling of the Province. Sir Francis admits, in "his speech from the throne," that we would have cheerfully submitted the whole matter to a convention of the people.<sup>10</sup>

Twelve leading reformers in the city and county agreed, one day in November, that on Thursday the 7th of December last, between the hours of six and ten in the evening, the friends of freedom in the several townships, led by their captains, would meet at Montgomery's, march to Toronto, seize the arms we so much wanted, dismiss Sir Francis, and proclaim a Republic. The details were left entirely to my management; and an executive in the city was named to correspond with Mr. Papineau and our other friends below, afford intelligence, aid our efforts, and finally, to join the army at Montgomery's. It was also stipulated that no attempt should be made by that executive<sup>11</sup> to alter the time on which we were to revolt, without consulting with me in the first instance.

The country was ripe for a change, and I employed a fortnight previous to Sunday, the 3d December, in attending secret meetings, assisting in organizing towns and places, and otherwise preparing for the revolution. On that day, I rode from Stouffville, (where I had held two private meetings on the Saturday,) to Yonge-street; and arrived at Mr. Gibson's in the evening.<sup>12</sup> To my astonishment and dismay, I was informed by him, that although I had given the captains of townships sealed orders for the Thursday following, the executive, through him, by a mere verbal message, had ordered out the men beyond the ridge, to attend at Montgomery's with their arms next day, Monday, and that it was probable they were already on the march.

I instantly sent one of Mr. Gibson's servants to the north, countermanded the Monday movement, and begged Colonel Lount not to come down nor in any way disturb the previous regular arrangement, because neither of the other towns, nor

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[10] *Convention of the People!*—Why, what is that but yielding at once to the worst species of Republicanism

[11] Curiosity will be all agog in Toronto, to fix upon the individuals who formed this same *Executive!*

[12] On Saturday, the 2d instant, *Mackenzie* was seen with both hands in his breeches' pocket, knitted brows, and his hat drawn closely down over his eyes, and onst serious aspect—making a strict scrutiny of the Market Buildings—giving occasionally a significant nod, or wink, to some of the country people collected in the square.

the citizens of Toronto, were in any way prepared<sup>13</sup> for an alteration which, if persisted in, would surely ruin us. The servant returned on Monday, with a message from Mr. Lount, that it was now too late to stop, that the men were warned, and moving with their guns and pikes, on the march down Yonge-street, (a distance of 30 or 40 miles on the worst roads in the world,) and that the object of their rising could therefore be no longer concealed.

I was grieved and so was Mr. Gibson, but we had to make the best of it; accordingly I mounted my horse in the afternoon, rode in towards the city, took five trusty men with me, arrested several men on suspicion that they were going to Sir Francis with information, placed a guard on Yonge-street, the main northern avenue to Toronto, at Montgomery's, and another guard on a parallel road, and told them to allow none to pass the city. I then waited some time, expecting the executive to arrive, but waited in vain—no one came, not even a message—I was therefore left in entire ignorance of the condition of the capital; and instead of entering Toronto on Thursday, with 4000 or 5000 men was apparently expected to take it on Monday with 200,<sup>14</sup> wearied after a march of 30 or 40 miles through the mud, in the worst possible humor at finding they had been called from the very extremity of the county, and no one else warned at all.

About eight or nine o'clock, I accompanied Capt. Anderson of Lloydtown, Mr. Sheppard, and two others, on horseback, down Yonge-street, intending if no one came with tidings from the city to go there and ascertain how far an attack and seizure of the muskets and bayonets we so much needed, was practicable. There were warrants out for my apprehension, but I did not mind them much.

We had not proceeded far when we met Alderman John

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[13] Insidious and treacherous men are always cowardly, and we suspect that *Rolph's* heart failed him on *coming to the scratch*.

[14] It is not credible that so large a force of rebels could have been collected together on one point, under any circumstances! We are however clearly of the opinion that the city might have been captured, sacked, and destroyed, at any hour during the nights of Sunday the 3d, and Monday the 4th instant, in the total absence of all precaution on the part of the Government—even by a *less* force than 200 men, under dashing and spirited leaders—without that special interference of Divine Providence so wonderfully conspicuous throughout the whole affair!



Powell,<sup>15</sup> (now Mayor,) and Mr. Archibald McDonald, late of Kingston, on horseback, acting as a sort of patrol. I rode up to them, presented a double-barreled pistol,<sup>16</sup> informed them that the Democrats had risen in arms, that we wished to prevent information of that fact from reaching the city, and that they would have to go back to Montgomery's as prisoners, where they would be well treated, fed and lodged, and in no way injured in person or purse—but they must surrender to me their arms.<sup>17</sup> They both assured me they had none, and when I seemed to doubt, repeated the assurance; on which I said, “Well, gentlemen, as you are my townsmen, and men of honor, I would be ashamed to show that I question your words by ordering you to be searched;”<sup>18</sup> and turning to Messrs. Shepard and Anderson, I bade them place the gentlemen in the guard-room, and see that they were comfortable, after which I proceeded again towards the city.

Not many minutes afterwards I was overtaken by Alderman Powell, riding in great haste. I asked what it meant, and told him he must not proceed, except at his peril. He kept on, I followed and fired over my horse's head, but missed him. He slackened his pace till his horse was beside mine, and while I was expostulating with him, *he suddenly clapt a pistol quite close to my right breast*, but the priming flashed in the pan, and thus I was saved from instant death. At this moment McDonald rode back seemingly in great affright, and Powell escaped from me by the side bar, and by a circuitous route reached Toronto. McDonald appeared unable to explain, I

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[15] In order to ascertain the truth of all the facts connected with this part of the *Narrative*—and of the remarkable circumstances which occurred during that memorable evening—we waited upon our gallant and worthy MAYOR, and the result of our enquiries, which he very kindly and with much frankness answered, is so interesting and complete, that we have thrown the intelligence, we thus obtained, into an *Appendix*, to which we here beg leave to refer the reader.

[16] Mr. Powell thinks it was a large horse-pistol.

[17] Mr. Powell did not say that *he* was unarmed; and here it may be proper to name another providential circumstance—Mr. P. intended to have taken his fowling piece with him—but not being able to find its caps, he borrowed the pistols he carried from the *High-Bailiff*—one of which had a *percussion* and the other a *flint* lock. They were both small ones. It was the flint lock that flashed in the pan—by which incident Mackenzie's life was saved for that time. Had Mr. P. taken his gun with him, it is most probable his own life would have been sacrificed!

[18] Mr. P. declares that Mackenzie made no such courteous speeches, but muttered somewhat of his dissatisfaction. Mr. P. says that he clapt his pistol into M's. face, so closely, he thinks, as to touch it.

therefore sent him back the second time, and being now alone judged it most prudent to return to Montgomery's, on my way to which I encountered the murdered remains of the brave and generous Capt. Anthony Anderson, the victim of Powell's baseness. His body lay stretched in the road, but life was extinct. The manner of his death was as follows:—Sheppard and Anderson were accompanying Powell and McDonald on their way to the guard-room at Montgomery's, when Powell was observed to slacken his horse's pace a little—by this means he got behind Anderson, and taking a pistol from his pocket, shot him through the back of his neck, so that he fell and died instantly.<sup>19</sup> Sheppard's horse stumbled at the moment, Powell rode off and McDonald followed. Whether Powell is or is not a murderer, let the candid reader say. I give the facts.<sup>20</sup> On arriving at Montgomery's, I was told by the guard that Colonel Moodie of the army had attempted to pass the barrier, that they had told him what guard they were, that he had persisted and fired a pistol at them, on which one of the men levelled his rifle and shot him. He died in an hour or two after. I find it stated in many of the papers that I killed Colonel Moodie, although at the time of his death I was several miles distant, as those then present well know. But I fully approved of the conduct of those who shot him.

Sir Francis Head admits that he was entirely ignorant of our intended movement until awakened out of his bed that night. His informant, I believe to have been Capt. Bridgeford.<sup>21</sup> He had the bells sett a ringing, took up his abode in the city-hall, delivered out a few rusty guns, made speeches,

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[19] It is rather singular how Mackenzie could pretend to describe the manner of Anderson's death when he did not witness it! He however, is not very far wrong in this part of his narration—as will be seen by reference to Mr. P's account. Most of the rebels assert that he was not shot at all—if so why was the body so carefully concealed? Mr. P. declares that he had no intention of making resistance until he heard that poor MOODIE was killed—he then, naturally, concluded his own turn was next—and was determined to seize the first opportunity to escape.

[20] *Murder indeed!* Pray what was, and what is Mackenzie himself—and what title would he have taken unto himself, had he shot our worthy Chief Magistrate, which he attempted to do?

[21] No—it was Mr. Powell himself, who went directly after his most fortunate escape, to the Government House, and to *the bedside of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, AND AWOKE HIM!*—and ill has he been requited:—indeed, he has not been requited at all—except by the increased esteem of his fellow-citizens!!



and was in great trouble. Of all which particulars our executive neither brought nor sent us any account whatever.

About midnight our numbers increased, and towards morning I proposed to many persons to march to Toronto, join such of the reformers there as were ready, and endeavor to make ourselves master of the garrison and musquets.

To this it was objected, that I was uninformed of the strength of the fortress, that the other townships had not yet joined the men from the upper country, that we were ignorant of the state of the city, and that gentlemen who had advised and urged on the movements, and even the executive who had ordered this premature Monday rising, stood aloof, and had neither joined us nor communicated with us.

Next day (Tuesday) we increased in number to 800, of whom very many had no arms, others had rifles, old fowling pieces, Indian guns, pikes, &c. Vast numbers came and went off again, when they found we had neither musquets or bayonets. Had they possessed my feelings in favour of freedom, they would have stood by us even if armed but with pitch forks and broom handles.

About noon we obtained correct intelligence that with all his exertions, and including the college boys, Sir Francis could hardly raise 150 supporters<sup>22</sup> in town and country; and by one P. M. a flag of truce reached our camp near the city, the Messengers being the Honorables Messrs. Rolph and Baldwin,<sup>23</sup> deputed by Sir Francis to ask what would satisfy us, I replied, "Independence;" but sent a verbal message that we had no confidence in Sir F's word, he would have to send his messages in writing, and within one hour. I then turned round to Colonel Lount and advised him to march the men under his command at once into the city, and take a position near the Lawyer's Hall, and rode westward to Col. Baldwin's where the bulk of the rebels were, and advised an instant march to Toronto. We had advanced as far as the college avenue, when another flag of truce arrived, by the same messengers, with a message from Sir F. declining to comply

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[22] This all the City of Toronto well knows—and Mackenzie himself must have known when he wrote it, to be one of those deliberate falsehoods he took so much delight in uttering.

[23] Of all the absurdities during the whole affair, this embassy was the *most absurd!* It is, indeed, so inconceivably ridiculous, considering the character of the parties, as to be absolutely incredible, if it was not confirmed by so many witnesses!

with our previous request. We were proceeding to town, when orders from the executive arrived that we should not then go to Toronto, but wait till 6 o'clock in the evening and then take the city.

True to the principle on which the compact was made for our rising, the order was obeyed, and at a quarter to six the whole of our forces were near the toll bar, on Yonge-street, on our way to the city. I told them that I was certain there could be no difficulty in taking Toronto; that both in town and country the people had stood aloof from Sir Francis;<sup>24</sup> that not 150 men and boys could be got to defend him; that he was alarmed, and had got his family on board a steamer, that 600 reformers were ready waiting to join us in the city, and that all we had to do was to be firm, and with the city would at once go down every vestige of foreign government in U. C.<sup>25</sup>

It was dark, and there might be an ambush of some sort,<sup>26</sup> I therefore told six rifle men to go ahead of us a quarter of a mile on the one side of the street, inside the fences, and as many more on the other side, and to fire in the direction in which they might see any of our opponents stationed. When within half a mile of the town, we took prisoners the Captain of their Artillery, a Lawyer, and the Sheriff's horse. Our riflemen a head saw some 20 or 30 of the enemy in the road and fired at them, the 20 or 30, or some of them, fired at us, and instantly took to their heels and ran towards the town.—Our riflemen were in front, after them the pikemen, then those who had old guns of various kinds, and lastly those who carried only clubs and walkingsticks. Colonel Lount was at the head of the riflemen, and he and those in the front rank fired, and instead of stepping to one side to make room for those behind to fire, fell flat on their faces, the next rank fired

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[24] It is needless now to contradict this gross falsehood, since the danger in which the City had been placed was no sooner known in the country, than *thousands* rush'd in arms, from all quarters, to the rescue. All Upper Canada, indeed, rose, with but few exceptions, as one man;—or, as a lion, in his strength and majesty, shaking the dew-drops from his mane! Justifying the high character of its people for their loyalty, high, and unconquerable spirit, when their best and dearest interests are in danger.

[25] Again, this disgusting expression of "*Foreign Government*"—As well might *Yorkshire*, in England, stigmatize *Middlesex*, as a foreign Country!

[26] Yes.—a gun may go off—though it be not charged!



an. did the same thing.<sup>27</sup> I was rather in front when the firing began, and stood in more danger from the rifles of my friends than the musquets of my enemies. I stopt to the side of the road and bade them stop firing, and it appeared to me that one of our people who was killed was shot in this way by our own men. Certainly it was not by the enemy.

Some persons from town friendly to us, but not very brave had joined us during the march, and they unknown to me, told awful stories about the preparations the tories had made in several streets, to fire out of the windows at us, protected by feather beds, matrasses &c. These representations terrified many of the country people, and when they saw the riflemen in front falling down, and heard the firing, they imagined that those who fell were the killed and wounded by the enemy's fire; and took to their heels with a speed and steadiness of purpose that would have baffled pursuit on foot. In a short time not twenty persons were to be found below the toll bar!

This was almost too much for human patience.<sup>28</sup> The city would have been ours in an hour, probably without firing a shot; hundreds of our friends waited to join us at its entrance; the officials were terror struck; Gov. Head had few to rely on; the colony would have followed the city; a democratic constitution been adopted, and a bloodless change from a contemptible tyranny to freedom accomplished. But 800 ran where no one pursued, and unfortunately ran the wrong way.<sup>29</sup>

I rode hastily back until I got in the rear of the main body, stopt a number of them, and implored them to return. I explained matters to them, told them to fear nothing, offered with half a dozen more to go between them and all danger, and reminded them that the opportunity of that night would be their last<sup>30</sup>—that the moment it was known in the country that the reformers were timid and fearful without cause, Sir Francis would instantly gain numbers. But it was of no use. To successive groups I spoke in vain. Neither threats<sup>31</sup> nor

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[27] How delighted would all the lovers of peace be, if, when two armies met both sides fell flat on their faces, or, like true patriots determined to preserve their lives as long as possible for the good of their Country—ran away!

[28] Certainly quite staggering!

[29] Most capital!

[30] True: the last, the very last!

[31] It is quite amusing to hear the little rebel talk of threats under his own favourite system of *Mob-Law*!

coaxing could induce them to go to the city. I tried to find even fifty or forty to go to town, but the reply was, "we will go in the day light but not in the dark."<sup>32</sup> Of these many went home that evening, and although about 200 had joined us during the night, we were 200 less numerous on the Wednesday morning.

With the steamers in the hands of the government, the city, 4,000 musquets and bayonets perhaps 60 experienced military officers, the well paid officials and their sons and dependants, abundance of ammunition, a park of artillery well served, the garrison, and the aid of all who are prejudiced in favor of colonial government, it had become a difficult task for a collection of undisciplined half armed countrymen, without cannon, scarce of gunpowder, not possessed of a single bayonet, not even of guns or pikes for half their numbers, to contend successfully against the enemy for the city; we therefore stood on the defensive on Wednesday. Gentlemen of influence, who were pledged to join us, and even the executive who had commanded us to make the premature and unfortunate movement, neither corresponded with us nor joined us. To explain their conduct was beyond my power. It discouraged many, and thinned our ranks.<sup>33</sup>

On Wednesday forenoon, I took a party with me to Dundas street, intercepted the great western mail stage and took a number of prisoners, with the stage, mails and driver, up to our camp. The editors state that money was taken from the mail, which was not the case.<sup>34</sup> But the letters of Mr. Sullivan, President of the Executive Council, Mr. Buchanan, and others, conveyed useful information. We found they expected soon to attack us in the country, and I wrote to the executive in the city to give us timely notice of any such attack. Some of the

[32] Rifles, to be sure, are not of much use in the dark!—and their use has a tendency to produce cowardice.

[33] How true the remark that has been often made, but not generally believed, that *Mackenzie*, after all, was a mere tool in the hands of others.

[34] This wretched, bad man pretended he robbed no one:—he robbed many with his own hands, and, among them, a poor woman of *her all!* The following is only one of many vouchers:—

I, THOMAS COOPER, of the City of Toronto, hereby certify, that on Wednesday the 6th of December last, I was travelling from the City into the Township of Toronto, in company with James Armstrong, of the Humber, both being on horseback. About one o'clock in the day, as far as I recollect, both of us stopped at Mr. Farr's of the Peacock Inn, to get a glass of beer, and fastened our horses to a post. On going back to our horses, we found them removed to a shed, and were [proceeding to mount them,



leading reformers<sup>35</sup> in the city had left it, *but not to join us*—others seemed to have lost their energies; neither messenger nor letter reached our camp; the executive was not there.—One man on horseback told us we might be attacked on Thursday.

My chief hope lay in this, that if we were not attacked till Thursday night, vast reinforcements would join us from the outer townships, and that reformers at a distance would march to our aid, the moment they heard that we had struck for self-government. With this view, I sought to confine the attention of the enemy to the defence of the city, and on Thursday morning selected 40 riflemen and 20 others to go down and burn the Don bridge, the eastern approach to Toronto, and the house at its end, to take the Montreal mail stage and mails, and to draw out the forces<sup>36</sup> in that quarter if possible. I also proposed that the rest of our men who had arms, should take the direction of the city, and be ready to move to the right or left, or to retreat to a strong position as

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when we were taken prisoners and handled very roughly; both our pockets were searched, and my purse taken from me; when just at that moment Mackenzie made his appearance, and asked the man who had rifled my pockets, how much money was in my purse; the man said he did not know, but handed the purse to Mackenzie, who counted it and found eleven pounds five shillings; he took therefrom a two dollar note and a one dollar note, which he returned to me in the purse, and the remainder of the money he put in his own pocket: he also took my horse, which cost me £27 10s., and a nearly new bridle and saddle. From Mr. Armstrong he took four dollars in money, and one pound of tea, two pounds of coffee, and also his horse and bridle and saddle. Mr. Armstrong was so alarmed from the rough treatment we received, that he jumped over a fence and ran across a field, when two men fired after but happily missed him. I was also witness to Mackenzie's seizure of the trunk of the servant-girl of the house, which contained all her clothes, and as she alleged, fifteen dollars in money. The poor girl entreated to have her clothes and trunk returned, and said he might take the money, but Mackenzie was deaf to her entreaties, though made on her knees. The woods resounded with her lamentations; and I was further witness to the robbery of a poor wayfarer travelling to Toronto, who happened to be passing at the time; he took him prisoner and searched his person, on whom he found only half a dollar. The poor man was clothed in rags; and when deprived of his money, the tears coursed down his cheeks.

In about two or three hours after this, the Western Mail arrived at the Peacock, which Mackenzie also robbed, and carried off horses, coach, and all.

All this I do solemnly declare to be true.

THOMAS COOPER.

Toronto, February 10th, 1838.

[35] The *amiable, benevolent, religious* Dr. JOHN ROLPH, to wit—who, in his charity and good-will to all mankind, advised the *conflagration of the City*, as the best means to insure success!

[36] How carefully this diabolical traitor avoids all mention of the burning of Dr. Horne's house with his own hands. Surely, such a remorseless villain ought to be demanded of the American Government, and the delivery of his person insisted upon at all hazards.



prudence might dictate. At this moment Colonel Van Egmond,<sup>37</sup> a native of Holland, owning 13,000 acres of land in the Huron Tract, a tried patriot, and of great military experience under Napoleon, joined us, and one of the Captains desired a council to be held, which was done. Col. V. approved of my plan, a party went off, set fire to the bridge, burnt the house, took the mails,<sup>38</sup> and went through a part of the city unmolested. But the counselling and discussing of my project occasioned a delay of two hours, which proved our ruin, for the enemy having obtained large reinforcements by the steamers from Cobourg, Niagara and Hamilton, resolved to attack us in three divisions, one of them to march up Yonge street, and the others by ways about a mile to the right and left of that road. Had our forces started in the morning, the party at the bridge would have interfered with and broken up the enemy's plan of attack, and we would have been in motion near Toronto, ready to retreat to some one of the commanding positions in its rear, or to join the riflemen below and there enter the city.

We were still at the hotel, discussing what was best to be done, when one of the guards told us that the enemy was marching up with music and artillery, and within a mile of us.<sup>39</sup> Our people immediately prepared for battle, I rode down towards the enemy, doubting the intelligence, until when within a short distance I saw them with my own eye. I rode quickly back, asked our men if they were ready to fight a greatly superior force, well armed, and with artillery well served. They were ready, and I bade them go to the woods and do their best.— They did so, and never did men fight more courageously. In the face of a heavy fire of grape and canister, with broadside following broadside of musketry in steady and rapid succession, they stood their ground firmly, and killed<sup>40</sup> & wounded a large

[37] This fellow, who was taken at Montgonery's, died in the City Hospital whilst a prisoner.

[38] This was done by the notorious Peter Mathews, but nothing is said about shooting a poor harmless woman, out of sheer wantonness, at the same time!

[39] Had anything like good generalship been observed by the Queen's troops on this occasion, the entire *rebel squad* might have been captured with the utmost ease and without loss or risk—a full account of the transactions of this day will be given in the enlarged History of this Rebellion.

[40] What outrageous falsehood! The loyalists did not lose a single man; nor did the rebels stand their ground at all, until they got into the woods; and then only for a moment or two, being speedily put to the route by a well directed charge of grape and cannister, fired by our gallant townsman, Dr. Lang—and as to the *position* of the rebels it was exceedingly *favourable*; and, moreover, they had the choice of the ground.



number of the enemy, but were at length compelled to retreat. In a more favorable position, I have no doubt but that they would have beaten off their assailants with immense loss. As it was they had only three killed and three or four wounded. I felt anxious to go to Montgomery's for my portfolio and papers, which were important, but it was out of the question, so they fell into the hands of Sir Francis. All my papers previous to the events of that week I had destroyed, except a number of business letters, and these it took my family upwards of an hour and a quarter to burn. But with all my caution, some letters fell into their hands to the injury of others.

The manly courage with which two hundred farmers, miserably armed, withstood the formidable attack of an enemy 1200 strong, and who had plenty of ammunition, with new muskets and bayonets, artillery, first rate European officers, and the choice of a position of attack, convinces me that discipline, order, obedience and subordination, under competent leaders, would enable them speedily to attain a confidence sufficient to foil even the regulars from Europe. About 200 of our friends stood at the tavern during the battle, being unarmed.

Mr. Fletcher, Col. Van Egmond, myself, and others, held a consultation near Hogg's Hollow, and concluded that it would be useless to reassemble our scattered forces, for that without arms, success would be doubtful. I instantly determined to pass over to the United States, and accomplished my purpose in three days, travelled 125 miles, was seen by 2000 persons at least, and with a reward of 4000 dollars advertised for my head, speedily reached Buffalo.

It is said we were cruel to our prisoners, 54 in number, but nothing could be farther from the truth. They had the largest and best rooms in the hotel, twelve bed chambers were appropriated to their especial use, and bedding, while our volunteers lay in their wearing clothes on the floor of the bar and other apartments—they fared as we fared; and for their amusement I sent them up European, American and Canadian papers,<sup>41</sup> often without reading them myself. Mr. McDonald wrote to his family that he was kindly treated, and it is unjust for any British officer to allow such slanders as have appeared in the newspapers to go uncontradicted.

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[41] Stolen from the Mails.

As to Sir Francis Head's story of 10,000 men instantly making to the capital to support him, it is a sheer fabrication.<sup>42</sup> If that were true, why has a law become necessary since to suspend the trial by jury? Why were his family confined for two days on board a steamboat? Why did he send us a flag of truce on Tuesday, when all the force he could muster was 150 men and boys, out of a population of 20,000 in and near to Toronto?<sup>43</sup> The truth is, that thousands were on their way to join us on Thursday evening, that being the regular time for which the towns had been summoned; and they, on learning that we were dispersed, made a virtue of necessity, and professed that they had come to aid the tories! Sir Francis, in his Speech, says they were "generally speaking, without arms;" and in fact most of them had none to bring. That was the grand difficulty; and would have been remedied had our movement been delayed till Thursday, as agreed on.—Very few Militia men in Upper Canada had been entrusted with arms, and of these few the Government had endeavored, through Captain Magrath and others, to deprive them previous to the outbreak.

The burning of Mr. Gibson's house, stables, and out-houses, by the order and in the presence of Governor Head,<sup>44</sup> was highly disgraceful to him, and is a stain upon his reputation. Dr. Horne's premises was head quarters to the spies and traitors who invested our camp, and used for the purpose of the enemy, but this was not the case with those of Mr. Gibson. Yet Government destroyed them, and carried off his cattle, horses, grain, and property, and used or sold it, and kept the money. The moveables of hundreds of others were taken in the same way. Sir Francis' advisers may live to see this example followed more extensively than they desire.<sup>45</sup> When the reformers destroyed the house of Dr. Horne, they

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[42] So far from being a fabrication, all America now knows it to be fact.

[43] We admit these are rather *home questions*—which the Councillors of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor must answer.

[44] This was done neither by the order, nor in the presence, of the Governor—who evinced an extraordinary degree of clemency throughout the day.

[45] The abortive attempts which have been made, although abetted by thousands of rascally *Yankees*, to carry this threat of suspension, promise a great opportunity for the future.



did not carry off to the value of one farthing of his effects.<sup>46</sup> As to Sheriff Jarvis' premises, they would have been burnt but for two reasons—1st, we had no proof that the Sheriff's house was used as a rendezvous for our enemies; and, 2ndly, there were sick people in it, whom we did not wish to make war upon.

About 3,500 persons joined us during the three days on which we were behind Toronto.<sup>47</sup>

My large and extensive Book Store, the newest and most valuable Printing Establishment in Upper Canada, and my Bindery, were entered by Alderman Powell, and others, on the Tuesday, the types upset, the work destroyed, and every thing on the premises either rendered useless or carried off.

The American people will understand the state of society in the Canadas, when informed, that martial law obtains at Montreal, and that the Habeus Corpus Act is suspended at Toronto—that the opposition presses are all destroyed or silenced, and their Editors expatriated—and that the liberty of speech, and of the press, is enjoined in an equal degree in conquered Poland and in conquered Canada.<sup>48</sup>

There may be errors in the preceding narrative, and if so, I shall be thankful for their correction. My motives having been impeached by some, I cheerfully refer to those of all parties who have had the best means of observing my public and private conduct for many years past, whether I am deserving of blame, as one who recommended a movement which has not been successful, or for lack of discretion, or energy, so far as concerned in its execution, are questions which, if worth while, the public have the facts before them to determine.—Being of opinion that a vast majority of the people of Upper Canada earnestly desire independence, and firmly persuaded that with perseverance they will attain it, I intend to continue to devote my very humble efforts towards hastening the happy

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[46] No, because it was not *very convenient* for them so to do; but the *Firebrand* Mackenzie broke up, and burnt some of the valuable furniture in the house *with his own hands*?

[47] We have no means of ascertaining the truth of this statement, but we do not believe there was ever, at any one time *half the number*.

[48] The American people are not such fools as to believe any portion of this lying braggadocio. Look at the public declarations of the American citizens of *Montreal* and *St. Catharines*.

time when Colonial vassalage will be exchanged for freedom and peace.<sup>49</sup>

The Canadian people owe to their American brethren a large debt of gratitude, and will, I trust, ever remember the kindness and sympathy extended towards them.<sup>50</sup> The freemen of this frontier have lost sight of the political and party divisions of the hour, and enthusiastically cheered our aspirants for liberty, indulging a lively hope that heaven would speedily bless their efforts, and hasten the day in which they will be enabled to burst the bonds of ages of tyranny, attain liberal political institutions, and become prosperous and free.

I am, dear Sir,

Your faithful servant,

W. L. MACKENZIE.

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[49] Should Mackenzie's eye ever rest upon these notes, we shall here assure him that his very name is held in *execration*, even by his former friends in Canada—and both his public and his private conduct has secured the inheritance of an eternal infamy! and the very way to secure the freedom and peace he so hypocritically talks about—is to bring himself and all others as guilty as himself, to speedy justice.

[50] Yes, *such* a debt, reversing the matter—that Jonathan will find it very difficult to pay. Of character, to be sure he has not much to lose, but he has a few dollars left—and most abominably does he hate to part with them—but part with them he must on this occasion.

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## A P P E N D I X,

CONTAINING FURTHER PARTICULARS OBTAINED FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH JOHN POWELL, ESQUIRE, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF TORONTO.

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ON Monday evening, the 4th of December, 1837, whilst engaged at the City Hall, in swearing in Special Constables, and in the distribution of arms, &c., finding from the number of Magistrates present, that he could be of more service by taking charge of several volunteers who had assembled to patrol on horseback through the different approaches to the City during the night, for the purpose of reconnoitering the movements of the *Rebels*, who were said to be in force, especially in Yonge-Street, Mr. Powell determined on turning out, in person, on that critical service, and Mr. Archibald McDonald offered to accompany him.



Just as the arrangements were made for this service, Col. FITZGIBBON, in company with Mr. BROCK and Mr. BELLINGHAM, rode up and declared their intention of turning out likewise. It was agreed they should go together. Mr. McDonald went home for his horse, and Mr. Powell went to his house for arms; but, after loading his gun, finding he had no caps, he abandoned the idea of taking it, and proceeded to overtake the party, who had gone on before, having with him only two small pistols, which he had borrowed from the High Bailiff as he left the City Hall.

Mr. Powell went alone as far as the Sheriff's Hill, about a mile from the City, when he met Col. Fitzgibbon returning by himself, who observed that Mr. Brock and Mr. Bellingham had gone farther on. Mr. Powell returned with Col. Fitzgibbon as far as the toll-gate, when they met Mr. McDonald; Col. F. observing that all was quiet, as he thought, up Yonge-Street, went home; but Mr. Powell and Mr. McDonald not being quite satisfied, resolved upon proceeding northwards with the view of overtaking Mr. Brock and Mr. Bellingham.

As they were proceeding leisurely along, on rising the eminence called the *Blue-Hills*, they encountered four persons on horseback, riding abreast of each other; Mr. Powell thought they were friends, but, as they approached, no less a personage than *Mackenzie* himself, advanced a little before the rest, and ordered Mr. Powell and his friend to halt; the others, his companions, instantly surrounded them—Mackenzie was armed with a large horse-pistol, the rest had rifles in their hands.

On Mackenzie telling Mr. P. and his friend that they were *prisoners*, Mr. P. demanded by what authority! Mackenzie replied, he would soon let him know by what authority! ANDERSON, who was one of the opposing party, then cried out, that "*their rifles were their authority!*" Mackenzie asked many questions as to the force, and preparations made in town?—what guard was placed at the Government House? and whether an attack on the part of the rebels was expected that night? &c. &c., to all which questions Mr. P. indignantly and fearlessly replied, that he, Mackenzie, might *go and see*. This answer appeared to enrage the little rebel very much, and he immediately ordered Anderson and Sheppard to march his prisoners into the rear, and "*hurry on the men!*"

Anderson took charge of Mr. Powell, and Sheppard undertook to secure Mr. McDonald. Mr. P. and his guard went first, and Mr. McD., with his sentry about ten yards behind. Anderson was excessively abusive towards the Governor, and said that he would "*let Bond Head know something before long!*" Mr. P. asked him of what he had to complain, and attempted to reason with him on the impropriety and wickedness of his conduct: Anderson replied that "*they had borne Tyranny and Oppression too long, and were now determined to have a Government of their own.*"

From all Mr. P. could gather he found, beyond doubt, that the rebels were upon their march to the City, and were near at hand, with a view of taking it by surprize; and, that those who had captured himself, and his companion, were the advance guard.

When opposite to Mr. Horne's gate, a person on horseback met them—Anderson ordered him to halt, and inquired who he was? He replied "*Thomson.*" Mr. P. instantly said, "*Mr. Thomson, I claim your protection—I am a prisoner.*" The person, who turned out to be Mr. Brooks, recognized Mr. P. by his voice, and said, "*Powell, the rebels have shot poor Col. Moodie, and*

*are advancing on the City!*" On saying this, Mr. B. put spurs to his horse and succeeded in making his escape; for, although both Anderson and Sheppard turned round to fire at him, they could not effect their purpose, owing to Mr. Powell and his friend being between them and their object.

Upon this intelligence, Mr. Powell made up his mind to an attempt at escape, at all hazards, feeling assured that the salvation of the City depended upon instant and correct information being conveyed to it. Mr. P. made several attempts to fall back; which, being observed by Anderson, the latter said if Mr. P. persisted in such attempts, he (Anderson) would "*drive a ball through him.*" Having gone on in this way, as far as Mr. Heath's gate, Mr. Powell suddenly drew out a pistol and fired at Anderson, who was not more than *two feet* distant at the time;—Anderson fell like a sack, and neither spoke nor moved afterwards;—Mr. P. riding off, at the instant, at full speed, down the Street, towards the City. Mr. McDonald did the same. Sheppard followed, and fired at them, the ball passing between them, although Mr. McD. was considerably in advance. Mr. P. finding his horse could not keep up, shouted to McDonald to *ride hard*, and give the alarm to the City.

At the Sheriff's Hill, they were again met by Mackenzie, and the other person. Mackenzie rode after Mr. Powell, and presenting a pistol at his head, ordered him to stop, on which Mr. P. turned round, and snapped his remaining pistol in Mackenzie's face, which he actually touched, being so near. Mackenzie's horse either took fright, or he could not be stopped, for he ran on ahead of Mr. Powell, who suddenly drew up at the road which turns off towards Dr. Baldwin's house at Spadina, up which he galloped for about twenty yards, and then jumped off his horse, and ran into the woods.

Hearing himself pursued, Mr. P. laid down for a short time behind a log, whilst a person on horseback passed by him, within the short distance of ten yards. At this crisis, indeed, the feelings of Mr. P. must have been very acute; for he did not know but that the adjoining woods were filled with rebels.

Soon as something like a pause in the pursuit occurred, Mr. Powell started from his retreat behind the log; and, running through the College fields, gained the Avenue;—down which he continued his course keeping near the fence, 'till he reached the City. He went instantly to the Government House; and, *after much difficulty*, obtained an interview with the Governor, *who was in bed!* In a few words, Mr. P. related all that he had seen and heard. Delicacy, of course, forbade Mr. P. from informing us of all that took place during the interview; but, at length, His Excellency appeared to believe *in the reality of the thing!* From the Government House, Mr. P. went to the City Hall, and did what was necessary there.

Mr. McDonald was re-captured at the Toll-Gate, and neither Mr. Brooke's, nor any other person, arrived in the City from Yonge Street, until all the bells were ringing.

LOUNT has confessed to several persons that the death of ANDERSON, *alone*, prevented the attack upon the City that night. Who then, under Providence, is to be accounted its Saviour? Unhesitatingly, we answer, JOHN POWELL, Esquire—the present MAYOR of the CITY!—and he knows not of this fair and candid eulogium.