

**From Seamster to Shopkeeper:  
Examining Occupational Mobility in Shelburne, Nova Scotia, 1783-1795**

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## Abstract

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This thesis examines the occupational structure in Shelburne, Nova Scotia, from its settlement in 1783 until 1795. In 1783, following the conclusion of the American Revolution, upwards of 10,000 Loyalist from the United States came to the nascent town of Shelburne. In less than a decade, the majority of those individuals had departed, and the population plummeted. Through the statistical evaluation of the early settlers' occupational data, patterns of growing and shrinking markets in response to historic events will be shown. Shortly after settlement, the new residents in Shelburne established large manufacturing and market/service sectors but failed to initiate a strong agricultural foundation. It wasn't until the termination of Crown provided food supply that the settlers implemented a flourishing agricultural sector. This research proves that the occupational structure of the town shifted to accommodate circumstance and demand amidst a recovering wartime economy. Secondly, this thesis undertook longitudinal studies of the individuals who comprised those sectors to demonstrate that those who were able to adapt their occupations to suit the needs of the town succeeded in long-term settlement, whereas those who were steadfast in their trades were left no choice but to seek prospects elsewhere. These findings are significant in understanding the importance of flexibility in the face of economic hardship, particularly in the context of an eighteenth-century maritime environment.

## Acknowledgements

There are so many people who contributed to this thesis by supporting and assisting me throughout the process. First, I would like to thank Dr. Karly Kehoe for her advice and suggestions throughout. Before I was admitted to this program, I recall telling her “I’m not a good writer and I’ve never taken a history course in my life” and she calmly told me that it was her job to make me think like a historian and to guide me through the writing process. Now that I am at the point where I have produced this piece of work that I’m proud of, and that I can say with some confidence that I am a historian, I have Dr. Kehoe to thank.

I would also like to thank my support system- Jo, thank you for always being there when I needed a proofread, a synonym, or even just a coffee. You’ve often believed in me more than I’ve believed in myself, and it truly means the world. Now that I’ve completed the writing process, I indebt myself to be the proof-reader for yours. Mum, thank you for providing me with the support that I needed, from meal prep to tech support, to handywoman. You are truly a superhero, and I appreciate you. Lastly, this endeavor would not have been possible without my fiancé, Matthew. Thank you for always handling my stress with grace, and your infallible support. Now let’s go get hitched!

## Introduction

In frontier settlements such as Shelburne, which was known as Port Roseway until shortly after its settlement in 1783, occupational structures were often modeled based on the natural resources in the area. As opposed to many of the earlier conquests in North America, which focused primarily on extracting the continent's natural resources, Shelburne was settled by Loyalists who had the intention of making it the largest port city in North America.<sup>1</sup> As such, its farming and fishing industries were overshadowed by this desire to grow the port, and so throughout the first decade of settlement, the town suffered the consequences of a concentrated manufacturing and market/service focused occupational structure. That is to say that during this period, most of Shelburne's residents worked occupations such as shoemaking, tailoring, carpentry, shopkeeping and tavern keeping. The problem for them and the town's future was that without a strong agricultural community to enable food security, the residents of Shelburne remained dependent on government-supplied rations and failed to establish their own primary sector until these provisions were terminated.

This thesis will examine the occupational demography of Shelburne's settlers from its establishment in 1783 until 1795, a period for which the archival records on employment for white Loyalist men are particularly rich and largely complete. The data will show the collective growth and shrinkage of occupational sectors, and on an individual level, occupational mobility will be shown to have been necessary for long-term settlement. Using aggregated individual-level data gathered from archival sources, this study focuses on the early years of settlement – to the point

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<sup>1</sup> Marion Robertson and Nova Scotia Museum. *King's Bounty: A History of Early Shelburne, Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Nova Scotia, 1983. 37.

when Shelburne's residents adapted to the economic capabilities of the region through occupational changes, and when its population stabilized through the process of outmigration as people left to find better prospects elsewhere. There are undoubtedly groups who went unrecorded in the taxation records such as women, Black loyalists and enslaved people. Their important contributions to Shelburne's economy will be discussed in chapter 2.

In chapter 1, the data will be used in two ways: first, it will be aggregated into three sectors - agricultural, manufacturing, and market/service - to identify and examine large-scale shifts that occurred in particular employment sectors. The terms "primary", "secondary", and "tertiary" sectors will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis with agricultural, manufacturing, and market/service sectors respectively. Although the former terms are more modern forms of economic classifications, the occupations that are contained within those categories are identical. This analysis will show how the balance shifted over the years from a manufacturing and market focused port city to an agrarian society and offer some explanations for these changes. Secondly, occupational data will be aggregated into major occupational groups (hereinafter referred to as MOGS), which will serve to examine small-scale shifts within specific vocational groupings. MOGS are useful for categorizing occupational data because of the sheer number of individual occupations present in historical documents. As such, like-occupations are grouped together (i.e. subsistence activities such as fishing, farming, gardening, and hunting) to form slightly larger groups that hold greater statistical significance. This will allow for a more detailed look into how (and potentially why) specific trades shifted throughout the study period; the manufacturing sector shrank considerably between 1786 and 1795, but there is little information on why this was the case and so this approach will reveal more about how occupations were affected in different ways. By examining the annual changes within vocational groups, the intricacies of Shelburne's early

boom-and-bust economy will be shown in a new light. Oftentimes, economic studies tend to focus primarily on large-scale shifts and overlook the individuals who compose the workforce. Conversely, this thesis will focus on people and the lives that built a settlement to open up a broader exploration of some of the overarching shifts in the occupational structure that were heavily dependent upon personal choice in response to circumstance. As the scope of taxation records is limited to the white male Loyalists who made up Shelburne's formal economy, groups who participated in the 'informal economy', that is in occupations that were not taxed nor monitored by colonial officials, will be discussed in chapter 2. Their contributions to life in early settlement Shelburne are not disregarded, and although their labour remains unrecorded in many historical records, it certainly had profound effects on occupational structure, and the occupational mobility of taxpayers.

## **Literature Review**

Due to the large population influx between the spring and fall of 1783, and its rapid decline in population in the following years, the town of Shelburne has gained notoriety amongst historians as a failed settlement. Studies of the town's rise and fall began in the late nineteenth century, yet, the portrayal of the town and its settlers has varied over the years, as has the discussion surrounding possible reasoning for the settlement's demise.

Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, several essays were published concerning Shelburne's settlement and subsequent 'exodus'. The general tone of these writings was that the Loyalists at Shelburne played an important part in Canada's development, as well as in the formation of the provinces.<sup>2</sup> In 1908, R. R. MacLeod stated that the history of Shelburne is

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<sup>2</sup> T. Watson-Smith, "The Loyalists at Shelburne", *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society for the year 1887-88*, 10 April 1888, 57-93.

part of the foundation of the Commonwealth, and that the “character and stamina of those humble pioneers” was fundamental to the power and prosperity of the Canada at that time.<sup>3</sup> The settlers were described as ablest, iron willed, and exiled patriots with an indomitable energy.<sup>4</sup> Although the rapid departure of Shelburne’s residents was acknowledged, the reasons behind the town’s demise were attributed to negligence on the part of colonial officials and little, if any, blame was placed on the settlers themselves. In his 1922 two-part paper, Plimsoll J. Edwards criticized Shelburne’s lack of access to other settlements as being consequential to the growth of its trade. The business people themselves, however, were said to have “spared no effort to develop business on a world-wide basis”.<sup>5</sup> The overall sentiment about the Loyalist settlers in Shelburne during this time period was that they needed to be seen as national heroes, and that the deterioration of the town was simply the result of it being “...born too soon, [it] came into being before there were proper means to perpetuate its existence.”<sup>6</sup> These works echoed the general sentiment of Loyalist studies throughout the early twentieth century, and greatly contributed to perpetuating and enriching the myth of Loyalists as national heroes.

These early histories of Loyalist settlement in Nova Scotia, as well as “justification by the Loyalists of their defeat and exile”, contributed to what Jo-Ann Fellows called “The Loyalist Myth” in her 1971 article. Fellows believed that the myth that Loyalists were people of upper-class origins, who had endured great sacrifice and suffering, who were in union with Great Britain, and who experienced grievance and betrayal was manufactured. Her work sought to debunk the

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<sup>3</sup> R. R. MacLeod, “Historical Sketch of the Town of Shelburne, Nova Scotia”, *Acadiensis*, Vol. 8 No. 1 (1908): 35-52.

<sup>4</sup> Watson-Smith, “The Loyalists at Shelburne”, 179.

<sup>5</sup> J. P. Edwards, “Vicissitudes of a Loyalist City.” *Dalhousie Review* 2 (1922): 313.

<sup>6</sup> R. R. MacLeod, “Historical Sketch”, 35-52.



myth that the Shelburne's settlers were victorious nation builders.<sup>7</sup> This perspective, and her efforts to question the rhetoric, was not commonplace because until the 1970s, the majority of literature published about Loyalist settlement throughout New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were genealogical studies and local histories, which further perpetuated the heroic Loyalist image. It was a difficult image to shake.

Yet, historians in the 1980s continued to push against the image of the Loyalist as an exemplar founding settler. An important example is Marion Robertson's work which offers a comprehensive history of Shelburne during its early settlement years. Her book highlighted the many individuals within the town and helped to shift the narrative from one focused on the Loyalist legacy to one that was more concerned with the experiences of individual settlers. Much of Robertson's work, as well as Neil MacKinnon's 1986 work, highlighted the interpersonal and economic struggles that the settlers faced. Whereas previous studies failed to acknowledge the acquisitiveness of the settlers and their lack of comprehension in agriculture or other labourious duties, during the 1980s there was an increase in the analysis of the individuals who settled the town. Though they still recognized the natural limitations of Shelburne's capacities, Robertson and MacKinnon made important links between the settlers' characteristics and the eventual dissolution of the town.<sup>8</sup> There was also another important development which helped to change the way some people saw the settlement – unlike previous studies, the work that was conducted during the 1980s and 1990s began to utilize journals and first-hand accounts from the residents of Shelburne themselves. Although these primary sources were inherently biased, they were indisputably valuable in enriching the narrative of Shelburne's settlement and offering firsthand

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<sup>7</sup> Jo-Ann Fellows. "The Loyalist Myth in Canada." *Historical papers - Canadian Historical Association* 6, no. 1 (1971): 94–111.

<sup>8</sup> Robertson, *King's Bounty*, 240-243.; Neil MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014, 151-152.

accounts of the settlement experience. Diaries offered insights about interpersonal tensions within the town and put forth alternative explanations to the outmigration.

In 1989, to counteract the use of those partisan accounts, from both primary accounts of the settlers and those who regarded them as the ‘founding fathers’ of the nation, historians Charles Wetherell and Robert Roetger undertook a quantitative study of Shelburne citizens. Using population data from muster rolls, assessment, and taxation records, it was determined that Shelburne faced severe demographic pressures which contributed to its recession. They also discovered an important point about its demographics – with approximately two men for every woman, single men began to depart the settlement rather quickly.<sup>9</sup> Beyond identifying these very significant and basic pressures, Wetherell and Roetger also analyzed the occupational structure of Shelburne between its settlement in 1783 and 1795. Using the minute books of the Port Roseway Associates, they considered a sample of the households and found an identical pattern that this thesis will demonstrate upon settlement; agricultural occupations accounted for a small proportion of the population, but in the years following 1787 they comprised a majority. This foundational work has been important for the research presented here and because of their lead it also focusses on the population’s ability to adapt to the economic carrying capacity of the region. Yet, in contrast to their study, this thesis will not use a sample population, but rather will analyze the entirety of the poll tax and assessment records that are available. Additionally, this thesis will include data for the year 1793, which has been combined with the 1792 data in the digitized records and does not appear to have been analyzed on its own in any literature to date. This means that any annual changes to the occupational structure between 1792 and 1794 have been previously overlooked,

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<sup>9</sup> Charles Wetherell, and Roetger, Robert W. "Another Look at the Loyalists of Shelburne, NS, 1783-95." *The Canadian Historical Review* 70, no. 1 (1989): 76-91.

which may reveal important information about how the settlers were adapting their careers to suit to economic needs of the town.

With the exception of Wetherell and Roetger's study, the town's narrative was dominated by themes of collapse and dissolution, up until the twenty first century, when historians began to focus on Shelburne as a case study of Loyalist identity within the larger British Atlantic world. Bonnie Huskins utilized the biased first-hand accounts of Shelburne's residents not to analyze their sharp tongues, but to look at their identity and their social interactions and process of community formation. Her 2010 study of William Booth's 1787 and 1789 journals reveal that kinship amongst the settlers was integral to survival in the colonial era.<sup>10</sup> Assemblies, dances, and entertaining in parlours comprised a significant part of the settlers' lives, in particular the lives of the men who were the usual hosts of parlour and garden gatherings.<sup>11</sup> Although this paper will not consider factors other than occupational change as a motive or means to remain in Shelburne, future research may choose to explore other elements that could have encouraged long term settlement such as displaying sociability and having established kinships.

These studies have offered in-depth histories of Shelburne's settlement, put forward various explanations for the town's population decline, and explored the identities of the early settlers. However, none have examined the occupational adaptations undergone by the settlers who stayed in Shelburne for more than a few years after their initial settlement. This thesis will undertake a statistical analysis to look at the career modifications that the Loyalists experienced to accommodate for the town's needs and capacities. Although Shelburne is a unique case in Loyalist

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<sup>10</sup> Bonnie Huskins, "'Remarks and Rough Memorandums': Social Sets, Sociability, and Community in the Journal of William Booth, Shelburne, 1787 and 1789(1)." *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society* 13 (2010).

<sup>11</sup> Bonnie Huskins. "Shelburnian Manners": Gentility and the Loyalists of Shelburne, Nova Scotia." *Early American Studies* 13, no. 1 (2015): 151-88.

settlement history, it underwent a normal demographic adjustment for any colonial settlement, albeit in a shorter amount of time.<sup>12</sup> As such, this thesis will provide a case study of late-eighteenth century occupational adaptation in a maritime environment.

## Methods

Working with historic occupational data comes with inherent challenges such as gaps in the available records, and uncertainty about precisely when individuals' occupational shifts occurred. To minimize these uncertainties, this study used annual assessment records (1786-1787) and poll tax records (1791-1795), rather than registers such as baptism, marriage, or death certificates. Assessment records included the names and addresses of taxpayers, their occupations, and the amount of county and poor tax they owed. Though these records primarily documented white Loyalist men, there were several women, minors, and Black Loyalists included.<sup>13</sup> The poll tax records, however, included only white Loyalist men. In a response to the increasing provincial debt in Nova Scotia, the provincial legislature introduced a poll tax, also referred to as a capitation or head tax, in 1791 which taxed each adult male. These documents did not include minors, women, or in Shelburne's case, Black Loyalists.<sup>14</sup> Nor are enslaved people included in these records, which were hugely important and unrepresented contributors to the Maritime economy. Despite the scope of these taxation records in the representation of people, it does ensure regularly recorded occupational markers for the taxpayers, rather than intermittent ones at times of important life events.

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<sup>12</sup> Wetherell, and Roetger, "Another Look", 76-91.

<sup>13</sup> Black Loyalists were only included on the 1787 assessment record but were absent from the 1786 document. They were given the distinction of "(negro)" next to their names and were subsequently crossed out in red ink.

<sup>14</sup> There may be black Loyalists included in capitation tax records in other districts, however, there are not on the Shelburne town records.

The assessment records (1786-1787) and poll tax records (1791-1795) were transcribed and entered into a database that contains the names of individuals and their associated occupations for each of the available years. Despite the relatively rich record of occupational data from the Nova Scotia Archives, there are still many individuals whose professions were unrecorded. To minimize these gaps in the data, names were tracked throughout the years, and should an individual's career be known and consistent for the year prior to and the year following the gap, this information was filled in and the data was corrected. Although these corrections minimized the unknowns, there were very few individuals to whom this applied.

After providing a brief history of settlement in Port Roseway/Shelburne, the first chapter focuses on economic structure and development. As historic settlements contained hundreds of distinct occupational titles, following data collection, this study started by classifying those professional titles into groups. Occupations were aggregated by functionality into two classification schemes: first, into sectors based on a three-sector economic model (agricultural, manufacturing, and market/service) and secondly into major occupational groups, which paired like-occupations together to examine shifts within specific vocations.

The agricultural sector included any occupation that involved the extraction of raw materials, manufacturing included the processing of those materials into saleable goods, and the market and service sector included sale and service occupations. It is important to recognize that the choice of classification scheme will determine in part the results of this study, and that contemporary systems are not necessarily applicable to historical data.<sup>15</sup> To mitigate this, the three categorizations were chosen to mirror the terminology used in the 1827 census in Shelburne, of

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<sup>15</sup> Michael B. Katz, "Occupational classification in history." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 3, no. 1 (1972): 63-88.

agricultural, manufacturing and commercial occupations.<sup>16</sup> They also mirror the methodology developed by Charles Booth in the late nineteenth century, which aggregates occupations into 3 groups: the production of raw materials, the preparation of them for use, and the distribution of those products.<sup>17</sup> In view of the changes to work organization and technology in modernity, using a historically relevant scheme to analyze the data gathered for Shelburne ensures the accuracy and pertinence of the results. By using a system that was both developed in the nineteenth century, and mirrors the nomenclature used in the settlement at the time, the results of this analysis are as accurate as can be regarding sectoral composition. Although the three-sector model gives a good overview of the shifting economic structure of Shelburne, it is not all encompassing, as individuals whose occupations were listed as unknown on the records were excluded from these functional classifications. Although most of those individuals were likely farmers (agricultural) or labourers (service) it is impossible to confirm given the surviving records, and this statistical discrepancy should be noted. As such, the following MOGS classification scheme does include those “unknown” workers and allows for a more detailed view into which trades were shifting rather than the overarching sectors.

Listed occupations from each sector were classed into major occupational groups (MOGS), such as agriculture, sales, seafaring, trades/crafts, and assembly places and lodging. Looking at the shifts in MOG distributions allowed for a more detailed exploration of questions regarding the sector composition. For example, can the shrinking of the market/service sector be attributed to a decrease in sales occupations or in service occupations? Each of these MOGS contained multiple professions which could also be examined on a more detailed level if needed; agriculture could be

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<sup>16</sup> Census Returns, 1827, 1827, RG1. Vol. No. 446, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

<sup>17</sup> Booth, Charles. "Occupations of the People of the United Kingdom, 1801-81." *Journal of the statistical society of London* 49, no. 2 (1886): 314-444.

explored as fishing versus farming.<sup>18</sup> The annual shifts in both data sets were then examined and contextualized based on events in Shelburne such as the termination of government-provided provisions, the Sierra Leone exodus, and the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars, among others.<sup>19</sup>

Occupation is often focused on by historians because it can offer insights as to the changing nature of whole economies and the occupational and social mobility of individuals.<sup>20</sup> As a continuation of this discussion, the second chapter will look at the occupational mobility of individuals throughout the study period. Although structure and mobility are different concepts that require their own unique classification schemes to explore them, the methodology used in this thesis allows the exploration of mobility within specific trades, through a hierarchical organization of those occupations based on specialization.<sup>21</sup> Individual people were tracked over several years using their names, and several case studies provide information on whether their professions changed annually. If so, causal relationships between occupational 'change and historical events are studied to determine what might have induced these vocational adaptations. Chapter 2 will also discuss the importance of those who are absent from the records: Black Loyalists, enslaved people, and women to Shelburne's early economy.

Research about Shelburne has traditionally focused on its economic decline. The longstanding narrative is that it was a settlement that was "as much a failure of expectations as

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<sup>18</sup> For a full list of sectors and MOGS and their components, see table 1 page 30-33.

<sup>19</sup> The Sierra Leone exodus refers to an event in 1792 where black loyalists were offered free passage to Sierra Leone. Given that many were unhappy with their circumstances in Nova Scotia, the Methodist congregation in Birchtown voted unanimously to accept the offer of assisted migration, and the black loyalist population in Shelburne County dwindled.

<sup>20</sup> Theodore Hershberg and Robert Dockhorn. "Occupational classification." *Historical Methods Newsletter* 9, no. 2-3 (1976): 59-98.

<sup>21</sup> Katz, "Occupational classification in history.", 63-88.

economics”.<sup>22</sup> The Loyalists themselves assisted in creating this image, journaling their critical perceptions of the characters and abilities of their peers. In the late 1980s researchers began to view the settlement as one that found its economic and social balance through the process of out-migration and have focused on Loyalist identity within the Atlantic world.<sup>23</sup> This thesis adopts this more contemporary views of Shelburne as a successful settlement rather than a failure and examines the adaptations and adjustments that the town and its settlers underwent to obtain a state of homeostasis.

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<sup>22</sup> Stephen Kimber. *Loyalists and Layabouts: The Rapid Rise and Faster Fall of Shelburne, Nova Scotia, 1783-1792*. Toronto]: Doubleday Canada, 2008, 293.

<sup>23</sup> Wetherell and Roetger, 76-91.; Huskins. "Shelburnian Manners", 151-88.



## Chapter 1: Resiliency and Adaptability

This chapter examines the occupational structure of Shelburne using two methods of analysis: the three sector (agricultural, manufacturing, and market/service) model to analyze the sectoral composition of the settlement; and then the major occupation groups (MOGS) to develop a more in-depth look into the ways in which the sectors shifted annually. Examining these shifts permits a deeper understanding of how Shelburne's settlers adapted to their new space despite the difficulties encountered along the way. An important starting point, however, is an overview of the settlement of Shelburne and how it came about in 1783.

### Settlement History

On 16 November 1782, a group of individuals met at Roubalet's Tavern in the city of New York to discuss 'business, negotiations, regulations, relative to the settlement of Port Roseway'.<sup>1</sup> This group became known as the Port Roseway Associates (PRA). They came from a variety of places and held a wide array of occupations, but what they had in common, was that they had all been loyal to the British Crown and sought refuge in Nova Scotia following the secession of the Thirteen Colonies.<sup>2</sup> With this in mind, the PRA elected a committee of seven to represent them to Sir Guy Carleton, the commander-in-chief of His Majesty's Forces in America. Ultimately, the PRA received Sir Carleton's approval for a tract of land adjoining Roseway Harbour. Upon learning of Carleton's recommendations, Governor John Parr granted a much larger area of land than was originally applied for and gave assurances of sufficient boards to build shelters.<sup>3</sup> It was noted in the initial surveys that sawmills should be erected prior to the arrival of the settlers, which

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<sup>1</sup> New York City was named as such when English authority was established in 1665. It remained under British rule until the end of the American Revolution in 1783.; Robertson, *King's Bounty*, 33.

<sup>2</sup> Robertson, 33-34.

<sup>3</sup> Robertson, 33-37.

sparked fear amongst the PRA that other Loyalists were attempting to secure land at Port Roseway. In response, they voted unanimously that all lands and bounties be equally distributed amongst the associates upon their arrival in Port Roseway.<sup>4</sup>

The first group of about 3000 settlers arrived on 4 May 1783. Upon their arrival in Shelburne, the PRA were troubled by the rocky, rough, and tree-laden land that was allotted to them. In the beginning, these Loyalists assisted the surveyors in clearing the land, but they quickly withdrew their labour, arriving to work late, or not at all. The surveyors of the town agreed that the PRA were unequipped for the business of settlement that they had undertaken.<sup>5</sup> A second group of settlers, totaling around 8000, arrived in late September of 1783. This group included members of the PRA, Loyalists from the Carolinas, disbanded soldiers, and free Black Loyalists who settled in the adjacent community of Birchtown.<sup>6</sup> In addition to the tensions between the PRA and the surveyors who felt that the Loyalists “take upon themselves to determine who are the proper subjects of the King’s grant”, there were mounting frictions between the various groups of settlers.<sup>7</sup>

Several first-hand accounts of the social tensions in Port Roseway are found in the journals of the Royal Engineer, William Booth, the Scottish merchant, James Fraser, and the town surveyor, Benjamin Marston. Bonnie Huskins, a local researcher, notes that although these journals are riddled with criticisms, primarily of other settlers or groups of settlers, they also describe Shelburne as a genteel and highly sociable society.<sup>8</sup> Not long after their arrival, the settlers were already hosting balls, even prior to constructing their houses. They also put their focus on building

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<sup>4</sup> Port Roseway was renamed Shelburne soon after the arrival of the loyalists. The name Shelburne will be used throughout for continuity. Robertson, 39.

<sup>5</sup> Robertson, 53-55.

<sup>6</sup> Huskins. "Shelburnian Manners", 151-88.

<sup>7</sup> Huskins, "Shelburnian Manners", 151-88.

<sup>8</sup> Huskins. "Remarks and Rough Memorandums", 103.; Huskins. "Shelburnian Manners", 151-88.

“larger houses than was afterward found necessary”.<sup>9</sup> The Loyalists seemed to be highly concerned with social climbing and conspicuous consumption, which had been attributed as a key factor in the town’s economic decline by the settlers themselves. It is worth noting that these critics of Shelburne were all from an upper-class background, both prior to and following their arrivals in Shelburne. A letter sent to Halifax in 1784 foreshadows the town’s decline, stating that keeping up the appearance of wealth was no longer sustainable for the settlers. In the same year, an inhabitant of the town stated that the expenditures of his fellow residents were the reason that there was little success found in the fisheries or in agriculture.<sup>10</sup> One historian later observed that the settlers’ lavish spending and investment of capital into their lifestyle rather than livelihood along with their unwillingness to conform to the realities of rural economies, ultimately lead to the town’s failure.<sup>11</sup>

The Loyalists in Shelburne formed a microcosm of British identity, not only in their colonial bodies, but in their consumption patterns. The elite in eighteenth century Britain set the standards for consumerism and set the basis for an economy catalyzed by emulation.<sup>12</sup> However, despite the trends being set by the British elite, luxury consumption was no longer limited to a higher class as it had been in the past, the product revolution in the eighteenth century reached even artisans, tradesmen, and merchants.<sup>13</sup> According to the first hand accounts from upper class residents of Shelburne, the high spending of the settlers was unsustainable. Given the shift in consumer patterns and its effect on social, cultural, and economic frameworks, it is possible that

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<sup>9</sup> Huskins. "Shelburnian Manners", 151-88.

<sup>10</sup> MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 151-152.

<sup>11</sup> MacKinnon, 151-152.

<sup>12</sup> Jon Stobart. "Gentlemen and Shopkeepers: Supplying the Country House in Eighteenth-Century England." *The Economic history review* 64, no. 3 (2011): 885–904.

<sup>13</sup> Maxine Berg. *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, UK, 2005, 4-6.

one source of these settlers' displeasures was the social mobility offered to the middling class and the sentiment of threatened status.

Other researchers suggest that the demise of Shelburne was brought upon by the lack of planning before settlement as surveyors arrived in Shelburne only days before the first group of 3000 settlers, leaving little time to lay out the townsite and lots.<sup>14</sup> Upon the first survey, high expectations were set for the settlement's agricultural, fishing, and climatic advantages, however, the capabilities of the town's hinterlands and its natural attributes seem to have been overestimated.<sup>15</sup> Despite the seemingly ideal harbour, it partially froze over in the winter, which hindered its use for part of the year.<sup>16</sup> The forests were rich with timber but there was a lack of rivers for transportation, and there were no roads leading to other major settlements, which disrupted trade efforts.<sup>17</sup> Coming from New England, and having been in or in proximity to the city of New York which had established itself as a hub of commerce and trade would certainly have been a shock for the settlers in Shelburne. In addition, given the British and Scottish roots of many of the Loyalists, they likely had familiarity with the extensive canal system formed in Great Britain during the Industrial Revolution, something that Shelburne was lacking. Considering that the establishment of transportation networks, be they by road or water, directly impact the rate of economic and financial development, the lack of those networks would certainly have had a negative impact on the growth of Shelburne's industries.<sup>18</sup> Although a £1,500 grant was received in 1785 to construct a road from Halifax to Shelburne, and then further along to Yarmouth, with

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<sup>14</sup> Stephen Kimber. *Loyalists and Layabouts : The Rapid Rise and Faster Fall of Shelburne, Nova Scotia, 1783-1792*. Toronto]: Doubleday Canada, 2008, 293-294.

<sup>15</sup> Plimsoll J. Edwards. "The Shelburne That Was and Is Not." *Dalhousie Review* 2 (1922): 179.

<sup>16</sup> Plimsoll J. Edwards. "Vicissitudes of a Loyalist City." *Dalhousie Review* 2 (1922): 313.

<sup>17</sup> Kimber, *Loyalists and Layabouts*, 294.

<sup>18</sup> Dan Bogart. "Inter-Modal Network Externalities and Transport Development: Evidence from Roads, Canals, and Ports During the English Industrial Revolution." *Networks and spatial economics* 9, no. 3 (2008): 309-338.

successive grants provided to better connect Shelburne with other townships, the declining population meant that by 1790 the roads were overgrown, and in many places allowed to return to wilderness.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to the rampant consumerism of the settlers and the natural shortcomings of the region, Shelburne was subject to intense demographic pressures. In a demographically stable society, a sex ratio between 90-110 men to 100 women, is relatively balanced.<sup>20</sup> In Shelburne, however, in 1784, the sex ratio amongst the Loyalists was 163:100, amongst disbanded soldiers, 361:100, and in Shelburne as a whole, 205:100.<sup>21</sup> That is to say that there were more than double the number of men than women and while problematic for settlement sustainability, an imbalanced sex ratio was not uncommon in colonial settlements.<sup>22</sup> The implications of an imbalanced male biased sex ratio in the case of Shelburne was that single men left and there were lower rates of marriage amongst males, which led to lower birth rates and a declining population overall between its settlement in 1783 and 1795.<sup>23</sup>

### **Demographic Information**

During its initial establishment in 1783, thousands of Loyalists and their families flocked to the new settlement in southern Nova Scotia. In 1784 the total population (according to the muster roll) was 7,922.<sup>24</sup> Although the total population is important, and even critical to understanding some of the demographic pressures that the people of Shelburne faced, this thesis

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<sup>19</sup> MacKinnon, 140.

<sup>20</sup> Wetherell, and Roetger, 76-91.

<sup>21</sup> Wetherell, and Roetger, 76-91.

<sup>22</sup> Robert V. Wells. "The Population of England's Colonies in America: Old English or New Americans?" *Population Studies* 46, no. 1 (1992): 85-102.; Herbert Moller. "Sex Composition and Correlated Culture Patterns of Colonial America." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1945): 114-53.

<sup>23</sup> Wetherell, and Roetger, 76-91.; Ryan Schacht, and Ken R. Smith. "Causes and Consequences." *Biological Sciences* 372, no. 1729 (2017).

<sup>24</sup> Wetherell, and Roetger, 76-91.

is focused on the taxable individuals in the town. In other words, the numbers examined here are those of the formal and recorded workforce, which means that women and children were not factored in despite having undertaken a range of work.<sup>25</sup> This is a limitation, but understanding this means that researchers can be aware of missing components and adjust their analyses accordingly. While there is a lack of representation of minority groups in the available data sources, their labour was of major importance to the local economy. Chapter 2 will highlight the significance of these groups as a way of holding space for their inclusion.

Based on the 1784 muster roll, the number of adult men in the town was 3,401.<sup>26</sup> Following 1784, data for 1786-87, and 1791-95 were taken directly from assessment rolls and poll tax records, excluding those individuals who were listed as retired, sick, or otherwise unable to work.<sup>27</sup> This data demonstrates a clear and continued decline in population, as shown in figure 1 below.

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<sup>25</sup> Although there are a few women, as well as minors, included in the assessment roles in 1786 and 1787, the majority are not included, and zero are on the capitation tax records from 1791-1795.

<sup>26</sup> Wetherell, and Roetger, 76-91.

<sup>27</sup> A List of Taxables for the Town and County of Shelburne Levied for the Year 1786, 1786, MG1, Vol. 957, No. 1517, Gideon White fonds, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.; Assessment for the Year 1787, 1787, MG1, Vol. 957, No. 1518, Gideon White fonds, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada; Poll Tax Records, 1791-1795, 1791-1795, RG1, Vol. 444, No. 57, Commissioner of Public Records, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

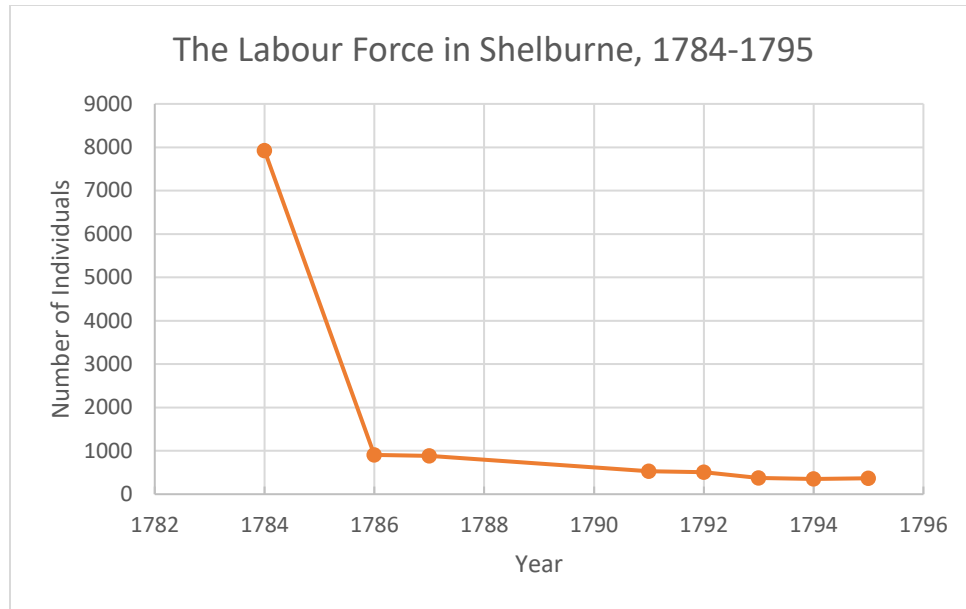


Figure 1: The Labour Force in Shelburne, 1784-1795

As shown above in Figure 1, following the initial influx of settlers, the workforce declined rapidly and by 1786 there were only 907 individuals on the assessment roll; this number decreased further in the following years with the exception of 1795, when there was a slight increase in the labour force. This increase in population following 1795 may have been the beginning of Shelburne's adjustment to its economic carrying capacity. The next available data for the settlement is in 1827, nearly four decades after the study period, and by this point the town was demographically healthy.<sup>28</sup> In a typical colonial settlement, the population would increase steadily until it remained relatively stable, after which time it would fluctuate around its economic carrying capacity. This slow adjustment of population to the number of people that a settlement can sustain given its natural resources and its built economy is referred to as the optimum density model. Shelburne did not follow this pattern. and was an anomaly for several reasons.

<sup>28</sup> Wetherell, and Roetger, 76-91.

The reality of population change in Shelburne was almost the opposite of the optimum density model. In fact, its population peaked quickly and grew far beyond what a town of Shelburne's size could sustain. Due to both demographic and economic pressures, the population plummeted quickly. The actual density model which Wetherell and Roetger created for Shelburne during its early settlement is shown below in Figure 2.

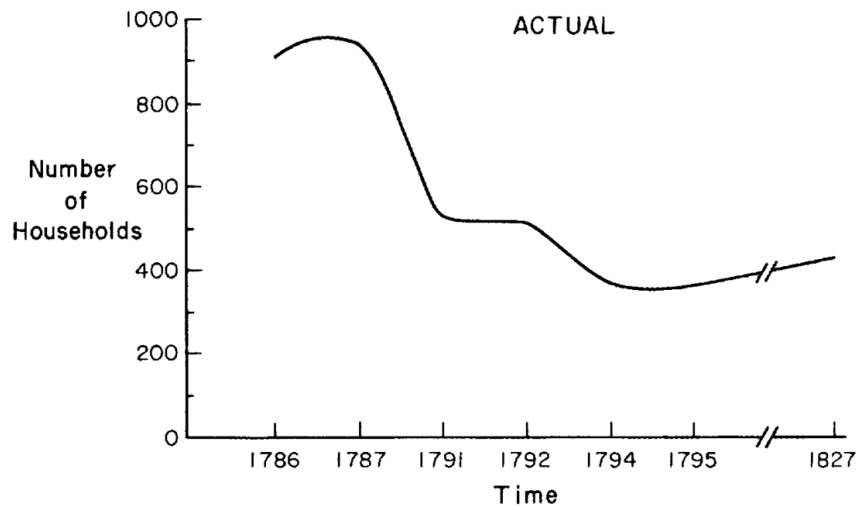


Figure 2: Actual Density Model for Shelburne, Wetherell and Roetger, 1989

As shown on the graph, following 1794, there was a slight increase in population, and by 1827, some three decades later, the town finally appeared to have become demographically stable with about 424 households.<sup>29</sup> Shelburne's population and its available labour force decreased just as quickly as it had developed. As labour was a key factor of production, a declining population was effectively equivalent to a declining economy. The methodology guiding this project, however, is not a focus on economic decline in Shelburne, but rather on sources that help illuminate elements of the structural changes that were experienced as its population declined, and what may have caused these shifts in occupational demography.

<sup>29</sup> Wetherell, and Roetger, 76-91.



## Sectoral Composition in Shelburne, 1786-1791

In a three-sector economic model, which was introduced by French economist, Jean Fourastié, changes in sectoral composition were used to better understand the economic development of a society. In his view, nascent societies were agriculturally focused, with an emphasis on the primary sector, which includes all occupations that involve the extraction of natural resources (i.e., fishing, farming, mining). Over time, these were replaced with industrialized societies, which had a heavier emphasis on the tertiary sector, or market sector.<sup>30</sup> This sector includes all occupations that involve the sale of goods or services. Market sectors, however, required two things to grow: population and technology. The rate of economic growth, and therefore the rate of transition from an agricultural to an industrial society, was reflective of the rate of population growth and technological advances.<sup>31</sup>

Prior to the Loyalists' settlement in 1783 there was scant settlement in the area. There was presence of Portuguese and Basque fishermen, and some French fur-traders.<sup>32</sup> In the spring of 1756 following a decision by the British colonial authority, the French inhabitants, otherwise known as the Acadians, in the settlement known as 'Port Razoir' (later Port Roseway, and then Shelburne), were driven from their homes.<sup>33</sup> Although the economic activities of these early settlers could have been classified resource extraction and/or agricultural, their occupational structure had no bearing on how the PRA established their markets, and thus does not represent a continuum of

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<sup>30</sup> Tai-Yoo Kim, Almas Heshmati, and Jihyou Park. "Decelerating Agricultural Society: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives." *Technological Forecasting & Social Change* 77, no. 3 (2010): 479-99.

<sup>31</sup> M. Goodfellow, and J. McDermott. "Early Development." *The American Economic Review* 85, no. 1 (1995): 116-33.

<sup>32</sup> Robertson, 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> The Acadian deportation, also known as the Great Upheaval, was a political decision made in response to the French settlers refusing to state loyalty to the British Crown. Between 1755 and 1763 about 10,000 Acadians were forced to leave the province.; Robertson, 9.

economic evolution.<sup>34</sup> The deportation of the Acadians was devastating to Nova Scotia's agricultural economy, and it took decades for the Loyalists in Shelburne and throughout the province to re-establish a semblance of what the French has accomplish in their agricultural pursuits.<sup>35</sup>

What is offered here is a simplified view of Shelburne's sectoral distribution, as it is not considering land, labour, and capital as inputs (resources used to create goods or services), or accounting for amount of output (goods or services produced). For example, the market/service sector could be larger based on the number of individuals employed within it, but it may generate less outputs than the agricultural sector. However, Nova Scotia's growth during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was extensive, rather than intensive, which in economic terms means that its output of goods and services was proportional to the population, and growth was relatively steady.<sup>36</sup> Due to the extensive growth demonstrated in Nova Scotia throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a population-based analysis of the sectoral composition will provide insights into how Shelburne's economy shifted and adapted in its early settlement years.

According to a classical view of economics, Shelburne's sectoral distribution should have begun as primarily agricultural, shifting to a market economy over time, however, what occurred was the opposite. The earliest available data (Figure 3) shows that in 1786, nearly half (49.28%) of Shelburne's population was employed in market or service industries. This included sales occupations such as shopkeepers and merchants, service occupations such as barbers, and legal

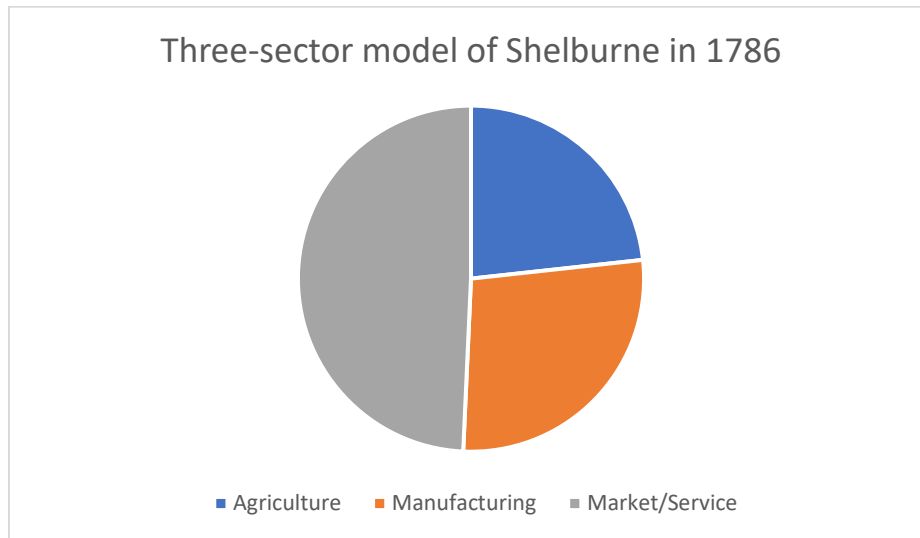
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<sup>34</sup> Other than placenames, such as Port Razoir (the inspiration behind Port Roseway), there are few records detailing these settlements. No sources for this thesis suggest that the loyalists acknowledged any previous settlement of the area or interacted with any other settler groups.

<sup>35</sup> Julian Gwyn. *Excessive Expectations: Maritime Commerce and the Economic Development of Nova Scotia, 1740-1870*. 9780773566491. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998, 7.

<sup>36</sup> Gwyn, 45.

professions such as attorneys and other occupations within the Courts of Sessions and the Courts of Justice, who held both administrative and judicial duties.<sup>37</sup> Less than a quarter (23.27%) were employed in the agricultural sector, which included farmers, fishers, gardeners, hunters, and sawmillers.



*Figure 3: Sector Composition in Shelburne, 1786*

By 1795, the final year of data included in this study, the sectoral composition had changed drastically. While the manufacturing and market sectors dropped by 47.65% and 22.65% respectively, the agricultural sector grew by 104.17%. This distribution can be seen below in figure 4. The changes are clear and show that rather than advancing into an industrialized society, Shelburne seemed to have been changing into one based on agriculture. According to economic development theory, this shift toward a primary sector is seen as ‘regression’ and indicates a

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<sup>37</sup> Robertson, 140.

movement along a linear spectrum where a traditional subsistence society is the first stage of growth, and a consumer-oriented service sector is the final stage of development.<sup>38</sup>

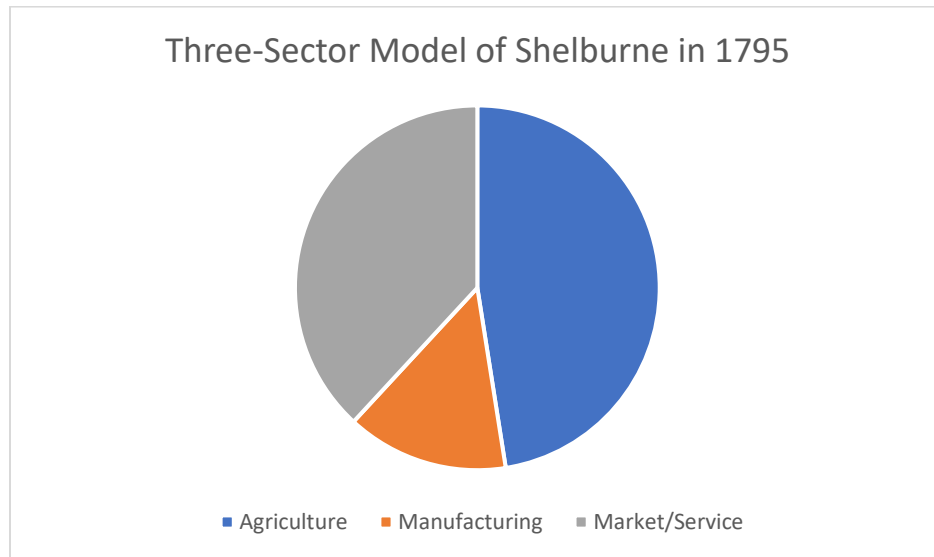


Figure 4: Sectoral Composition in Shelburne, 1795

This pattern of economic regression could be seen in Shelburne as the agricultural sector grew and the market/service sector shrank, amidst a declining population. The following graph (figure 5) shows the distribution of sectors between 1786 and 1795, with the years present on the x-axis and the percentage of the population on the y-axis.

<sup>38</sup> Kim, Heshmati, and Park. "Decelerating Agricultural Society", 479-99.; W. W. Rostow. *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-communist Manifesto*. 3rd ed. Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

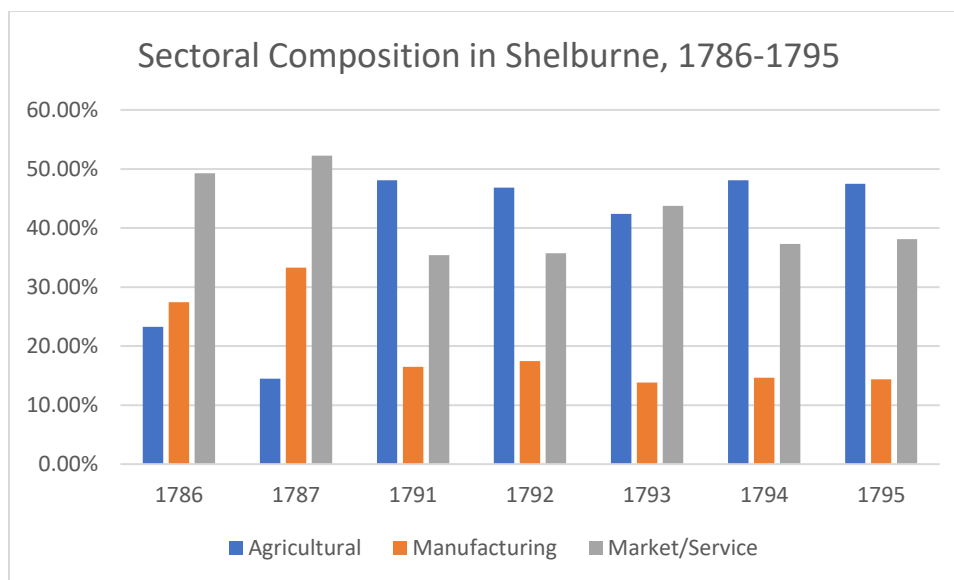


Figure 5: Sectoral Composition in Shelburne, 1786-1795

As shown in Figure 1 in the introduction of this thesis, the workforce in Shelburne declined steeply in the years following its 1783 settlement.<sup>39</sup> However, amidst a plummeting population, the agricultural sector grew. In 1787, the agricultural sector composed a mere 14.48% of the economy, and by 1791 this figure had increased to 48.09%, where it remained relatively stable until at least 1795. Although there is no available assessment data for the years 1788 to 1790, there are primary accounts that suggest that the agricultural sector continued to decline, as seen from 1786-1787. In 1789, William Booth noted that farmers “who are the men most desirable in every young Country are off or at least very few remaining.”<sup>40</sup> This decrease came after particularly difficult years for agriculturalists, with nutrient-deficient soils, and copious problems with insects. Shelburne’s hinterlands required extensive labour to ensure any sort of production, which was

<sup>39</sup> Though these figures do not include those with unknown occupations, the same pattern of population decline is seen when those individuals are included.

<sup>40</sup> William Booth, 1789, quoted in Robertson, *King’s Bounty*, 215.

often thwarted by grubs that destroyed cabbage, lettuce, bean, and carrot crops.<sup>41</sup> The uptake in agriculturalists then likely began in the year 1790 or 1791.

In analyzing this shift, it is particularly helpful to look at what was happening in Shelburne at the time and to learn that between 1787 and 1791, several major economic events occurred. In 1787 the King's Bounty, a program of government provisions for the settlers, was terminated. According to the data, the termination of provisions occurred approximately three years before there was an increase in primary industry, however, this could still be a key factor in this sectoral shift since the Royal Bounty of Provisions provided residents with flour, bread, beef, pork, butter, rice, oatmeal, peas, vinegar, rum, and molasses. Yet, even with these provisions, there was difficulty finding sustenance for those who could not procure it from the earth. James Courtney highlighted in 1783, "I tho't Hunger look'd every wretch in the face that could not hunt or shoot for his subsistence..."<sup>42</sup> In 1784 the number of persons victualled in Shelburne was 8,645, and it was quickly apparent to the residents that there would not be sufficient rations for everyone. This prompted a settlement-wide examination of provision claims and increased restrictions on who qualified to receive them. The Royal Bounty was restricted to Loyalists, their servants, disbanded soldiers, and freed Black Loyalists, but new arrivals were not permitted to claim them, nor were they provided immediately with farmland to attempt to provide for themselves.<sup>43</sup>

The theory that the termination of provisions sparked a radical shift in occupational structure is strengthened by the words of Scottish merchant, James Fraser, in his 1787 manuscript *Shelburnian Manners*. He wrote: that "The liberal provision made for them allowing them a great

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<sup>41</sup> Robertson, 215.

<sup>42</sup> James Courtney, 1783, quoted in Robertson, *King's Bounty*, 63-64.

<sup>43</sup> Robertson, 80-81.

deal of idle time, and enabling them to live well at ease, their manners are loose and corrupt".<sup>44</sup> Concerns around food security were likely a motivator for inhabitants to either depart and search for new opportunities elsewhere or if they possessed the necessary land and skill, to shift their professions towards the agricultural sector in order to find subsistence.<sup>45</sup> Despite the insufficiencies of the provisions, the removal of them would have made survival in Shelburne a more difficult task, and perhaps provided an increased incentive to cultivate from the land.

The change in sectoral composition could also be in part due to the disproportionate departure of artisans in comparison to farmers following the termination of provisions in 1787.<sup>46</sup> While the out-migration of craftsmen may in part explain the increase in the percentage of agriculturalists in Shelburne, it does not explain the increased number of farmers. In 1787 there were 97 individuals with careers listed in the agricultural sector. In 1791, this number increased to 239, indicating that there was an increase, either by immigration, or by individuals shifting their careers towards the agricultural sector. Even with modest numbers of in-migrants, given that there is an overall decrease in population, it is likely that residents who chose to stay were learning how to adjust to the rural economy.

In 1790 the crown suspended all free land grants in Nova Scotia to develop land more efficiently and to increase provincial revenues. Many newcomers or hopeful migrants to the area were unable to purchase land themselves, and either came as occupying settlers (not landowners), squatters, or chose alternate locations instead. The removal of free land grants effectively

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<sup>44</sup> James Fraser quoted in Mackinnon, Neil. "A Caustic Look at Shelburne Society in 1787." *Acadiensis (Fredericton)* 17, no. 2 (1988): 139-42.

<sup>45</sup> There are accounts of some Loyalists returning to New England, and others finding settlement elsewhere in the colony of Nova Scotia. In Chapter 2, the migrations of some individuals will be discussed in more detail.

<sup>46</sup> Wetherell, and Roetger, 76-91.

prevented further development of the hinterlands.<sup>47</sup> Given this information, as well as the rise in the agricultural sector both by the percentage of the population and by the number of individuals, it is highly likely that settlers who were already in Shelburne, and who were already granted lands suitable for agricultural use prior to 1790, shifted their careers to agriculturally based work following the termination of the King's Bounty. Men who previously worked in specialized crafts and trades such as tailors, carpenters, and masons, were given no other option other than fulfilling that need of the town for resources or leave in hopes of opportunity elsewhere.

The initial sector composition and the jump into an industrialized high society are evident when looking at first-hand accounts from Shelburne's early settlers. During the first month of settlement, Benjamin Marston, a land surveyor in Port Roseway, wrote

They are upon the whole a collection of characters very unfit for the business they have undertaken. Barbers, Taylors, Shoemakers and all kinds of mechanics, bred and used to live in great towns, they are inured to habits very unfit for undertakings which require hardiness, resolution, industry and patience. Nothing so easy as to bear hardships in a good house by good fireside, with good clothes, provisions &c., &c.<sup>48</sup>

In the same year, Loyalist Jasper Harding wrote

... [Shelburne] has few equals among the headlands of Nova Scotia's coast for bleakness, barrenness and rockiness, yet here and in like surroundings these town-bred men – merchants, tailors, carpenters and joiners, bricklayers, glaziers,

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<sup>47</sup> Wetherell, and Roetger, 76-91.

<sup>48</sup> Benjamin Marston, 1783, quoted in Vesey, Maud Maxwell. "Benjamin Marston, Loyalist." *The New England Quarterly* 15.4 (1942): 622-51.



tinsmiths, cabinet-makers, stationers, millwrights, goldsmiths, cutlers, wheelwrights, and engravers – were set down to scratch a living from the soil or wrest it from the sea.<sup>49</sup>

Both of these accounts indicate that Shelburne was composed primarily of men who were not accustomed to the economic necessities of rural living, namely farming and fishing, nor were they prepared for the hardships of living in a newly established settlement.

The capabilities and characters of the settlers are often touted as a reason for the town's demise. The residents were described as “the dregs of mankind”, and to have “a pitiable passion for finery, reveling and dancing and every species of sensual gratification”. They were said to have “contracted an aversion to all kinds of work which are labourious”.<sup>50</sup> These accounts, however, are subjective and although they offer insight into the qualities of the settlers, they were written by individuals who were likely angry and distressed about the situation in Shelburne. Rather than placing blame on the colonial authorities who ruled them, the settlers often criticized their peers. Despite their perceived ineptitude in rural settlement and flaws in their characters, people stayed, and the primary sector grew. Therefore, the tale of Shelburne's declining population, and its deceleration into an agriculturally based economy is not one of failure as historians and economists have tended to suggest, rather, it is a story of resiliency and adaptability to both circumstance and environment because those who stayed learned how to adapt and make lives for themselves there.

### **Major Occupational Groups (MOGS) in Shelburne, 1786-1795**

Although sectoral composition can reveal overall trends in Shelburne's economic makeup, they do not reveal smaller shifts within specific occupations that may have occurred. Due to the

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<sup>49</sup> Jasper Harding, 1783, quoted in Wetherell and Roetger, 1989.

<sup>50</sup> James Fraser quoted in Mackinnon, "A Caustic Look", 139-42.

large number of occupational titles listed on the assessment and poll tax records for Shelburne, these professions have been aggregated into categories, or major occupational groups (MOGS), based on function, in order to show statistical relevance.<sup>51</sup> MOGS allows for a more detailed analysis than the sectoral composition analysis of what occupations were successful, or not, during Shelburne's early settlement years. The following chart outlines all the MOGS in Shelburne, including their occupational components, between 1786 and 1795. The percentages highlighted in red are the MOGS, and the percentages in black are the respective occupations that are included within the aggregated grouping. These figures include all individuals who were recorded on assessment and poll tax records in Shelburne, including those whose occupations were unrecorded.

Occupations	1786	1787	1791	1792	1793	1794	1795
<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>19.28%</b>	<b>10.95%</b>	<b>44.91%</b>	<b>43.31%</b>	<b>40.53%</b>	<b>45.87%</b>	<b>44.02%</b>
Farmers	17.75%	9.71%	44.91%	43.31%	37.87%	43.02%	41.03%
Fishermen	1.21%	0.79%	0.00%	0.00%	2.40%	2.56%	2.72%
Gardeners	0.33%	0.45%	0.00%	0.00%	0.27%	0.28%	0.27%
Hunter	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.27%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Food Preparation</b>	<b>3.20%</b>	<b>2.26%</b>	<b>1.13%</b>	<b>1.38%</b>	<b>1.87%</b>	<b>1.99%</b>	<b>1.63%</b>
Bakers	2.21%	1.47%	0.57%	0.79%	1.07%	1.14%	1.09%
Brewers	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Butchers	0.55%	0.79%	0.57%	0.59%	0.53%	0.57%	0.27%
Millers	0.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.27%	0.28%	0.27%
<b>Assembly Places &amp; Lodging</b>	<b>2.65%</b>	<b>1.58%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>1.18%</b>	<b>0.27%</b>	<b>0.57%</b>	<b>0.82%</b>
Barman	0.11%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Boarding house	0.11%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Coffee house	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Tavern keeper	2.32%	1.35%	0.00%	1.18%	0.27%	0.57%	0.82%
<b>Trades/Crafts</b>	<b>19.62%</b>	<b>20.20%</b>	<b>11.70%</b>	<b>12.20%</b>	<b>9.07%</b>	<b>9.40%</b>	<b>8.97%</b>
Blacksmith	1.32%	1.24%	0.38%	0.20%	0.53%	0.57%	0.54%

<sup>51</sup> Although some of the MOG titles are modern classifications, each trade is listed as transcribed from the taxation records. Because certain very specialized occupations (for example, weavers, pomatum maker, plaisterer), contain no statistical significance when examined individually, they must be combined with other crafts to show overall trends. This classification scheme is based in part on Dr. Kenneth Paulsen's 1996 dissertation, where he did a similar study on Lunenburg Township in 1753, with some modification to his "other" category, based on the differences in data in Shelburne (i.e. enough merchants and traders to constitute their own classification).; Kenneth S. Paulsen, "Settlement and Ethnicity in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, 1753-1800 : a History of the Foreign-Protestant Community." Thesis (Ph. D.), University of Maine, 1996.

Bricklayer	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Cabinet Maker	0.44%	0.23%	0.00%	0.39%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Calender	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Carpenter	4.74%	5.53%	3.02%	2.36%	1.87%	1.71%	1.36%
Cartwright	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Caulker	0.11%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Chandler <sup>52</sup>	0.00%	0.00%	0.19%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Chimney Sweeper	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Cooper	1.21%	1.58%	1.32%	1.77%	2.13%	2.56%	2.17%
Cooper smith	0.22%	0.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Currier	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Engraver	0.11%	0.11%	0.19%	0.00%	0.27%	0.28%	0.27%
Glazier	0.11%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Gold Smith	0.00%	0.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Gun Smith	0.00%	0.11%	0.19%	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Hatter	0.11%	0.11%	0.19%	0.20%	0.27%	0.28%	0.27%
Jeweller	0.00%	0.00%	0.19%	0.00%	0.00%	0.28%	0.27%
Joiner	0.11%	0.23%	0.00%	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.82%
Mason	2.09%	1.24%	0.57%	0.20%	0.53%	0.28%	0.54%
Millwright	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%	0.27%	0.28%	0.27%
Painter	0.33%	0.34%	0.38%	0.20%	0.27%	0.28%	0.27%
Plasterer	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Pomatum maker	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Potter	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Printer	0.33%	0.45%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Rope maker	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Saddler	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sawmill	0.33%	0.00%	0.19%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Silver smith	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Shoemaker	2.76%	3.27%	2.64%	3.15%	1.33%	1.42%	1.36%
Soap boiler	0.11%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Tailor	2.09%	3.27%	1.32%	1.97%	1.07%	0.85%	0.82%
Tanner	0.11%	0.11%	0.19%	0.39%	0.27%	0.28%	0.00%
Tin Smith	1.65%	0.11%	0.19%	0.39%	0.27%	0.28%	0.00%
Turner	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Washerwoman	0.00%	0.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Watchmaker	0.44%	0.34%	0.19%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Weaver	0.00%	0.11%	0.19%	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Wheelwright	0.11%	0.11%	0.19%	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

<sup>52</sup> A calender's job included pressing and rolling paper or cloth until it became smooth and glossy.; Marion Robertson and Nova Scotia Museum. *King's Bounty: A History of Early Shelburne, Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Nova Scotia, 1983. 204.

<b>Shops and Merchants</b>	<b>13.01%</b>	<b>11.96%</b>	<b>10.38%</b>	<b>6.69%</b>	<b>9.07%</b>	<b>9.12%</b>	<b>9.51%</b>
Auctioneer	0.22%	0.23%	0.19%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Book seller	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Clothier	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Fishseller	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Merchant	10%	8.69%	5.47%	3.35%	4.80%	4.27%	7.61%
Milkman	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Shop Keeper	2.43%	2.60%	4.72%	3.35%	4.27%	4.84%	1.90%
Tabacconist	0.22%	0.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Seafaring</b>	<b>10.03%</b>	<b>11.85%</b>	<b>16.79%</b>	<b>15.94%</b>	<b>12.80%</b>	<b>13.39%</b>	<b>15.49%</b>
Blockmaker	0.33%	0.34%	0.19%	0.20%	0.27%	0.28%	0.00%
Boat owner	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.92%	2.93%	2.85%	4.35%
Boatswain	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.57%	0.00%
Mate	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.80%	0.85%	0.27%
Pilot	1.87%	0.68%	0.00%	0.00%	0.53%	0.00%	0.54%
Rigger	0.00%	0.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sail Maker	0.11%	0.34%	0.38%	0.39%	0.27%	0.28%	0.54%
Sailor or Mariner	2.87%	8.01%	13.96%	3.74%	2.40%	2.56%	3.80%
Sea Captain	3.09%	0.34%	0.00%	4.72%	3.73%	3.99%	3.80%
Ship Builders	1.76%	1.92%	2.26%	1.97%	1.87%	1.99%	2.17%
<b>Medicine</b>	<b>0.88%</b>	<b>0.90%</b>	<b>0.57%</b>	<b>0.39%</b>	<b>0.27%</b>	<b>0.28%</b>	<b>0.27%</b>
Doctor	0.88%	0.90%	0.57%	0.39%	0.27%	0.28%	0.27%
<b>Courts, Churches and Schools</b>	<b>3.53%</b>	<b>3.27%</b>	<b>1.89%</b>	<b>0.98%</b>	<b>2.13%</b>	<b>2.56%</b>	<b>1.90%</b>
Attorney	0.22%	0.34%	0.38%	0.39%	0.27%	0.28%	0.27%
Clerk	1.32%	0.79%	0.00%	0.20%	0.27%	0.57%	0.54%
Constable	0.33%	0.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Deputy Sherrif	0.11%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Judge	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Justice	0.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Justice of Peace	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Minister/Reverend	0.11%	0.68%	0.38%	0.39%	0.27%	0.28%	0.27%
Notary	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
School master/mistress	0.55%	0.79%	1.13%	0.00%	0.80%	1.14%	0.82%
Sexton	0.22%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Sherrif	0.11%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.53%	0.28%	0.00%
<b>Other</b>	<b>13.56%</b>	<b>12.64%</b>	<b>6.42%</b>	<b>10.43%</b>	<b>19.73%</b>	<b>12.25%</b>	<b>10.05%</b>
Assistant	0.22%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Barber	0.44%	0.45%	0.57%	0.39%	0.53%	0.57%	0.54%
Carman	1%	1.02%	0.00%	0.00%	0.53%	0.28%	0.27%
Collector	0.11%	0.23%	0.38%	0.39%	0.27%	0.28%	0.27%
Commissary	0.22%	0.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Controller	0.11%	0.11%	0.38%	0.20%	0.27%	0.28%	0.27%

Engineer	0.22%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Esquire	0.00%	1.92%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ferryman	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Fiddler	0.00%	0.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ganger	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Gauger	0.00%	0.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Gentleman	1.43%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	2.40%	1.71%	1.63%
Harbour Master	0.11%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Inspector	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Journeyman	0.66%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Labourer	7.28%	6.88%	4.72%	9.25%	12.80%	7.12%	6.25%
Lighthouse keeper	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.27%	0.28%	0.00%
Measurer	0.22%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Military	0.22%	0.45%	0.00%	0.00%	1.60%	0.57%	0.27%
Music Master	0.11%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Piper	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Post Master	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Recorder	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Surveyor	0.44%	0.45%	0.00%	0.20%	0.53%	0.57%	0.54%
Tidewaiter	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Town Cryer	0.00%	0.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Yeoman	0.00%	0.00%	0.38%	0.00%	0.53%	0.57%	0.00%
<b>Unknown<sup>53</sup></b>	<b>15.66%</b>	<b>24.38%</b>	<b>6.23%</b>	<b>7.48%</b>	<b>4.00%</b>	<b>4.56%</b>	<b>7.34%</b>

Table 1: Major Occupational Groups in Shelburne, 1786-1795

The first and perhaps most sharp change was the drop in agriculture in 1787, followed by a sharp increase in 1791. As the primary sector includes all agricultural careers plus sawmillers (which are included in trades/crafts), the notable rise in agriculture will not be discussed again here. However, the decrease in agricultural careers in 1787 will be examined. In 1787, agriculture dropped by 8.34%, and those with ‘unknown’ careers increase by 8.72%. Initially, this might indicate a human error in recording those with agricultural careers. However, even after correcting

<sup>53</sup> “Unknown” denotes all individuals whose occupations were left blank on the assessment and taxation records. Individual names were tracked annually, and where an occupation was known in the preceding and following records, the data was filled in for the ‘unknown’ year to minimize error, however there were few individuals to whom this applied.

the data by tracking individuals' names and occupations throughout the years, this discrepancy is still present. This decrease in agriculture may have been the result of the difficulties that agriculturalists faced in Shelburne - rocky soil that was unfit land for cultivation, and pests that destroyed harvests.<sup>54</sup> Additional difficulties faced were severe droughts and fires during the summer of 1786, and the following winter (1786-87) being "the severest known among the early settlers for many years". In 1787 the town was struck by a smallpox epidemic.<sup>55</sup>

Not only did smallpox affect the settlers' health and threaten their lives, but it also undermined the survival of their businesses. The Court of Sessions prohibited those people who had smallpox from walking in the main streets of the town and prevented people from outports coming to Shelburne for trade. Smallpox afflicted the settlers and the economy until a general inoculation order was permitted by the Court in 1797.<sup>56</sup> On the 1787 assessment role, the individuals who do not have their occupations listed are, for the most part, residents of either Roseway River or Jordan River, small communities on the outskirts of the town.<sup>57</sup> Sections of communities were undoubtedly missed during enumeration; whether this was due to human error or communities being more heavily afflicted by smallpox and therefore being less accessible during assessment time, is not known. It is, however, likely that many of the 'unknown' occupations on the 1787 assessment were farmers given their area of residence, and that the discrepancy is not the result of shifting professions.

Secondly, there is a consistent decrease in trades and crafts, most of which are included in the manufacturing sector with few exceptions. This is somewhat expected, as the occupational

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<sup>54</sup> Robertson, 214.

<sup>55</sup> MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 154-155.

<sup>56</sup> MacKinnon, 155.; Robertson, 80-81.

<sup>57</sup> Assessment for the Year 1787, 1787, MG1, Vol. 957, No. 1518, Gideon White fonds, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

structure was simplified over the first years of settlement to better suit the capacities of the town. Although this decrease was reflected in the shrinking manufacturing sector, a closer look into which trades and/or crafts were shifting and in what ways allows for a more detailed examination. The following chart (figure 6) shows those crafts which had the most notable changes based on a percentage of the population during the early settlement years.

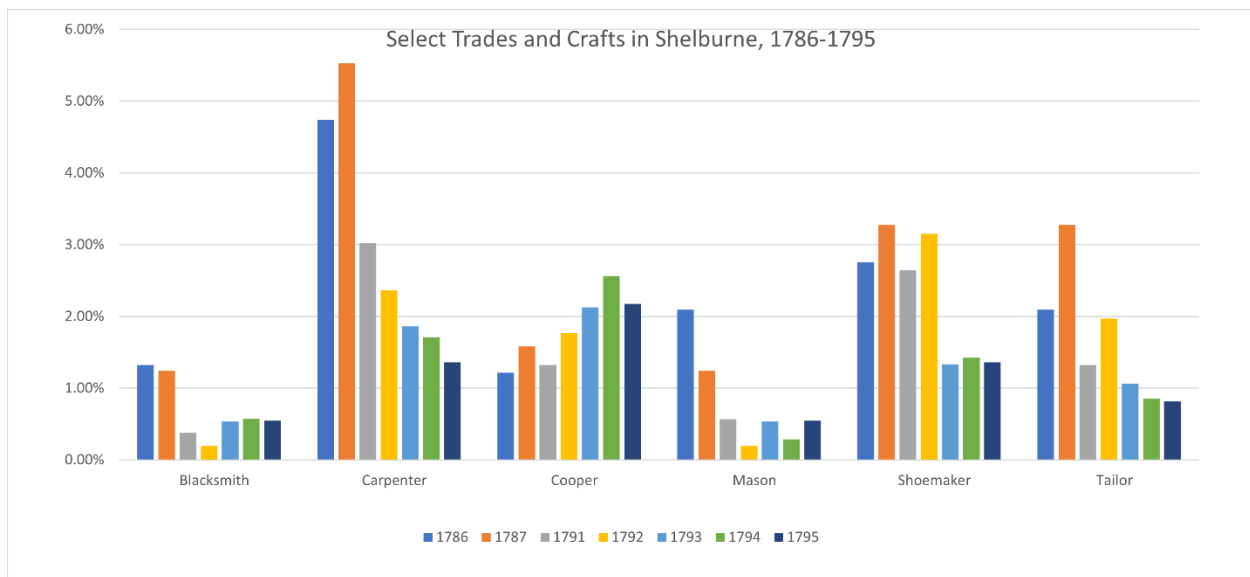


Figure 6: Select trades and crafts in Shelburne, 1786-1795

In 1786, there were 12 blacksmiths in Shelburne, dropping only by one in the following year. However, by 1791 blacksmiths only represented 0.38% of the population with just two remaining in town. Although a decrease in trade specialization was seen across Shelburne while the settlers adjusted to their rural economy, this drop in blacksmithing is rather surprising, as it is the most common and essential form of metalsmithing.<sup>58</sup> Of the 11 men who were noted as blacksmiths on the 1787 assessment, only one remained in 1791, 10 were not present on the later

<sup>58</sup> As opposed to goldsmiths, tinsmiths, silversmiths, etc. who fabricate non-essential goods.

records, and one individual was a new addition to the 1791 poll tax.<sup>59</sup> None of the men listed as blacksmiths were listed in later years as having different careers, and no other metalworkers (goldsmiths, coppersmiths or tinsmiths) changed their careers to blacksmithing. This indicates that blacksmiths were leaving Shelburne, which is unusual given the rise in agriculture, and the importance of smithing to repairing farming equipment and shoeing livestock. Blacksmithing was also closely tied with the shipbuilding industry, an important economic area in early Shelburne. Smiths were creating rudders, anvils, slings, straps, and bolts for the boats.<sup>60</sup> These industries were typically closely tied, particularly in rural communities, therefore the cause of the decrease in metalsmiths corresponds with Neil MacKinnon's thoughts about Shelburne's economic regression – that it was simply not serving a purpose that Halifax was not already fulfilling.<sup>61</sup>

Another career closely linked to the fisheries was coopering, as coopers provided barrels for fishing and curing fish.<sup>62</sup> In contrast to most other specialized crafts in Shelburne, the number of coopers in the town increased steadily starting in 1786. There was nearly an 80% increase in coopers from 1.21% of the labour force in 1786 to 2.17% in 1795. Not only of importance to the fisheries, coopers also provided a means to transport and store goods, both wet and dry.<sup>63</sup> The importance of casks and barrels, even in the years following 1795, becomes apparent when reviewing ship logs from the port of Shelburne, with the majority of goods being imported in those containers.<sup>64</sup> Rice, flour, corn, and other grains were all imported from the ports of the United States including New York, Boston, and Baltimore. St. John's provided salt cod, and manufactured

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<sup>59</sup> Robertson, 246. The “new” addition is David McGill, a blacksmith who arrived from Scotland in 1784, but is not present on any assessment records in 1786 or 1787.

<sup>60</sup> Robertson, 228.

<sup>61</sup> MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 153.

<sup>62</sup> Robertson, 194.

<sup>63</sup> Kenneth Kilby. *The Cooper and His Trade*. London: J. Baker, 1971. 42-43.

<sup>64</sup> Colin Campbell. *Inwards, 1796-1827*. Shelburne County Museum, Shelburne, Nova Scotia.



goods such as shoes and earthenware. Molasses, rum, and salt were imported from the British West Indies.<sup>65</sup> All of these goods required transportation in handcrafted barrels. As for exports, Shelburne provided timber to the British West Indies through its surplus trade, though it was modest in comparison to Halifax. In 1792, for example, six ships left Shelburne bound for the West Indies.<sup>66</sup> Casks and barrels underwent long journeys to different ports across the world and were affected by weather and wear, the repair of which was also undertaken by the coopers. Given the necessity of both building and repairing casks, coopering was a successful industry in Shelburne's early economy, among few others.

On the other hand, construction trades, such as carpentry and masonry, decreased quite substantially in Shelburne following 1787. Though from 1786 to 1787 there was an increase in carpentry, this is explained by craftsmen of more specialized, but related trades, such as joiners and cabinetmakers, reverting to carpentry because the more niche markets were not established.<sup>67</sup> In 1787, 49 individuals listed their career as carpentry. By 1791 this number plummeted to 16 and continued to decrease steadily, both in number and in percentage of the labour pool. Masonry, like carpentry, saw a decrease in numbers following its peak in 1786 of 19 individuals, or 2.09% of the population. This decrease in carpentry and masonry was indicative of an overall decrease in demand for the trades. In the initial years of settlement, and up until 1787, there was a high demand for construction trades due to the need for housing in the new settlement. In 1791, Shelburne reached its economic low, and at that point, the population was still decreasing. Given the continued out-migration, there was no need for new buildings, thus decreasing the demand, and in

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<sup>65</sup> Colin Campbell. *Inwards, 1796-1827*. Shelburne County Museum, Shelburne, Nova Scotia.

<sup>66</sup> S. Basdeo and Robertson, H. "The Nova Scotia - British West Indies Commercial Experiment in The Aftermath of The American Revolution 1783-1802." *Dalhousie Review* 61 (1981): 53.

<sup>67</sup> Robertson, 206.

turn the supply, of carpenters, masons, and other trades related to building infrastructures such as glaziers, bricklayers, and painters.

Manufacturing crafts also saw a decline during this period, namely shoemaking and tailoring. Shoemakers, or cordwainers, dropped significantly between 1792 and 1793. Of the 16 cordwainers on the 1792 poll tax records, only 6 remained in 1793, 5 of whom continued to practice their craft, and one of whom became a merchant. This brought the number of shoemakers down from 3.15% of the labour force in 1792 to 1.33% the following year. Tailoring also saw a decline between those years, dropping from 1.97% (n=10) in 1792 to 1.06% (n=4) in 1793. Both the decrease in shoemaking and the decrease in tailoring can likely be attributed, at least in part, to the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars in 1792. Across Nova Scotia, commodity prices responded to the wartime environment. With the conclusion of the American Revolution in 1783, prices dropped, but following the inter-war years, in 1793, prices increased by 15.1%.<sup>68</sup> This increase in commodity prices was not limited to manufactured goods but extended to agricultural products as well. Given this wartime inflation and the increasing costs of the raw materials from the agricultural sector, the decrease in many manufacturing occupations whose input costs would have increased is reasonable.

Shelburne's economy was inarguably shaped by its demography, the natural resources available, and its access to international markets. However, it was also influenced by the postwar economic depression following the American Revolution and the resumed wartime economy in 1792 with the French Revolutionary Wars. In Nova Scotia, the general pattern of inflation and deflation during wartime was that commodity prices and wages increased to varying degrees and

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<sup>68</sup> Gwyn, *Excessive Expectations*, 21-25.; The study cited focuses on the Minas Basin and Annapolis, however, there is evidence for the rest of the colony experiencing the same wartime inflation patterns.

fell during peacetimes.<sup>69</sup> These fluctuations did not affect every inhabitant equally; depending on their occupation and their settlement location, people felt the postwar depression in varying ways. Agriculturalists, or occupations that relied on labour, were at a particular disadvantage during the war which was further worsened during peacetimes when workers' real wages rose, despite the high prices of their outputs.<sup>70</sup> Inflation was not the only thing that wartime brought to the province. An increase in British spending, particularly in Halifax, reallocation of production workers to military forces, and an increase in international imports all accompanied high wartime prices.<sup>71</sup> Due to the increase in soldiers, demand for supplies of all kinds increased. Nova Scotia was unable to meet the demand relying solely on internal markets, and thus imports increase greatly during the period of the French Revolutionary Wars.<sup>72</sup> While imports increased, exports were comparatively low. Given a relatively large trade deficit, the market for manufacturing crafts, such as tailoring and shoemaking, was hugely diminished.<sup>73</sup>

## Conclusion

There was no singular cause for changes in a settlement's occupational structure. Often the impetus of change was multifaceted, as was the case with Shelburne. As Neil MacKinnon pointed out, in addition to the presence of war, there were many stressors on Shelburne's early economy, including massive fires in 1790 and 1791, a smallpox epidemic in 1791, and the Sierra Leone exodus in 1792.<sup>74</sup> Conversely, Julian Gwyn explains that although not all changes that happened

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<sup>69</sup> Gwyn, 21-18.

<sup>70</sup> Real wages indicated wages adjusted for inflation. Although wages decreased following the war, the spending power of the recipient increased due to the ratio at which wages and commodity prices were changing.; Gwyn, 23.

<sup>71</sup> Gwyn, 39-42.

<sup>72</sup> Gwyn, 39-42.

<sup>73</sup> A trade deficit occurs when imports are larger than exports.; Gwyn, 29, 33.

<sup>74</sup> MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 155.

during the war are caused by war, Nova Scotia's economy was largely shaped by the absence of peace, which caused large fluctuations in population, occupations, and in the economy.<sup>75</sup>

Despite the variety of events that could have, and likely did in some capacity, shift the occupational make-up of Shelburne, this analysis concludes the primary events affecting the large-scale shifts in both sectoral composition and major occupational groups are the termination of government provisions to the settlement in 1787 and the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1793. As sectors and occupations are not independent entities, the effects of these events ripple throughout the settlement, reaching the most unassuming of occupations. Despite the narrative painted by historians of Shelburne's catastrophic economic failure, the changes that the town underwent were normal and expected of a new community. In addition, its economy responded to external events in an expected way, reflecting patterns seen across the province during that time. In chapter 2, which follows, the individuals who comprised the sectors and major occupational groups will be examined. The resiliency of settlers is a factor of community formation that is not easily seen in a statistical capacity. Even amidst foundational events and associated economic hardships, the personal desire to stay and thrive is demonstrated through occupational mobility.

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<sup>75</sup> Gwyn, 40.

## Chapter 2: Success and Settlement

“We left New York on the last day of October 1783, in the schooner *Cherry Bounce* and arrived at Port Roseway on the 7<sup>th</sup> November, so called then, now Shelburne. The snow was about two feet deep; went up to the town there were a number of houses building, but none finished; plenty of marquees, tents, and sheds for the people to shelter under, which they greatly needed at that season of the year. It looked dismal enough.”

- Mrs. Van Tyle, quoted in Campbell J. R., *A History of the County of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia*. Saint John, N.B: J. and A. McMillan, 2018, 87.

The early settlers in Port Roseway undoubtedly faced many challenges associated with frontier settlement, particularly with an ill-timed winter arrival and the necessity of building shelters quickly. Port Roseway was not only distant from their homelands but isolated within the province of Nova Scotia with few amenities, fewer provisions, and far more people than a town of its size could possibly sustain. This sentiment of remoteness was expressed by the Loyalists specifically in relation to cattle; they felt that when there was a scarcity of livestock in the county, it was due to the lack of roadways to the settlements, rather than a representation of province-wide insufficiencies.<sup>1</sup> Despite these difficulties, some people chose to stay in the town, and many of their descendants continue to reside in the area today. In a town that did not have the economic carrying capacity to support a large population, it is useful to consider what distinguished those who were able to stay and thrive, and those who left for other prospects.

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<sup>1</sup> Robertson, 217.

By considering the individual-level data taken from assessment and poll tax records from Shelburne during its foundational years, it is clear that those who found success often displayed the ability to adapt to the changing socio-economic needs of the town, whereas those who departed lacked this fundamental quality, or perhaps simply the desire to do so. Firstly, it is important to understand the quantitative nature of the demographic data. As was demonstrated in chapter one, the overall population in Shelburne steadily declined following the initial population boom of 1783 and 1784. Although these figures are useful in determining the size of the labour force at any given time, it fails to recognize the components of demographic change: births, deaths, and migrations. The population change resulting from births and deaths is referred to as natural change. If more people are dying than are being born there is a natural decrease, and if the reverse is true, then it is a natural increase. Though natural change is not the focus of this research, it is worthwhile noting that Shelburne struggled with severe demographic challenges with a much larger number of men than women in the settlement, as was discussed in the introduction of this thesis.

Although natural change is an important component of population shifts, the focus of this research is primarily on migration. Though the total net migration following the initial settler influx in 1783 was negative, there was still modest amounts of immigration occurring. For example, between 1786 and 1787 the population dropped from 946 to 945, a negligible change. However, this does not indicate that one person left Shelburne during that time, as there are 326 new taxable persons on the 1787 assessment, indicating nearly equal amounts of in-migration and out-migration during that period.<sup>2</sup> Without looking into these components of the population shifts, we fail to recognize the individuals and their families who chose to stay, oftentimes in the face of

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<sup>2</sup> These figures also include some amount of 'natural growth' when minors come of age and are entered into the labour pool, or perhaps more aptly, begin contributing taxes.

economic adversity and hardships. These people adapted their lives to find success and settlement in Shelburne.

This chapter will explore the nature of the population decline in Shelburne on an individual level. In other words, attention will be paid to those who were leaving, arriving, and staying, and in what numbers, as well as the occupational mobility of those individuals who resided in Shelburne. This will be done through the consideration of four case studies. Firstly, a picture will be drawn of Reverend David George, a Black Loyalist who came to Shelburne in 1783. He and his family resided within the town, and George preached both in Shelburne in Birchtown.<sup>3</sup> The second case study is of a settler woman, Jane Holderness, who operated a boarding house. Her inclusion is important since women's economic contributions are drastically underrepresented in the formal records and through her, we catch a glimpse of some of their activities and input to Shelburne's economy. The last two case studies focus on white settler men. The Goddard brothers came from a family of cabinetmakers from New England who arrived at Shelburne as Loyalists in 1783 and who left sometime before 1791. Finally, William McGill arrived in Shelburne in 1784 from Scotland and found his footing within the young community through his own adaptation skills and resilience. These case studies will compare the styles of economic adaptability amongst the various settlers in Shelburne.

### **Case Study 1: Reverend David George and the Black Residents of Shelburne**

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<sup>3</sup> Robertson, 97-98.; David George and John Rippon. *An Account of the Life of Mr. David George from Sierra Leone in Africa Given by Himself in a Conversation with Brother Rippon of London, and Brother Pearce of Birmingham*. London, 1792.

Before getting into the statistical representation or lack thereof of Black settlers in Shelburne, it is important to understand the settlement history of the Black Loyalists. During the American Revolution, many Black enslaved people were promised their freedom if they agreed to participate as British soldiers against the Americans. With the promise of free land and provisions, Black and white Loyalists settled throughout the Maritimes; the largest group of Black Loyalists settled in Birchtown, just six kilometers outside of Shelburne.<sup>4</sup> Many of the new residents were disappointed, however, when they received no land grants or land that provided only opportunities for subsistence farming and not for economic advancement. This forced many of the Black residents in Birchtown to either enter the wage-labour market, where they were paid less than their white counterparts or to enter indentureship.<sup>5</sup>

In the early 1790s it was petitioned that any Black settlers who were not satisfied with their quality of living in the Maritimes could relocate, free of charge, to Sierra Leone, where they would be granted at least 20 acres per man, plus 10 for his wife and 5 for each child.<sup>6</sup> In October of 1791, John Clarkson, an abolitionist of the Sierra Leone Company, spoke to the Methodist congregation in Birchtown. The congregation of 300-400 people decided unanimously to take the Sierra Leone Company up on their offer of supported emigration. In total, around 600 Black people from Birchtown and Shelburne decided to leave. On 7 March 1792, the ships arrived and on 11 March 1792, Freetown, Sierra Leone, was officially founded. In all, over 1200 Black settlers emigrated

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<sup>4</sup> Harvey Amani Whitfield. "Black Loyalists and Black Slaves in Maritime Canada." *History Compass* 5, no. 6 (2007): 1980-1997.

<sup>5</sup> Whitfield, 1980-1997.

<sup>6</sup> James W. St. G. Walker. *The Black Loyalists*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. 115-117.



from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone in 1792, the majority of whom left from Shelburne and surrounding areas.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of taxation records and assessments, Birchtown was considered its own entity, distinct from Shelburne, and the residents were not included in the town's documentation. An anomaly on the 1787 assessment lists for Shelburne is the inclusion of 40 new taxable individuals, all of whom were singled out as being "negro", and all of whom were subsequently crossed out in red ink. The red marks appear to be contemporaneous to the assessment list as it is the same ink was used to create margins throughout the document. Three additional names of white settlers were also crossed out in red ink: John Aimes, a pilot, Cornelius Cunningham, a labourer, and Joseph Oliver, a cooper. Each white settler who was scored out was accompanied by a note of "a mistake". John Aimes was not present on any subsequent records; however, Cornelius' and Joseph's names were both rewritten in the 1787 records with different addresses, and they remained in the town for some portion of the 1790s. None of the individuals whose names were crossed out, had been recorded as having paid their taxes, so it is likely that those singled out as 'mistakes', as well as those listed as 'negroes' did not pay their poor tax or county tax.<sup>8</sup> Given that there is no evidence that any Black settler who owned land within Shelburne paid their taxes, it is likely that they were disenfranchised in Nova Scotia.<sup>9</sup> Below, figure 7 shows the 1787 assessment which shows several names struck in red and identified as Black settlers, as explained above.

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<sup>7</sup> Walker, 118-119.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Oliver was listed as having has paid on his corrected second entry.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Anthony White, "Liberty to Slaves: The Black Loyalist Controversy," Masters Thesis, (University of Maine, 2019)

		when paid	N <sup>o</sup>	County Tax	Poor Tax
Fraser Thomas	Merch. <sup>r</sup> Dock street	20 Dec	2	8 "	7 "
Ferguson James	d <sup>o</sup> d <sup>o</sup>	23 June 88	29	6 6	6 "
Farish George	d <sup>o</sup> Water Street		55	5 6	4 6
Farish Greggs	d <sup>o</sup> d <sup>o</sup>	29 Octobr	57	8 "	7 "
Foster John	Mason Lane		100	1 "	" "
Fraser Thomas	Taylor d <sup>o</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup> May 88	103	1 "	" "
Fritz Henry	Trader S. St. Lane		110	1 "	1 "
Francis Thomas	(Negro) Charlotte Lane		144	1 "	1 "
French John	Taylor d <sup>o</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup> March	163	1 "	" "
Fraser Hugh	Rev. Minister S. Patrick Lane	9 <sup>th</sup> May 88	200	5 6	4 6
Fraser Simon	Shopkeeper Water Street	29 Jan'y	248	6 6	6 "
Fraser Alexander	Shop & Tavern Menzies d <sup>o</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup> Feby	281	8 "	7 "
Francis Peter	(Negro) Carpenter Hammond d <sup>o</sup>		315	3 3	2 9
Freemantle Samuel	Taylor d <sup>o</sup>		330	1 "	1 "
Freeland Lewis	(Negro) Harriot d <sup>o</sup>		359	1 "	1 "
Fountain Peter	Labourer Carleton d <sup>o</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup> Feby	374	1 "	" "
Forty John	(Negro) d <sup>o</sup>		378	1 "	" "
Francis Prince	(Negro) Lab <sup>r</sup> Cornwallis d <sup>o</sup>		385	1 "	" "
Faugh M <sup>r</sup>	Meadow Clement d <sup>o</sup>		399	1 "	" "
Fortune Thomas	(Negro) Rodney d <sup>o</sup>		415	1 "	1 "
Fritz Catherine	Shopkeeper Water d <sup>o</sup>	28 Jan'y	427	3 3	2 9
Fritz Peter	Lab <sup>r</sup> do		431	1 "	1 "
Fleet Pompey	(Negro) d <sup>o</sup>		434	1 "	" "
Fitzpatrick John	Carpenter Hammond d <sup>o</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> April	521	3 3	2 9
Full Thomas	Fisherman M <sup>r</sup>		554	3 3	2 9
Fernandes M <sup>r</sup>			570	1 "	" "
Fisher Peter	Carpenter Cornwallis St <sup>r</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup> Sept <sup>r</sup>	573	1 "	1 "
Finnan Sheik	(Negro) Fidler King Street		583	1 "	" "
Finner Lawrence	Shoe Maker Water d <sup>o</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup> Oct <sup>r</sup>	601	3 3	2 9
French Adolphus	Half pay Officer d <sup>o</sup>		639	5 6	4 6
Fraser John	Carpt <sup>r</sup> d <sup>o</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup> March	645	3 3	2 9
Fraser Hugh	Shopkeeper d <sup>o</sup>		646	3 3	2 9
Fox Mathew	Butcher	2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov <sup>r</sup>	658	8 "	7 "
Fraser Hugh	Roseway River	6 <sup>th</sup> Nov <sup>r</sup>	801	3 3	2 9
Ferguson James	Carpenter d <sup>o</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup> Dec <sup>r</sup>	837	1 "	1 "
Fraser Daniel	Jordan River	15 <sup>th</sup> Nov <sup>r</sup>	897	1 "	" "
Faney Lancelot	d <sup>o</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> Mar <sup>r</sup>	908	1 "	1 6

Figure 7: 1787 Assessment Record, Commissioner of Public Records Nova Scotia Archives MG 1 vol. 957 no. 1518 p. 7

Three of these 40 identified Black individuals were women and were also included in the figures for female occupants of Shelburne. In looking at the statistics, these new additions skew the data to appear as though there are 40 new arrivals from 1786 to 1787, all of whom depart prior to 1791 where the names are absent on the capitation tax records. This, however, is likely not the case. Of a list of 181 Black land grantees, who received land in the Shelburne Township bordering Beaver Dam Lake in November of 1787, 14 also appear in the list of 40 individuals from the 1787

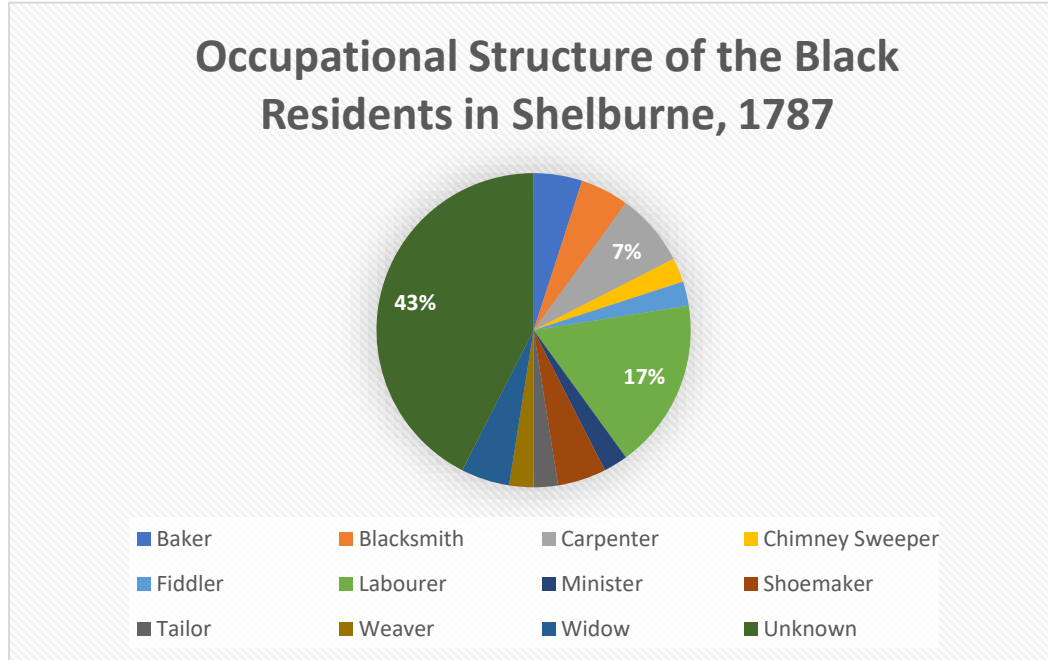
assessment list for Shelburne.<sup>10</sup> Thus, although Beaver Dam Lake is considered part of the Shelburne township, it appears that the residents were not typically included in the town assessment. Additionally, at least 12 of those 40 individuals appear on a 1784 assessment of the free Black people in Birchtown.<sup>11</sup> Birchtown was a distinct municipality from Shelburne, and its residents, similar to those in Beaver Dam Lake, were also excluded from Shelburne's assessment and taxation records. In the 1784 assessment of Birchtown, it is noted that the residents had a wide variety of occupations, from millers and sawyers to doctors.

Given that nearly half (47.5%) of the Black individuals on Shelburne's 1787 assessment list were residents of one or more predominantly Black communities outside of town, it is likely that the 'newcomers' on the 1787 assessment role represent people who came into Shelburne town for work, although this does not explain the presence of two widows. The following chart (figure 8) depicts the occupational distribution amongst those 40 individuals present in the 1787 assessment, which will allow a deeper exploration of why these people may have come to into Shelburne.

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<sup>10</sup> Robertson, 305-306.

<sup>11</sup> 12 names were confirmed to be on both documents, however, because it has not been transcribed it is difficult to discern and there are likely more individuals who appear on both assessments.; Port Roseway Associates, 1782, MG9, E 9-14, vol. 1, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.



*Figure 8: Occupational Structure of the Black Residents in Shelburne, 1787*

There are certain occupations that appeared with the arrival of Black individuals on the assessment role, such as fiddler, weaver, and chimney sweeper. Fiddlers and chimney sweepers subsequently disappeared from the poll tax records, so it is possible that people of colour were in part working in Shelburne to fulfill roles that the white Loyalists would not have done. However, the majority of the positions being filled were labouring jobs, as shown in Figure 8, which was the third most popular career in Shelburne overall at 6.88% in 1787, falling closely behind farmers (9.71%) and merchants (8.69%). It is therefore a possibility that there was an increase in the necessity for labourers in Shelburne.

“Labourer” was a generalized term, and was used across sectors including agriculture, trades and crafts, and seafaring. Due to the lack of provisions and poor soils given to Black settlers,

they often worked as indentured servants or as day labourers.<sup>12</sup> Day labourers were hired and paid for one day at a time, with no guarantee of future work. As such, it is possible that due to the termination of the King's Bounty in 1787 and the subsequent increase in agriculture, there was an increased need for labourers from out of town while the occupational structure shifted, and those who previously worked as day labourers were hired on in a more permanent capacity. For employers, it may have been beneficial to hire Black workers, as they were paid less than their white counterparts.<sup>13</sup>

There are no existing tax records from 1787-1790 to confirm whether these individuals were employed in Shelburne during that period. The only certainty is that those 40 people were recorded to have lived or worked in Shelburne during the year of 1787, and that they were absent on town records by 1791. Many of the Black Loyalists were trained as artisans, but in Birchtown, a community with little commerce, there were no opportunities for those individuals to flourish.<sup>14</sup> It is possible that their stay in Shelburne was temporary, a necessity to escape the limited economy in Birchtown, and a response to Shelburne's need for labourers during its economic adjustments following provision termination. Even if the Black Loyalists continued to work in Shelburne between 1787 and 1790, it is likely that they were not present on the 1791 records because of the emigration offer from the Sierra Leone Company which included land and freedoms overseas. This was an offer that was accepted by most of the Black settlers in Birchtown and Shelburne, and one that had a deep impact the socioeconomic climate in Shelburne and its surrounding townships.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ruma Chopra. *Choosing Sides Loyalists in Revolutionary America*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, Publishers, 2013, 49.

<sup>13</sup> Whitfield, 1980-1997.

<sup>14</sup> Graham Russell Hodges Gao, and Brown, Alan Edward, eds. *The Book of Negroes: African Americans in Exile after the American Revolution*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2021, XXII.

<sup>15</sup> Hodges Gao, and Brown, *The Book of Negroes*, XXXIV.

David George was one of these Black Loyalist settlers who went to Shelburne following the conclusion of the war. David George had been born in Essex County Virginia in 1742. His parents, Judith and John, were enslaved, and George, along with his eight siblings were born into enslavement. When he was around 19 years of age, George ran away from his master, Chapel.<sup>16</sup> He was pursued by Chapel for years and lived and worked with various groups of people including white travellers, the Creek Indians, and the “Natchee” (Natchez) Indians. In 1768, after six years on the run, David George was purchased from the Natchez people by a white man named George Gaulphin, and went to live and work at Silver Bluff, along the Savannah River in South Carolina. It was here that he met his wife, Phyllis, and where his first child was born.<sup>17</sup> They married four years after George arrived at Silver Bluff, and their son, Jesse, was born a few years later, in about 1774. Shortly after the birth of his first son, George met a man named Cyrus “a man of [his] own colour”, who introduced him to the Lord and prayer. This experience began David’s interest in Christianity, and soon after he was baptized, and he began praying with his fellow enslaved people at Silver Bluff.<sup>18</sup> At the beginning of the American Revolution, Ministers ceased coming into Black communities “lest they should furnish [Black people] with too much knowledge”. Armed with a bible and a determination to preach, David George enlisted the help of George Gaulphin’s children to teach him how to read. Once he had mastered reading the scriptures, David held mass for up to 30 people at the plantation.<sup>19</sup> Mr. Gaulphin fled British troops during the war, leaving David a free man once again. During the war, he worked with British forces as a food broker in

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<sup>16</sup> Robertson, 97.; George and Rippon, *An Account of the Life*.

<sup>17</sup> George and Rippon.

<sup>18</sup> George and Rippon.

<sup>19</sup> David George and John Rippon. *An Account of the Life of Mr. David George from Sierra Leone in Africa Given by Himself in a Conversation with Brother Rippon of London, and Brother Pearce of Birmingham*. London, 1792.

Savannah, Georgia, and continued to preach to his fellow Black congregants. At the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, along with other Black Loyalists, David, his wife, and his three children were offered passage to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Soon after, while his family remained in Halifax, David moved south to Shelburne. A man he had known in Savannah, Georgia, allowed him to live upon his lot, and David built a pole hut where he preached, and utilized the creek running through the property for baptisms.<sup>20</sup>

Soon, his family arrived in Shelburne and the George's were granted six months of provisions and  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of land. It is unclear where exactly this land grant was located, however, David did purchase a plot of land in Shelburne's town limits in 1785 from James and Ann Masimore.<sup>21</sup> He purchased lot number six, letter M, in Parr's division. The lot is shown on the map below, figure 9, in the lower left-hand side, bordering on Black's Brook.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> George and Rippon,.

<sup>21</sup> John Jones. "John Jones, James Masimore & wife to David George (a Black) registered at eleven o'clock in the forenoon on the seventh day of May 1785 on the oath of John Jones," April 6, 1785. Online at URL: [blackloyalist.com/cdc/documents/official/masimore\\_to\\_george.htm](http://blackloyalist.com/cdc/documents/official/masimore_to_george.htm) (accessed on 13 June 2022)

<sup>22</sup> If looking at a modern map, the right arm of Black's Brook that emptied near letter E no longer exists and has been developed.

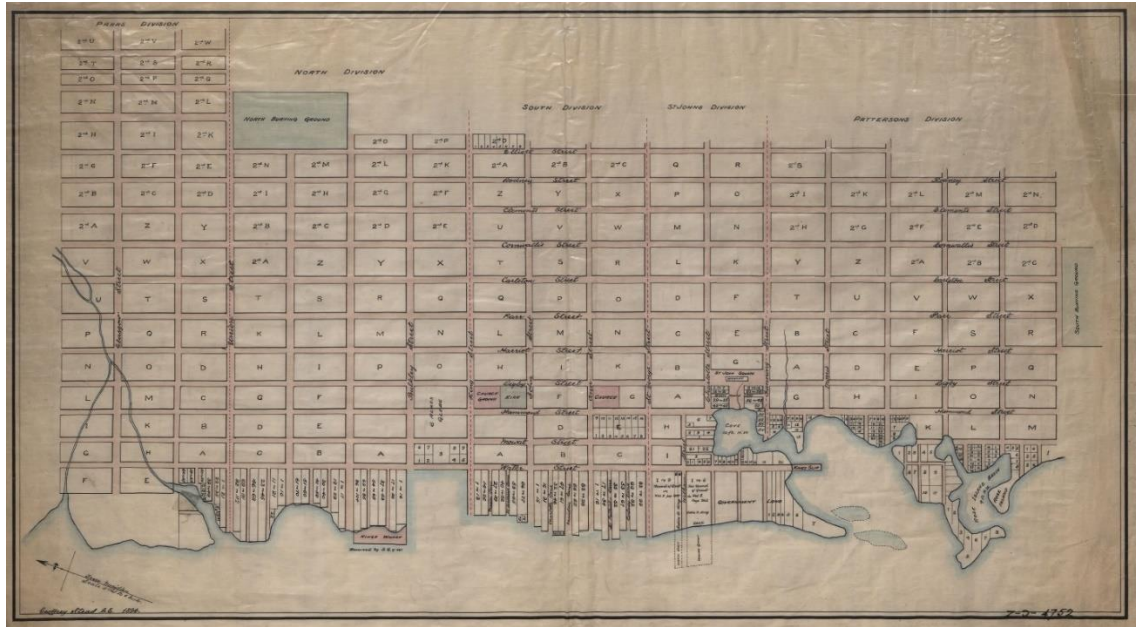


Figure 9: Map of the Town of Shelburne, 1784, drawn in 1894<sup>23</sup>

On the 1787 town assessment, David George is recorded as having lived on Water Street, which would not have been the same property that he had purchased from the Masimore's in 1785, which was near the intersection of Hammond Street and Glasgow Street.<sup>24</sup> It is clear from the surviving records that David owned several properties in Shelburne, although he is only present on the 1787 town assessment, and was stricken from that record in red, along with his fellow Black residents. This segregation from their white counterparts went beyond administrative markings; David met with significant opposition from the white Loyalist population in Shelburne. He preached to both Black and white people but was not widely accepted. He once went to baptize a white couple from his congregation, and in response, a mob drove him into Birchtown temporarily

<sup>23</sup> Map of the Town of Shelburne, 1794. Unknown Scale. Nova Scotia Archives Map Collection: V7 239 Shelburne, Nova Scotia, 1894.

<sup>24</sup> Assessment for the Year 1787, 1787, MG1, Vol. 957, No. 1518, Gideon White fonds, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada



He did return to Shelburne for a period of time but moved onto Ragged Island where he continued to preach to a mixed congregation.<sup>25</sup>

In 1792 when the Sierra Leone Company offered supported emigration to the West coast of Africa for those Black settlers who were unhappy with their circumstances in Shelburne, David George assisted in preparing for the voyage. His decision seemed to come easily, as he wrote in his autobiography: “The white people of Nova Scotia were very unwilling that we should go, though they had been very cruel to us, and treated many of us as bad as though we had been slaves.”<sup>26</sup> However, things were not as expected upon their arrival in Sierra Leone.

“There was great joy to see the land”, David George noted upon their arrival to the western coast of Africa. He quickly constructed the first Baptist church in Sierra Leone, constructed of wooden poles and a thatched roof.<sup>27</sup> David and his family were allocated 9 acres of land, but there were continuous issues with land allocation as the dense jungle required labourious clearing, and the British government required the settlers to pay quitrents.<sup>28</sup> In addition to civil tensions, food and supply shortages plagued the colony, and unfamiliar wildlife caused frequent problems within the village. Anna Marie Falconbridge, the wife of a commercial agent of the Sierra Leone Company, remarked “...five, six, and seven are dying daily, and buried with as little ceremony as so many dogs or cats. It is quite customary of a morning to ask, ‘how many died last night?’”.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ragged Island is included in Shelburne’s assessment and poll tax records, however it is approximately 20 miles from the town of Shelburne.; George and Rippon.

<sup>26</sup> George and Rippon.

<sup>27</sup> Maya Jasanoff. *Liberty’s Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World*. 1st ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011, 295.

<sup>28</sup> Jasanoff, 296-298.

<sup>29</sup> Anna Maria Falconbridge, and Edited by Christopher Fyfe, *Narrative of Two Voyages to the River Sierra Leone During the Years 1791-1792-1793*. Liverpool University Press, 2000, 82.

Life in late eighteenth century Sierra Leone was certainly difficult. Although different, in many ways, from settlement in Birchtown or in Shelburne, some similarities can be drawn regarding the adaptability of its settlers to the environment and to the new economic requirements of the colony. In 1831, after Freetown had time to establish itself and its markets, occupational flexibility, entrepreneurialism, and informal work were markers of the town's economy.<sup>30</sup> The settlers adapted their work to the shifting necessities of the environment and partook in seasonal or migrant work opportunities, much like they did when they were in Nova Scotia, when they worked temporarily in Shelburne. Despite their exodus, the Black Loyalists of Shelburne did find success in their settlement, albeit across the ocean, with informal wage labour markets. This high level of occupational mobility and flexibility is something that the white settlers in Shelburne seem to have avoided, as will be demonstrated in the following case studies.

Another group of Black people who were not represented in these taxation records were the enslaved people in Shelburne. Following the conclusion of the American Revolution, white Loyalists settled in Shelburne along with their "servants"<sup>31</sup>. 1312 people, or 15% of those who came to Shelburne remained in servitude or enslavement upon their arrival to Nova Scotia.<sup>32</sup> Enslavers in Loyalist Nova Scotia were not restricted to the upper class, they were members of the middling class, including farmers, shopkeepers, carpenters, butchers and more. Given the expanded consumption patterns across classes occurring at that time in British consumerism, it is

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<sup>30</sup> Laura Channing and Bronwen Everill, *On the Freetown Waterfront: Household Income and Informal Wage Labour in a Nineteenth Century Port City*. African Economic History Working Paper Series No. 58, University of Cambridge, 2020.

<sup>31</sup> This is the word most often found in documentation, although it is likely diplomatic language used by Colonial officials to obscure the presence of enslavement.; Harvey Amani Whitfield. *North to Bondage: Loyalist Slavery in the Maritimes*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016, 43.

<sup>32</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 43.

unsurprising that this extended to human chattel.<sup>33</sup> This attainability of enslaved people to the middling class meant that they were no longer symbols of elite status, but necessary sources of labour. Enslaved people often worked as extensions of the enslavers' business, that is in inns and shops, and even as craftsmen such as shoemakers and tailors.<sup>34</sup> They also provided domestic work, and helped in the clearing of land and building of houses, freeing up families to establish their businesses.<sup>35</sup> Along with the decline of Shelburne's economy and its population, enslaved people departed as well. By the late eighteenth century, the highest concentration of enslaved people had shifted from Shelburne to the Annapolis Valley and Saint John.<sup>36</sup> It is certain that the ability to own enslaved people would have assisted in one's ability to find long term settlement.

Capital, be it social or economic, was a motivator for those to remain in Shelburne. For those Black Loyalist settlers who lacked both, the choice was clear to accept the Sierra Leone Company's offer of a transatlantic upheaval. For those enslaved people in Shelburne, they served as economic capital for the white Loyalists of the middling class who utilized them in their own occupational ventures. Due to the scarce records depicting both Black Loyalists and enslaved peoples in colonial Nova Scotia, it is a difficult history to contextualize, however it is none the less an important narrative to tell.<sup>37</sup>

### **Case Study 2: The Women of Shelburne; Janet Patterson and Jane Holderness**

Though there was scarce representation of women in the employment records in early settlement Shelburne, this does not mean that they made no contribution to the economy. Women

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<sup>33</sup> Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, 4-6

<sup>34</sup> Whitfield, *North to Bondage*, 67.

<sup>35</sup> Whitfield, 42.

<sup>36</sup> Whitfield, 43.

<sup>37</sup> For additional information on Maritime enslavement see: Whitfield. *North to Bondage: Loyalist Slavery in the Maritimes.*; Whitfield, *From American Slaves to Nova Scotian Subjects: the Case of the Black Refugees, 1813-1840.*

were only represented on the 1786 and 1787 assessment roles but were missing entirely from the capitation tax records which begin in 1791. In 1786 there were 36 women on the assessment role, 72% of whom were listed as widowed, poor, or unknown. In 1787 the number of women jumped to 59, 81% of whom are widows or unknown. Of the women who were not categorized as widowed, the occupations were diverse: shopkeepers, tavernkeepers, a school mistress, and a gardener. In comparing the tax assessment with other records, all but two women on the 1786 list, and all but one on the 1787 list were widows.<sup>38</sup> One woman, Janet Patterson, who was present on both the 1786 and 1787 assessments, was listed as the owner of a boarding house on Charlotte Lane.<sup>39</sup>

Though no information about Janet Patterson can be found other than her presence on the 1786-87 assessment lists, there was another woman, absent from the assessment records, but with a rich record of owning a boarding house in Shelburne, Jane Holderness. The absence of Jane, a contemporary and perhaps even a professional adversary to Janet, from the record further indicates the lack of complete documentation depicting women's role in the economy during early settlement. Much information about Jane Holderness can be found in the journals of William Booth, a Loyalist who lived in Shelburne with his wife, Hannah Proudfoot, from 1786 to 1789. On 22 February 1789, at the age of 38, William's wife died due to tuberculosis. William and Hannah had two enslaved servants, Betty Anna and Nancy, who had been brought to the Booth family from the Proudfoot estate in Grenada.<sup>40</sup> They also had a manservant, Thomas Graves, a white

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<sup>38</sup> Beatrice Spence Ross. "Adaptation in Exile: Loyalist Women in Nova Scotia after the American Revolution", PhD diss., (Cornell University, 1981), 140.

<sup>39</sup>A List of Taxables for the Town and County of Shelburne Levied for the Year 1786, 1786, MG1. Vol. 957, No. 1517, Gideon White fonds, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada; Assessment for the Year 1787, 1787, MG1, Vol. 957, No. 1518, page 16, Gideon White fonds, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

<sup>40</sup> Huskins. "'Remarks and Rough Memorandums", 103.

Loyalist who had a land grant of his own and who in the years following Booth's 1789 departure from Shelburne, was listed as a labourer in poll tax records.<sup>41</sup> Following his wife's death, William and his three servants moved into the home of Jane Holderness, on Mowatt Street.<sup>42</sup>

Jane had been born in London, England, and had married a Yorkshire man named William Holderness. They, along with their six children had come to Shelburne following the conclusion of the Revolutionary War in America. Mr. Holderness was a merchant and shipowner, and he spent much time in the West Indies, leaving Jane and the children at the home port. He was also frequently mentioned in the local newspaper "*The Port Roseway Gazetteer and The Shelburne Advertiser*" as the treasurer for the parish.<sup>43</sup> As such, Jane likely took up boarding as a means of providing for her family while her husband was away at sea, and by the impressions in William Booth's journal, she had found success in it; "She is a very active and clever woman both in the management of her family...and as well in her business."<sup>44</sup> Despite her well managed business, Jane expressed that Shelburne likely was not the last destination for her family "...family must be thought of having 6 young children and no trade stirring here".

William Booth paid 18 pounds a year to rent three rooms in Jane's house, and to have use of the kitchen, a sum much lower than the fares for lodging appointed by the court of sessions.<sup>45</sup> Despite this low rate, Booth stated that he could have rented a good house for half the sum he was

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<sup>41</sup> Huskins, 103.; Poll Tax Records, 1791-1795, 1791-1795, RG1, Vol. 444, No. 57, Commissioner of Public Records, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

<sup>42</sup> Huskins, 103.

<sup>43</sup> The Port-Roseway Gazetteer and the Shelburne Advertiser, Volume 1, Number 16, 17 February 1785, Commissioner of Public Records, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

<sup>44</sup> Huskins, ""Remarks and Rough Memorandums"

<sup>45</sup> Robertson, 91, 187.

paying to Jane Holderness.<sup>46</sup> William Booth departed Shelburne sometime after 1 November 1789, and sailed from Halifax to London on 7 December of the same year, never returning to the province. William Booth represents just one of the boarders that Jane Holderness would have welcomed into her home over the years, generating income for her family, and providing a needed service to the community.

Mrs. Holderness was seemingly correct in her expression that Shelburne was not the place for her large family to settle, and they soon departed. There is no record of Jane or her husband in Shelburne following the birth of their son, John Francis, in September of 1790, nor is there record of any of their children on the first available census, in 1827. Given this lack of information, it is likely that the Holderness family left Shelburne sometime after September of 1790 and before capitation tax was collected in 1791. They relocated to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where William became a shopkeeper, an occupation that would have allowed him more time at home with his family than his former one as a seafaring merchant.<sup>47</sup> On 2 March 1807, at the age of 21, Henry James Holderness, son of William and Jane, was naturalized as a citizen of the United States.<sup>48</sup> So although the Holderness family was not a 'success' story of term or permanent settlement in Shelburne, Jane was an example of the importance that women who went otherwise unrecorded played in the local economic climate.

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<sup>46</sup> Huskins, ""Remarks and Rough Memorandums"

<sup>47</sup> *Septennial Census Returns, 1779–1863*. Box 1026, microfilm, 14 rolls. Records of the House of Representatives. Records of the General Assembly, Record Group 7. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, PA.

<sup>48</sup> Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission; *Supreme Court Naturalization Papers 1794-1868*; Archive Roll: *RG-33:791*

During times of political crisis and war, women increased their involvement in financially sustaining their families with their husbands, only to be increasingly consigned to household duties post-Revolution.<sup>49</sup> This relegation to domestic activities following the conclusion of the war could explain the lack of women in taxation records in Shelburne, and the fact that the majority of women recorded were being taxed on their late husbands' estates. In the absence of their husbands, many women used the lending, pawning and sharing of domiciliary goods to maintain their homes and families, further explaining the absence of women on financial records.<sup>50</sup>

...all of the evidence that can be drawn from Loyalist claims points to the conclusion that the lives of the vast majority of women in the Revolutionary era revolved around their immediate households...The economic function of those households in relation to the family property largely determined the extent of their knowledge of their property.<sup>51</sup>

Although their lives revolved around domestic life, women found ways to generate income, be it through the barter system (unrecorded), or taxable income. Boarding houses, which offered furnished accommodations and meals, such as the ones that Jane Holderness and Janet Patterson owned and operated, would have been an extension of their immediate household, and a way in which domestic work could be turned profitable.

Between 1786 and 1787, 79 women were recorded on Shelburne's assessment records, but it is certain that many more went unrecorded. There were accounts of Anna Rogers Hunter, a

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<sup>49</sup> G. Patrick O'Brien, "“Unknown and Unlamented”: Loyalist Women in Nova Scotia from Exile to Repatriation, 1775-1800." PhD. Dissertation (University of South Carolina, 2019).

<sup>50</sup> Derek Morris and Ken Cozens. "Mariners Ashore in the Eighteenth Century: The Role of Boarding-House Keepers and Victuallers." *Mariner's mirror* 103, no. 4 (2017): 431–449.

<sup>51</sup> Mary Beth Norton. "Eighteenth-Century American Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists." *The William and Mary quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1976): 386–409.

grocer, Margaret Coupar Fletcher, a tavern, and innkeeper, and at least two midwives, all of whom were unrecorded on taxation lists.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the women on the Shelburne assessment lists do not constitute a statistically reliable sample of Loyalist, or even Shelburnian womanhood and economic involvement.

Loyalist women's lives most often revolved around domestic matters, and it was rare to find married women working outside of the home, though it is likely that the female residents of the town were able to commercialize their skillsets in the form of untaxable employment. Legislation allowed married women to work if deemed necessary:

It may be fairly presumed that a married woman in the prolonged absence of her husband, if destitute of other means of support, or in case of his presence and inability or wilful neglect to maintain her may enter into temporary contracts of service, as in such case his consent may be inferred.<sup>53</sup>

In those cases where married women worked out of necessity, they were unrecorded on taxation records as their husbands remained the head of the household. In both the cases of the Black settlers and of the women in Shelburne, though both important contributors to the local economy, the lack of documentation does not permit the study of those who stayed and found their footing within the town. The following two case studies, one of the Goddard family and one of William McGill, will examine the white male Loyalist experiences in immigrating to rural Nova Scotia in the late eighteenth century.

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<sup>52</sup> One man, James McNeil, was recorded as "mid-wife's husband" on the 1786 assessment, indicating that although he was formally considered the head of household, a mid-wife was likely a career of higher value than his own. Ross, 131-140.

<sup>53</sup> Ross, 131-140.



### Case Study 3: Shelburne's Craftsmen: The Goddards

The Goddard family was a group of well-known cabinetmakers from New England. John and James Goddard, the sons of house carpenter Daniel Goddard, moved to Newport, Rhode Island, to work for Job Townsend, of the Townsend family, an equally regarded artisan family. The two brothers went on to marry their boss's daughters: John wed Hannah Townsend; and James married Susanna Townsend, Hannah's younger sister. This was the beginning of the Goddard-Townsend empire. The intermingled families were known as the Goddard-Townsend group and became the finest furniture makers in New England in the mid to late 1700s. They were known for their unique style, the block-and-shell motif, a style that is considered uniquely American as there are no European prototypes in existence. Craftsmen spanned across four generations of their family tree and 21 individuals in the Goddard-Townsend family took part in the trade.<sup>54</sup>

John Goddard and Hannah Townsend had 15 children together, all born between 1747 and 1769. Four of their sons, Daniel (b. 1747), John (b. 1758), Job (b. 1761) and Henry (b. abt. 1763), all cabinetmakers like their father, left Rhode Island to settle in Port Roseway.<sup>55</sup> Though only two of the four brothers were listed in the Port Roseway Associates (PRA) minutes book from 1782, all four were granted land in 1784 by Governor John Parr.<sup>56</sup> Job and John, both members of the PRA are listed as having come to Shelburne alone. John's occupation is listed as 'carpenter' and Job as 'mariner'.<sup>57</sup> John died not long after their arrival in the Spring of 1785 and left property to

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<sup>54</sup> Ralph Carpenter, "Newport, a center of colonial cabinetmaking" *Antiques*, April 1995.

<sup>55</sup> James Newell Arnold. *Rhode Island Vital Extracts, 1636–1850*. 21 volumes. Providence, R.I.: Narragansett Historical Publishing Company, 1891–1912. Digitized images from New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>56</sup> Marion, Gilroy and Harvey, D.C. *Loyalists and Land Settlement in Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Board of Trustees of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1990. 85.

<sup>57</sup> Port Roseway Associates, 1782, MG9, E 9-14, vol. 1, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

his surviving brothers.<sup>58</sup> Job's identification as a mariner is perhaps a temporary career shift due to the Revolutionary War, and in subsequent records in Shelburne he resumed the family craft of woodworking. Henry was also noted as a member of the PRA, although it is unclear what his occupation was prior to arrival, or if he brought any one with him. Daniel was not regarded as a member of the PRA, and like his brother, it is unclear if he came with family. However, Daniel married Elizabeth Ann Moore in 1773, and had one son, Daniel Goddard Jr. (b.1775), both of whom likely accompanied him to Shelburne.

The three surviving brothers, Daniel, Job, and Henry continued their family craft and established themselves as cabinetmakers along Shelburne's Water Street.<sup>59</sup> The Goddard brothers were a prime example of career adaptability in early Shelburne. On the 1786 assessment role, Job, Henry, and Daniel were listed as cabinet makers, however, as was noted on the 1787 assessment, they re-established themselves as carpenters along Fanning Street.<sup>60</sup> This shift in careers has been attributed to the lack of demand in Shelburne for the fine furniture that the Goddards manufactured.<sup>61</sup> Carpenters often fared better than cabinet makers or joiners and in fact, 49 individuals, or 5.53% of the taxable individuals in 1787 were listed as carpenters on the assessment rolls. This makes carpentry the fourth most popular career in 1787, following closely behind farmers (9.71%), merchants (8.69%) and labourers (6.88%).

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<sup>58</sup> Eleanor Robertson Smith, and Robertson Walker, Kim. *Founders of Shelburne, Nova Scotia Who Came, 1783-1793, and Stayed*. Barrington: Shelburne County Archives & Genealogical Society, 2008, 69-70.

<sup>59</sup> Robertson, 206.

<sup>60</sup> A List of Taxables for the Town and County of Shelburne Levied for the Year 1786, 1786, MG1. Vol. 957, No. 1517, Gideon White fonds, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada; Robertson, Marion, and Nova Scotia Museum. *King's Bounty: A History of Early Shelburne, Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 1983. 206.; Assessment for the Year 1787, 1787, MG1, Vol. 957, No. 1518, Gideon White fonds, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

<sup>61</sup> Robertson, 206.

During the initial influx of immigrants to Shelburne there was plenty of work for those in carpentry and other construction trades. However, by 1791, when the town had reached its economic nadir, there was little work left for those in the construction business. This impact can be seen across the trades, but most notably in carpentry and masonry, as shown in figure 10, below.

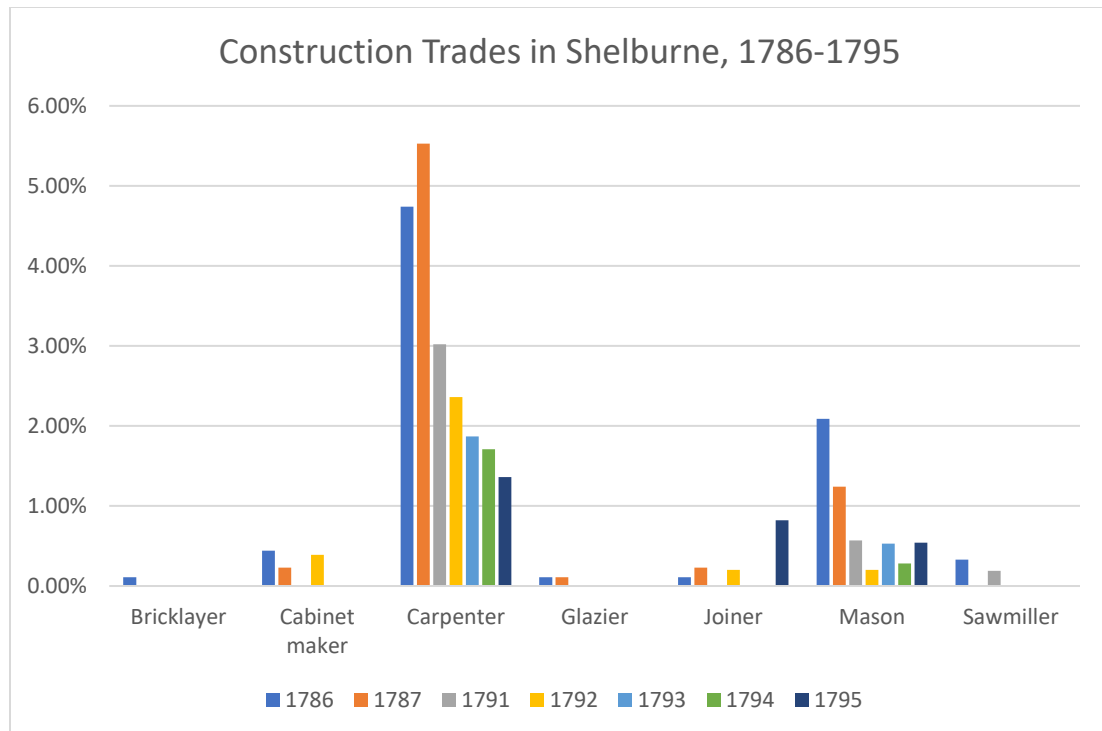


Figure 10: Construction Trades in Shelburne, 1786-1795

The Goddard brothers were affected by this economic downturn, shifting their careers to cater to the needs of the town until their departure sometime before 1791. Though there is little trace of the Goddard brothers after their departure from Shelburne, there is some evidence that the family returned to New England, though perhaps anecdotal, in the presence of the surname Goddard in the decades following the 1790s. In addition, Daniel Goddard is noted to have died in Dartmouth, Bristol County, in 1819 at the age of 72.

#### Case study 4: William McGill

William McGill was born on 11 January 1762 in Straiton, Ayrshire, Scotland. At the age of 22, in 1784, he set sail across the Atlantic, unaccompanied, and settled in the recently established town, Shelburne. He found his home along Water Street, amongst other artisans, such as the Goddard brothers. On 19 March 1788 at Christ Church in Shelburne, William married Susannah Hipp, a native of Gloucestershire, England. In 1786, prior to their marriage, William was listed as a barber. This may be a clerical error, as no other source corroborates this. In 1787 and in 1792, he was listed as a tailor, a trade that he brought with him from Scotland.<sup>62</sup> Tailors seemed to be relatively successful in Shelburne, where there were numerous until 1787. As shown in figure 11 below, following 1787 the number of tailors in town continuously decreased.

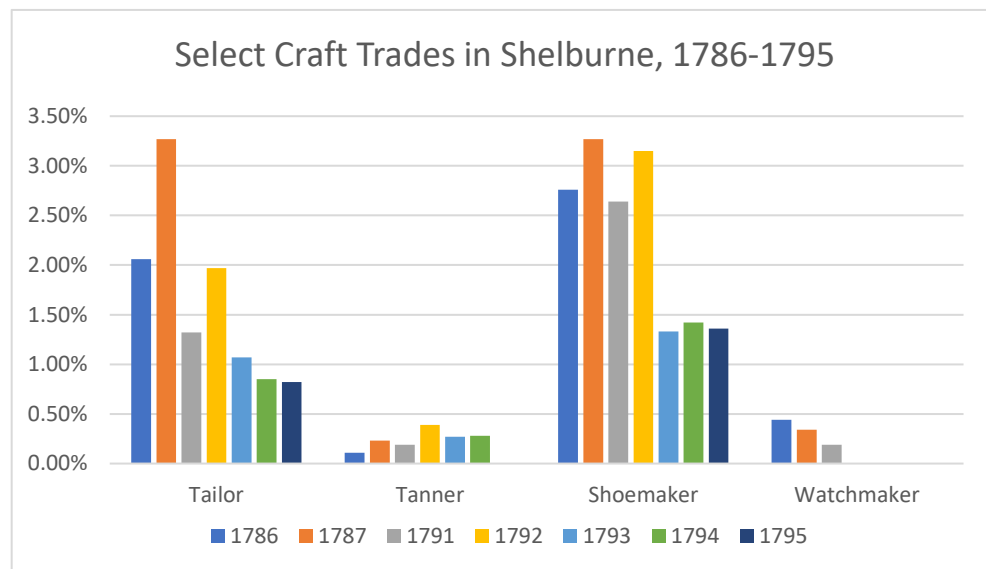


Figure 11: Select Craft Trades in Shelburne, 1786-1795

<sup>62</sup> A List of Taxables for the Town and County of Shelburne Levied for the Year 1786, 1786, MG1. Vol. 957, No. 1517, Gideon White fonds, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.; Assessment for the Year 1787, 1787, MG1, Vol. 957, No. 1518, Gideon White fonds, Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.; Robertson-Smith and Robertson-Walker, 147.

The reason for this decrease is likely associated with the termination of the King's Bounty in 1787, as most major occupational groups saw decreases following this event with the exception of agriculture, as is discussed more in depth in chapter one. Following his career as a tailor, McGill shifts to a career in shop keeping, and he was listed as such in 1791, 1793, 1794 and 1795.

The shift to a career in sales was not uncommon amongst Shelburnians and makes sense if the numbers are considered. Sales jobs remained relatively stable throughout the years, comparative to other major occupational groups. Although sales careers did initially decrease, reaching their low in 1792 with 6.69% of the population, they ultimately recovered and by 1795 there are more numerous salespeople than there are trade and craftspeople combined. William was not alone in his career choice; from 1786 to 1787, 75 people changed their careers, 14.6% (n=11) of which were to sales positions.

This career change likely allowed William and Susannah to settle in Shelburne long-term, and they went on to have 13 children. Unfortunately for the McGill family, in November of 1810, 6 of those children between the ages of 3 and 20 perished due to an unknown illness, possibly diphtheria.<sup>63</sup> Along with William and Susannah, four of their children survived this epidemic; Thomas (21), William (18), David (15), Sarah (9). The other 3 unmentioned children either died in infancy and/or were born following 1810, though not much information can be found on them. William died on the 11 January 1822. It is said that on Christmas Day on his way to the church service he slipped on the ice and fractured his skull. Though he lived for a couple of weeks with his injury, he ultimately succumbed.

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<sup>63</sup> Robertson-Smith and Robertson-Walker, 147.

Despite the tragic story of William McGill and his family, there is still success in his tale. William came to Shelburne a single man, of the demographic that typically does not settle, particularly in a town with such a disparate sex ratio such as Shelburne. He, however, not only found a partner and went on to have thirteen children, but also adapted his career to the changing needs of the town to facilitate settlement. His surviving four children went on to have children of their own, only one, Thomas, relocated away from Nova Scotia to Massachusetts. The other three remained in Nova Scotia, settling between Yarmouth and Liverpool.

### **Success and Settlement: Conclusion**

Success and settlement in Shelburne were not easy feats, shown by the negative net migration during its first decade of existence. Many who came, left just as quickly, and many who tried to stay, such as the Holderness family and Goddard brothers, found a harsh and unforgiving economic environment that necessitated their departure after several years of calling the nascent town home. Others were forced to leave, not due to economic necessity, but due to a disagreeable social climate. Those individuals, the Black Loyalists, found success in their new overseas settlement of Freetown, Sierra Leone. Then others, such as the McGill family, adapted their career choices to fit within the parameters that the economic climate allowed, and catered to the changing needs of a town in its early stages. Ultimately it seems that the pivotal characteristic displayed by those who remained in Shelburne was that of adaptability and occupational mobility.

## Conclusion

This research aimed to identify the ways in which Shelburne's early economy shifted during its early settlement, 1783-1795, the reasons behind those structural changes, and the individuals who lived and worked within that economy. This thesis opposes the dominant narrative of Shelburne's settlement as a failure, and its settlers as sinful beggars who brought their economic demise upon themselves. By examining which sectors and major occupational groups changed throughout the study period, particular times of flux were identified and correlated with documented historic events. Most major occupational groups, apart from seafaring trades, decrease in popularity between 1786-87, agriculture being hit particularly hard. This period in Shelburne's history was wrought with drought, fires, and disease, on top of the land that the settlers were still acquainting themselves with being unsuitable for their economic needs. The second major shift in all sectors and occupations occurred between 1787 and 1791. Agriculture boomed, and specialized trades and crafts diminished. Again, this shift was multifaceted, and was attributed to the termination of government food provisions, and the exodus of the Black population, who had previously provided the town of Shelburne with cheap, undocumented day labour, to Freetown Sierra Leone.

Although how sectoral composition and major occupational groups shift throughout time provided insight about the overarching changes in structure to Shelburne's economy, it lacked the perspective of the individuals who made up that economy. Four case studies offered insight as to the occupational mobility of individuals who attempted to, with some success, build their lives in Shelburne. Those who were steadfast in their craft, such as the Goddards, a family of

cabinetmakers, did not settle in the community long term due to lack of demand for their skill. Others, such as William McGill, changed their careers to meet the economic demands of the town and were able to live the remainder of their days on the South Shore of Nova Scotia. This ability to pivot and adapt a flexible outlook on employment was not only documented in Shelburne, but also across the Atlantic Ocean, in Freetown, where Shelburne's expatriated Black population flourished. Being able to shift careers to the economic needs of a location was not only proven to be a useful characteristic in those two eighteenth century colonial towns, but could be relevant to understanding the current gig-economy, or the prevalence of freelance and short-term contract work, in Nova Scotia.

There remains much work to be done in reconstructing Shelburne's narrative from one of failure to one of success. This thesis has provided an overview of economic make-up through the study of the labour force, however there are many other factors, such as production levels, trade (both imports and exports), and income that would be useful in expanding this study. It would be worthwhile to explore those economic pillars to expand the understanding of early colonial settlement. Although beyond the scope of this project, customs logs, and many court of general sessions records exist which document fluctuations in prices and wages exists and remain to be examined in depth. Not only might this avenue expand our understanding on Shelburne's settlement, but also give insight into how societies with high occupational mobility fit within the larger British-Atlantic economy.

In studying an economy, we must not forget the individuals who live within it, contribute to it, and become a commodity of their labour. Production, trade, income and employment are all dependant on the humble worker. It is our duty as historians to explore those individual histories,



and to place them within the larger context of the world in which they were living. Not only will they contribute to our appreciation of the human experience in colonial North America but can offer insights as to how we might adapt to current socio-political upheavals that threaten the security of our economy.

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