

HALIFAX DURING AND AFTER THE WAR OF 1812*

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AT this time, when Haligonians are once more caught up in the whirl of war and cannot but be concerned about its aftermath, it may be helpful to look at Halifax during and after the War of 1812. A friend of mine once remarked upon the difficulty of seeing the past with the eyes of the past. Words, poor enough vehicles of ideas in any case, are especially tricky when you seek to penetrate the minds of people long since dead. Their meaning has in so many cases changed with the changing world—a fact so obvious that it is usually overlooked. It seems strange that, without special care on our part, we could not carry on intelligent conversation with our great-grandfathers. Reference to even such common things as ships, houses, clothes, lights, dinner-time, a drive and a dance would be misleading. Mention of a place would give rise to entirely different conceptions. What did our great-grandfathers have in mind when they spoke of Halifax from 1812 to 1840?

In these years, Halifax experienced more than its usual share of ups and downs. Coming near the end of the long conflict with Napoleon, when the town was already flush with profits from military contracts and proceeds from French prizes, the War of 1812 was like an exciting dream. Beamish Murdoch, who lived through it as a boy and later studied it as an historian, recorded these impressions:

The effects of the war upon this province, and particularly upon the people of Halifax, were very marked. Always sympathizing closely with the national glory of Great Britain, they were now drawn more than ever to feel a lively interest in military and naval transactions. The operations of the combatants were brought much more near than ever, and on the sea were more frequent. Our harbour had become the temporary home of the ships of war, and the place where their prizes were brought and disposed of. . . . The little capital, then occupying a restricted

*This study is based on the documents and newspapers in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia and such other authorities as T. B. Akins, *History of Halifax City* (Vol. VIII Nova Scotia Historical Society, see *MSS Collections*), Beamish Murdoch, *A History of Nova Scotia*, (Vol. III, 1867), T. C. Haliburton, *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia* (Vol. II, 1829), H. W. Hopkins, *City Atlas of Halifax, 1848*, R. M. Martin, *History of Nova Scotia &c.* (London, 1837), W. Moorsom, *Letters from Nova Scotia* (London, 1830), Cornelius O'Brien, *Memoirs of Lt. Rev. Edmund Burke* (Ottawa, 1894), J. W. Regan, *Sketches and Traditions of the Northwest Arm* (Halifax, 1909).

space, became crowded. Trade was active. Prices rose. The fleet increasing, provisions were in great demand . . . Rents of houses and buildings in the town were doubled and trebled. A constant bustle existed in our chief streets. Cannon were forever noisy. It was the salute of a man-of-war entering or leaving, practising with the guns, or celebrating something or somebody.

The moral state of the town, as might be expected, was deplorable. With eight or ten thousand soldiers, sailors, and paroled prisoners on the loose, grog shops, dancing halls and brothels beckoned at every turn. Although only a child in 1812, T. B. Akins had many first hand accounts when he wrote:

A portion of Grafton Street was known under the appellation of Hogg Street, from a house of ill-fame kept by a person of that name. The upper street along the base of Citadel Hill between the north and south barracks [now part of Brunswick Street] was known as "Knock him Down" Street in consequence of the number of affrays and even murders committed there. No person of any character ventured to reside there, nearly all the buildings being occupied as brothels for the soldiers and sailors. The streets of this part of the town presented continually the disgusting sight of abandoned females of the lowest class in a state of drunkenness, bare headed, without shoes, and in the most filthy and abominable condition.

So far as other conditions were concerned, respectable citizens had little reason to complain. Under the protection of a gentlemen's agreement whereby the people of the Maritime Provinces and their neighbours in New England promised not to attack one another on land, Nova Scotia, and particularly Halifax, enjoyed an unparalleled period of prosperity. A lucrative trade, authorized by the British Government, was carried on with the Federalist merchants in New England who were only too ready to embarrass the Washington war effort, and there was every opportunity for privateering against both French and American shipping. Even the Navy, after Halifaxians protested against press gangs, held out the lure of prize money. The advertisement inserted in the *Acadian Recorder* in 1813 by Captain Pascos of H.M.S. *Tartarus* suggests that the captain could without difficulty step into a publicity office of the present time:

NOW OR NEVER

All able bodied SEAMEN and sturdy LANDSMEN, willing to serve His Majesty, and enrich themselves, are invited forthwith to enter for His Majesty's ship TARTARUS, Captain John

Pascos, fitting with all expedition to take *more* American Indian-men; she will be ready for sea in a few days. Those fond of pumping and hard work had better not apply—the *Tartarus* is as tight as a bottle: sails like a witch—scuds like a Mudian, and lays to like a Gannet—has one deck to sleep under and another to dine on—Dry Hammocks, regular meals, and plenty of Grog—the main brace always spliced when it rains or blows hard—A few months more cruising, just to enable her brave Crew to get Yankee Dollars enough to make them marry their sweethearts, buy farms and live snug during the Peace that is now close aboard of us.

HIS MAJESTY'S AND PROVINCIAL BOUNTIES

Able Seamen	£10.5 0
Ordinary.....	2.10.0
Landsmen.....	1.10.0

Halifax, Feb. 16th, 1813

GOD SAVE THE KING

While young Haligonians serving on His Majesty's ships or local privateers filled their pockets with the old Spanish pieces of eight, then common currency, some of their elders who traded with the Yankees or speculated in privateers made substantial fortunes. Enos Collins, who seems to have had an interest in a number of privateers, cleared upwards of £30,000 from this source alone in 1814. Richard John Uniacke, who was Advocate-General of the Vice-Admiralty Court which auctioned off the prizes, is said to have made £50,000 in *fees* before the war was over.

Although the money rolled in as never before, there was no direct taxation. The only war taxes were the additional excise duties of fourpence per gallon on rum and sixpence per gallon on other distilled liquors and all wines. A loan of £20,000 for defence purposes was authorized by the legislature during the special war session in 1812, but it was later decided that, in view of the friendly attitude of the Federalists, it was not necessary to raise more than £5,000. This small amount was subscribed in Halifax. No government currency was in circulation when the war broke out, and there were no banks. To help with the war-time financing, the province issued treasury notes, over £14,000 before 1813, which bore interest at 6%. As the public did not spurn this paper money (Who would, at 6%?), a bolder move was made in 1813 with the issue of nearly £21,000 of non-interest bearing notes redeemable in three years in gold and silver or, for large sums, in loan certificates at 6%. This

also proved to be good enough for most people. As a result of this happy discovery, the light expenses of the war were met largely by treasury notes. It is intelligible if this is the period that Nova Scotians mean when they speak of "the good old days".

The labour problem, however, worried some people. Early in the Napoleonic wars, in 1799, William Duffus and other merchant tailors of Halifax had complained in a petition to the Assembly that their journeymen tailors had "lately entered into a Combination to work no longer, except they can obtain extravagant and unwarrantable wages, which will operate as a great Detriment to the Petitioners, as well as the Public in general". Wages went up with the War of 1812. Lieutenant-Governor Sherbrooke reported in 1814: "A Day Labourer can readily obtain from 5/ to 7/6 pr. Day at this time in Halifax, and have constant Employment". Skilled men got more. The masons working on the new Province House in 1815 demanded an advance of two shillings a day to bring their wages up to ten shillings, and when this was refused, they all quit work for two days. Then ten of them returned and agreed to work for nine shillings a day. "Whereupon His Excellency with the advice of the Council recommended the Commissioners [of the Province House] to use their best discretion to retain the masons in the service of the province at the lowest rate of wages at which they can prevail upon them to remain, but on no account to Exceed the sum of Nine Shillings Currency *per diem*." At the next session of the legislature, a bill was passed to prevent "unlawful Combinations of Master Tradesmen and also of their workmen and Journeymen".

From the new heights of prosperity gained during the war, Halifax was dragged to a low point in 1822 by the ordinary let-down of peace and a succession of untoward events: crop failures throughout the province in 1816 and 1817, the British-American Convention of 1818 re-admitting the Americans to the fisheries, the lowering of Imperial duties on foreign timber in 1819, and, the same year, the reduction of the naval dockyard. "I do not think", Murdoch wrote in the 1860's, "that there was any period in the history of Nova Scotia in which the progress of the country was more thoroughly paralysed than it was in this year, 1822 . . . The value of buildings and lands in Halifax . . . had sunk to a low amount; and the stagnation of business had made real estate almost unsaleable at any price. At this time the town of Halifax contained, as nearly as I can

judge, less than 2000 dwellings, many of which were then unoccupied”.

The private paper notes and coins now being issued by various Halifax merchants were a great source of confusion and annoyance. Murdoch tells of a man from Lunenburg “pasting a stick of firewood from end to end with the small notes of one issuer,—then with the stick, shouldered like a gun, carrying it to the office of the merchant who had signed the notes, to collect the amount in metallic currency”. One poor Haligonian wrote to the press on October 10, 1820, to complain of his difficulties that morning when he had gone “to the green market to buy a bunch of carrots, one of turnips, a squash, and two cabbages”. He had a twenty-shilling treasury note:

First, one said he could not change it; another shook his head and shrugged his shoulders, uttering with a foreign accent “me no small money, will keep my cabbage till you pay them;” a third, who had the squash, began to fumble in his waistcoat pocket, and emptied out of it, coppers, ragged bits of paper and one solitary seven-pence-half-penny in silver; “my squash, sir if I change the note is 6d. but only 3d. if you give me coppers”—“Change the note, said I, and the D—I take it; for I am tormented” . . . for the information of others, and probably for the benefit of posterity, I shall faithfully set down what I received in this trifling transaction:

1st.	George Legget and Wm. Lawson's note each 5. £0 10 0		
2d.	H. H. Cogswell's [Dartmouth] team boat note		
	for.....	0	1 0
3d.	Adam Esson and John A. Barry, each for 1s 3d	0	2 6
4th.	Wm. Smith, for three 7½d. in his notes.....	0	1 10½
5th.	In silver.....	0	0 7½
6th.	In coppers.....	0	3 6

I had thus 8 paper notes, 1 silver piece, and 84 coppers—in all 93 separate things before I could get vegetables for my family's dinner—For God's sake, gentlemen, let us get back our DOLLARS!

He was referring to the Spanish silver dollars which were divided into eight reals sometimes known as bits, hence the expression of “two bits” for a quarter.

After 1822, the normal return of confidence, the accumulated effect of the post-war issues of treasury notes, the benefits of a free port, the removal of Imperial restrictions on commerce with other countries, the boom in ship building, the construction of the Shubenacadie Canal, the expenditure of Imperial funds on fortifications, particularly the Citadel, and the increase of population all helped to bring back good times. The upswing

continued for a decade, in which Haligonians organized their first banks and started more joint stock companies, while the government embarked on the dangerous experiment of issuing irredeemable paper money in excess of the provincial credit.

The inevitable crash came in 1833 owing to a number of causes, not least of which were the slump in trade following the entry of the Americans into the West Indian markets in 1830 and the complicated currency troubles. In vain had some of the older citizens hoped for a return of past times "when, instead of stamped *rags*, merchants would be seen paying their bills in wheelbarrow loads of [silver] dollars or bags of gold". In July, 1834, Joseph Howe reported:

The condition of this town is in the highest degree distressing. . . . It is now about 18 months since the first failure of any consequence occurred—since then, and more particularly within the last half year, there have been many others—embracing houses which had been doing a very extensive business, and had maintained undoubted credit. The panic has been heightened, and the pressure increased, by the closing, within a few days, of a concern of the very highest standing and character . . . The Banks contribute but slightly to the relief of the community—discounting nothing but renewal Notes, and in fact until things clear they can scarcely tell who to trust. Those who have property will only sell for cash, and none but the wealthy capitalists can go into the market to buy. Debts cannot be collected—and in fact business of every kind is at a stand.

A few months earlier, Deane White, a young Halifax merchant, had written to his brother:

You have, with all you have seen, little idea of the present state of Halifax—what property a Man has, he keeps close under his thumb and trusts not a farthing to his next door neighbour—What do you think of upward of 600 houses *now* to let in Town and Suburbs—rents are generally 25 pr Ct lower than they were 6 months since—and Many Shops that let last year 90 and £100 are now offered for 40 and £50: this I *know* to be the Case. The Town is glutted with all sorts of produce and no vent for it. If £5 or £1000 comes into the Market this Moment it is locked up in the Banks the next.

The cholera epidemic, which broke out in August, 1834, and the departure of many people to the United States, increased the general gloom.

Measures taken to improve the financial situation were beginning to have a beneficial effect by 1836, and in another few years the depression had definitely lifted. Howe wrote

an editorial to celebrate the changes which he saw in the spring of 1839:

Halifax is not a town in which there ever is much bustle. The wharves extending along a water line of nearly two miles, there is no concentration—no crowding around particular points; and therefore a stranger, coming here just now, would look in vain for the signs of that prosperity which a resident so easily remarks. But it is seen in the demand for houses, in the rising of rents, and the increasing value of property—in the vast importation—the high and steady but not artificial prices of every article of domestic production—the employment of the poor—the activity of the young and enterprising, and the mutual confidence which business men appear to have in each other.

The population fluctuated with the times. Immigrants who regarded the town as a temporary abode were ever ready to float off, and with them in the worst years went many established residents. Soldiers were always coming and going, although in time of peace the size of the garrison remained steady: usually four regiments, some companies of artillery and detachments of other services. The naval squadron, which after the removal of part of the dockyard establishment to Bermuda in 1819 spent only the summers on the Halifax station, generally numbered in the 1820's about six ships, but in the 1830's seems to have been considerably strengthened. The number of civilians in 1812 was estimated at about 10,000, or double the number at the beginning of the Napoleonic wars.

This rate of increase was not maintained after 1815, despite the annual arrival of immigrants. Possibly 10,000 or more old countrymen, mostly Scots and Northern Irish, landed at Halifax in the first six years of the peace, but they were nearly all transients, moving on into the country or to the United States. When the census takers made their rounds later in 1817, they found a population of only a little over 11,000. A decrease was recorded at the end of the next decade, during which calamities had dogged the town and immigration (in 1821-25) had practically ceased. A count taken by the Poor Man's Friend Society early in 1825 showed 7,903 people in twelve of the sixteen wards. When reporting this, the *Novascotian* allowed about 2,000 for the other wards to make a total of 10,000. If this was correct, a sharp increase marked the next few years, for the official census at the end of 1827 gave a population of almost 14,500. In the meantime, immigration had picked up, particularly in 1827 when 1,600 or more Irish arrived and,

incidentally, brought the small-pox which carried off some 800 people. The high birth rate was responsible for a good many of the additions throughout this period. The average Halifax family in 1838 was between five and six. In 250 households that year, the number ranged from ten to twenty. Boarders or servants or both lived in some of these homes.

Calling attention to one such house in 1831, a correspondent in the *Acadian Recorder* made a point of the cosmopolitan nature of the population with the challenge "*Equal this in Coblenz!*"

In a respectable Halifax boarding house, the following collection of persons are found, and they live together in as perfect amity as the cat, mice and canary birds, exhibited by the itinerant showman—4 Irishmen, 3 Yankees, 2 Englishmen, 2 Scotchmen, 1 Frenchman, 1 German, 1 Spaniard, 1 Russian, and 1, only 1, Bluenose!

Immigration, after a comparative lull in 1828-30, flowed freely in the next two years; but during the hard times that followed 1832, it fell off, and there was a frightening increase in emigration. The extent of the out-flow may be judged from the fact that the census of 1838 showed no more citizens than the census of 1827. The figures, in fact, were almost identical: 14,439 in 1827 and 14,422 in 1838. Emigration, Howe believed, drained off "several thousands at least" in the depression. Whatever the temporary differences, there had been no gain over the past eleven years.

If the population of Halifax did not grow greatly between 1812 and 1838, the place itself did. Money made during the war went into the building of houses and buying of land. The number of properties almost certainly doubled. The assessment rolls for 1812 and 1838 have not been found, but those for 1819 and 1836 show 1,517 and 2,395 properties respectively, an increase of 878 in seventeen years. These statistics are for the area that Halifax covers to-day, that is, the whole peninsula. At that time, the town proper did not extend much beyond the eastern shadow of the Citadel. It was a parallelogram half a mile by a quarter of a mile, bounded on the south by Salter Street and on the north by Jacob. The streets leading uphill from the harbour to the base of the Citadel were carefully avoided in the new development, which took place largely on the level thoroughfares. Not many new houses in these years went up in the south suburbs, then known as Irish Town, which stopped at Morris Street and Fort Massey Road. This road, now Queen Street,

in 1818 was "covered with grass and seldom used except for military funerals". The section west of Queen Street, bounded to-day by Spring Garden Road, South Park Street and Morris Street and then called Pedley's Fields or Schmidt Town, was first settled in the 1820's and 1830's, as were scattered lots further west and south. The north suburbs, where in 1819 only Brunswick, Lochman, and Gerrish Streets had any inhabitants, went by the name of Dutch Town (not to be confused with Dutch Village, which lay between the North West Arm and Bedford Basin). Dutch Town had expanded considerably by 1836, when people were living on eight more streets. The area further north and west, which in 1812 had been a virtual wilderness, now had scores of residences and farmsteads.

Since the war, more wealthy people had come to appreciate the charm of living along the east bank of the North West Arm, but some of them resided there only in the summer, because it seemed so far out of town. In the discussion in 1839 over the site of the proposed Halifax Hotel, one citizen who favoured Hollis Street declared that if the hotel were placed south of Salter or north of Jacob, it might as well be put at the North Pole for all the benefit it would confer on Halifax. The heat of the argument generated exaggeration; yet it must be remembered that for some years after the war, gentlemen enjoyed snipe-shooting in the marshes around Camp Hill.

Many changes were made in these years within and without the confines of the old town. Looking down from the Citadel, which underwent a face-lifting itself from 1828 on past the middle of the century, one could not have helped noticing the new steeple put on St. Paul's in 1812, the imposing new Province House being built between 1811 and 1819, the spacious Admiralty House begun in 1814 and completed a few years later, the National School (1818), Dalhousie College (1819-20), the Royal Acadian School (1820-21), and after 1820 the slowly rising walls of St. Mary's Cathedral. The cessation of work on all but the last in or before 1821 no doubt helped to make 1822 such a bad year. A striking fact about these new buildings was that, with the exception of the National School, they were made of stone. The whole town in 1822 contained no more than twenty stone or brick buildings.

A bill was passed in 1822, however, that required that all buildings exceeding thirty feet in depth and twenty feet in

faced with brick, with fire walls of brick or stone. Fires had been so numerous that the fire companies were "perhaps the most useful institutions in the community". The new law reinforced by the return of prosperity led to the construction of what the *Acadian Recorder* in 1825 considered "very fine and substantial buildings of the iron stone of Acadia" along with granite and free stone. The editor predicted that the town would gradually acquire an air of solidity, and fires and time lose a portion of their destructive powers. In 1828, T. C. Haliburton counted in the town and suburbs 73 stone and 37 brick buildings, and in the following decade R. M. Martin reported that "Many of the private residences are handsomely built of stone". Nevertheless, the Act of 1822 was said to be "extremely injurious to the interest of a large proportion" of Haligonians, and was consequently repealed in 1831. Although in the past nine years stone and brick had from necessity or choice been used as never before, the town was still predominantly wooden.

Amid the jumble of nondescript architecture, some buildings were good and others very odd. The most notable structure was the Province House, which in the opinion of some travellers was one of the finest in America. The Government House built in the first years of the century had a Georgian charm that attracted visitors, as did the graceful proportions of St. Paul's (1750) and the circular lines of St. George's (1800). Except for St. Mary's, all the churches—fourteen were open in 1835—seem to have been made of wood. The Town Clock (1803), also of the circular design favoured by the Duke of Kent, was another object of interest. The oldest stone house was the residence of H. H. Cogswell on the corner of Prince and Argyle Streets, which had been erected in the eighteenth century by Richard Bulkeley with stones gathered among the ruins of Louisburg. This example of importation was followed about 1821 by John Black, who sent to Scotland for the granite that went into his solid new house on Hollis Street, later the residence of Bishop Binney.

A number of the wooden houses were worth more than one look. Bishop Plessis of Quebec on his visit in 1815 said that he "could not believe it possible that such noble houses as those in the upper part of the town, could be built of wood." In particular, he mentioned the house of Chief Justice Blowers on the corner of Blowers and Barrington Streets, that of the

Collector of Customs, T. N. Jefferys, on Pleasant Street, and the residence of General Gosselin, the property of the Imperial Government, which had been built for the Duke of Kent on the north-east slope of the Citadel, as well as the Masonic Hall (1800), St. Paul's, and St. Matthew's (175-?), the Presbyterian Church, which faced the new Province House from Prince Street. "A great number of houses," the Bishop wrote, "are finished with a flat roof, others have flat roofs on the wings, and a sloping one on the main building. One must come to Halifax to find handsome porticoes, superb entrance doors and steps, broad stairways, and noble and well furnished apartments". The assessors in 1819 valued the property of the Chief Justice at £4,000, and that of the Collector of Customs at £3,000, or the same as on the wooden mansion of Attorney-General Uniacke at the corner of Argyle and Sackville Streets. In the 1830's, R. M. Martin thought that "the houses, of wood plastered or stuccoed" had "in several instances an imposing appearance". Some of the wooden survivors of earlier times, especially the relics of the first years of the town, standing cheek by jowl with the new business houses, residences and public buildings, made a contrast particularly noticeable to a stranger. Captain Moorsom caught it in 1829 for his readers in the old country:

Picture rather to yourself Macadamized roads garnished with buildings mostly of wood, some of brick, and others of stone, of all sizes, shapes, and dimensions, from one storey to three; some neatly painted, others setting the ingenuity of the colourist at nought: here, a line of shops . . . followed by a row of good dwellings; then an interval; a garden, or the gable end of a temple of Vulcan; a fine stone edifice standing apart, evidently for public purposes; and opposite, a little wooden structure, setting at defiance all the rules of perspective, and looking as if ready to give up the ghost, with fear at the august appearance of its lordly neighbour.

The streets in these years were greatly improved. Their deplorable condition after the war made changes imperative. According to Akins:

Those in the least frequented parts of the town had been so much neglected that in many places they were impassable from the accumulation of rubbish and the broken condition of the wooden platforms or bridges at the gutters and crossings. In many places the streets were overgrown with grass except in the centre. Brunswick Street, though one of the principal highways of the town, was overgrown at each side with grass. Many of the old Dutch houses then still remaining in this street stood on

banks a few feet above the sidewalk, and where there were no buildings, rough stone walls or fences marked the line of the street. Water Street, from the continual traffic and wear during the period of the war, had been worn into holes and was in wet weather almost impassable from the accumulation of mud, particularly between the Ordnance Yard and the foot of Prince Street . . . It was found necessary to pave this portion of Water Street, which was accordingly accomplished during the years 1816 and 1817 . . . The Provincial Legislature contributed the sum of £1,200 towards the work, and the expense of flagging the sidewalks was charged to the owners of property fronting on the street . . . The Macadamizing system began to be introduced, and the extensive improvements in the way of levelling the streets and filling up hollow places were proceeded with.

Sir James Kempt, Lieutenant-Governor from 1820 to 1828, could claim credit for much of this transformation. Shortly after Kempt's departure, Haliburton wrote: "Water-street is now well paved, and the side-paths neatly flagged for the accommodation of foot passengers. The other main streets have been Macadamized, and the cross streets covered with hard and durable materials." But these improvements were not as permanent as at first hoped. The pavement on Water Street had by 1835 sunk under the mud, so that the way to the market slip had to be raised five feet. The side-walks, except on that street, were still made of wood. Carpenters were busy in 1831 "laying down platforms on the side walks", which doubtless needed frequent replacements.

Trees had provided compensation for the roughness of the old gravel streets. In 1815, Bishop Plessis noted that "many places are ornamented on both sides with willows, from which the tops are lopped off from time to time, causing them to spread out, and thus affording as much shade as the linden and limes of Canada." Lombardy poplars of "gigantic size" and other "fine trees" lined other streets. In the plans for widening part of Spring Garden Road in 1818, provision was made for "two rows of trees planted at the expence of the Town, leaving a side walk of twelve feet wide." Later authorities apparently took less account of beauty. With bitterness and surely some exaggeration, Akins declared that in 1829 and 1830 the trees were "all cut down without mercy" because "they grew on the side paths" and, in the opinion of the commissioners of the streets, were deemed "an encroachment on the public highway." Thus, at one swoop, Haligonians were deprived of their shady walks.

The streets were dark at night. Although at times in the eighteenth century lamps placed at the principal corners gave some illumination, in this later period there appear to have been no public lights. Lieutenant-Governor Sherbrooke appropriated £250 from the Arms Fund in 1816 for this purpose, but the money was still unspent in 1831 when someone suggested that it be used to enclose a new cemetery. A bill for "lighting the streets and wharves of the town of Halifax" introduced in the assembly in 1827, and motions in 1828 and 1829 for lighting the Province House Square were all rejected, probably because the country members considered that the capital received more than its share of the public funds. No further move on this line was made in the legislature, although discussion continued in the press. As early as 1819 the *Acadian Recorder* foretold the time when electricity would "light up a whole city". Meanwhile, reports from other countries indicated the more immediate possibilities of gas. James McGregor of East River, Pictou, informed William Young of Halifax in 1822 that only the expense prevented him from putting gas fixtures in his house. Five years later, William's brother, George Young, wrote an editorial in the *Novascotian* urging the advantages of gas: "If gas were used for the lighting of our [Halifax] streets, it would soon find its way into our stores, counting-houses and parlours". More than a decade passed before any action was taken to make these words come true.

Haligonians might have been more anxious to light their streets in the night hours, if the watch and ward system established in 1818 under which all citizens or their substitutes did periodic service had been less successful. As it was, in view of the mixed population of soldiers, sailors, seamen, immigrants and established residents, peace and order were well maintained. During the day, the streets were patrolled by several constables. Civic pride probably increased the demand for lights when the town was incorporated in 1841. The Halifax Gas, Light and Water Company, formed the previous year, began in 1843 to supply the city with gas-light.

The need for a better water system had long been felt. In 1817, a number of citizens dissatisfied with pumping water, which was often hard and bitter, from public wells, contemplated the making of a reservoir of lake water on the Common. A bill was passed providing that when twenty people joined together for that purpose, they would be incorporated as "the Halifax Water Company". But talk of the project was still

going on in 1833, when somebody pointed out that during the past twenty-five years only one well had been opened, while five had been closed. He urged that "the money about to be expended in making a reservoir on the Common" be used to sink half a dozen new wells. Although considered desirable, the reservoir was never built. Lake water was finally introduced in 1847 by a company formed the previous year which laid pipes from Long Lake to St. Andrew's Cross, at the junction of Robie Street and Bell Road, and from there, instead of converting Camp Hill into a reservoir as they had intended, continued the pipes into town.

With no system of running water, the streets were disgustingly filthy. Slops were emptied into the gutters and, where these were ineffective, accumulated in stagnant, evil-smelling messes. Neglected out-houses and overflowing cess-pools in the poorer parts of town were often complained of, as was the Poor House Burying Ground, now Grafton Park, where the want of drains and careless interments created a standing nuisance. The commissioners of the streets usually did something about the worst cases, but without proper drainage and regular garbage removal, cleanliness was impossible. Possibly in the expectation that water would soon be piped from a reservoir, the commissioners were authorized in 1832 to borrow money for the building of "public drains and Sewers". If any improvements were made, they were not evident in 1834, when one citizen at least publicly blamed the dirty state of the town for the spreading of cholera. The ravages of this dread disease stirred up the health wardens to employ carts "to remove daily all FILTH and ASHES from the Town" and, at the same time, to give notice that henceforth no one could keep pigs. This latter injunction was a blow to a number of households. In the north suburbs alone, twenty-two people in 1832 had pigs. What with these and other animals running about, the streets were never clean. As a line had to be drawn somewhere, pigs were ruled out. Smoking on the streets, although quite conceivably a means of personal protection, was also against the law.

Small wonder the people took advantage of their open spaces! The North Common was always a popular place, especially on Sunday afternoons in the summer-time, when the whole garrison was on parade. This military feature on the Lord's Day was discontinued after the arrival in 1828 of Lieutenant-Governor Maitland, who was said to be "anxious for a safe passage to a better world". Perhaps he also disapproved of the horse races,

although they were on week-days. The scene during one race on the Common in 1826 was reflected in the words of a contemporary observer:

The citadel hill presented, from the course, a very interesting sight, being crowded by the fair of Halifax and gentlemen in every variety of summer costume. The scene below was of rather a more motly [*sic*] and disorderly appearance—ladies in their carriages—gentlemen on horseback—carts—wagons—huxters—gingerbread women with their baskets—booths filled with the drinking and the drunken; and the cheers of the multitude as the horses went swiftly round formed altogether a scene of confusion which can better be seen than described.

General fun and games were held here on holidays, and a particularly fine time was had on June 28, 1838, when Halifax celebrated the coronation of Queen Victoria.

Roads and lanes running in all directions over the peninsula offered many opportunities for riding and walking. A favourite promenade was along Pleasant Street to the Kissing Bridge, up the road later known as Inglis Street, along Tower Road to Pyke's Bridge, and down Spring Garden Road to Government House. Tower Road which continued out to the Martello Tower (1796-7) in Point Pleasant went past Gorsebrook, built by John Moody in 1818 and acquired a little later by Enos Collins. Various lanes led westward to estates on the North West Arm, such as Belmont, Oaklands, Studley, Jubilee. In the winter, to save the trouble of going around the head of the Arm, people used to cross on the ice from Jubilee to Melville Island which, with its charming scenery and memories, if not the presence of French and American prisoners, was considered a romantic place, but perhaps no more so than the Kissing Bridge, already mentioned, which spanned Fresh Water River near the foot of Inglis Street and was "the favourite resort of the young of both sexes on Sundays and summer evenings". The shore road from this bridge to Point Pleasant, which had fallen into disrepair, was rebuilt in the 1830's. In former days, when there was a full governor, a lieutenant-governor lived out on the Point, while at the other end of the peninsula, on what was called the Governor's North Farm, his superior had a summer residence. This lay north of Fort Needham, on Gottingen Street, which was a country lane on which practically no one lived until the 1820's. In the last years of the American Revolution, when Sir Andrew Snape Hammond built his "snugg little farm house" there, a road obviously for his convenience

was made from Gottingen Street to Bedford Basin and named Lady Hammond's Road.

A number of highways led out of Halifax. The oldest was the Blue Bell Road which ran past a tavern of that name on what is now Windsor Street. This and the Lady Hammond Road were reported to be in such a "very bad state" in January, 1824, that Sir James Kempt decided to build a new highway between them. The Kempt Road, as it was called, was henceforth the principal way to the country. Campbell Road, proposed as early as 1831 and laid out in 1836 when Sir Colin Campbell was Lieutenant-Governor, served only the north-east part of the peninsula. The quickest way out of town was by the Dartmouth ferry, sail and row boats before 1816, then teamboats worked by horses, and from 1830 on, steamships.

Although the many improvements in transportation in these years enabled Haligonians to know the province better, most of them seem to have been satisfied with their situation in the capital.