

New England Planters at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia

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One of the more constructive results of the Loyalist bicentenary a few years ago was the rekindling of scholarly interest in archival sources for the writing of Loyalist history. Curiously, the Planter bicentenary over two decades earlier failed to evoke similar scholarly interest. My purpose here is to survey the holdings of one provincial archives for material relating to that group of pre-Loyalist immigrants who are now entrenched in the *Nova Scotia Subject Headings Authority* as "New England Planters." Anyone who has tried in a general way to research their history at PANS soon realizes that Planters have never been quite so popular with historians as Loyalists. The unexceptioned use of the term "pre-Loyalist," for example, presupposes a view of the history of Nova Scotia in which the coming of the Loyalists was the decisive event. The same cannot be said of the various groups of pre-Loyalists. If one checks the Miscellaneous card file in the Manuscripts Reading Room under "New England Planters" one finds only two cards. Obviously, that does not give an accurate indication of Planter sources at PANS -- several, in fact, are entered under "Miscellaneous Townships"; nor does it mean that no one, apart from John Bartlet Brebner, has been interested enough in Planter history to have done sustained archival research on the subject. Quite the opposite is the case: distinguished contributions have been made by non-professional township and county historians and, more recently, by historical geographers, beginning with Andrew Hill Clark in the 1950s.¹ It does mean, however, that New England Planters have not been researched with the same enthusiasm and sophistication as either Loyalist or other pre-Loyalist immigrants easily identifiable as a group, such as the "foreign Protestants." A biased scholarly coinage, which the term "pre-Loyalist" is, at the very least implies that no distinction need be made among pre-Loyalist immigrants, where in fact there were three clearly defined groups, of which the New England Planters were the third, the latest and the largest.

The arrival in Nova Scotia of thousands of New Englanders, towards

¹ See Andrew Hill Clark, *The Geography of Early Nova Scotia to 1760* (Madison, WI, 1968); and Graeme Wynn, "W.F. Ganong, A. H. Clark and the Historical Geography of Maritime Canada," *Acadiensis*, 10, 2(Spring 1981), 5-28. An outstanding recent example of the genre is Debra Anne McNabb, "Land and Families in Horton Township, N.S., 1760-1830," MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1986.

the end of the French and Indian War and the declaration of peace among the European powers, was the fourth great demographic event in the history of British Nova Scotia — the first being the founding of Halifax in 1749; the second the immigration of German and Swiss Protestants in the early 1750s; the third, the expulsion of most of the indigenous Acadian population in 1755, which created both the need and the opportunity for emigration from New England. Given the breadth and diversity of the subject, I shall confine my attention to the period when the Planter townships came into being, i.e., 1759 to 1764; to those townships located in peninsular Nova Scotia or in the trans-border area; and mainly — though not exclusively — to contemporary original documents which are available either as hard copy or on microform at PANS.

The New England Planters were not an accidental phenomenon, but a deliberately planned result of official British government policy for Nova Scotia. This policy was initiated in Halifax; agreed to and encouraged in Whitehall; and executed mostly in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The very nature of the case seems to require a heavy dependence on government records to research Planter history. In his newly published biography of Bishop Charles Inglis, Brian Cuthbertson makes the point that a common problem which confronts those who attempt to write the history of the Loyalist and post-Loyalist years in Nova Scotia is the necessary over-reliance on official correspondence which results from the scarcity of personal papers.² What is true for the later period is truer still for the pre-Loyalist. The farther back in Nova Scotia's history one goes, the fewer documents of a non-governmental nature one is likely to encounter. It is just possible, however, to lessen the harmful effects of this over-reliance on government records by making allowances for the bias inherent in them. Authors of documents, whether writing as private individuals or as government officials, had vested interests or axes to grind, and their point of view is reflected in which subjects they addressed; what they said about them; how they said it; and whom they said it to.

Planter history may be considered to have begun in October 1758, when Governor Charles Lawrence issued a proclamation soliciting proposals from would-be settlers and providing a description of the lands. A copy of this document was forwarded by Lawrence to the Lords of Trade, and is among the Colonial Office Papers in the Public Record Office.³ This first proclamation has always been overshadowed by the longer and more detailed second proclamation of 11 January 1759, which was issued in response to the various questions raised by the first, and which prospective settlers had been asking of Lawrence's agents at Boston and New York —

2 Brian Cuthbertson, *The First Bishop: A Biography of Charles Inglis* (Halifax, 1987), 282.

3 CO 217/16/311, Public Record Office (hereafter PRO).

concerning "particular encouragement," the bounty of provisions, quantity of land, quit rent, form of government, taxes and religious toleration. Copies of the second proclamation are to be found among Colonial Office Papers;⁴ among House of Assembly papers collected and bound by the Records Commission,⁵ predecessor of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia; and in a volume of miscellaneous proclamations collected by the Records Commission.⁶ Both proclamations, of course, were entered *verbatim* in the minute-book of the Council at Halifax.⁷ The number of copies of this document which are available at PANS indicates both its contemporary administrative value, and its perceived importance by archivists conversant with history — not only the province's, but also their own family's. Thomas Beamish Akins (1809-1891), the Records Commissioner, was himself the grandson of an original grantee of one of the Planter townships.⁸

Governor Lawrence's plan called for thirteen townships of 100,000 acres, twelve square miles, each to be settled over a period of three years with 2,550 families or 12,750 individuals.⁹ The township was a quintessential New England concept which had been introduced into Nova Scotia by emigrants from Massachusetts soon after the founding of Halifax. It was a model which could not altogether be dispensed with — the farthest thing from Lawrence's mind, of course, was that public officials in the new townships might be elected at a meeting of freeholders rather than appointed by himself — because the township was the fundamental institution of local government in New England, and was therefore a necessary inducement to prospective settlers.¹⁰ Such a structure generated its own types of record: not only the township grant, but also the township book, which was both the minute-book of meetings, and the official register of vital statistics, proprietors, lots, cattle marks, etc. It is understandable, therefore, that Planter history has traditionally been studied township by township within a county, and family by family within a township.

PANS holdings of Planter township books include Annapolis, Barrington, Chester, Cornwallis, Cumberland, Falmouth, Granville, Horton,

4 CO 217/16/315, PRO.

5 RG I, Vol. 310, doc. 3, Public Archives of Nova Scotia (hereafter PANS).

6 RG I, Vol. 346, doc. 10, PANS.

7 RG I, Vol. 187, pp. 30ff., PANS.

8 Stephen Akin was a grantee of Falmouth Township in 1761. The genealogy is in John V. Duncanson, *Falmouth: A New England Township in Nova Scotia* (Belleville, Ont., 1983), 161-2.

9 Lords of Trade to the King, 20 December 1759, CO 218/5/195-200, PRO.

10 On the subject generally, see D.C. Harvey, "The Struggle for the New England Form of Township Government in Nova Scotia," in *Canadian Historical Association Report* (1933), 15-22.

Liverpool, Newport, Onslow, Sackville, Truro and Yarmouth.¹¹ Several of these documents go back to the very beginning of Planter settlement, and indeed beyond — into New England, whence the Planters themselves came; others date from the 1770s or later. PANS holdings consist for the most part of microfilm copies or transcripts; the originals often are held either privately or in the custody of a town or municipal office or the county court-house — or at a national or local repository other than PANS. The Granville and Newport township books, for example, are at the National Archives in Ottawa;¹² the Cumberland township book is at Fort Beausejour National Historic Park. The originals of six Planter township books are at PANS: Cornwallis, Falmouth, Liverpool, Truro and Yarmouth in MG 4,¹³ and Onslow in RG 1¹⁴ — the only such document to be preserved in that collection. Though for purposes of archival arrangement, the township books are now considered to be non-governmental records, and have thus been placed in a “manuscript group” rather than a “record group,” they are public records within the meaning of the Act, which has stood on the statute-book in one form or other since 1914. In that year, the Legislature passed “An Act in respect to the Preservation of Court Records.”¹⁵ According to section 1 of the Act, which comprises section 6 of today’s Public Records Act:

All the papers, documents and record books of the Court of Sessions, of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas, and also of the old townships constituted about the year 1760...are hereby vested in the Province, which is hereby empowered to take possession of the same, and also to take proper measures for their permanent preservation and for placing them where they will be available for investigation and students of history.¹⁶

The passage of this Act preceded by some fifteen years the formal establishment of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, an aspect of the mandate of which is to collect and preserve the public records of the province. “[T]he old townships constituted about the year 1760” are the Planter townships, of course, and I shall be focusing on their records and papers both sessional and judicial.

The thirteen original townships projected by Governor Lawrence in 1759 were Horton, Cornwallis, Falmouth, Onslow, Granville, Annapolis,

11 These are divided between “Micro. Places.” and MG 4, PANS. For precise references, see the finding aid concerned.

12 MG 9, B9, No. 20, National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC).

13 MG 4, Vols. 18; 218; 180; 150A; 167, PANS.SFB

14 RG 1, Vol. 361 1/2, PANS.

15 4 Geo. 5, C. 6 (1914).

16 *Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1967, C. 253.

Cumberland, Amherst, Sackville, Tinmouth, Liverpool, Barrington and Yarmouth.¹⁷ Omissions from the list rather beg the question of whether, for the sake of definition, a New England Planter had to be a native of New England. Onslow, and then Londonderry and Truro — the Cobequid Townships — were settled by Ulstermen who had been brought out to New England by Alexander McNutt. Tinmouth, moreover, was stillborn, though to be resurrected in 1762 as (New) Dublin Township and settled, again, by Northern Irish whom Colonel McNutt had this time brought over directly from Ulster. Also to be added to the list of those Planter townships which were erected after 1759 are Chester (or Shoreham), Newport (or East Falmouth) and Wilmot. Among the oversize manuscript documents in PANS are the original grants of all the Planter townships in peninsular Nova Scotia except Amherst, Barrington, Cumberland, Falmouth, Newport, Wilmot and Yarmouth.¹⁸ The township grant *per se* describes the boundaries and names the grantees; registered or “effective” grants may be found in the Land Grant books, which are on microfilm at PANS,¹⁹ the originals being at the provincial Crown Lands Records Centre in Dartmouth. Difficulties with filling up the number of grantees, or with processing the township grants, meant that there were often two grants, and, in the case of Cumberland, as many as three. Elsewhere in the Crown Lands papers at PANS are brief statistical reports for the early 1760s of Cornwallis, Falmouth and Horton Townships.²⁰

In terms of the sheer survival of records, pride of place undoubtedly belongs to Horton Township, which is better represented in PANS holdings than any of the other Planter townships. The original grant of Horton Township was dated 22 May 1759. A copy of this document was sent by Governor Lawrence to the Lords of Trade, who subsequently appended it to their long and detailed “Representation” to the King on the subject of filling vacant Acadian lands with settlers from New England.²¹ RG 1, Volume 362, for example, is a register of grants for the township, arranged by the grantee, in 197 folios, with a contemporary index at the beginning. Volume 177 is a seventy-page book of abstracts from the registrar’s office at Horton, between 1765 and 1775. It gives the date of registration; the names of the parties and the date of the deed; the lands conveyed, and for what price: an arrangement made all the more accessible

17 Lawrence to Lords of Trade, 20 September 1759, CO 217/16/345, PRO.

18 O/S No. 209 (Annapolis), 212 (Granville), 217 (Onslow), 223 (Truro), 239 (Cornwallis), 246 (Horton), 258 (Shoreham [Chester]), 263 (Liverpool), 267 (Sackville).

19 Micro. Places. Nova Scotia. Land Grants, PANS.

20 RG 20, Series C, Box 89, doc. 1, 2, PANS; cf. “A List of the Proprietors of the Township of Liverpool With Their Number In Family Respectively” [1761], RG 20, Series C, Box 43, doc. 1 (I am grateful to Elizabeth Mancke for bringing this item to my attention).

21 See Note 9 above.

by a contemporary index at the beginning by name of conveyer. The Horton township book is extant, though apparently in private hands. PANS has both a microfilm copy of the original, and a nineteenth-century transcription.²²

Elsewhere in RG 1 are documents which concern the Planter townships, among others, more or less as a group. Pre-eminent among them are the "General Return of Townships," made in 1767, and the Census of 1770, both in Volume 443. The former covers thirty townships in Nova Scotia and what is now New Brunswick, including all the Planter communities. Cumulative statistical data is given for each township in six principal categories, which are then divided and subdivided. Under the subject heading "Numbers in each Family" is entered how many males and females. Under "Religion," Protestant and Roman Catholic. Under "Country of Origin," English, Scotch, Irish, Americans, German and other foreigners, and Acadians. Under "Stock and Substance," cattle, mills and vessels. Under "Produce of the last Year," the various grains, etc., in bushels, hundredweight and barrels. Under "Alteration of Inhabitants since last year," the number born, died, arrived and left the province. Apart from the necessary addition of the "Name of master or mistress of the family," the subject headings for the Census of 1770 are nearly identical to those on the General Return of 1767. There are fewer statistical subdivisions, however, especially as regards the composition of households. The seventeen extant returns for 1770 include all the Planter townships except Chester, Cornwallis, Liverpool, Newport and Wilmot. The return for Yarmouth, however, is dated 1773. The General Return of 1767 and the Census of 1770 notwithstanding, the "return" or "state" is probably the most frequently occurring type of semi-official record which documents the early history of the Planter townships.

Volumes 221 and 222, two of a long series in RG 1 entitled "Manuscript Documents of Nova Scotia," run from 1751 to 1791, and from 1757 to 1781, respectively, and contain diverse material on most of the Planter townships. Volume 222, with more than ninety Planter-related items, is especially valuable. There are lists of proprietors and lots; memorials, reports, returns, warrants and writs of partition. Each of these volumes has been fully calendared.²³

Volume 359 contains lists of grantees, draft grants, memoranda, memorials and petitions dating from 1759 — relating to Horton, Cornwallis, Granville, Cumberland, Onslow, Truro, Liverpool and Chester. The second part of Volume 360 is a fifty-page register of grantees arranged alphabetically by township. Compiled in 1760 or 1761, the register gives the proprietor's name, the township and, in some cases, the

22 MG 4, Vol. 74; Micro. Places. Horton, PANS.

23 The calendars are in RG 1, Vol. 250, pp. 115 and 160, respectively.

number of shares. All but three of the original thirteen townships are represented.

Volume 361 is made up of papers connected with the partition of the townships of Falmouth, Horton, Newport, Yarmouth, Chester and Onslow. There are lists of grantees; writs of partition issued out of the Supreme Court at Halifax; and petitions requesting them. Of particular interest is an undated document in the handwriting of Isaac Deschamps entitled, "A List of the Grantees in the Township of Falmouth with the Numbers and Contents of the Respective Lots drawn by, or allotted to them, in the Several Divisions agreed on by the Proprietors." Precise information about the size and distribution of the lots is given under eight different headings.²⁴

Volume 374, a so-called "Land Book" of about three hundred pages, covers the years 1760 through 1767 and gives both the names of proprietors and descriptions and boundaries of township grants. There is an alphabetical list by name of township at the end. Unfortunately, the first fifty pages or so are missing.

Volume 473 1/2 is a two-hundred-page alphabetical and chronological index to Crown grants of land in Nova Scotia from 1725 to 1768. Though neither contemporary nor original, this document is a finding aid appropriately limited in scope and handily divided into five parts, each part having its own alphabetical arrangement with the names in chronological order. The second, third and fourth parts, which cover the years 1759 through 1763, are especially useful to Planter historians. The information given includes the name of the grantee; number of acres and district; date of grant or conveyance; and book and page where recorded. The cumulative Crown land grants index for 1730 through 1937, on the other hand, which researchers normally consult, distinguishes only among the names of the grantees; there are no periodic subdivisions.

Volume 204 contains the minutes of Council from May 1761 to September 1763 relative to Crown grants of land. Though not specifically concerned with Planters, this volume nevertheless contains much useful information about them, often in the form of petitions presented to the Council and summarized or abstracted in the minute-book. The latter part of it may be used in conjunction with the land papers in the first box of RG 20, Series A. These commence in 1763, and consist of petitions, warrants of survey, draft grants, etc.

Of continuous importance and interest, especially for establishing the broad historical context from an official or quasi-official perspective, are not only the Halifax and Whitehall dispatches in CO 217 and 218,²⁵

24 There is no document number.

25 Micro. Miscellaneous. Colonial Office, PANS.

respectively; but also the Executive Council minutes,²⁶ “inland” letter-books,²⁷ and miscellaneous Assembly Papers in RG 1 and RG 5, Series A.²⁸ Halifax dispatches for the years 1759 through 1764 frequently describe in detail the progress of the Planter townships and enclose documents, such as returns, which are concerned with specific townships. A dispatch from Lieutenant-Governor Jonathan Belcher to the Lords of Trade in September 1762, for example, enclosed returns of inhabitants and livestock for Yarmouth Township, Barrington Township and the area in between.²⁹ The names of householders and numbers in each family were given, together with a “General Return of the Inhabitants in the Several Townships Settled at Cape Sable.” A dispatch in January of the same year enclosed an eighteen-page “Description of the Several Towns in the Province of Nova Scotia...,” which had been drawn up by Surveyor-General Charles Morris in 1761. This work concluded with an abstract showing the number of inhabitants and acreage of cleared upland marsh in each township.³⁰ Comparable with this is a statistical return from 1763, which analysed each of the nineteen townships — fourteen were Planter — under number of families; and acreage of marshland, cleared upland and woodland.³¹

Despite limitations of space, and my declared emphasis on government records at the various levels — imperial, provincial and township — it would not be possible to leave the subject of the Planters at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia without mentioning the unique “Chipman Papers” in MG 1, Volumes 181-218. The title of this collection may not perhaps be the best guide to its provenance, as the papers are by no means confined to the Rhode Island Planter, Handley Chipman, and his descendants — many of whom were prominent in the official life of Kings County. The collection seems to have originated with the Connecticut Planter Robert Denison, whose name is first among the grantees of Horton township.³² Denison was a judge of the Common Pleas and was elected MHA for Kings County in 1761; already an elderly man when he came to Nova Scotia, his brief official career is well documented in the Chipman Papers. This magnificent collection covers a century of Planter

26 RG 1, Vol. 188 covers the years 1757 through 1766.

27 RG 1, Vol. 136 covers the years 1760 through 1784.

28 The Assembly Papers have all been calendared, those in RG 1, Vol. 301ff. twice: by T.B. Akins and Margaret Ells. The calendars are available in the Manuscripts and Public Records reading room on the third floor of PANS.

29 CO 217/19/134ff., PRO.

30 CO 217/18/246-263. PRO.

31 “State of the Settlements in the Province of Nova Scotia 1763,” RG 1, Vol. 219, doc. 118, PANS.

32 CO 217/16/334, PRO.

history, articulated through different townships and families and types of record. Represented are not only the Kings County townships of Horton and Cornwallis, but also, at least until 1781, two of the three townships which were joined together to create the new county of Hants: Falmouth and Newport. Thematically, the papers range over the whole gamut of official life in the Planter townships on Minas Basin. So numerous are the examples of the various types of record generated in the 1760s and 1770s by local government — the Court of Sessions — and the administration of justice, whether by the Inferior Court of Common Pleas or by the Supreme Court on circuit, that the distinction between government records and family papers is effectively blurred. In the Chipman collection are the papers, both public and private, of individuals who held government office in Kings County; the collection very precisely documents their activity as office-holders, because it often contains the records of the bodies in which they served. Indeed, one might even say that the Chipman Papers preserve the records of township government in Horton, Cornwallis, Falmouth and Newport in the first two decades of their existence. Facilitating access to the thirty-seven boxes of documents is a two-volume content report, which has itself been indexed, in three parts, by the Kings Historical Society. What is undoubtedly the most important collection of its kind has therefore been made easily accessible.

On a much smaller scale than the Chipman Papers — they require only a single box — are the Deschamps Papers in MG 1, Volume 258. Isaac Deschamps, of course, was not a New England Planter, but rather a “foreign Protestant” who came to Halifax in 1749. He nevertheless was one of the original grantees of Newport Township in 1761; represented Falmouth and then Newport in the House of Assembly for over twenty years; and was intimately involved in Planter affairs in Kings County in the 1760s and 1770s. Like Robert Denison, he was made a judge of the Common Pleas in 1761, and held “numerous minor offices in the administrations of several townships.”³³ Appointed a judge of the Supreme Court in 1770, Deschamps continued to travel regularly to Horton, which, as the seat of government for Kings County, was one of the original stations on the Supreme Court circuit. Several Planter townships are represented in the Deschamps Papers, just as Deschamps himself appears in the voluminous Chipman Papers. Of particular value is a “Return of the families settled in the Townships of Horton Cornwallis Falmouth & Newport...together with the Numbers of persons said families consist of and their Stock of Cattle and Grain and Roots raised the present year 1763.”³⁴ Statistical information is given here under twelve different

33 Grace M. Tratt, “Deschamps, Isaac,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, V (1983), 251.

34 MG 1, Vol. 258, p. 125 [doc. 23], PANS.

headings.

Allowing for the official or at least semi-official nature of both the Deschamps Papers and the Chipman Papers, it is necessary to consider two further collections of government records in conjunction with which the latter, especially, can be used. I refer to the General Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace (RG 34) and to the Inferior Court of Common Pleas (RG 37).³⁵ In no county, even Halifax, have the sessions records survived more extensively than Kings. There is a complete run of proceedings from 1760 to 1890, which includes fees of the clerk of the peace, subpoenas, warrants, assessments, etc. In no county except Halifax, moreover, have the original papers of suits brought before the Inferior Court survived from an earlier period than Kings. The earliest document in the collection is dated 1762; the latest, a docket of judgments, 1780. There is a long run of cases, especially for the years 1764 and 1765, and these have been arranged by year and then alphabetically by plaintiff. There are a few documents from the later 1760s and 1770s, but the major part of what has survived from those years appears to be in the Chipman Papers. The records of the Kings County Court of Sessions and Inferior Court of Common Pleas, not to mention the Supreme Court — after 1774, when the law establishing the circuit was enacted — are therefore complemented by the Chipman Papers. These three collections are all the more important in the 1760s and 1770s, because they comprehend four townships instead of two.

Finding aids at various levels of description facilitate access to most of the collections dealt with thus far. Other useful access points to Planter material in PANS are the “Biography” and “Genealogy” card files, which reference documents or collections of documents concerning both individuals and families. Useful, too, is the “Communities” card file, the main entry being the name of the township — whether or not it corresponds to a contemporary place-name. This file provides quick access to records and papers, especially in MG 4 — churches and communities. Worth mentioning here are the registers of St Paul’s Church, Halifax, which include early records for Newport, Falmouth, Horton and Cornwallis. A special “rolodex” card file, arranged alphabetically by place-name and then by denomination or name of church, greatly facilitates access to church records. The registers of deeds and wills, moreover, which include all the Planter townships, are available on 3,282 reels of microfilm in the PANS Library. Though the extent, condition and organization of these records varies widely from registry to registry, they are a vital research tool — access to which is provided by a descriptive finding aid for both deeds (RG 47) and wills (RG 48).

The greater number and variety of archival sources for the Planter townships around Minas Basin, than elsewhere in the province, may be

reflected in the fact that the first work of academic scholarship in Planter history was a study entitled "Pre-Loyalist Settlements Around Minas Basin. A History of the Townships of Cornwallis, Horton, Falmouth, Newport, Windsor, Truro, Onslow and Londonderry, 1755-1783." Written in the early 1930s as an MA thesis by James Stuart Martell, a future Assistant Archivist of Nova Scotia, and under the direction of Professor Daniel Cobb Harvey, then Archivist, more than fifty years after its composition this work could still be described by a leading historical geographer as "a sound study."³⁶ With the exception of CO 217, and other materials available at PANS only on microfilm, the sources used in the preparation of Martell's thesis are the same as those mentioned above.

The fact that Planter sources are less diverse, less numerous and less well-known than Loyalist sources may account for their comparative underuse by professional historians. One does not speak of "pre-Planter" Nova Scotia or the "Planter" period in Nova Scotia history — though indeed there was one, between 1759 and 1783 — because it was the American Loyalists not the New England Planters who were considered the watershed migration. Nevertheless, it would perhaps be more satisfactory to regard the Planters as a culmination of the ten-year process of peopling — and depeopling — Nova Scotia, which had begun with the founding of Halifax and continued with the expulsion of the Acadians, than as mere prolegomenon to the immigration of the Loyalists. Planter history need not be viewed exclusively, if at all, from the Loyalist perspective in order to be understood and appreciated. Hindsight is anachronistic.

A survey of archival sources for Planter history rather begs the question of the types of use to which they can be put by historians. Statistical data such as one finds in census returns obviously lends itself to quantitative analysis. The data may be incomplete and inaccurate, however, and there is often no means by which it can be checked — or by which disagreements among contemporary original sources can be resolved. The categories in which statistical data is presented are subjective, moreover, and difficulties arise when evidence derived from such a source is analysed as if it were purely quantitative. The method of presentation is as important as the data itself, and the latter cannot be analysed except in relation to the former.

The use to which government records may have been put in their own time, in other words, their administrative value, is necessarily quite different from the use to which they must be put by historians, who are concerned with their evidential or informational — in other words, historical — value. To interpret or analyse a government record, however, involves understanding the nature and purpose of its creation; the

36 Graeme Wynn, "A Province Too Much Dependent on New England," *The Canadian Geographer*, 32, 2(Spring 1987), 111.

presuppositions and expectations of its creator; and whether it efficiently discharged its administrative function. The record cannot be taken out of context and treated as if its life-cycle had nothing to do with its historical significance. Whether evidence derived from government records is more or less impressionistic and biased than evidence derived from other contemporary original sources, it is the historian's responsibility to classify the evidence — regardless of its origin — and interpret it accordingly. The business of the archivist, on the other hand, is to identify and preserve the source materials and to facilitate access and retrieval. If the documents no longer exist, then they cannot be used. If they are known to exist, however, but cannot be identified, located or accurately described, then they still cannot be used — at least not to their full potential. By implication, therefore, archivists, whether they manage contemporary records or advise on how they were generated and managed in centuries past, are helping the historian do justice to the evidence. This paper has attempted to show the extent to which the historiography of the New England Planters depends on the sensitive interpretation of government records concerning them.