

HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES Visits Lanark and Renfrew

In May 1859, the Legislature of the Province of Canada invited Queen Victoria (1819-1901) and her husband Prince Albert (1819-1861) to visit British North America “*to witness the progress and prosperity of this distant part of your dominions*”. Queen Victoria regrettably declined the invitation, saying that “*her duties at the seat of Empire prevent so long an absence*”. However, her advisors prevailed upon the Queen to send her 18-year-old son, Prince Albert Edward (1841-1910), Prince of Wales,¹ in her stead.

The first Royal Visit to Canada departed England on July 10, 1860, when the Prince sailed from Portsmouth aboard HMS *Hero*, a 91-gun Royal Navy vessel. He reached St. John's Newfoundland on July 23rd and, over the following month, made his way around the Atlantic colonies visiting St John's, Halifax, St John, Fredericton, and Charlottetown. He reached Quebec City on August 18th and made his way upriver, visiting Trois Rivières and then Montreal where he opened Victoria Bridge on August 25th. The Royal tour arrived at Ottawa on August 31st and the following day Prince Albert laid the cornerstone for Canada's new Parliament Buildings.

On Monday morning, September 3, 1860, the Prince of Wales was escorted by a party of lumbermen on a thrill ride down the timber slide at Chaudière Falls before boarding the steamboat *Ann Sisson* at Aylmer and sailing up the Ottawa river. Off Pontiac, on the Quebec shore, the Prince and his suite were transferred to a fleet of canoes and set out across the river. The following account of the, at times chaotic, Royal visit to the United Counties of Lanark & Renfrew was published by the Perth *Courier* four days later.



Ottawa River Steamer *Ann Sisson*

¹ Later King Edward VII.

Perth Courier, September 7, 1860

Monday last, 3^d instant, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales passed through the United Counties of Lanark and Renfrew, en route from Ottawa City to Kingston. His Royal Highness and suite first entered the United Counties at Arnprior. Here every preparation had been made which forethought could suggest commensurate with the importance of the occasion. Six beautiful arches of evergreen were erected in the streets through which the Prince would have to pass, -- flags innumerable fluttered in the breeze, -- the streets and houses were decorated with evergreens -- and the whole village of Arnprior presented a very pleasing appearance, and the decorations and preparations generally were highly creditable to the good taste and loyalty of the inhabitants.

For hours previous to the arrival of the Prince, crowds of people might have been seen making their way to the steamboat landing, where a suitable platform had been erected and carpeted for the reception of the Prince, and a line of low wharfage put up on the lake [river] shore to facilitate the landing from the canoes.



2010 re-enactment of the Prince's landing at Arnprior.
(Photo by Sherry Haaima)

The ground from the lakeshore [river shore] rises in gentle ascent about 12 to 15 feet, there is then a flat space about 60 feet wide, when another rise takes place for about 30 feet. These natural advantages were taken possession of by the throngs of people assembled, who numbered, we should say, some five or six thousand, among whom were a large sprinkling of the fair sex, all anxious to obtain a favorable view of England's future sovereign.

James Thompson, Esq.², High Sheriff of Lanark and Renfrew, was there, dressed in his official robes, to receive the Prince on landing; and the members of the County Council were present to present him with an address. It was announced that the Prince and suite would cross the lake [river] in bark canoes, and for an hour or so glasses were in requisition to see if any signs could be distinguished of the embarkation on the opposite shore.

About one o'clock it was announced that the canoes had put out, and two steamers were seen putting off from the opposite shore. The canoes soon became visible to the naked eye. They were manned by shanty-men, dressed in white trousers and red shirts, and as the fleet of canoes (some 40 or 50) came fully into view, they presented a very imposing and pleasant appearance.

² James V. Thompson (1812-1912), Sheriff of United Counties of Lanark & Renfrew 1852-1866 and of Lanark County 1867-1903.

The steamer Oregon came to her wharf first, crowded with people; and another small steamer followed a few minutes later. A royal salute was then fired from some cannon stationed on the rising ground in the rear, and by the time this was concluded the canoes had reached the landing-place, when the young Prince stepped lightly ashore, and advancing a few steps, raised his hat and bowed to the people, and was greeted with loud and prolonged hearty British cheers, which made the welkin³ ring. The Prince then turned round and waited a few minutes till all had disembarked from the canoes.

Sheriff Thompson then conducted him to the platform, where he stood to receive the address of the County Council. Sir Edmond Head⁴ and the Duke of Newcastle⁵ stood on the right of the Prince and Lord Mulgrave⁶ on his left, while the other members of his suite stood in the rear. Daniel Galbraith, Esq.⁷, Warden of the United Counties of Lanark and Renfrew, then stepped forward and read the following Address, which the Prince, who stood uncovered, acknowledge with a polite bow at the conclusion of each paragraph. Having received the Address from the hands of the Warden, the Prince handed it to Lord Mulgrave, and then read the Reply, in a clear and distinct voice, and handed it with a bow to the Warden.



Sheriff James V. Thompson
(1812-1912)

ADDRESS - To the Most High, Puissant, and illustrious Prince Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, Duke of Saxony, prince of Coburg and Gotha, Great Steward of Scotland, Duke of Cornwall and Rothesay, Earl of Chester, Carrick and Dublin, Baron of Renfrew and Lord of the Isles, K.G.:



Daniel Galbraith (1813-1879)

May It Please Your Royal Highness – We, the Warden, Reeves and Deputy Reeves of the United Counties of Lanark and Renfrew, assembled, and on behalf of the inhabitants of the Counties, avail ourselves of this opportunity to wish and offer you a hearty welcome on your arrival amongst us.

Though from the geographical position of these Counties, and the population, in consequence thereof, being not so great as in other more favored localities, the inhabitants have it not in their power to mark your arrival amongst them with such a demonstrative reception as you have elsewhere received, you may, however, rest assured that the inhabitants of these Counties are second to none in their feelings of loyalty to our beloved Queen, your Royal Highness and the Members

³ Sky or heavens.

⁴ Sir Edmund Walker Head (1805-1868), Governor General of the United Province of Canada 1854-1861.

⁵ Henry Pelham Fiennes Pelham-Clinton (1811-1864), 5th Duke of Newcastle, British Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1859-1864.

⁶ George Augustus Constantine Phipps (1819-1890), 3rd Earl of Mulgrave and 2nd Marquess of Normanby, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia 1858-1863.

⁷ Daniel Galbraith (1813-1879), Warden of United Counties of Lanark & Renfrew 1860-1862, represented Lanark North as MLA 1867-1872 and as MP 1872-1879.

of the Royal Family, and attachment to the British Constitution, descended as a great many of them are from men who had devoted a great portion of their lives to the services of their King and Country.

We hail with pleasure the arrival amongst us of your Royal Highness and look forward with satisfaction to the beneficial results that will issue from your personal visit to the British Provinces in North American, and particularly to Canada.

We feel highly honored that your Royal Highness has been pleased to ascend and view the scenery of the River Ottawa, the northern boundary of these Counties, and the second river in magnitude in Canada; and also, with your intention to pass through these Counties on your way to Brockville and Western Canada, where your receptions will be as enthusiastic as those that have already taken place.

*Daniel Galbraith
Warden*



Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (1841-1910)

REPLY - Gentlemen

I thank you sincerely for the Address which you have presented to me. In the Queen's name, I acknowledge the expressions of your loyalty to her Crown and Person, and for myself I am grateful to you for this welcome.

This ceremony concluded, the Prince stepped lightly into his carriage and, with his suite, proceeded to the residence of D. McLachlin, Esq.⁸, amid loud and prolonged cheering. Ample preparations had been made by Mr. McLauchlin for the reception and accommodation of the Prince and suite, and after having partaken of refreshment, and rested awhile, his Royal Highness entered the carriage prepared by Mr. McLauchlin for his conveyance and proceeded en route to Almonte.

The first triumphal arch the Prince passed under had a painting of a beaver and a maple leaf, the Canadian national emblem, and beneath this a likeness of the Prince with the words "Welcome to our future Sovereign". The second arch had a likeness of Queen Victoria, the third a likeness of Prince Albert, while the one erected on the road leading out of the village was embellished with the crown of the Prince of Wales. All the arches were got up with good taste, and the designs were admirable and highly creditable to the people of Arnprior.

⁸ Daniel McLachlin (1810-1872), mill owner, businessman, represented Lanark South as MP 1867-1869.

The Sheriff and County Warden accompanied the Prince's suite, and ere he had proceeded but a few miles, any number of carriages, wagons, and men on horseback, joined the Royal cavalcade. In the competition to get as near the Prince's carriage as possible, the utmost confusion prevailed, and all were driving at a furious rate, utterly regardless of consequences. This portion of the Prince's journey must have been very disagreeable, owing to the dense cloud of dust raised by the horses and carriages. Had the people exercised a little prudence and judgement, and kept in a regular line, it would have been more agreeable for all parties. By taking the course they did, they merely annoyed the Prince and did themselves no good.

At the village of Pakenham triumphal arches were erected at each end of the village, with the word "Welcome". The streets were lined with evergreens, and any number of flags fluttered in the breeze. The village on the whole had a beautiful and imposing appearance, and the arrangements and designs reflected great credit on the taste and management of the inhabitants. The cavalcade of His Royal Highness, however, did not stop in the village, but drove through at a rapid rate, and the throngs of people lining the streets, and looking out of the windows of the houses, could have got little better than an imperfect glance at the young Prince as he passed rapidly along in a cloud of dust. Had the cavalcade passed leisurely through the village, it would have been much better and more agreeable for all parties, and there was evidently bad management somewhere.

From Pakenham to Almonte, at every mile or two, were stationed crowds of people anxious to get a glance at the Prince as he passed, many of whom must have been disappointed.

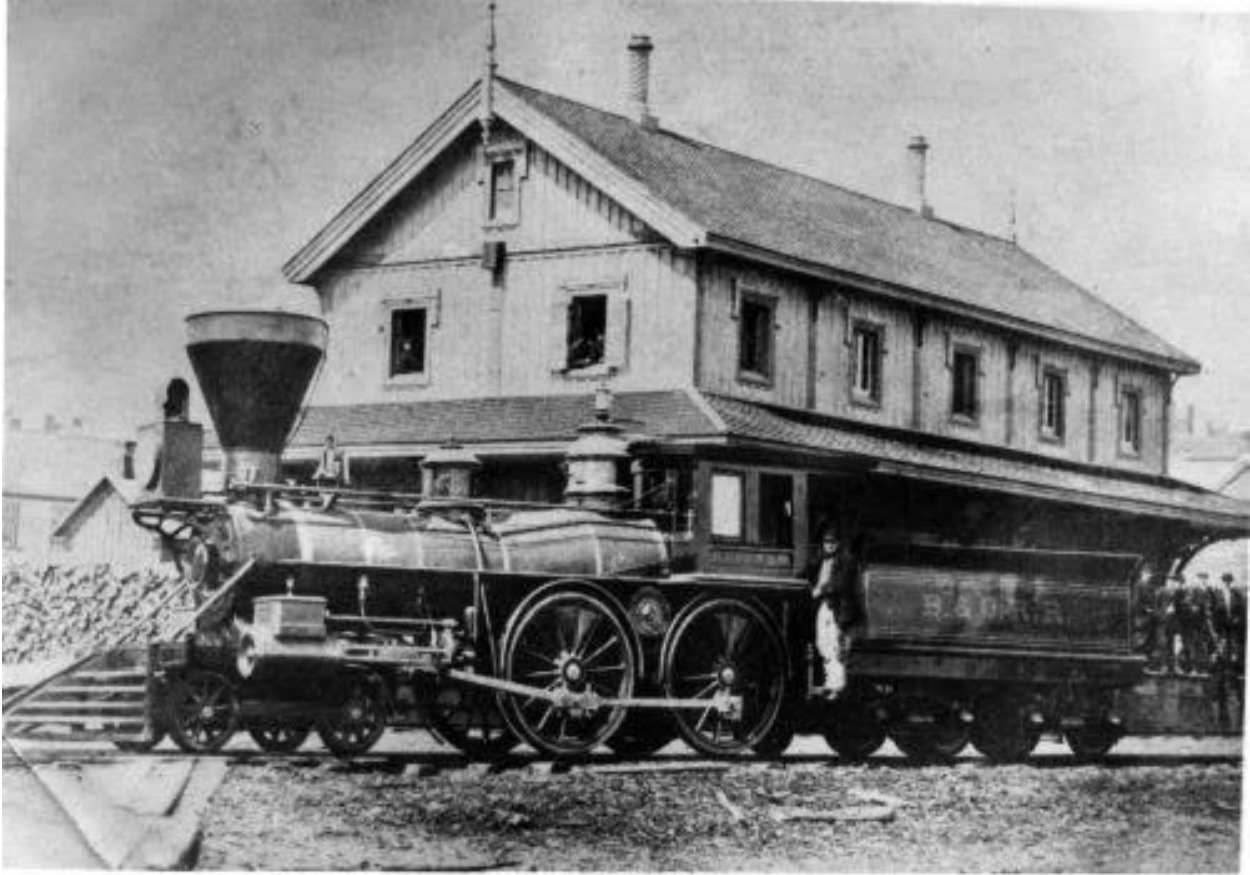
At Sneddon's Corners, Ramsay, a beautiful triumphal arch was erected, through which the Prince and his suite passed, and a large concourse of people were assembled here to witness the procession and get a sight of the Prince and who cheered heartily as he passed along. But as the rapid rate of driving was not slackened any, and the cloud of dust was kept up, the view must have been but momentary.

Before entering Almonte, a triumphal arch was erected in front of the residence of J. Wylie, Esq., through which the Royal cavalcade had to pass. Flags were also hoisted from Mr. Wylie's house, and from several other houses along the road.

In the village of Almonte great preparations had been made to welcome the Prince. Triumphal arches were erected in the principal streets, and any number of flags were fluttering in the breeze. The flags presented a beautiful appearance when the village first came in view from the rising ground near Mr. Wylie's residence. The inhabitants of Almonte were deserving of credit for the taste displayed in arranging the decorations of the village.

The Prince's cavalcade passed through the village direct to the railroad station⁹, where the State Car was in waiting to receive the Prince and his suite and carry them to Brockville. The cars started a few minutes after the arrival of the Prince and as they were leaving His Royal Highness appeared in the door of the car and bowed to the people as the train moved off amid enthusiastic cheering.

⁹ The Brockville & Ottawa Railway had only reached Almonte the previous year, 1859.



Brockville & Ottawa Railway Station, Almonte, c1860
(Courtesy Library & Archives Canada)

The Royal train did not stop at Carleton Place but proceeded direct to Smith's Falls – where a stay of a few minutes was made. It had been arranged that the Address from the County Council should be delivered at this place, but that body preferred delivering it at Arnprior, on the Prince's first entry into the United Counties, which was done, and Smiths Falls consequently did not receive the honor. The Village Council, however, presented an Address, which was received by the Prince on the platform erected for the purpose. It is as follows: --

ADDRESS - To His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales &c, &c, &c

May It Please Your Royal Highness

We, the Reeve, Councillors, and inhabitants of the village of Smith's Fall, desire most respectfully to approach your Royal Highness with assurances of our devoted attachment, and loyalty, to the person and government of our beloved Queen.

It is with no ordinary feelings of gratification that we welcome among us the Heir Apparent to the British Throne, and, as we trust, our future Sovereign.

We esteem the visit of your Royal Highness as evidence of the interest felt by our most Gracious Sovereign in her subjects in this part of her dominions, and trust that the mutual interchange of interest and affection of the sovereign, and of devotion and loyalty on the part of her subjects, now taking place through the medium of your Royal Highness, may tend to strengthen the tie that already binds this Colony to the Mother Country.

We would express the hope that the further progress of your Royal Highness through this country may be one of unalloyed pleasure; that you may return in health and safety to your native land; and if it shall please the Almighty that at some future period you shall be called to reign over us, and to occupy the Throne now so nobly filled by your illustrious Mother, you may emulate her virtues, rule with her wisdom and, as she does, live in the hearts of your people.

A. Clark¹⁰
Reeve

REPLY - Gentlemen – I thank you sincerely for the Address which you have presented me.

In the Queen's name, I acknowledge the expression of your loyalty to Her Crown and Person; and, for myself, I am grateful to you for this welcome to your neighborhood.

There was an excursion train from Perth to Smith's Falls, and there was a vast concourse of people assembled there, some say eight or ten thousand. A Royal Salute was fired by the Perth Artillery¹¹, and the Prince's train moved on to Brockville; and thus ended the first, and probably the last, visit of a member of the Royal Family of England to the United Counties of Lanark and Renfrew.

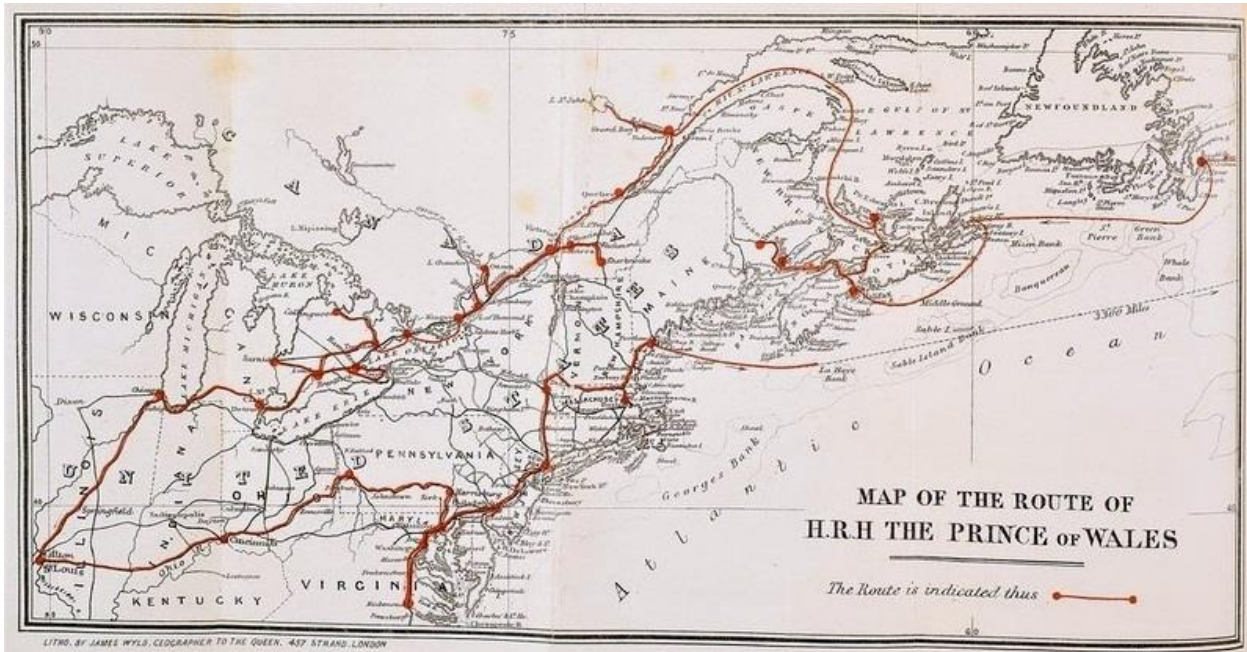
From Brockville the Prince set out for Kingston, cruising the Thousand Islands by steamboat. Entering Kingston harbor, however, the Royal party found the wharf thronged by unruly Orangemen, demonstrating their displeasure with how prominently the Catholic clergy had been received by the Prince at Quebec and Montreal. Determined to show they were the most loyal followers of the Crown in Canada, the Orangemen, carrying their lodge banners and beating drums, insisted on staging a partisan parade to escort Prince into the town. Brought to Canada by Irish Protestant immigrants, the Orange Lodge had a large membership in Anglo-Canada but was proscribed as an illegal organization in England.

On the advice of his principal advisor the Duke of Newcastle, the Prince of Wales declined to accept the demonstrators address, or to even step ashore, and steamed away to his next stop at Belleville. Not to be denied, the Orangemen commandeered a train and, reaching Bellville at about the same time as the Prince, continued their unwelcome (and not entirely sober) manifestation of 'loyalty'.

¹⁰ Alexander Clark (1812-1887), merchant.

¹¹ The three-pounder guns now displayed in front of the Lanark County Court House as Perth.

Moreover, the Royal Party found the streets of Belleville decorated by 10 ceremonial arches that incorporated Orange Order colors and slogans in their design. Once again, the Prince did not go ashore, but sailed away for his next port-of-call at Cobourg. The Orangemen again set out by rail to keep pace, but their train broke down¹², stranding them in the intervening bush and the Prince enjoyed an enthusiastic non-sectarian welcome at Cobourg.



At Toronto the Prince of Wales opened Queen’s Park, the city center’s public park that would host the Ontario Legislature from 1893. He unveiled the Sir Isaac Brock Monument at Queenston and watched stuntman Charles Blondin (1824-1897), walk a tight rope over Niagara Falls.

Having heard that the heir to the British Throne would be visiting British North America, United States President James Buchanan (1791-1868) had invited him to tour the United States as well. Crossing the border at Windsor, Prince Arthur continued his travels south of the border.

The five-week visit to the USA was intended to be unofficial, but that did not limit the size of crowds that greeted Prince Albert everywhere. There were 30,000 in Detroit, 50,000 in Chicago and 500,000 witnessed his procession down Broadway in New York. So many people turned up for a ball at New York’s Academy of Music that the floor collapsed. At a White House levee the East Room was so mobbed that people stood on chairs and ladies clambered onto the shoulders of men to catch a glimpse of the young Prince.

The Royal Tour ended on October 22nd at Portland, Maine, with more crowds cheering madly as the Prince was ferried out to the *Hero* for the trip home.

- Ron W. Shaw (2022)

¹² The break-down allegedly arranged by government agents.