Replenishing the Earth

The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939

JAMES BELICH

OXFORD

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For Angie and Colin

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James Belich
Stout Research Centre
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Abbreviations

AHS	Wade Vamplew (ed.), *Australians: Historical statistics*, Broadway, New South Wales, 1987.
CEHUS, i, ii, iii	Stanley L. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of the United States*, Cambridge and New York, 3 vols., 1996–2000.
IHS: A	B. R. Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics: The Americas, 1750–1993*, Basingstoke and New York, 1998.
IHS: A, A and O	B. R. Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics: Africa, Asia & Oceania, 1750–1993*, Basingstoke and New York, 1998.
IHS: E	B. R. Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics: Europe, 1750–1993*, Basingstoke and New York, 1998.
OHBE, i	Nicholas Canny (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. I, The Origins of Empire: British overseas enterprise to the close of the seventeenth century*, Oxford, 1998.
OHBE, ii	P. J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. II, The eighteenth century*, Oxford, 1998.
OHBE, iii	Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. III, The nineteenth century*, Oxford, 1998.
OHBE, iv	Judith M. Brown and William Roger Louis, *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. IV: The twentieth century*, Oxford, 1999.

Introduction

Tales of Two Cities

Let us begin with two problems in urban history, exemplified by two pairs of cities: Chicago and Melbourne and London and New York. The name 'Chicago' stems from the local Indian word for 'skunk weed' or 'bad smell', later laundered in local legend into 'the wild garlic place'.[1] In 1830, after several decades of precarious existence as a French trading post and American fort, Chicago consisted of 'about half a dozen houses', a few Indian tepees, and one hotel. It boasted a population of 50–100—about the same as five years earlier, when it had had fourteen taxpayers.[2] Sixty years later, in 1890, despite hitches such as being burned down in 1871, Chicago's half-dozen houses had become the world's first dense cluster of skyscrapers, and its population numbered 1.1 million. In a single lifetime, the 'wild garlic place' had grown to roughly twice the size of Rome or Cairo. Not surprisingly, Americans have been reflecting on this urban miracle for well over a century. As a contemporary noted in 1871, even before the Fire, Chicago's growth was 'one of the most amazing things in the history of modern civilization'. 'America is Great', marvelled another, 'and Chicago is her prophet.'[3] Yet, beginning with urban theorist Adna Weber in 1899, scholars have noted that Chicago was first among peers in the American West, not wholly unique.[4] Cincinnati, St Louis, San Francisco, and many other western cities all experienced similar explosive growth, at much the same time. Even the best of these historians, however, still believe that these remarkable 'gateway cities' were 'a peculiar feature of North American frontier settlement'.[5]

In 1835, Tasmanian sheep-ranchers founded the settlement of Port Philip, in the area of south-eastern Australia later known as Victoria. After

a perilous flirtation with the name 'Batmania' (after founder John Batman), it came to be called Melbourne. From zero permanent inhabitants in 1835, Marvellous Melbourne grew to 473,000 in 1891. Gold, which poured in tons from Victorian fields from 1851, might be thought to explain this growth, and it did of course boost it. Yet the town was growing fast *before* gold was discovered—from zero to 23,000 people in the fifteen years to 1851.[6] Sydney, whose hinterland had much less gold, grew from 16,000 in 1833 to 378,000 in 1891[7]—and gold does not explain Chicago. Other infant settler cities, such as Toronto, experienced similar rates of growth, without benefit of either gold or American-ness. Even in absolute terms, Melbourne in 1891 was bigger than St Louis, Cincinnati, and San Francisco, and almost half the size of Chicago. Relative to host populations, it was even more remarkable than Chicago. Melbourne in 1891 contained 41 per cent of the Colony of Victoria's population. Chicago in 1890 contained 29 per cent of the population of the state of Illinois.[8] The precocious sprouting of these nineteenth-century settler cities is a resonant mystery, but we are not going to unravel it by reference to United States history alone.

Our second urban problem is even bigger: London and New York. Before 1800, few if any cities had ever reached a population of one million, though ancient Rome, medieval Baghdad, and eighteenth-century Beijing came close. After 1900, million-plus mega-cities became almost commonplace; there were twenty in 1920, fifty-one in 1940; eighty in 1961; and 226 in 1985.[9] Even larger cities also mushroomed. Urban population statistics are bedevilled by changing boundaries, but on B. R. Mitchell's recent figures, the world in 1990 had seventy-four cities of over 2.5 million people.[10] A century earlier, in 1890, there were only two: London and New York.

One key to the twentieth-century flowering of mega-cities was a massive modern agro-industrial revolution, which dwarfed earlier surges in farming productivity. Better machines and techniques, new fertilizers, improved crop varieties and carefully bred livestock, electricity, and the petrol engine massively boosted productivity. Artificial fertilizers came into their own in Europe and North America about 1900—German use of them doubled between 1895–1901—and spread to other continents thereafter. German grain production doubled between 1880–1913, while acreage remained static, and the number of pigs increased 250 per cent. Anti-fungal sprays eliminated potato blight in the early twentieth century. Maize yields

per acre tripled or quadrupled through the use of hybrid seeds. Improved breeding techniques doubled milk-fat production per cow. Mechanization reduced the labour needed to produce a hectare of wheat from 150 hours to nine.[11] 'Today's farmers' yields', claims one historian, 'are between eight to ten times greater than their counterparts in the mid-nineteenth century.'[12] Electricity, for heating, lighting, cooking, and industrial power, removed fuel constraints on urban growth. On top of this, the petrol engine displaced work animals, notably horses, which had hitherto consumed about one-third of farm production.[13] Overall, world food production is thought to have increased eighteenfold between 1750–2000, and 'most of the productivity gains took place after 1900'.[14] Production rocketed, while consumption—animal if not human—fell, and transport and storage improved. Mega-cities became possible in many parts of the world.

The curious thing about London and New York is that they became mega-cities well before this agro-industrial revolution. London crossed the million mark by 1800; New York by the 1850s. London reached 2 million in the 1830s, 4 million in the 1870s, 6.5 million by 1900, and 8–10 million by the 1920s, depending on which boundaries one takes. New York hit 2 million in the 1880s, 3.5 million in 1900, and 6 million in the 1920s. Other cities were also growing fast, but not this fast. London and Paris were very roughly equal in size around 1750. By 1900, London was two and a half times the size of Paris. In 1750, New York was about one-eighth the size of Rome. By 1900 it was eight times the size.[15] How did London and New York sprout into mega-cities before it was theoretically possible?

The massive growth of settler and mega-cities both led and symbolized a wider Anglo-American explosion. In the 1780s, Britain's American empire, loyal or otherwise, was much smaller than that of Europe's other great overseas settling society, Spain. The population of the United States, when it won its war of independence in 1783, was about 3 million, white, black, and subject Indian, with what is now Canada adding roughly another 200,000, mostly French. In 1790 the population of Spanish America was around 15 million, almost five times that of Anglo-America.[16] If we add in metropolitan populations—10 million for Spain and 9 million for Britain, we get a 'Spanish world' twice the size of the 'Anglo-world'. Anglo-America had a higher proportion of Europeans and higher incomes per capita, but the value of its exports to Europe and its urban development were dwarfed by those of its Spanish rival.

Between the 1780s and the 1920s these rankings reversed. The population of old Britain grew faster than that of old Spain, and that of the new Britains grew far faster than that of the new Spains. From rough parity in 1790, Britain in 1930 had twice as many people as Spain's 23.5 million. From one-fifth the size of Spanish America in 1790, Anglo-America was now well over twice the size—152 million compared to about 65 million. In addition, Britain, but not Spain, had grown fresh clones of itself in Australasia and South Africa. In all, the Anglo-world grew, from the 1780s to the 1920s, from about half the size of the Spanish world to over twice the size, overtaking the 'Russian world' as well. It was not that Spain and Spanish America grew slowly—their populations increased over 350 per cent, 1790–1930, from 25 million to about 90 million. It was that the Anglos grew explosively. Leaving aside the 400 million people in Britain's subject empire, English-speakers grew over sixteenfold in 1790–1930, from around 12 million to around 200 million—a far greater rate than Indian and Chinese growth, as well as Russian and Hispanic. In more recent times, the trend reversed again. Metropolitan Britain's population grew by only two-thirds in the twentieth century, while China quadrupled, and Egypt and Mexico grew sevenfold. But in the long nineteenth century it was the Anglophones who bred like rabbits. As their great cities suggest, Anglo wealth and power grew to match, boosted by the fact that they were the first people to achieve industrialization. Many British and American historians prefer to backdate their nations' rise to such things as the British 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688 or the arrival of the *Mayflower* in America in 1620, or even to the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215. But, with all due respect to these foundational pieties, it was the remarkable explosion of the nineteenth century that put the Anglophones on top of the world. This book attempts to understand and explain this great Anglo explosion and to do so without fear or favour, celebration or denial.

Divergence, Celebration, and Denial

The Anglo divergence in the long nineteenth century came at the end of two longer and broader global processes: the territorial expansion of gunpowder empires, culminating in mass settlement, and the evolution of capitalism, culminating in industrialization. While the broader processes spoke many languages, both culminations spoke English—this was the

Anglo divergence. It was a matter of speed of growth and development, with the latter defined as the increasing complexity of an economy. It was not a matter of intrinsic virtue or quality of life. But, like other expansive peoples, English-speakers around 1900, or 'Anglo-Saxons' as they then tended to call themselves, were awestruck by their own achievements, and preferred to attribute them to virtues rather than vices, and to destiny rather than accident. Anglo-Saxonism was a powerful mythology in its day. Settler 'neo-Britains' such as the United States and Australia had an incentive to embrace racial explanations of alleged group virtues: metropolitan genes packed tighter than metropolitan institutions or environments; they were easier to transfer across oceans. Racialism allowed you to take metropolitan virtue with you wherever you went. Yet the fact remains that Anglo-Saxonism was not only racist, but also a matter of mystery rather than history. Its advocates assembled empirical evidence of substantial achievement in their present, then took flight from recorded history to intuited mystery in attempting to explain it. Around the fifth century AD, the story ran, some Germanic tribesmen in the forests of Saxony suddenly found that the secrets of success, such as a unique addiction to law and liberty, had somehow been hardwired into their genes or souls by an Anglo-prone Nature or Providence. Think of the scene where the proto-human first wields his club in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and replace the club with a book of common law. This mysterious moment when 'the Lord blessed the Anglo-Saxons',[17] somehow gave them a permanent edge over other peoples in the building of states and economies, and in reproduction through migration. The Anglo-Saxons' first great migration was to Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries; their second to North America in the seventeenth, with the intervening 1,200 years as a very long half-time.

Anglo-Saxonism was an important myth that need no longer be taken seriously as a historical explanation. Yet it has left an ironic legacy. Where people mistake similar form for similar content, it tars pan-Anglophone studies with its brush. It has generated an understandable but deceptive tendency to downplay, diminish, or even deny a genuine Anglophone divergence. We are, it seems, allowed to talk about an unusual 'Mongol world' or an unusual 'Arab world', both of which quickly became culture-groups not single empires or nations, but not an unusual 'Anglo-world'. This is partly denial, but also partly an inverse tendency to see the Anglo-world as normative. We still live in or with the Anglo-world, and therefore

find it difficult to historicize. Worst of all, Anglo-Saxonism is arguably not quite dead. Some modern writers attribute Britain's rise to an ancient and unique individualism whose origin they fail to explain. 'It is not possible to find a time when an Englishman did not stand alone.'[18] The notion of the 'Anglosphere', distressingly similar at first sight to my own 'Anglo-world', has elements of this approach.

> The Anglospherist school of thought asserts that the English-speaking nations have not only formed a distinct branch of Western civilization for most of history, they are now becoming a distinct civilization in their own right... This civilization is marked by a particularly strong civil society, which is the source of its long record of successful constitutional government and economic prosperity. The Anglophone's continuous leadership of the Scientific-Technological Revolution from the seventeenth century to the twenty-first stems from these characteristics.[19]

This line of thinking is not necessarily racist. It invites all peoples to adopt Anglophone ways and so achieve prosperity. But it does tend to attribute the Anglo achievement to unexplained factors whose origins are lost in the mists of time, and so shares the Anglo-Saxonist lift-off from history to mystery.

Anglo-Saxonist explanations of the rise of the Anglophones never had the field to themselves. Environmental explanations also existed. A benign and allegedly almost empty environment was seen as the key to the rapid growth of the greatest incubator of new Anglophones, the American West. Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 article, 'The Frontier in American history', perhaps the most influential single history essay ever written, took this view. Turner's American 'frontier thesis' was actually an attack on Anglo-Saxonism, or 'Germanic germ' theory as he described it.[20] Turner explained American growth, and the ostensibly egalitarian and progressive 'national character', in terms of the effects of the continuing frontier rather than the English inheritance. 'The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development.'[21] His argument was an American declaration of cultural independence from Britain—his frontier Americanized all whites—which helps explain its continuing resonance. But it does not actually help much in explaining Anglophone or even solely American divergence. As Turner's aberrant disciple, Walter Prescott Webb pointed out, all settler societies have frontiers, and the frontier thesis would apply 'had the United States never existed'.[22] One could add that some of the

biggest American settlement booms came *after* the closing of Turner's frontier in 1890; and that neither Turner nor Webb have much to tell us about the explosive growth of settler cities such as Chicago.

There are modern versions of environmental explanations, emphasizing the natural endowment—fertility, abundant natural resources, temperate climate, and thin precursor populations—of both the British dominions and American West.[23] The Anglophones, it is implied, were lucky enough to move into rich, climatically benign, and largely empty lands. In fact, high soil fertility was real but temporary, a 'virgin bonus' that extractive farming, hunting, and forestry could soon exhaust. Settlers had to transform local nature before it became abundant in their terms. Geographical determinism is as suspect as most others, defining determinism as the promotion of one of several major causal factors to master variable. The benignity of climate is exaggerated—try visiting southern New Zealand or Northern Ontario in winter, or Texas or Queensland in summer. So too is the emptiness of these lands. Indigenous populations were thin, but sometimes militarily very formidable. It was easier to take parts of Asia than to take the Great Plains from the Sioux, the Eastern Cape from the Xhosa, and the North Island of New Zealand from the Maori.

Perhaps the dominant current explanation for the rise of the Anglophones is their possession of growth-friendly institutions. Some variants may smack of Anglospherism or even Anglo-Saxonism, but it would be grossly unfair to tar most with these brushes. Institutional explanations are now associated with the 1980s work of American economic historian Douglass North but can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century or beyond. The story goes something like this.

Growth-prone institutions emerged in seventeenth-century Britain through a fortunate mix of heritage, insular environment, and contingency. In much of early-modern Europe, the power of monarchs was tempered by parliaments representing local elites and having some control over taxation. In continental Europe, most kings then acquired large, regular, gunpowder armies with which to fight each other. They also used these armies to increase their own internal power and reduce that of the parliaments. Because Britain was an island, it did not need a large regular army to defend itself but was able to rely instead on its fleets. Its Parliament was therefore able to resist royal centralism, in a process culminating in the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688. From 1688, therefore, traditional liberties—notably customary law and representative assemblies—survived better and evolved

more than their cousins on the continent. These institutions, which were transferred to Britain's settlement colonies, happened to be growth-friendly in the context of globalizing capitalism. For example, the law protected and enhanced individual property rights and made property more easily tradeable and more useable as security for loans. Later, it did the same with intellectual property, through patent law, so encouraging innovation. Strong law encouraged the servicing and repayment of loans, including loans to the state, and therefore encouraged accumulation and investment. Parliament was by no means democratic, but it did accurately represent the powerful, increase consent, and provide the means to co-opt newly influential groups such as merchants into the establishment. Some would add Protestantism, especially non-conformist Protestantism, to the mix. It enhanced literacy by encouraging you to read the Bible yourself rather than relying on priestly intermediaries, and it discouraged conspicuous consumption—a 'savings ethic' if not a 'work ethic'. This suite of mutually reinforcing fortuitous circumstances produced a peculiar balance of liberty and order that incubated geopolitical power, proto-industrialization, industrialization, and successful overseas settlement. 'Institutions mattered most in determining if and how economic growth was diffused in the 19th and early 20th centuries', and the Anglophones happened to have the most appropriate institutions.[24]

This book respects such explanations, but also suspects them. The cliché that 'institutions matter' is not a substitute for historical explanation. The emergence of the relevant institutions, their effect on the divergence to be explained, and their difference from similar institutions elsewhere, has to be demonstrated, not merely asserted, and contrary evidence needs to be taken into account. A strong parliament did not do eighteenth-century Poland much good. As for England, one recent study finds that 'the Glorious Revolution leaves no trace on rates of return in the English economy . . . To read the Glorious Revolution as ushering in a stable regime of taxes and property rights that laid the foundation for the Industrial Revolution is to write Whig [presentist] history of the most egregious sort.'[25] Another concludes that scholars have 'failed to isolate enduring and peculiarly "British" features of the kingdom's institutions, religion, or culture behind its precocious transition to urban industrial society'.[26] Institutional explanations are long term. From 1688, the English were 'an essential people, whose destiny was to grow into more of what they were already'.[27] Yet major delays, of a century or so, between the emergence

of an advantageous institution and the advent of the advantage, whether mass settlement or industrialization, have surely to be explained. Britain, its dominions, and the United States may well have achieved the world's best practice in various respects at various times, but was this a cause or a consequence of their increased size, wealth, interactivity, power, and reach?

Both environmental and institutional explanations are long term, and 'path-dependent'. Once the relevant factors are in place, history continues along the trajectory they establish. There are alternatives to long-term, path-dependent explanations other than seeing history as inexplicable chaos. Mega-change can result quite quickly from the intersection of two or more new developments, such as wars, revolutions, or the emergence of new technologies or ideologies—in our case, all four. The developments may be autonomous initially, but once they begin interacting their full flowering is caused by each other, like the proverbial chicken and egg. Fernand Braudel's concept of 'conjuncture' is one term for this; a 'cause–effect spiral' is another. This book develops a hypothesis along these lines, positing a resonant interaction between the American, French, and Industrial Revolutions and an underestimated 'Settler Revolution'. The Settler Revolution, it is argued, was itself a synergy between ideological and (initially non-industrial) technological shifts. It happened in particular times and places in two stages: 'explosive colonization', which compressed time and supercharged growth, allowing huge cities like Chicago or Melbourne to sprout in a single lifetime, and 're-colonization', which compressed space and reintegrated settler colony and metropolis, giving London and New York the extra hinterlands they needed to grow into mega-cities so early. It was the emergence of the Anglo-world in 1783, a politically divided but culturally and economically united intercontinental system, more than growth-friendly institutions, that incubated and spread these changes. Like the Industrial Revolution, the Settler Revolution was by no means exclusively Anglophone, as we will see in Chapters 17 and 18. Yet both did begin with the Anglos, and remained Anglo-*prone* to the 1880s. It is this that explains the Anglophones' divergent propensity to giganticism in the nineteenth century.

* * *

All the approaches to divergence canvassed so far, including my own, could be described as 'Anglocentric', if 'centric' is taken to mean focus,

not bias. They posit an Anglophone divergence and, not unreasonably in my view, focus on Anglophone factors to explain it. There are at least two other interesting approaches to the 'Great Divergence' and its spawning of the industrialized and globalized modern world. They are conveniently described as 'Eurocentric' and 'Sinocentric'. The first argues that the really great divergence was pan-European, not Anglophone alone, and tends to date it to 1200 or 1500 rather than to 1688. The second argues that some other parts of the world, most notably China, were right up there with Europe until 1800. Each sometimes overstates its case. 'For the last thousand years, Europe (the West) has been the prime mover of development and modernity.'[28] 'The ''expansion'' of Europe and its progress/advantage over Asia from 1500 is a Eurocentric myth.'[29] But the moderate versions of each are worth careful consideration.

Eurocentrists note that, from about 1200, parts of Europe such as northern Italy developed mercantile capitalism, complete with trading cities and instruments of credit. From about 1500, Protestantism enhanced diversity and literacy in parts of Europe, while printing enhanced the flow of information. Improved maritime technology, resulting largely from a fruitful hybridization of Mediterranean and Atlantic practices, unleashed Europeans on the world and gave them privileged access to ongoing globalization—to American silver and African slaves, for example. Also around 1500, spasms of 'proto-industrialization' or 'Smithian growth', began to emerge in particular areas, featuring regional specialization. 'Efflorescences', or 'blooms' for short, is another name for these flowerings, during which places like Renaissance Italy and the seventeenth-century Netherlands experienced a golden age.[30] By the eighteenth century, 'blooms' in England and France featured the following elements. Improving transport networks permitted regional specialization, which in turn improved output, and reduced regional famines. This was coupled with the increased organization of handicrafts, especially in textiles, with merchants supplying raw materials to household processors and then distributing the finished product—the 'putting out' system. The further development of commercial and financial institutions, such as banks and insurance, was another key ingredient. Some argue there was also an increase in the duration and intensity of work, and in the participation of women and children in wage labour, driven by the desire for new consumer goods, such as tea and sugar, and permitted by the availability of cheap textiles previously produced in the home—an 'industrious' revolution.[31] All this went along with generally growing population,

increasing agricultural output, and increased use of fossil fuels (peat and coal). During the eighteenth century, a scientific revolution topped off this sequence, and industrialization emerged. Eurocentrists concede that industrialization appeared first in England; most would say around 1780. But it was the product of West European-wide developments that would eventually have produced an Industrial Revolution somewhere in the region.[32] 'The Industrial Revolution was a multi-dimensional pan-European process with deep roots in the past.'[33] England was merely the first cab off the rank.

One can sympathize with this type of Eurocentrism as an antidote to English conceit. Consider Karl Marx, beavering away in the British Museum in the 1850s, struggling to find an explanation for the dynamism around him other than the triumphalism of his hosts. One problem with the Eurocentric view, however, is its tendency to assume that industrialization follows inevitably from proto-industrialization, which is not the case. The Netherlands achieved a high degree of proto-industrialization in the seventeenth century, as did France (and China) in the eighteenth, but none moved independently to industrialization. Only England did so. According to a French economic historian, 'recent work has shown that the British pattern of industrialization was unique, atypic, inimitable, non-reproducible, the exception rather than the norm'.[34] One might add that there is arguably a double dose of denial in the notion of a 'European miracle'. First, it evades the fact that both the industrial and settler revolutions did start with the English-speakers, and that until about 1900 the English-speakers as a whole grew and developed even faster than other burgeoning societies, such as the German. Bulked out with settlers, the United States and 'Greater Britain' (Britain plus its dominions) were able to provide the world's leading superpower for most of the last two centuries, and they still do. We need not celebrate this, but we do have to understand it, and it is very difficult to do so solely in terms of pan-European factors. Secondly, Eurocentrists tend to deny growing evidence that China was ahead of or equal to Europe in growth and development until the late eighteenth century.

Sinocentrists note that comparing fourteenth-century northern Italy or the seventeenth-century Netherlands to China as a whole is unfair. Economically advanced 'core' regions such as the lower Yangzi Delta are the appropriate comparison, while less advanced 'peripheral' regions such as Hunan might be compared with the Baltic or the Balkans.[35] The

terminology echoes Immanuel Wallerstein, but takes his 'cores' beyond Western Europe.[36] On this basis, China matched Europe in virtually every respect before 1800. It too had advanced mercantile capitalism, sophisticated and commercialized agriculture, proto-industrialization, active scholarship and print culture, large companies and concentrations of capital, and so on. Its population growth exceeded that of Europe in the eighteenth century and from a much higher base. The Sinocentrists also claim that the average Chinese standard of living was at least equal to that of Europe, core for core. This has been contested on the grounds that Chinese wages in silver, though not the amount of grain or rice it would buy, were lower.[37] But China's pre-eminence, if only through sheer scale, and its centrality in the global economy until about 1800, seem increasingly difficult to deny. Some 'Sinocentrists' make a similar case for India and Japan, but here they are less convincing.

In the fifteenth century, China certainly had a far superior transoceanic capacity to any European power, even to all of them combined. Between 1405 and 1431 the Chinese eunuch Admiral Zheng He (Cheng Ho) took six fleets into the Indian Ocean, as far as East Africa, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf. These fleets, with up to 317 ships and 27,000 men, were twenty times the size of Christopher Columbus's largest flotilla.[38] The Ming emperors then abandoned transoceanic state enterprises, for reasons that seemed good to them. But China continued to participate actively in global networks, letting others do the dirty work but acquiring most South Asian spices and most American silver, as well as a large share of Russian and North American furs. Historians of late eighteenth-century Pacific trade might have suspected China's centrality in the world economy—the first market for Californian sea-otter and New Zealand fur-seal skins was Canton. Before 1800, conclude the Sinocentrists, 'there was no European advantage sufficient to explain either nineteenth-century industrialization or European imperial success'.[39] 'Even in Britain any departure from earlier patterns of growth stretching back to the high Middle Ages is not evident until well into the nineteenth century.'[40]

Eurocentrists counter-attack in some ingenious ways, suggesting fresh early European advantages, such as less sex and team-worked plows. Eric Jones claims that Europeans were better than the Chinese at limiting family size, mainly through later marriage. In contrast to China, therefore, European economic growth remained a little ahead of population growth. Yet the Chinese were also good at limiting family size when they needed to,

sometimes with female infanticide.[41] William and John McNeill emphasize the mold-board plow, introduced to turn over Northern Europe's heavy clay soils around 1000 AD. These not only boosted agriculture but also accustomed Europeans to working as teams, even with non-kin.[42] But other forms of agriculture, such as Chinese rice paddies, seem also to have required this kind of cooperation. Overall, the only European long-term 'advantage' that seems to survive Sinocentric revisions is political fragmentation within a wider unity. Despite various attempts, Europe never had a single long-term ruler between Rome and the European Community, and this has always been its most obvious contrast with China. Europe's divisions were to some extent contained within the wider unity of shared religion and shared elite languages—Latin, Greek and, later, French. Innovators of all kinds therefore always had an 'exit option'. If a local ruler failed to support their innovations, they could go to another state with which they shared at least some culture and language. In the 1480s, Columbus took his pet project to the King of Portugal and was told to get lost. He then went to the Spanish monarch and was backed. Earlier in the same century, by contrast, the Chinese government turned against Zheng He's great naval expeditions, and progressively dismantled China's capacity for overseas colonization and conquest. There was nowhere else for Zheng He to go.

The exit option seems to me to lurk behind other apparently independent long-term Western European advantages over China. For example, it has been suggested that, by 1500, numerous and autonomous universities were one such advantage—an approach to the great divergence dear to the hearts of academics.[43] But China had comparable concentrations of scholars. The difference was the autonomy, stemming again from political fragmentation. European scholars were more free, though by no means wholly free, of state control and if this was not true in one country, there were always others. A somewhat better European uptake of technology is another example. China preceded Europe in the development of gunpowder, printing with moveable type, coke-smelted iron, and long-range large-scale maritime capacity among other things. In China, when state interest flagged, that was it. In Europe, there was always somewhere else for the innovator to go, and inter-state rivalry to motivate government sponsorship. But, for Europe, the political fragmentation behind the exit option also had its price: constant insecurity and endemic general warfare, which eighteenth-century China largely escaped. The European exit option is not enough in itself to

undercut the Sinocentrists' case, and I accept their conclusion that a great divergence dates to about 1800 and not before. Some also tend to the view that the initial divergence was more Anglo- than pan-European, another view this book shares. What the Sinocentrists have not done, despite some gallant attempts, is provide a convincing explanation for this Anglo divergence. This is something that no amount of research on China—or continental Europe—can do. Here is the gap, the question of Anglophone elephantiasis and its global effects, into which this book now plunges.

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PART I

The Anglo Explosion

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Introduction to Part I

The Anglophone settler explosion was a late flowering of a still greater phenomenon: modern European expansion. This may not have given the Europeans an immediate edge over the Chinese, but it certainly spread them further—to all six of the world's inhabitable continents. European expansion took three forms: *networks*, the establishment of ongoing systems of long-range interaction, usually for trade; *empire*, the control of other peoples, usually through conquest; and *settlement*, the reproduction of one's own society through long-range migration. The three forms continually overlapped in practice and blurred in theory. But it is important to distinguish them.

Europeans were by no means the world's first networkers. Chinese, Indian, and Middle Eastern civilizations regularly interacted with each other several thousand years ago. Expansive peoples had long been prone to break down old networks and establish new ones. From the seventh century AD, the Arabs created a network stretching from Spain to West and East Africa, the Indian Ocean, and South-east Asia. In the thirteenth century, the Mongols created a network of similar size, whose gifts to Europe may have included the bubonic plague.[1] If we see these networks as 'global', then globalization is millennia old, and it did not need Europe. Yet the early networks never linked more than three of the world's six inhabited continents. From 1492, Europeans plugged the Americas into Europe and Africa. From 1497, with the voyage of Vasco Da Gama, they stretched around the Islamic network to establish their own link with East Asia. From 1571, with the Spanish settlement of Manila, they outflanked the Chinese network too and established another link to East Asia. Globalization could be dated to this period, when Europeans established the first global industry—New World sugar production. A

borrowed Asian crop was grown on expropriated Native American land by coerced African labour for the benefit of Europe. In 1788, Europeans added the sixth and last inhabited continent, Australasia, to their network. Indonesian groups had interacted with northern Australia for centuries before this, but their network did not stretch much farther. Sydney, 1788, is another candidate for the place and time of globalization's birth.

Europeans established these new networks, or linked up older but hitherto separate networks, but other peoples used them too and some were very good at it. As noted in the Introduction, China in particular ultimately acquired much of the vast new flow of American silver by exchanging tea, silk, and porcelain for it, leaving Europeans and their slaves to do the dirty work of conquest and silver mining.[2] Also through Europeans, the Chinese acquired new American food crops, such as maize and sweet potatoes, and made good use of them, growing them in terrain unsuitable for traditional crops such as rice.[3] The silver currency lubricated a Chinese economic flowering in the eighteenth century, and the new food crops helped feed a parallel surge in population. Other groups, such as the West African middlemen of the slave trade, also did well from expanding Europe's networking. European-led early globalization did not necessarily mean European empire. The early European 'empires' in Asia, Africa, and much of America, were more like chains of trading posts, though both chains and violence were among their stocks in trade. Portugal's string of fifty trading forts in Africa and Asia in 1550 were devoted mainly to '"squeezing" the rich seaborne trade already there'.[4] But the new networks did facilitate European imperialism. They enabled Europeans to probe for weak spots overseas, transfer resources to them, and send reinforcements when needed. They allowed Europeans to become new and disruptive factors in delicate local balances of power. The Spanish were able to hijack the Inca and Aztec Empires, and the British the Mughal Empire, partly for these reasons. Coupled with a growing edge in military and maritime technology, and driven by rivalry and ideologies of imperialism, Europeans eventually managed to convert most of their networks into empires. By 1900, Europeans ruled almost all Africa and much of Asia.

The story of European imperialism is dramatic and traumatic, etched deep into the psyches of both victors and victims, and it has tended to dominate discussion of European expansion. Yet, in much of Asia and Africa substantive European empire arrived very late and did not last very long. The British did not comprehensively dominate India until the

suppression of the 'Mutiny' in 1859, and they were gone ninety years later.[5] Outside Java, the Dutch East Indies was largely a myth on a map until about 1900—an understanding that, if any power was to have a real empire in this region, it would be the Dutch.[6] European empire in most of Africa was not even a myth on a map until the 'Scramble' of the 1880s, and often not substantive before 1900. 'Before 1890 the Portuguese controlled less than ten per cent of the area of Angola and scarcely one per cent of Mozambique.'[7] 'Even in South Africa . . . a real white supremacy was delayed until the 1880s.'[8] For many Asians and Africans, real European empire lasted about fifty years. A recent study notes that 125 of the world's 188 present states were once European colonies. But empire lasted less than a century in over half of these.[9] With all due respect to the rich scholarship on European imperialism, in the very long view most of these European empires in Asia and Africa were a flash in the pan.

Settlement, the third form of European expansion, emphasized the creation of new societies, not the control of old ones. It had no moral superiority over empire. Indeed, it tended to displace, marginalize, and occasionally even exterminate indigenous peoples rather than simply exploit them. But it did reach further and last longer than empire. It left Asia largely untouched, with the substantial exception of Siberia, and affected only the northern and southern ends of Africa. It specialized, instead, in the Americas and Australasia. European empire dominated one and a half continents for a century or so. European settlement came to dominate three-and-a-third continents, including Siberia. It still does. It was settlement, not empire, that had the spread and staying power in the history of European expansion, and it is time that historians of that expansion turned their attention to it.

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I

Settling Societies

Europe's first effort to reproduce itself in the Americas took place about 1,000 AD, in southern Greenland.[1] Norse from Iceland established two settlements, east and west, and for a time throve in a modest way. Gardar, the eastern settlement, had a cathedral and, at times, a bishop; and there was a sporadic trade with Europe, where narwhal tusks were marketed as unicorn horns. The Greenland Norse, who may have numbered 5,000 at peak, visited the adjacent American mainland, and in at least one case stayed several years, but did not settle there. The climate of Greenland allowed little or no cultivation of crops, and there was apparently little fishing either. The people lived off their herds of goats, sheep, and cattle, and from hunting game, notably caribou. For reasons that remain mysterious, this first neo-Europe disappeared completely by the mid-fifteenth century. One theory is that it was out-adapted by superior Inuit technology such as toggle-harpoons that permitted the hunting of seals throughout winter through holes in the ice and large hide boats (*umiaks*) that permitted the hunting of whales. A glance at a map shows that Greenland is as much part of the Americas as Newfoundland. For its sin of failure, settler Greenland has been expelled from the geography of the Americas and the history of European settlement. Yet it did have a lesson to teach. Europe might have sent it demographic and technological reinforcements in its crisis, but contact was lost in the fourteenth century. In the future, successful European settlements would maintain some kind of contact with a metropolis. It was this contact that gave settlers some advantage over locals. They could more easily access metropolitan resources and new technologies.

As Norse Greenland breathed its last, European overseas settlement renewed in the Atlantic islands of Madeira, the Azores, the Cape Verdes, and the Canaries. The last, the only populated islands, served as a dry run for the Americas. The indigenous Guanches proved formidable foes,

despite their lack of metals, but were eventually overcome by disease and by attack after European attack, beginning in 1402. The Spanish finally overcame the Guanches in 1496, and the Canaries had a settler population of almost 100,000 by 1678.[2] The Atlantic island settlers must have sensed that they were involved in the birth of a new world. The first children born in Portuguese Madeira were named Adam and Eve.[3] The Canaries and the other Atlantic Islands became the first permanent 'neo-Europes', to use Alfred Crosby's term.[4] Yet we should note that they were populated or repopulated not only by Europeans but also by Africans. African slaves comprised about three-quarters of the eight million migrants to the Americas before 1800, though high death rates and low birth rates meant that they did not generate a proportionate number of descendants.[5] Mostly, Africans served as slaves in the various neo-Europes of the Americas, but, against the odds, they did manage to create a few 'neo-Africas'. Haitian Africans rebelled in the 1790s and soon became the second independent nation in the Americas, after the United States. The Maroons of the Cockpit Country in Jamaica were more or less independent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Maroonlands in Portuguese Brazil were known as 'quilombo' and there were several of them. The largest, Palmares, comprised ten settlements and up to 20,000 African people, lasted almost the whole of the seventeenth century, and defeated a dozen Portuguese and Dutch expeditions.[6] Such independent 'neo-Africas' were only the tip of an iceberg of African cultural resilience in the Americas.[7] Our subject here is European settlement, but one has to note that much of that settlement was built on African sweat and blood and that Africans resisted when they could.

Europeans were not the only creators of settler societies in the period 1500–1800, and they were not the world's only gunpowder imperialists either. Islamic empires were also rising. The Ottoman Turks expanded across North Africa and completed the conquest of the Balkans—a 450,000 square mile Asian empire *in* Europe.[8] They besieged Vienna in 1683 and came so close to taking it that the Holy Roman Emperor fled his capital.[9] Iran may actually have saved Europe by ensuring that the Turks did not have things all their own way, even in the Middle East. Iran controlled Baghdad in the 1620s and 1630s, and generally ensured that the Ottomans always had to be wary of a second front. Muslim heirs of Tamerlane conquered most of India and established the Mughal Empire between 1555 and 1596, and powerful Islamic states also emerged in West

Africa. In China, seventeenth-century Manchu conquerors established the Qing dynasty and carried the Chinese Empire to its modern apogee in the eighteenth century, conquering Outer Mongolia, Tibet, and Xingjiang (Sinkiang) and presiding over a population of 360 million by 1790.[10] It was by no means obvious that such conquests were any less significant than those of the Europeans.

Settler Races

English-speakers were late starters in the race to construct and expand neo-Europes. Their first permanent settlement, in Virginia in 1607, postdated the first Spanish permanent settlement, in Hispaniola, by 105 years. Despite this handicap, the Anglos were, by 1900, clear winners in the race, measured in either numbers or wealth of settlers. Existing explanations of this tend to suggest that the Anglo lead came early, indeed almost as soon as they entered the race. 'Transatlantic emigration from England, where capitalism was most advanced, varied fundamentally from Spanish and French emigration.'[11] 'Clearly, then, the colonies of English North America showed far greater vitality in the 17th and 18th centuries than did those of the other European nations, and became the major force in the development of the continent's resources.'[12] Most attribute this alleged early lead to the long-term institutional advantages discussed in the Introduction.

Another view, related but more medium term, would date the Anglophone lead to 1763 and explain it in terms of geopolitics. Britain was smaller than its great rival, France, but from 1688 developed institutional means of mobilizing a higher proportion of its resources, especially financial resources. In the great wars that followed, furthermore, France fought Britain at sea and in the colonies with its left hand, using its stronger right to fight other powers in continental Europe. Consequently, in the Seven Years War of 1756–63, Britain was able to defeat France decisively at sea, in India, and in North America. The tendency to see 1763, or the '*annus mirabilis*' of 1759 when the key military victories occurred, as the watershed in the achievement of British maritime hegemony is very widespread to this day. 'By the middle of the 18th century Britain was without doubt the supreme maritime and colonial power and hub of global commerce.'[13] By 1759, it was 'already obvious that the balance of global power had shifted decisively

in favour of Great Britain.'[14] To mix gambling metaphors, Britain now held all the aces in the settler races. This corresponds with a 'great surge' in British emigration to North America in 1760–75.[15] The problem is that the result of the Seven Years War was not permanent. It was largely reversed in the War of American Independence, 1775–83, in which Britain's main rival at sea was France. France, as much as the United States, won this war. In international trade, scientific innovation, and in some other respects it was roughly equal to Britain at this time.[16] It remained absent from mainland North America, but only because it had handed Greater Louisiana over to its ally, Spain, which had also reconquered Florida, seized by the British in the Seven Years War. Spain's dominion in the Americas was at its peak in the years 1783–1803. And it was not until 1805, with the battle of Trafalgar, that Britain achieved the long-term maritime hegemony attributed to it in 1763.

An Anglo edge has also been attributed to a mix of institutional, cultural, and structural factors. The scholarship behind this view is recent and impressive, and makes a substantial case. It emphasizes that the Anglos were more Protestant, more individualist, more democratic, and more capitalist than the competition; and that their colonies were more decentralized. Some claim that the British were peculiarly obsessed with obtaining their own land,[17] and some claim that British migration to the Americas in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was higher than that of other European nations. Others specifically compare Anglo and Spanish settlement of the Americas and note fundamental differences of structure and philosophy: the Spanish were centralized and change-averse; the Anglos were decentralized and change-prone.[18] Some of this is true, and I will not dispute the balance here. But these institutional explanations of an early Anglo divergence, powerful as they may seem, face at least three major problems.

First, the Anglo characteristics listed above may have facilitated commercialization, innovation, and industrialization, but it is not always obvious that they facilitated settlement. Cooperation, for example, might enhance the success of settlement more than individualism or decentralization. Indeed, advanced capitalism at home could have operated to discourage migration, by reducing domestic poverty and increasing opportunity. Success in capitalism at home might easily militate against mass settlement abroad. The second major problem is the Dutch. They too were Protestant, individualist, democratic, and capitalist, as well as mercantile and

maritime. At home, the 'United Provinces' were much more decentralized than Britain, a much more obvious model for the United States. Yet the Dutch, while great networkers and empire-builders, were not great settlers. The Dutch did send up to a million people overseas from the late sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, as sailors, soldiers, officials, traders, planters and the like, But the vast majority were sojourners, not settlers. Many were not Dutch; almost half died abroad, and almost all the rest returned home as soon as they could. Total Dutch *settler* migration over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is estimated at 25,000, around 1 per cent of all European overseas migration to 1800. The only two Dutch settlement colonies, New Amsterdam (present-day New York) and the Cape of Good Hope, had tiny founding populations and an even tinier trickle of reinforcements, by no means all of them Dutch. White settlers at the Cape in 1806, over 150 years after first settlement in 1652, numbered about 20,000, only half of them Dutch—the rest were French Huguenots and Germans. New Amsterdam, founded in 1625, had a peak of 9,000 settlers in 1664, many of them not Dutch.[19] The French, who were more Protestant, capitalist, and individualist than the Spanish if nobody else, were in the same category as the Dutch as settlers. Their two main settler colonies, Canada and Louisiana, each had a founding population of around 10,000.[20] Protestant capitalist individualism, or even simple European-ness, does not take us far in understanding success in settlement. The third major problem with the notion of early Anglo leadership in settlement, driven by deep-rooted factors, is that the early lead may not have existed.

The chief candidates for winner of the European settler races, 1500–1780, are the British, the Iberians (Spanish and Portuguese) and the Russians. The last are often excluded from discussions of European expansion by the convenient insertion of 'overseas' or 'western'. But this study is concerned with long-range mass migration over land as well as sea, notably in the American West, and here Russia is an important comparison.

Before tracing the settler races, we need to look briefly at settler demographics. As the Dutch example suggests, most of the Europeans who travelled overseas between 1500 and 1780 were sojourners, not migrants, except in the sense that many left their corpses abroad. Even the number of genuine migrants, permanent stayers, is no necessary guide to eventual settler populations. Birth rates, death rates, and above all the number of women are also crucial variables. In this period both sojourners and migrants were predominantly male, and they had mixed-race offspring.

Sojourners moved on, and over time their offspring either melted into the indigenous or slave populations, or formed an intermediate group. If male migrants stayed, they were often integrated into indigenous societies through the classic group-linking mechanism of intermarriage. All this sometimes produced distinct mixed-race cultures, such as the Metis of Canada and the Griqua of South Africa, the latter originally known with Boer bluntness as 'Bastards'. In none of these cases were European offspring accepted as 'settlers', or full citizens of neo-Europes. The actual genetics are less important than whether people considered themselves to be 'white' full citizens, and were accepted as such.

To produce neo-Europeans, you needed European women, and few early colonies could get many. But even a minority of women in a founding population, if not reinforced by fresh male migrants, soon eliminated the excess of males through gender-balanced births. If male reinforcements did keep arriving, then a 'frontier effect', very different from Frederick Jackson Turner's, came into play. High demand for wives pushed down their ages at marriage, so boosting birth rates. This real 'frontier effect' has been documented among Dutch and French settlers, as well as among English.[21] The difference between 700,000 New Englanders and 100,000 French Canadians in 1780 was not birth rates, which were similarly high; time of foundation (in each case a few decades in the mid-seventeenth century); or indeed the gross number of founding migrants—about 21,000 in the case of New England and 10,000 in the case of French Canada. The difference was the number of founding mothers—perhaps 8,000 English as against 1,100 French.[22] The high rate of natural increase, at least in low-disease regions, could double a population in twenty-five years, which meant that a fifty-year head start could make a big difference—a 'founder effect'. In short, in the production of neo-Europeans, one female settler was worth several males, and one early settler was worth several latecomers.

Spain

Spain established its beachhead in the Americas on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola in 1502. Private adventurers licensed by the crown led the way on the mainland, notably the famous contract conquistadors Cortes and Pizarro. By mid-century, the Spanish crown was able to wrest control from its over-mighty subjects. The vice-regalities of New Spain (Mexico) and Peru (including Bolivia) were essentially the Spanish names of the

co-opted Aztec and Inca Empires. Spanish power in the Americas was based squarely on these two hijacked empires, with their numerous and well-organized native populations, intensive agriculture, and hidden depths of silver. Spanish control of the Americas stretched out from its Mexican and Peruvian/Bolivian heartlands at no great pace, contiguity, or continuity. Some native peoples outside the heartlands remained independent throughout Spanish rule. The Mapuche of southern Chile, the related Araucanians of southern Argentina, and the Huichol, Yacqui, Comanche, and Apache of Mexico are cases in point.[23] Spanish America was a mixture of real and nominal empire, as well as of empire and settlement. Until the eighteenth century, its core business was the mining of silver and the transport of as much as possible of it to Spain. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most of it came from the remarkable Bolivian silver mountain of Potosi, in the vice-regality of Peru. 'With the constant flux of some 200,000 people coming and going to Potosi at the turn of the seventeenth century, it was one of the world's largest cities.'[24] Peruvian silver production declined in the eighteenth century, but the mines of Mexico took over.

Spanish America was no simple extractive frontier. Supplying the silver mines with mules alone was a major business—40,0000 were sold at a single fair. Mercury, or 'quicksilver', was mined in present-day Ecuador to process Potosi's silver. Ships as large as 1,150 tons were built locally to support the trading system.[25] Missions, forts, and towns extended out from the two heartlands, and from the old Caribbean base, into Texas, Florida, and New Mexico. Great ranching frontiers developed in California and the River Plate delta, producing hides for a growing European leather market. The increasing need to defend their empire from Dutch, French, British, and Russians at least forced the Spanish crown to invest more American silver in the Americas in ships, troops, and fortifications.[26] The Spanish Empire is generally spoken of in terms of decline from 1700 if not earlier, but historians are beginning to qualify this. An upturn is associated with the Bourbon reforms, from the 1750s, whereby the state encouraged trade and invested in development. Other factors seem also to have contributed. In the eighteenth century, silver mining continued to expand, now much more in Mexico than Peru, but was joined by new exports: cacao from Venezuela, sugar from Cuba, and hides from Argentina and California. There was a substantial 'country trade' in such things as textiles.[27] 'The last quarter of the 18th century was an era of

unprecedented prosperity and economic growth for Spain and Spanish America.'[28]

From the seventeenth century, the indigenous populations of Mexico and Peru began to recover from introduced epidemics and continued to be exploited by their Spanish masters. This, along with imports of African slaves, reduced Spain's need for European settlers, and European immigration in the second half of our period, 1650–1800, was modest at about 300,000—well below contemporary British levels. The comparison is deceptive because the Spanish founding period came earlier, 1500–1650, when about 450,000 emigrated. Thus 'Spanish America received roughly three-quarters of a million emigrants from the metropolis over the three centuries of colonial rule.'[29] The difficulty is determining how many neo-Europeans this migration produced. It was mainly male. Only 6.2 per cent of migrants up to 1539 were female. But, during the peak migration period, 1560–80, the female minority rose to 28.5 per cent—a very substantial minority indeed for so early a settler society. The female proportion dropped thereafter, but this mass injection of founding mothers, combined with the 'frontier effect', produced a substantial neo-Spanish population over two centuries. A reasonable estimate of the total population of Spanish America in 1790 is 15 million.[30] The proportion of Europeans varied—from 76% in thinly-peopled Chile, through 26% in New Granada and 18–20% in New Spain, to 13% in populous Peru.[31] Assuming a total population of 14 million in 1780, of whom say 15% were accepted as white, about 2.1 million neo-Spanish seems likely for Spanish America in 1780.

Portugal

The smaller of the two Iberian settling societies, Portugal, began the settlement of its vast American domain of Brazil in 1532. It too contracted out initial conquest and colonization to private individuals—fifteen 'donatory captains'—and took longer to wrest back control than Spain. Portugal and its empire then spent sixty years, 1580–1640, at least nominally under the control of Spain. Sugar was the main early export, of which Brazil was the world's leading supplier until the emergence of Caribbean competition in the later seventeenth century. The sugar industry was concentrated in the north-east. In 1695, gold was discovered in the south-east, and Brazil became the world's leading supplier of that too. Minas Gerais, the 'General

Mines', boomed modestly, around 1700–60, after which output began to decline. Gold encouraged the development of a second centre of settlement, in the south-east, dominated by Rio de Janeiro. In the 1770s, over two-thirds of the registered population of Brazil was concentrated in only four of sixteen provinces—Bahia and Pernambuco in the north-east, and Rio and Minas Gerais in the south-east.[32] The Portuguese grip on the rest of Brazil was loose.[33]

As with Spain, the notion of general decline in the later eighteenth century is now being questioned. 'Is it possible to speak of a decadence in Portugal at the end of the 18th century? Certainly not. We are dealing here with a period of economic prosperity.'[34] Under the Marquis de Pombal, Portugal and Brazil experienced their version of Spain's Bourbon reforms. Portugal was able to avoid war more than Spain during the eighteenth century, and maintained a close political and economic alliance with Britain. While Britain may have derived more benefits from this relationship, and while decline may have set in at the beginning of the nineteenth century,[35] Portugal and Brazil around 1780 were doing fairly well despite the decline of gold output. By this time, hides, cotton, diamonds, and coffee had joined sugar and gold in the list of exports.

The total outflow of Portuguese overseas between 1400 and 1760 has recently been estimated at between 1 and 1.5 million people—staggering figures for a country of only two million in 1700.[36] Most, as with the Dutch, were male sojourners. But it is clear that a substantial number of Portuguese settled in Brazil. One estimate of actual Portuguese migrants to 1760 goes as high as 518,000.[37] The annual outflow was never great. 'It is doubtful if more that 5,000 or 6,000 people emigrated from Portugal to Brazil in a single year at the height of the gold rush.'[38] But these are actually high numbers in their context, and Portuguese migration before 1780 stretched back for 250 years. Estimates of Brazil's total registered population, black, white, and Indian, in about 1780, range from 1.5 million, through 1.9 million, to 2.8 million, with the last the most recent.[39] Because Brazil's Indian population was thinner than in Spanish America, and because the African slave population was not self-sustaining until the nineteenth century, the proportion of recognized whites, or 'brancos', was much higher than in Mexico, let alone Peru. Brazil-wide figures seem unavailable, but in the 1770s whites comprised 24% of the population in Minas Gerais, 32% in Maranhao, and 56% in Sao Paulo.[40] The rest were blacks, mixed bloods, and Indians.

Taking the more recent overall population figure of 2.8 million, about 800,000 seems a reasonable guess for the number of Brazilian whites in 1780.[41]

Britain

Like the Iberian, British colonies in the Americas began as numerous separate foundations. Unlike the Iberians, the British crown was unable to impose a later centralization, despite various attempts. One could see this decentralization as a deep-seated tendency, or as an historical accident arising from the relative weakness of the British crown. 'The state's failure may have been an essential precondition for the eventual success of England's overseas enterprise.'[42] Fragmentation was also the rule among the French and Dutch colonies, but the British did have more of it. By 1763, there were thirty British colonies in the Americas, seventeen on the North American mainland and the rest in the Caribbean. The mainland colonies included Canada and Florida, recently acquired from France and Spain; Newfoundland and Nova Scotia; and the thirteen colonies that became the United States. The last are conventionally and usefully divided into New England, the Mid-Atlantic (together 'the North') and the South, although other culture regions have been suggested.[43] The indigenous peoples of these regions resisted and collaborated with the incoming settlers with varying degrees of success. Some Indians were enslaved, but there was voluntary cooperation in the fur trade in the North and the deerskin trade in the South. On the whole, however, Anglophone settlers tended over time to displace, marginalize, or at least push back the Amerindians, whereas the Spanish incorporated and exploited them in Mexico and Peru. It was the Spanish—or rather their numerous and resilient Inca and Aztec subjects—who were the exceptions among settler societies. The Portuguese Brazilian—and Russian—trend in indigenous relations was more like that of the Anglos. While powerful and adaptable peoples such as the Creeks, Cherokee, Shawnee, and Iroquois survived Anglo settlement rather well to 1780, they did so on its margins rather than at its heart.[44]

The British possessions lacked the silver and gold of Mexico or the Minas Gerais and Britons often bemoaned the fact. But sugar proved a fairly good substitute. The centre of gravity in sugar production moved north from Brazil, via the retreating Dutch, to the West Indies in the

mid-seventeenth century. A competitive land grab for sugar islands ensued, and the British and French got the largest shares, though Dutch and Spanish shares were also substantial. For eighteenth century Britain and France, sugar exports, and the imports of slaves and manufactures that sustained them, were the main point of the Americas. The British West Indies was an economic success, but a demographic disaster. Some 650,000 British and Irish migrated to the Americas between 1607 and 1780.[45] This was only a little lower than the total Spanish flow, and the annual rate was substantially higher. Furthermore, the British were reinforced by perhaps 100,000 Germans. But a good half of the British and Irish went to the West Indies, where they died like flies. They were also male and prone to sojourning. As founders of settler populations, they were next to useless. In 1750, the white population of the British West Indies was less than 50,000, compared to almost 400,000 Africans. Both populations were the residues of far larger migrations.[46]

Demographically shaky as they were, the British West Indies acted as a kind of supplementary metropolis for the mainland colonies. South Carolina, founded in 1663, was 'primarily an offspring of Barbados',[47] and a major business in the North was supplying the requirements of the sugar islands for food, timber, and slaves, which Northern ships brought from Africa. Initially, the Chesapeake colonies of Virginia and Maryland looked as though they might become another demographic West Indies, but by 1700 their high mortality was being overtaken by even higher birth rates. Migration continued, mainly of indentured European servants and African slaves. An adapted version of the West Indies plantation system was developed, using slaves but focusing on tobacco, indigo, and rice because sugar would not grow. Subsistence farming was probably the main economic activity in the North, but this is a vexed question in American historiography.[48] Pure subsistence farming, by the legendary self-sufficient yeoman, was always more an ideal than a reality. In practice, everyone needed to buy or barter for at least a minimum of imported goods, such as guns and tools. Early American settlers may or may not have been free of masters; they were certainly not free of markets. Yet there is an important distinction between farming mainly for subsistence and farming mainly for the market. Market agriculture was not huge in New England, which earned its imports more through commerce, shipbuilding, and extractive industry (cod-fishing, sealing, furs, and timber). 'At least 75% of the goods produced by the typical New England household in the late eighteenth

century went into direct family consumption.'[49] The Middle Colonies also had an active seaborne commerce and semi-subsistence farming in some areas, but produced grain surpluses in others, which were exported to the West Indies and Europe.[50]

The Southern colonies received far more migrants than the North, white as well as black, but many more died of disease and there were fewer women. The South's 200,000 or so white immigrants yielded a white population of 780,000 by 1780. New England was the classic foundational colony. Most of its 21,000 founders arrived in the single decade of the 1630s, and there were few reinforcements. 'Virtually all growth after 1640 came from natural increase.'[51] Yet by 1780, as we have seen, there were almost 700,000 New Englanders. The mid-Atlantic had a more varied foundation. Dutch New Amsterdam, established in 1624, swallowed New Sweden in 1655 before being itself swallowed by English New York in 1664. The Dutch remained an important minority, though British (English, Scots, and Protestant Irish) soon predominated. Pennsylvania began as a single English Quaker foundation in the 1680s, but received more reinforcements than New England, including Protestant Irish and Palatine Germans. In 1780, the Mid-Atlantic was just behind the other regions with 680,0000 Europeans.[52] In all, allowing for the small white populations of the West Indies, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, British settlers and their descendants totalled around 2.3 million in 1780.

Russia

Russian expansion into its most obvious settler colony—Siberia—began in the 1580s in the standard form of contract colonization. Tsar-licensed entrepreneurs such as the Stroganov family sent expeditions across the Urals in search of furs, using hired Cossacks to do the dirty work.[53] These engaged the indigenous Siberians in the usual early imperial mix of plunder and trade, conflict and collaboration, and continually extended these activities. Some claim that the Russian Empire in Siberia was established by 1650,[54] but the situation looks more like a network—a system of interaction similar to that of the French fur trade in North America at the same time. The tendency to assume that the payment of *yasak*, a 'tribute' in furs, always indicates acceptance of Russian rule is questionable. Some groups received reciprocal gifts from the Russians. One group, the Kirgiz, paid tribute to Mongols as well as Russians—whose empire were they part of?[55]

During the eighteenth century, conflict appears to have increased as the Russians sought to turn trade network into empire. Like the North American Indians, the indigenous Siberians were not numerous, but some were militarily formidable, and the fur trade had perceived benefits for them. Russian historians long nurtured a notion of the 'peaceful conquest' of Siberia, rather like that alleged in Australia. Both realities were much more violent, and indigenous military success was considerable. In the 1760s, after several failed attempts at conquest, the Russians had to categorize the Chukchi as a people 'not completely subdued'.[56] The Chukchi 'managed to avoid direct Russian rule well into the twentieth century'.[57] 'By the turn of the twentieth century, Russia had not yet established full domination of this region, nor throughout the entire northeastern native Siberia.'[58] In 1784, the Russians extended the Siberian system across the Bering Strait to Alaska, only to have similar problems with the local Tlingit, who sacked the Russian base of Sitka in 1802. 'As late as 1860 the Tlingits still manifestly controlled the land beyond the settlement walls.'[59]

Empire or network, Russian expansion into Siberia did not involve a huge amount of settlement for a very long time—until the 1880s. In 1762, Siberia contained 362,000 Russian 'male souls', and not many female souls. An estimate for 1795 gives a total Russian Siberian population of 412,000.[60] Russian America, though it stretched south almost to San Francisco, had hardly any settlers at all, and few sojourners. Russia's main settlement push was southward from the Muscovite heartland towards the Black Sea and Central Asia, and whether it counts as long-range or intercontinental settlement is debatable. Old Russia was made tributary to the Mongols or Tatars in the thirteenth century, and began rolling back the Mongol tide in the mid-sixteenth, a process similar to the Spanish *reconquista* of Andalusia from the Moors up to 1492. Neither reconquest was easy. Tatars sacked Moscow in 1571, and raided to within 20 miles of it as late as 1633.[61] But by the late seventeenth century Russian settlers, as well as soldiers, were penetrating into the southern steppes—distant territories never before controlled by Russia that were then generally considered to be part of Asia.[62] One authority puts the number of new southern settlers in 1762 at 3.62 million males. Unlike Siberia, female migration was strong here, so this implies a total population of at least five million.[63] But this includes the 'central black earth region' which can be seen as part of Russia proper. Excluding it leaves about 2 million Russian 'neo-Europeans' on the southern steppes.[64] As in Anglo-America, this involved some German

reinforcements. Even this steppe settlement was contiguous, arguably more akin to German settlement of the Baltic coast than the settlement of far Siberia. Adding about 400,000 for Siberia gives a neo-Russian population of about 2.4 million in 1762. A fresh surge of settlement beginning soon afterwards created New Russia—'the greatest colony of the Russian people'[65]—on the shores of the Black Sea.

China

The great non-European gunpowder empires also engaged in settlement as well as conquest in the period 1500–1800. The Ottoman Turks did some settling in Europe, particularly from Anatolia to Bulgaria in the sixteenth century.[66] It is not easy to distinguish Balkan Muslims of Turkish descent from indigenous converts, but one source implies that as much as 13 per cent of the Balkan population was Turkish a century or so after conquest.[67] Qing China was an even bigger player in the settlement game, including overseas settlement. The Chinese settler population of Taiwan was about 100,000 in the 1680s, when the Qing took over the island.[68] Subsequent emigration was 'erratic and clandestine' to 1760, but then surged to bring the Chinese population of the island to about 2 million by 1811.[69] Apart from Taiwan, the main site of Chinese settlement on far frontiers was Xinjiang, the 'New Frontier', isolated from the Chinese heartland by the Gobi Desert. From 1690, the Qing, with cannon loaded on camels, took on the powerful Mongol Zhungars, who had built an empire in Xinjiang. After early defeats, the Qing conquered the Zhungars with the help of a smallpox epidemic. By 1757, 'Zungharia was left as a blank social space to be refilled by a state-sponsored settlement'.[70]

Settlement had to be state-sponsored, because, like the Dutch and French, the Han Chinese were not keen on permanent long-range migration. Like the British and the Russians in Australia and Siberia, the Chinese sent convicts as well as free settlers. 'By one estimate, about 160,000 exiles went to Xinjiang from 1758 to 1911.'[71] But this was only the same number as went from much smaller Britain to Australia between 1788 and 1840, and was less than a third of the Australian average annual rate. Other settlement efforts struggled against distance, fluctuating state attention, and peasant unwillingness to move. 'The peasantry had only to refer to common folklore to learn that the Western Region [Xinjiang] was a dangerous land inhabited by strange quasi-human beasts or spirits . . . the region thus did

not become a major settlement frontier.'[72] Even in the late nineteenth century, when mass Han settlement (of Manchuria) did take place, the Chinese were 'reluctant pioneers':[73]

> [Like Europe] China also had 'colonies', new territories conquered by imperial expansion, but these . . . were in the interior of the Eurasian continent, without large arable lands or dense populations. The empire actively promoted the settlement of these regions, but they did not provide the raw materials or commodity demands comparable to those available to the settlers of the New World.[74]

In absolute numbers, the Chinese were right up with the Russians, British, and Iberians as far-settlers. Taiwan was certainly a substantial neo-China by 1800. But relative to their vast home population, the Chinese were more like the Dutch and French. Whereas most people of British or Spanish descent live outside their homelands today, and some 15 per cent of Russians live in Siberia, a tiny minority of Chinese now live in the whole of their Far West. 'Tibet, Mongolia, and Xinjiang together account for only 3.6% of the PRC's population today.'[75] That figure includes indigenous people as well as Chinese settlers. No doubt the Chinese could have been great settlers if they had wished to be, but they did not. In the end, it was neo-Europes, not neo-Chinas—or neo-Turkeys or un-enslaved neo-Africas—that proliferated around the globe.

Common Ground?

To sum up the settler races, if the southern steppes are allowed to count, Russia was the European winner in raw numbers. If not, then Britain did win, but only by a nose from Spain and only in absolute terms. Relative to the size of the home population, the Portuguese were clear winners. Numbers are not everything of course, and the population of Anglo-America was richer on average than that of Latin America. But this is not so clear if whites are compared to whites, and even the gross picture might surprise us. The economic prosperity of British North America to 1775 is contested by the experts, and has recently taken a pessimistic turn.[76] In size at least, the cities of Spanish America dwarfed those of Anglo-America before 1800. In 1790, the three biggest cities in *North* America were Havana in Cuba, Puebla in Mexico, and Mexico City. At 105,000 people, half of

them European, Mexico City was three times the size of New York.[77] In 1701, Spanish America had nineteen universities compared to British America's three.[78] Recently, two eminent American economic historians, Kenneth Sokoloff and Stanley Engerman, have attempted a comparison of gross domestic product per capita in Anglo-America and Latin America in 1700 and 1800.[79] Given the sparse and uneven nature of the statistics, this is a heroically speculative enterprise, but it may be better than mere inherited assumption. It suggests that, in 1800, the United States was well ahead of Brazil, Chile, and Mexico, but a little behind Cuba and Argentina. Sokoloff and Engerman conclude that:

> The relationship between national heritage and economic performance is weaker than popularly thought. During the colonial period, the economies with the highest per capita incomes were those in the Caribbean, and it made little difference whether they were of Spanish, British, or French origin . . . It was not until industrialization got under way in North America over the nineteenth century that the major divergence between the United States and Canada and the rest of the hemisphere opened up.[80]

After 1780, and especially after 1815, the Anglos did draw ahead in the settler races. I do not dismiss the possibility that some long-term differences, such as larger proportions of freeholders and voters, may have been a factor in this. But, to 1780, they can have had no great effect because there is no great early Anglo divergence to explain. The Anglophone settler explosion, the Anglo divergence in settlement, belongs mainly to the nineteenth century and not before.

The comparative literature on European settling societies focuses on their differences, and these were certainly considerable. It is hard to imagine more different European cultures than Britain, Iberia, and Russia. Yet the settlement outcomes, at least in raw numbers, were similar. Could it be that we have something to learn from what these societies had in common? There were, it seems to me, four common qualities: marginality, interactivity, previous experience, and hybridity.

Russia, the Iberian Peninsula, and the British Isles were each in some sense marginal—on the flanks of Europe, outside its heartland of France, Italy, western Germany and the Low Countries. But they were close enough to interact intensely with the heartland. This blend of separation from, yet proximity to, a neighbouring civilization was shared by other expansive peoples, the Arabs, the Mongols, and indeed the Manchu. Such societies

could borrow the techniques and technologies of the adjacent cores, while retaining a certain hardiness, a martial edge. Territories flanking the Europe core had better access to other continents. Marginal territories could also better control interaction with the core. They could say yes to German print technology but no, if they chose, to the Thirty Years War. On a less positive note, the margins tended to have harsher environments, which may have made emigration more tempting. Alan Taylor suggests that 'the English succeeded as colonizers largely because their society was less successful at keeping people at home'.[81] They shared this with Iberians and Russians.

The settling societies were all good borrowers, a penchant symbolized by Tsar Peter the Great wandering Europe incognito in the 1690s, looking for useful ideas. German elite migrants played an important role in Russia under Peter and his successors. Genoese capital, techniques, and experts were crucial in early Iberian expansion. That Christopher Columbus was Genoese is no accident. The Dutch played a comparable role for Britain. Dutch fiscal, mercantile, maritime, military, and agricultural practices were all adopted by Britain in the seventeenth century, and one could almost see eighteenth-century Britain as a giant cuckoo in the Netherlands' nest.[82] Having such mentors did not necessarily imply ongoing subordinacy. Indeed, it tended to be the other way around. The British–Dutch relationship from 1688 to 1745 was rather like that of the British–American relationship in 1917–45, with the British shifting from junior to senior partner in the first case, and from senior to junior in the second. Borrowing by late-comers gave very substantial advantages. You could choose between tested alternatives and avoid common mistakes, and someone else met your research and development costs. We might note the obvious analogy with nineteenth-century Japan.

Another shared advantage of the European settling societies was previous experience of conquest and settlement. The Russian and Iberian reconquests of territory from the Moors and Tartars have been noted above. Many writers feel that the *Reconquista* in Spain in particular paved the way for expansion in the Americas by supplying tested institutions, practices, and techniques for conquest, control, and settlement. Cortes sometimes described Aztec temples as 'mosques'.[83] Much the same has been said of British conquest and settlement in Ireland from the late sixteenth century. Some scholars feel that one can exaggerate the extent to which Ireland was a 'blueprint for America'.[84] But one cannot deny that the settlement of

Ireland produced a particularly tough and re-settlement-prone subculture: the Scots-Irish. These people had by far the highest rates of overseas migration in the British Isles in the eighteenth century. The same is true of the Andalusians of Spain and the Cossacks of Russia. These groups were the shock troops of European far-settlement, and they had been produced by earlier, closer, settlements.

This brings us to the final shared characteristic of the settling societies: hybridity. Except between 1580 and 1640, Iberia was split into Spain and Portugal, and Spain itself was made up of Castilian, Catalan, Basque, and other elements. Russia was composed of Muscovites, White Russians, and Ukrainians, as well as Cossacks. 'Britain' mixed English, Scots, Welsh, and at least two varieties of Irish. The multiple ingredients of each settling society may have acted as a kind of yeast for each other. Cultural hybrids were better able to merge two techniques, and produce something greater than the sum of the parts. The union of Castile and Aragon in 1469 helped in the crucial blending of maritime technologies that created the cannon-armed, far-ranging caravel with its mix of Mediterranean lateen rig and Atlantic square rig. Scots contributed disproportionately to British expansion and development in a number of ways.[85] Ukrainians seem to have done something similar in Russian culture.[86] A hybrid metropolis was particularly useful on the frontiers. It gave settlers more than one suite of practices and techniques from which to select and adapt. When junior partners were proportionately more prominent than at home, as was often the case, they became less junior and more willing to cooperate in a shared enterprise. Hybridity was an evenly shared advantage among settling societies up to 1780, but the Anglophones were soon to have more of it than their rivals.

Notes

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2

Shaping the Anglo-World

Birth of the Anglo-World

From the 1780s, the Anglophones did begin to diverge from the other great settling societies. We can date one element of the divergence precisely, to 1783, when Britain recognized the independence of its rebellious offspring, the United States. After 1783, the Anglophones were never again to share a single state, never again to have all their eggs in one political basket. They had become a transcontinental, transnational entity, an 'Anglo-world', like the 'Arab world' or the 'Iberian world'. Such entities were politically divided and sub-global, yet transnational, intercontinental, and far-flung. They comprised a shifting, varied, but interconnected mélange of partners and subjects. Transfers of things, thoughts, and people, lubricated by shared language and culture, were easier within them than from without. Changes flowed more easily within the system, and were received more readily. These sub-global 'worlds' were important change agents, and both national and global histories ignore them at their peril.

According to some experts, Americans rebelled in 1775, not because they yet saw themselves as a distinct nation, but because they felt they were not being treated as British enough. 'It was precisely because they saw themselves as British that the Americans would stand up for their rights.'[1] Taxation without representation hurt, but 'what especially galled Americans was the thought that ordinary English men and women assumed superiority over the colonists'.[2] The American War of Independence was no familial tiff, however, but a bitter civil war, with another round of the great global struggle between Britain and France superimposed on it. The war was big in its context. Some 200,000 Americans and 500,000 old Britons are estimated to have served in arms at some time or another.[3] Spanish, Dutch, and, above all, French made up the numbers on the

American side. Fortunes fluctuated on the battlefield but the surrender of one British army at Saratoga in 1777 and another at Yorktown in 1781 gave victory to the Americans and their allies. The conflict was seldom cousinly. Britain used German mercenaries and Indian allies against its rebel children, who in turn called in Britain's hereditary enemies, France and Spain. Some 80,000 American Loyalists went into exile rather than accept the Republic, and such things as massacres and brutal prison camps, on both sides, left legacies of antipathy and distrust. It is therefore no surprise that post-war relations between Britain and the United States were often fraught. Tension eased temporarily from 1795 with the Jay Treaty, but then renewed from 1807, exploding into a second war in 1812. Further war scares occurred in the 1840s and the 1860s, and even as late as the 1890s.

Yet the Anglo-world's founding rupture, while permanent and seminal, was also incomplete. Transfers of things, thoughts, money and people between Britain and the new United States recommenced as early as 1783. Cultural exchange, in evangelical religion for example, persisted unabated. British Bible societies continued to sponsor American equivalents through the war of 1812.[4] It was not simply that some links survived the Big Split of 1783, but that new ones emerged and some old ones strengthened. In 1795, the British banking house of Baring extended its operations to the United States. It helped finance the US purchase of Greater Louisiana from France in 1803, and generally acted as the Federal government's international banker. 'War with the United States, 1812–1814, placed Baring Brothers and Company in a somewhat embarrassing position.' But the Barings gallantly overcame their embarrassment, and 'continued to perform their normal functions for the Federal Government'.[5] 'Victory furniture', designed to celebrate America's 'victory' in the War of 1812, was made in Birmingham.[6]

In terms of trade, American independence caused only a short-lived rift. 'America's commercial relations with England remained largely unscathed by independence.'[7] Just before the War of Independence, in 1772–4, the thirteen colonies took 22% of Britain's exports. Soon after the War, in 1790–2, the United States took 23%, and the figure increased thereafter to around 40%, 1820–60. The proportion of American exports that went to Britain was around 25% in 1790–1815, rising to 34% in the 1820s, and 50% by 1860.[8] By contrast, after the states of Spanish America became independent in the 1810s and 1820s, 'trade between Spain and the new

Spanish American republics almost disappeared'.[9] The thousands of ships involved in the Anglo-American trade also carried people, money, and information, as we will see in later chapters. 'The Anglo-American world had an organic unity that made for the fluid movement of ideas, methods, and men across the Atlantic in both directions.'[10]

Revolutionary Britain

The American was not the only Revolution to beset Old Britain in the half-century around 1800. Soon after losing America, Britain faced the French Revolution of 1789, which was followed by a generation of warfare, 1793–1815, broken only by the Peace of Amiens in 1802–3. In comparison to previous wars, the armies were huge, the devastation vast, the economic costs monumental. These great 'French Wars' did not match the twentieth-century World Wars in industrialized lethality, but to some extent made up in sheer length. The United States mostly stayed out of them. Britain fought throughout, but unlike all other major European powers did not have to host battling armies on its own soil. The French Wars were important in Anglophone history, arguably stimulating industrialization in Britain and proto-industrialization in the United States, and delaying development in potential rivals such as Germany, the Low Countries, and France itself.

Apart from our 'Settler Revolution', Old Britain also faced three more peaceful 'revolutions' or evolutions: demographic, agricultural, and industrial—all subjects of intense historical debate. The demographic revolution consisted of a reduction in death rates, together with the emergence or continuation of moderately high birth rates. After a period of high growth, 1550–1650, Britain's population had stagnated in the second half of the seventeenth century. Around 1700, there was a moderate upturn, followed by a stronger upturn from about 1750. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the population of Britain grew 15 per cent, to about 7.4 million. In the second half of the eighteenth century, it grew almost 50 per cent to close on 11 million. In the first half of the nineteenth century, despite increasing emigration, it grew almost 100 per cent to 21 million in 1850.[11] This population growth was a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for the nineteenth-century British diaspora. The agricultural transition was more a series of spasms of increased productivity

then either a single revolution or a steady evolution, and barely kept up with population growth. The eighteenth-century spasm was traditionally attributed largely to the enclosure of farmland into larger units. Another view, supported by recent research using a large empirical base, suggests that the hero of the eighteenth-century spasm was less enclosure and 'high farming' than the humble turnip, which recycled nitrogen in the soil and fed livestock over winter.[12] The obvious conclusion, that improved agriculture caused population growth, is in fact contested. The lifespans of aristocrats, who had never been short of food, also increased. Another explanation is that the rise of manufacturing increased opportunities for the formation of new households and so increased marriage and birth rates. Alternative explanations for the eighteenth-century decline in mortality include the disappearance of bubonic plague (possibly due to the greater availability of arsenic for the poisoning of rats), the introduction of vaccination for smallpox, and various improvements in housing and hygiene.[13]

Turnips, enclosure, and rat poison were eventually joined by industrialization in powering Britain to greatness. Arguments about the British divergence in industrialization blend readily with arguments about the eventual Anglo divergence in settlement—perhaps too readily. None of the great settling societies had industrialized by 1780, yet they had managed to produce substantial neo-Europes. Even in the nineteenth century, when Anglo settlement did diverge explosively, industrialization was not necessarily the cause. But it did help. To give one of many possible examples, it provided steamships that could carry settlers against wind, tide, and river current. Attempts to explain the Anglo divergence in settlement cannot evade the vexed debate on Anglo divergence in industrialization.

Almost everyone agrees that industrialization happened first in Britain, but when? One view, old but still strong, dates the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to 1760 or 1780.[14] Other scholars find no industrial revolution at all, but a gradual evolution dating back to the seventeenth century or before.[15] A third school accepts a revolution, but dates its substantive beginnings to the 1800s or 1820s, or even later. Assessing these views depends partly on definitions. Something remarkable was happening in Britain in the eighteenth century, but was it industrialization? Industrialization traditionally implies large factories and significant steam power, though not necessarily together, and we should be cautious about abandoning this

core definition. What was happening in eighteenth-century Britain was arguably not substantive industrialization, but a proto-industrial 'blooming' or 'efflorescence' similar to that occurring in France at the same time. 'Over the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century, taken as a whole, industrial growth was at much the same pace in both countries; in the middle decades its acceleration was possibly stronger in France.'[16] The British may have had an edge in technical crafts, provided by non-conformist 'brilliant tinkerers' in Midland towns, and they certainly had an edge in stationary steam engines. But the French had an edge in theoretical science. 'Britain's success in the Industrial Revolution was to a remarkable extent based on French inventions.'[17] Surprisingly, the French also had an edge in steam transport, floating a steamboat on the Seine in 1775. 'Steam power was essentially an eighteenth-century invention pioneered in France but developed in Britain.'[18]

The early revolutionists date British industrialization from James Watt's invention of an improved steam engine in the 1760s. One could just as well go back to Thomas Newcomen's engine in 1712 or Thomas Savery's in 1698. In history, as against technological granny-hunting, the time of mass advent, the beginning of a revolutionary effect, counts more than the time of invention. In 1800, stationary steam engines were a minor power source in Britain, used mainly to pump water out of coalmines, and steam transport scarcely existed.[19] The mass advent of steam ships in Britain dates to about 1810, and of rail to 1830, One would also expect a surge in manufacturing output from industrialization over and above that provided by proto-industrialization. Economic historians once thought they had found such growth in the later eighteenth century, but more recent research quite firmly places it after 1800.[20] 'Many historians are now skeptical that the Industrial Revolution had proceeded very far by 1800.'[21] Industrialization had 'no overwhelming aggregate effects in Britain before the 1820s'.[22]

There were two apparent exceptions: the cotton and iron industries. These did show huge rates of growth in the late eighteenth century. But cotton was a new and peculiar industry—it was growing from nothing—and high growth rates do not necessarily mean high output.[23] Output is exaggerated by the habit of giving cotton weights in pounds. British cotton consumption in 1801 was 54 million lbs, which sounds a lot but is only 24,000 tons—a fraction of sugar imports or of wool consumption, and a fraction of the 120,000 tons of raw cotton consumed

in 1821. The cotton industry did grow very fast, and equalled wool consumption in 1817, but it only became a really large industry in the nineteenth century, and it was only from the 1830s that it became fully mechanized.[24] Cotton's peculiarity was that its raw material came from far away—first India, then the Southern states of the United States—whereas the raw material for the other textiles, wool and linen, was grown locally. Because merchants had to bring in the raw material, they had an incentive to take on the organization of production as well, and to try to improve it. The eighteenth-century British cotton industry had to compete with the world's most efficient handicraft producers, the peasants and merchants of Bengal. Despite mechanized spinning and other innovations, the contest was still hard-fought in the late eighteenth century. The British therefore changed the rules. 'To keep Indian goods out, duties were raised threefold in the 1790s and ninefold in 1802–19', when the Bengal export industry was at last swallowed by its ungrateful offspring.[25] Strange as it may seem, British iron production was also something of a new industry. Traditional charcoal smelting techniques had of course long existed. But charcoal required timber and this was already running short in mid-eighteenth-century Britain. Much iron was therefore imported from Sweden until the 1780s, when coke-smelting was developed, using domestic coal, and the British industry revived. Even with iron, however, the really big output occurs in the nineteenth century, not the eighteenth. In 1785, British iron output was only 50,000 tons—less than half that of France—and only 125,000 in 1796, compared to 677,000 in 1830 and 2.2 million in 1850.[26] We are looking at a great economic leap forward, but it dates from about 1800 or 1820, not 1760 or 1780.

A late Industrial Revolution seems the most likely, which raises the possibility that the great French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars of 1792–1815 were important to it. Unfortunately the late revolutionists disagree on just how war might have been important. One view is that British war expenditure 'crowded out' other investments, and so delayed the advent of industrialization. Government-bond interest rates and business insecurity rose in wartime, which tempted investors to shift from the private sector to the safer public sector. Early industrialists may not have employed much bank or broker capital, using their own ploughed-back profits instead. But this is clearly not true of other sectors of the economy, such as steam transport. The most recent research, though rather narrowly based, concludes that 'wartime borrowing did crowd

out private lending on a massive scale . . . there is also ample evidence to suggest that the decline in lending slowed industrial growth, and hence hindered Britain's industrial transformation . . . Once the reservoir of technological advances could be tapped undisturbed—after the end of the Napoleonic Wars—growth accelerated.'[27] This comes close to attributing the Industrial Revolution to pent force blocked up in Britain during the French Wars, as in a pressure-cooker, and released in a rush with the peace of 1815.

Another view is that war 'crowded in' investment. Other European countries were proto-industrializing too. But these countries were consumed by war in 1793–1815. For example, the fall of Amsterdam to the French in 1794 relieved London of its main rival in international finance. Only Britain remained largely immune to invasion, and though its war effort cost it dearly, there were compensations. Government bonds funded the war, and accustomed wealthier Britons to new forms of investment, longer term and more impersonal. Britain also provided a magnet and refuge for Dutch, German, and Royalist French skills and capital. For example, the Rothschild banking family moved into British finance in 1798.[28] The war meant that Britain, in the early nineteenth century, was best able to capitalize on, and kick on from, shared eighteenth-century western European developments. In short, the French Wars gave Britain a huge advantage over other European bloomers—the absence of rampaging French armies. Instead, continental European capital and financial skills fled to Britain. The pollen from the French—and Dutch and German—'blooms' was carried off to London by émigré bees, where it helped germinate Britain's industrial take-off.[29] Fortunately, we need not decide between 'crowding out' and 'crowding in'. Both scenarios put the beginning of the revolutionary impact of industrialization in Britain at somewhere between 1800 and 1820—a late Industrial Revolution.

Metropolitan America

Times were hard across the Atlantic in the 1780s. The newly independent United States was burdened with war debt, political squabbles, and a weak central government. Long-term explanations of the Anglo explosion have another problem here. The survival of the United States, let alone its prodigious expansion, at first seemed unlikely. In the 1780s, 'few observers

thought the United States likely to become a major power—economic or otherwise'.[30] Indeed, many had 'growing doubts about its long-term capacity for survival'.[31] From 1789, however, fiscal and constitutional reform combined with geopolitics and the enduring British connection to strengthen, even to transform, the United States. The reforms resulted in the Constitution, a reasonably strong central government, and a workable system of public finance. They are among the best-known events in American history. The geopolitical situation and the enduring British connection, however, were arguably even more important.

If Jefferson, Washington, Hamilton, and the rest were the fathers of American greatness, then the great war of 1793–1815 was its fairy godmother. The conflict crippled Spain as a rival in North America, made possible the Louisiana purchase from France in 1803, and enabled the neutral United States to take over a large chunk of the embattled world's maritime carrying trade. For continental Europe, Spanish America, and the French West Indies, the United States was the substitute Britain you used when you were at war with the real thing. Between 1790 and 1807, United States-produced exports rose from $20 million to $48 million. Re-exports, bought in one country and sold in another, rocketed from insignificance to $60 million, while the direct profits of the maritime carrying trade climbed from $6 million to $42 million.[32] Between 1793 and 1808, merchant shipping tripled to over 1 million tons, giving the United States the world's second-largest merchant marine.[33] Financial institutions proliferated to support this trade. The number of chartered banks increased from 3 in 1790 to 212 in 1815.[34]

Manufacturing advanced too, for similar reasons to trade. Production of textiles and shoes, and such things as clocks, became more regionally specialized and more efficient, though household production remained important. In New England and Pennsylvania, a textile industry emerged to replace British imports. New England's cloth output expanded from an insignificant 46,000 yards in 1795 to 2.35 million yards in 1815. One pair of shoes a year per capita was all that was needed to supply local markets; by 1810 Massachusetts was producing three pairs, and selling the surplus to other regions. Craftsmen using traditional methods produced around ten wooden clocks a year; by 1809 one factory could produce 3,000.[35] Pennsylvania-made muskets might cost twice as much as French muskets, but they were there when you needed them.[36]

This American economic transformation, 1790–1815, is now widely accepted, but its precise nature is disputed. A few see it as an early American industrial revolution, or even an early convergent evolution of industrialization independent of Britain. It is true that the United States had long-standing traditions of water-powered milling and iron smelting, and that American industrialization was camouflaged by its rural location and the concomitant use of water rather than steam power. But dating American industrialization, with Thomas Cochran, to the 1790s is surely pushing things too far.[37] Even in 1815, most mills were tiny, home manufacturing continued to predominate, steam ships were very rare, and factory production was by no means competitive with that in Britain. American factories discovered this the hard way in 1815, when renewed British competition pushed many to the wall, and tariff protection had to be introduced to save the remainder. The United States did not industrialize in 1790–1815. But, in the Northeast, it did 'proto-industrialize' or 'bloom': organize manufacturing on a larger scale, specialize regionally, make most things for itself, and create the business organizations, such as banks, that facilitated these developments. This conclusion is broadly compatible with the extensive literature that sees the shift of 1790–1815 as a 'transition to capitalism' from an economy dominated by subsistence farming, or as a 'market revolution', in which a 'moral economy' was displaced by a 'market economy'.[38]

The United States could not yet manufacture as cheaply as Britain. But it could make most things that Britain could, from clocks to cannon. This newly sophisticated economy was restricted to New England and the Mid-Atlantic, and in 1815 it was not yet comparable to the industrial north of England. But it did mean that the American Northeast had ceased to be a colonial economy, and become a partly metropolitan one. Economic development was matched by demographic, though here the transition from the past was less sharp. Birth rates in the United States actually fell in the period 1800–30, but the fall was from very high (fifty-five births per thousand to plain high (fifty-one births per thousand).[39] By 1815, the Eastern United States, the original thirteen colonies, was demographically, as well as economically, capable of being a *settling* society, as well as a settler society and an intermediary of Old British settlement. It became a leading source of emigrants—to its western territories—as well as a leading destination for immigrants from Europe. Henceforth, there were *two* great Anglophone settling societies.

Reshaping the Anglo *Word*

For over a century, honest citizens of the Anglo-world who happen to have no English descent have bridled at narrow semantic Anglocentrism: 'For Wales, see England.'[40] The word 'Anglo' risks association with such beefy English triumphalism, and is unfortunately also popular with the mystical institutionalists discussed in the Introduction. Yet there is a case for it. In this book's broadest, default, usage, 'Anglo' is simply shorthand for Anglophone or English-speaking, whatever the ethnicity. However, during most of our period, 1780s–1920s, full citizenship of the Anglo-world tended to be restricted to a handful of ethnic groups, including Britons and white Americans, and this is our narrower usage. Like it or not, 'Anglo' is now often used in the United States, long the largest Anglophone society, for white Americans other than Hispanics, and has long been used by the Quebecois for Anglophone Canadians. In Old Britain, 'Anglo' is the hyphenating form of 'British', as in 'Anglo-French condominium' or 'Anglo-Soviet relations', even in the mouths of Scots. Thomas Dunlap has suggested that ' "Anglo" is no worse a cultural tag than most.'[41] The term may raise hackles, but we need a short label, and it is the best of a bad job. More important issues are the various ethnic contents behind the label, the relationship between them, and the fact that they poured out, rather than trickled out, from about 1815.

The Anglo culture group, as it sailed from Europe, was an ethnic trimaran. Its central hull, itself a tripartite compound, consisted of English, Scots, and Welsh. Between 1815 and 1930, around 12 million Britons emigrated permanently to North America, Australasia, and South Africa.[42] The English dominated the outflow in terms of absolute numbers, but emigration rates from smaller Scotland were higher. Britons abroad were therefore more Scottish than Britons at home. Scotland married England in 1603, with the union of the two crowns, but the marriage was not consummated until parliamentary union in 1707. A Highland Scots minority resisted the displacement of Stuart kings with Hanoverian ones, in 1715 and 1745, but the lowland Scots majority remained committed to the union. In the eighteenth century, the Scots experienced a cultural and economic flowering like that of the English. The 'Scottish Enlightenment' is well known to have been immensely influential, though it did not quite 'make the modern world' single-handedly.[43] From about 1750, Scots

contributed disproportionately to British politics, philosophy, banking, and medicine, and to military and mercantile activity. They did so as junior partners, not subordinates. To give one of many possible examples of their penetration of English elites, 130 Scots held English and Welsh seats in the House of Commons between 1790 and 1820.[44] Scots also contributed disproportionately to British expansion. In the later eighteenth century, one quarter of British army officers were Scots, and the East India Company was 'a veritable Scottish fiefdom'.[45] Scotland's wide education base and narrow natural-resource base may have been factors in this over-achievement. But it was the formation of Britain, the British Empire, and the Anglo-world that successively provided wider fields for Scottish enterprise. In turn, the Scots appear to have provided a leavening that helped the Anglo-world to rise.

Wales was institutionally incorporated into England in the mid-sixteenth century, and suffered 'the statistical indignity of being lumped in with the English' thereafter.[46] This makes it hard to estimate the Welsh contribution to the Anglo diaspora. Welsh overseas migration was significant, especially for new-land mining districts, but the scale is contested. One view is that overseas emigration from Wales was low, because the rural Welsh went instead to England or to the rapidly industrializing south of their own country. Another view is that Welsh emigration rates were similar to those of England, 1870–1900, and higher in the 1860s.[47] The low number of Welsh-born in most destination countries supports the former view. The number in the United States peaked at only 100,000 in 1891, compared to 1.8 million Irish-born, and was only 30,000 in 1850.[48] If overseas emigration was low, one reason could be that the continued dominance of the Welsh language to about 1900 insulated the Welsh from the flows of myth and information that ratcheted up nineteenth-century migration elsewhere in the British Isles. The Scots and—surprisingly enough—the Irish were much more Anglophone than the Welsh in the nineteenth century, and it may be no coincidence that they also migrated much more.[49] Scholars today are in no doubt that Scots, Welsh, and English remained substantially separate cultures throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and arguably to the present. There were also sharp cultural distinctions within these countries, such as that between Highland and Lowland Scots and Cornwall and the rest of England. Yet it is equally clear that 'Britain' did gain some substance in this period, through increasing economic, demographic, and cultural interaction plus an element of shared identity.[50]

Like the Holy Trinity, in Linda Colley's phrase, Britain was both One and Three.

The Anglo trimaran was a broader trinity, and one of its outer hulls was Ireland. Between 1815 and 1930 the Irish contributed some 7 million people to the United States and the British Dominions.[51] Around 1890, people of Irish birth or descent comprised between 18 per cent and 25 per cent of the white populations of the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and even more of the population of Newfoundland. Only in South Africa, at 2 per cent of whites, were they anything less than the chief lieutenants of Anglo settlement.[52] Until 1800, Irish emigration was dominated by Protestants. Between 1700 and 1809 perhaps 250,000 Irish crossed the Atlantic.[53] About 80 per cent were Protestant, and the great majority of these were Scots Presbyterians from Ulster. These people, known as 'Scotch-Irish' or 'Ulster Scots', had come to Ireland from southern Scotland between 1610 and 1700, so the voyage to America was their second migration in successive centuries. The numbers were dwarfed by Catholic Irish migration in the nineteenth century, but were quite extraordinary as a proportion of the Ulster Scots source population, usually estimated at around 200,000 in 1700. What we seem to have here is the earliest example of European *mass* migration overseas.[54]

One factor in the Ulster exodus may have been an increasing dependence on the linen industry. This proto-industry, whose workers farmed as well as wove, was volatile and international. From about 1800, Ulster linen suffered from increasing continental European competition and from the rise of cotton, which to some extent displaced linen. Yet Ulster mass migration began well before this, by 1729 at the latest, and there is something unsatisfactory about the notion of a generally growing industry causing mass migration. The previous migratory experience of the Scots-Irish must also have contributed. As Americans were to confirm, one migration made the next easier, even across generations. Combined with evidence of flows of myth and information between the American colonies and Belfast, this suggests the emergence of a cultural ethos of migration. The Ulster Scots give us some clues about subsequent mass migrations from the rest of the British Isles, and these will be explored in a later chapter. Here, we should note that though the Ulster migration was small compared to nineteenth-century peaks, its early date and its relatively high number of women gave it disproportionate ethnic impact, which was supplemented by more modest levels of Irish-Anglican migration and some conversion

by Catholic Irish. About half of Americans who claim Irish descent today are Protestant.[55]

It may seem particularly harsh to include the Catholic Irish among the 'Anglos'. They were more consistently exploited than the Welsh and Scots, and were victims of settlement as well as conquest. 'The Catholic share of land in Ireland fell from 59% in 1641 to 22% in 1688, 14% in 1703, and 5% by 1776.'[56] Irish rebellions, brutally suppressed, persisted into the twentieth century, whereas the Scots stopped rebelling in the mid-eighteenth. The Catholic Irish certainly migrated, but they arguably did so more as victims of the Anglo explosion than as partners in it. Violent Irish resistance extended to the British settlement colonies. Australia, Canada, and New Zealand all witnessed Fenian unrest in the 1850s and 1860s. Discrimination and prejudice against Catholic Irish existed in these countries too, as well as in Old Britain and the United States. Yet the Irish were partners as well as victims in the rise of the Anglo-world. Catholic Irish began their major outflow in the nineteenth century, and it is indelibly associated with the terrible Potato Famine of 1846–7 which, directly or indirectly, killed a million people and drove out a million more. In fact, high Catholic Irish emigration began between 1800 and 1815, well before the famine, and continued long after it. Even in relatively good times at home, opportunities abroad provided by the British connection were 'highly prized'.[57]

The extent of Irish assimilation in new Anglophone lands, and of the assimilation of minorities in general, is a complicated issue. Full assimilation into mainstream society in the United States and the British Dominions was relatively easy for groups whose 'Anglo-ness' was uncontested. English in America were 'invisible immigrants'; Americans in Canada merged 'with scarcely a ripple'.[58] Groups who seemed, on racial grounds, to be clearly non-Anglo found full assimilation, in the sense of being accepted as equals, extremely difficult. Some, most notably black Americans, were integrated into the mainstream economy, but only into its lowest levels. Others, such as indigenous Americans, were economically as well as socially marginalized throughout our period. The Irish encountered varying degrees of racial and anti-Catholic prejudice. Like many other minority groups, they also clung to their Irishness beyond the first generation, using the classic mechanisms of ethnic persistence: residential and occupational clustering, their own institutions (churches, schools, clubs, newspapers), and in-marriage. The persistence of ethnicities such as Irish can be underestimated if one assumes a culture snap-frozen, or still worse stereotyped, at the time of mass

migration. We are looking for quite subtle American or New Zealand Irishness, 'not singing boozing leprechauns always dressed in green'.[59] A good case can be made for the persistence of a 'neo-Irish' ethnic difference. The Irish, and other non-British European groups, adapted to their new lands, and drew on and contributed to mainstream culture, but were not so fully assimilated that their Irishness disappeared.

But were these neo-Irish something less than full citizens of Anglo societies? As usual, the experts differ. One school sees Irish emigration as unwilling exile, and is inclined to see persistent socio-economic disadvantage in both the United States and the Disunited Dominions.[60] Another school maintains that Catholic Irish integrated quite well, encountered racial prejudice but not long-term racial oppression, and were as economically successful as their Protestant fellows.[61] The evidence for this view is stronger for the Dominions and the American West. In Britain and the Eastern United States, Irish did experience discrimination, poverty, and long-term restriction to lesser occupations, but eventually overcame even this. In the American West and the Dominions, negative experiences were less widespread and more fleeting, and Catholic Irish 'became white' more quickly.[62] A neo-Irish culture expanded along with the neo-British, the former sometimes resisting, rivalling and subverting the latter, but also greatly reinforcing it.

The third hull of the Anglo trimaran was German. The German contribution to the Anglo-world was old, large, widespread, and consistent. A veil of silence descended over it as a result of the two World Wars. Recent studies have lifted it to some extent, but the prominence of Germans in British settlement is still underestimated. Few Germans emigrated to North America in the seventeenth century, but about 100,000 did in the eighteenth, and a remarkable 5 million followed in the nineteenth.[63] German Americans comprised between 7 and 9 per cent of the white US population in 1790, and 16.3 per cent, or one-sixth, in 1920.[64] Beginning with participation in the founding of Halifax around 1750, 400,000 Germans migrated to Canada by 1950, most before 1914.[65] Some 150,000 German-speakers are said to have entered Canada in the 1850s alone.[66] The number of German emigrants to Australia and New Zealand was very much smaller. But German migrants included a high proportion of women, and tended to have high birth rates. They were therefore good 'founders'—good at producing descendants. A recent study of New Zealand Germans cites three cases of early immigrant couples having between

1,137 and 3,500 descendants each (!), and calculates that 'there must be, therefore, at a conservative estimate, several hundred thousand present-day New Zealanders who are of German descent'.[67] This may be exaggerated, but by 1900 Germans were New Zealand's largest European ethnic group other than the British and Irish. This was also true of Australia. In 1891, Germans and their descendants comprised 2.8 per cent of the Australian population, with much higher concentrations in Queensland (6.2 per cent) and South Australia (7.7 per cent).[68] Germans were even more prominent in the white population of South Africa. According to one estimate, 27 per cent of the Dutch Afrikaaner population in 1807 was actually German,[69] and the Cape Colony experienced a fresh injection of German settlers in the 1850s.

Why were Germans such important allies of Anglo settlement? One possible explanation is that the Anglo-world merely took its share of a substantial German diaspora, which also involved large-scale emigration to eastern Europe and Russia.[70] This might suffice for German settlement in North America in the eighteenth century, but not in the nineteenth, when there was a clear German predilection for Anglo destinations. The tendency of migration to cause itself—migrants follow friends, family, and neighbours who have migrated earlier—was no doubt a factor here, as was prosperity in North America. But there were other factors too, and one of them was racialism. Some English had long thought that their Anglo-Saxon forebears were prone to energy, liberty, and progress, and that the Germans were kin who shared these characteristics. Other views contested this up to the eighteenth century. But in the nineteenth century, Anglo-Saxonism flowered alongside other rising racialisms.[71] Scholars traditionally emphasize racialism's powers of exclusion, but it also had great powers of *inclusion*. Ideas of Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, Teutonic, Nordic, and Aryan racial superiority and kinship may well have helped lubricate the flow of Germans (and Scandinavians) to the Anglo-world, as well as improving their reception there. Certainly, Anglos usually regarded Germans as good immigrants, second only to Britons themselves, and perhaps even ahead of Catholic Irish. The German predilection for Anglo destinations was matched by an Anglo predilection for German migrants. Until the 1880s at least, American and neo-British emigration agents and literature in continental Europe were clearly biased towards German-speakers, who were inherently no more compatible with Anglos than, say, Czechs.

Whatever the case with racial legend, there were substantial real connections between British and Germans. They had long shared an active North Sea world and from the sixteenth century shared Protestantism as well. Although Catholics were a substantial and important minority, most German migrants to the Anglo-world were Protestant. Another link was the dynastic unification of Britain and a large part of northern Germany—the Electorate of Hanover—between 1714 and 1837. For this 123-year period, Britain was partly a German power. The Hanoverian connection in particular is underplayed in the historiography. One of the few books on the subject, published to 1993, asserts that 'it is unlikely that the connection with Hanover had any influence on British history'.[72] Yet Hanover, with its ports of Bremen and Verden, and with 'ancient rights' and connections in the even larger nearby port of Hamburg, must surely have provided Britain, and therefore its settlement colonies, with unusually good links to Germany. Even after the official link ended in 1837, German migration to Australia had some bias towards Hanover.[73] Earlier German immigration to North America did not, coming especially from southern Germany. But Hanover could still have provided the necessary transport and communication links to facilitate these migrations, helped by its well-established British and American connections, and by the nineteenth century it clearly did do so. 'Between 40% and 50% of all German emigrants in the nineteenth century are known to have passed through either Bremen or Bremerhaven.'[74] These considerations, along with some recent thesis research, suggest that Hanover may be a missing link between Germans and the Anglo-world.[75]

Germans did not assimilate quickly or fully into the mainstream societies of the United States and the British Dominions any more than the Irish, if as much—most Irish could speak English as early as 1850. Germans, too, clustered occupationally and residentially. They, too, had their own churches, schools, and newspapers. By the late nineteenth century, there were no less than 800 German newspapers in the United States, and half a million American children in German-language schools.[76] But German migration to the United States diminished rapidly from the 1880s, as did Irish, and the absence of reinforcements reduced the size and separateness of ethnic enclaves, even before the First World War. Germans might not *assimilate*, but they did *integrate* quite readily—certainly economically and to some extent politically. They were active participants in elections and in the Civil War.[77] The First World War stimulated virulent anti-German

feeling throughout the Anglo-world, which cut a swathe through German place names, and ethnic Germans naturally lowered their profiles thereafter. But this was all the more shocking because unprecedented. Until 1914, with a few exceptions, Germans were welcome in the Anglo-world and they made the most of it.

* * *

In 1834, the British colonization theorist Edward Gibbon Wakefield pointed out that 'the greatest emigration of people that ever took place in the world occurs from the Eastern states to the outside of the Western states of America'.[78] Native-born Americans moving west were the fourth great component of the Anglo diaspora, along with Britons, Irish, and Germans. With exceptions such as the early settlement of Texas, which was Mexican territory until 1836 and independent until 1845, the great American westward movement was technically 'internal migration'. But, at least until the late nineteenth century, the shift west was as major a move as that across the Atlantic. It was roughly as lengthy, costly, difficult, and dangerous, and it was almost as different. Migration from New England to Oregon was as sharp a shift as from England to New England. At the broadest level, emigration from the Eastern United States, and immigration to the United States, were part of the same Anglo diaspora.

Given the prominence of the great 'westward movement' in American historiography, it is surprisingly difficult to find reasonable estimates of its scale: the number of native-born Americans who made the big shift west. We can count the number of people born in the East but living in the West at particular times. In 1850, there were about 1.5 million of them, not counting those who had returned or died.[79] Between 1870 and 1920, about 6.5 million native-born Americans moved west.[80] Allowing for the 1850s and 1860s, decades of high migration, this suggests a westward movement of about 10 million native-born. Recent research on rates of migration in the first half of the nineteenth century supports this figure, or even higher ones. 'Net [internal] migration rates more than doubled in the first half of the nineteenth century.'[81] One-sixth of a large 1815 sample of American-born men migrated to the West.[82] Even these figures may be too low. A very recent study concludes that 'Nineteenth-century Americans were extraordinarily mobile. Despite the difficulty of travel, almost half the population moved across state lines, and most of those migrants moved

long distances. The bulk of mid-nineteenth century migrants moved to the Midwest.'[83] We should also allow for substantial American migrations to Canada early and late in our period. It is not just symmetry that inclines me to an estimate of 12 million for the American-born westward movement, 1815–1930, matching the 12 million migrant Britons and the 12 million migrant Irish and Germans.

The ethnicity of the American settlers, and of Americans in general, is another vexed question. A black minority of Western settlers have generated some fascinating studies, but the great majority were white. The exception was a substantial movement of blacks from Virginia and the Carolinas to the newer Southern states between 1815 and 1860, slaves accompanying their owners or being 'sold down the river'. The major free black migrations, from the South to Northern and Western cities, were twentieth-century phenomena—in 1890 over 90 per cent of American blacks still lived in the South.[84] As for the whites, Americans in the present place great emphasis on their ethnic pluralism, and for the twentieth century this is fair enough. Between 1882 and 1924, the United States opened its immigration gates to a vast number and variety of southern and eastern Europeans. There was also some Mexican immigration and a boom in black American birth-rates around this time. This was a very significant divergence from Anglophone norms. The British Dominions did not match America's post-1890 ethnic diversity, at least until after the Second World War. But there is a tendency to read both the old ethnic 'melting pot' and the new 'cultural pluralism' too far back into the American past, helped by the wide acceptance of a 1931 study of ethnicity in 1790 that can be shown to have exaggerated diversity.[85] The trend was pioneered by Tom Paine, not the most reliable of demographers, who claimed of the thirteen colonies that 'not one third of the inhabitants . . . are of English descent'.[86] In the seventeenth century, white settlers in what became the United States were largely English, who therefore dominated the founding population. Only 6,000 Dutch, 5,000 Irish, and 2,000 Scots joined 148,000 English before 1700.[87] Irish, Scots, and Germans streamed in thereafter, but in 1790 Europeans in the infant United States were still 80% British, 9% German, 6% Catholic Irish, and 3% Dutch—less a melting pot then a British stew with a dash of neighbours.[88] Until about 1890, the Anglos and their allies continued to dominate the European American population, with the addition of Scandinavians. 'Before 1881, the vast majority of immigrants, almost 86%

of the total, arrived from northwest Europe, principally Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia.'[89] Even in the period 1881–93, these groups accounted for two-thirds of all immigrants. In 1900, the *New York Times* asked 'are Americans an Anglo-Saxon people?' and concluded with relief that they were: 60% of whites, it claimed, were insular Anglo-Saxons proper while 23% were 'Continental Teutons' and 11% were Celts, leaving the melting pot only 6%.[90] The nineteenth-century United States was predominantly an Anglo society, and its internal migrations were part of a wider Anglo explosion.

* * *

In the Introduction, we isolated the 'Exit Option' as the sole European advantage over China to survive recent revision. Rejected by Portugal, Christopher Columbus exited to an alternative, Spain, an option his Chinese near-contemporary Zheng He did not have. The European exit option was a function not only of political divides but also of cultural unities—shared Latin legacies, shared Christianity, and in the case of Spain and Portugal, mutually comprehensible languages. From 1783, British and American denizens of the Anglo-world had a transatlantic exit option, and some innovators used it. The British inventor Robert Fulton, finding his ideas about steamboats and torpedoes getting nowhere in Britain during the French Wars, took himself off to the United States, where he made 'the best claim to be the father of commercial steam navigation'.[91] Engineers Mark Isambard Brunel and John McAdam, the father of modern roading, made the reverse exit from America to Britain. Just how important this heightened cross-insemination may have been is a matter for individual studies, but it was made possible by the existence of the Anglo-world.

In the previous chapter, we isolated cultural hybridity as a key shared characteristic of successful settling societies. England, Scotland, and Ireland shared membership of the Anglo-world but retained cultural difference, and this may also be true of various parts of the United States. Emphasizing shared Anglo-ness is not to deny the persistence of some old ethnic differences within the Anglo culture group. Nor is it to deny the possible emergence of new ones. The differences between the three main regions of the Atlantic United States are easily stereotyped—Puritan Yankee New Englanders; Pennsylvania 'Dutch' (in fact Germans) and Quakers,

uneasily yoked to New Yorkers in the 'Mid-Atlantic Region'; slave-owning Southern cavaliers and their poor-white and black-slave sidekicks. But recent scholarship suggests regional differences in Atlantic America did exist. The old 'germ theory' of divergent British founding subcultures, revived first by Louis Hartz and his 'fragment' thesis and then by David Hackett Fischer and others, is part of the explanation.[92] But different frontiers joined different fragments in generating regional difference. From our point of view, the intriguing thing is that the proto-ethnic regional differences of Old America were structurally similar to those of Old Britain. Both Scots and New England minority cultures leavened, and perhaps energized, the majority cultures of England and the Mid-Atlantic states from about 1780. I am not convinced by American notions of a 'Yankee nation', which attribute nineteenth-century cultural leadership to New England. As far as I can see it was New York that led nineteenth-century Western settlement. But a mass of New Englanders moved into western New York state, and New York City, between the 1790s and the 1830s. They did add something to New York's cultural mix, and they did disproportionately penetrate New York and other elites, just as the Scots did in England. Older histories seem more aware of this curious echo than newer ones. New Englanders were described as 'the Scotch of America'.[93]

> The story goes that a Scot, returning to Glasgow from a business trip to London, was asked how he liked the English. 'I canna tell' was the alleged reply, 'as I talked only with the heads of firms'. A New Englander visiting New York during the second quarter of the last [the nineteenth] century might well have carried back a similar story.[94]

The two Anglo metropolises, the British Isles and the Atlantic United States, shared a structural triangularity. Each had an important junior partner, Scotland/New England, with a limited natural endowment but educated, enterprising, and migration-prone people. Each had a second 'junior partner', the South/Ireland, deeply split within itself into black/white and Catholic/Protestant, but a good source of the shock troops of settlement. Each had a wealthy and populous senior partner, England/Mid-Atlantic states, exploiting but also exploited by at least one of its junior partners, and tending to be left out of ethnic discussions because it was taken for granted. When we add this to the rift of 1783, which made the Anglo-world a hybrid of British and American, and also consider the role of German

Map 1. The Two-Pair 'Anglo-World'.

settlers, the Anglos begin to seem as remarkable for their hybridity as for their unity. There was no melting pot, but there was a thorough mixing of a few strong flavours, and this may have contributed to Anglo success in settlement during the long nineteenth century.

Hybrid or not, after 1783, the two Anglo metropolises emitted a vast stream of settlers into the American West and the British Dominions or settlement colonies. The latter can usefully be seen as a fragmented 'British West'. To visualize this two-pair Anglo-world, imagine a malleable map like those used to illustrate pre-historic continental drift. Place your thumbs above Florida, and your forefingers firmly in the Great Lakes. Prise the United States apart along the line of the Appalachians, splitting it into Atlantic East, roughly the original thirteen colonies, and the vast American West. The East, in our period, was an *emigrant* society as well as an *immigrant* society. It was one of the world's greatest sources of long-range migration and investment. It was the American 'old-land', a metropolis equivalent to Britain. Now gather up Australia, New Zealand, and, with some hesitation, South Africa, and place them in the Central Atlantic. With Canada, the Dominions make up a water-linked 'British West'. This West and Old Britain combined to comprise 'Greater Britain', the white, un-coerced part of the British Empire, the British flank of the Anglo-world. Here we have two metropolises or 'oldlands', the British Isles and the US East, and two Wests or constellations of 'newlands', land-joined in the American case and sea-joined in the British. It is to these Wests that we now turn.

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3
Exploding Wests

In 1951, in an impassioned plea for the inclusion of all Russia in Europe, George Cressy pointed out that 'the crest of the Urals supplies no more of a boundary than the Appalachians'. 'Would anyone', he asked rhetorically, 'divide the United States into two continents?'[1] My answer is yes, almost. Cressy was right about the similarity of the Ural and Appalachian Mountains. The former are 1,250 miles long with a highest peak of 6,214 feet; the latter 1,200 miles and 6,684 feet. Until the 1820s, the Appalachians did virtually split the United States into two continents, and crossing them with any kind of cargo was about as hard as crossing the Atlantic. The process of getting wagons over the mountains was described as 'a continuance of miracles'.[2] In 1827, getting freight from Philadelphia to Cincinnati over the mountains cost over three times as much as the vastly longer sea and river route via New Orleans.[3] Pioneering trans-Appalachian settlement began in the 1770s, led by the likes of Daniel Boone. But the new settlements were tiny and insecure. In 1777 the three main settlements of Kentucky contained 280 people between them, who 'lamented the misfortune and poor judgment that had marooned them in Kentucky' amidst a sea of forest and hostile Indians.[4] Their little forts were no more significant than the older French trading posts on the Mississippi, if that. From about 1780, trans-Appalachian migration became substantial. There were 8,000 European settlers in Kentucky by 1782, and 73,000 by 1790, with another 36,000 in Tennessee and 3,000 in Ohio.[5] Allowing one-third for high natural increase, this would represent an inflow of about 70,000 settlers. The numbers dwarfed those of earlier pioneering, but they were soon to be dwarfed in their turn.

The birth of the American West is a familiar story. What is perhaps less familiar is that it had a twin. A 'British West' was also born in the 1780s, and it too was, to some extent, a product of American independence. About

Map 2. The First Booming Wests, 1815–19.

50,000 of the American exiles who refused to accept republican rule after 1783 went to what is now Canada, where they were known as 'United Empire Loyalists'.[6] Most went first to Nova Scotia, where their camp of Shelburne boomed into an instant city of 8,000 in 1784. They subsequently dispersed more widely. The Loyalists were not the first Anglophone settlers of what is now Canada. English cod fishers had been wintering over in Newfoundland since 1610, but settlement was slow due to French depredations, the dominance of sojourning cod fishers, and the paucity of women. By 1775 there were about 12,000 settlers in Newfoundland.[7] On the mainland, Nova Scotia or Acadia had been conquered from the French in 1710, but there was little Anglophone settlement until the British government established a naval base at Halifax in 1749. From 1755, the British embarked on the brutal expulsion of the French Acadians, who were partly replaced by an inflow of about 7,000 settlers from New England.[8] Despite this, the settler population of Nova Scotia was less than 20,000 in 1780, so the Loyalist migration did triple it at a stroke, upsetting a *modus vivendi* between old settlers and indigenes in the process.[9]

The Loyalists were not quite the founding elite of old Canadian legend, selected from the rebellious Americans for education and probity as well as loyalty to Britain. The notion that they were 'a superior, cultured, and elevated group . . . bears little relation to the historical record'. Few were wealthy, and their demographic influence used to be exaggerated.[10] They were in fact soon swamped in their turn by other inflows. But they did attract substantial help from the British government, who transported them, provided land and initial supplies, and then paid out compensation, pensions, and half-pay for retired military officers. The total outlay by London 'must have amounted to not less . . . than £6,000,000, exclusive of the value of the lands assigned'.[11] The Loyalists wanted their own institutions and, between 1784 and 1791, the colonies of New Brunswick, Cape Breton Island, and Upper Canada (Ontario) were carved off for them from Nova Scotia and Lower Canada (Quebec Province). The Loyalists were less numerous than their kin who crossed the Appalachians in the 1780s, but not by much, and they travelled further and had better finance and government support. In these few years, 1784–91, the British increased the number of their residual colonies in mainland North America from three to six. Cape Breton Island rejoined Nova Scotia in 1820, which brought the number back down to five. In the far west of what is now Canada, the colonies of Vancouver

Island and British Columbia were added in 1849 and 1858, before uniting in 1866.

The schizoid British West had another branch, also born in the fertile 1780s. It was tiny in numbers, but big on organization, state funding, and distance. The initial settlement of Botany Bay (later Port Jackson, and later still Sydney) in 1788 involved only 1,000 people, all convicts and their warders, but it was a remarkable feat. 'The First Fleet, which arrived in 1788, brought enough food to feed a thousand people for about two years, and its collection, storage, transportation, and weekly distribution was a triumph of administrative skill.'[12] The British government founded settler Australia as an alternative destination to the United States for the convicted felons it was too humane to hang. Cheaper and equally isolated destinations were available, and there were also strategic motives: supporting the whaling industry in its move to the Pacific, accessing the timber and flax of New Zealand for naval supplies, and pre-empting other European powers.[13] The founding of settler Australasia at Botany Bay, 10,000 miles from Britain as the crow flew and up to 16,000 miles as the ship sailed, was surely the longest-range act of colonization in human history up to that time. Not even the remarkable Polynesian far-settlers had managed to transfer so many people so far so quickly. Little was known of Australia apart from the partial and seasonal observations of Cook and Banks in 1770. Add to this the sheer difference of Australian nature, with its duck-billed mammals and jumping ruminants, and it is no wonder that historians compare the settlement of Botany Bay to the founding of a colony on Mars in the twenty-first century.

After the 1780s, the settlement of the Anglo Wests continued with increasing momentum. Embryonic settler Australia grew from 1,000 to 12,000 people in 1790–1810. The American Western states rocketed from 100,000 to over 1 million; and Canada from under a quarter of a million to over half a million, with most of the growth among English-speakers rather than French. Spasmodic but explosive growth continued between 1810 and 1860, with the United States Old Northwest (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin) burgeoning twenty-eightfold, from just over a quarter of a million people in 1810 to 7 million in 1860, with an economy to match. The new states of the Old Southwest, a 'forgotten frontier', shared in at least the early phases of this extraordinary human and economic explosion.[14] This region is minimally defined as Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas, and is here taken to include the other new slave

states of Missouri, Louisiana, Florida and, from 1845, Texas. It rocketed thirtyfold from 150,000 people in 1810 to 4.65 million in 1860. Northwestern expansion extended into Iowa, Minnesota, and Kansas in the 1850s, whose combined populations shot from little more than 200,000 people to close on a million. Between 1791 and 1861, the original thirteen states added two further Eastern states to their number (Vermont and Maine), and grew remarkably from 3.8 million to 15.9 million people. Even more remarkably, they reproduced themselves in the form of eighteen new Western states with a population almost equal to the East, at 15.5 million.[15] Other groups had grown fast in the past, but they had not quadrupled locally in two generations *and* fully reproduced themselves at a distance.

Exceptionalist American explanations of this truly massive growth must founder on one fact: it was emulated in the British West at much the same time, at much the same rate, and in much the same way. Settler Australasia grew from 12,000 people in 1810 to 1.25 million in 1860, expanding over a hundredfold in fifty years. As in the American West and Canada, governments proliferated. Tasmania, then known as Van Diemen's Land, was founded in 1803 and became a separate colony in 1825. Queensland was founded in 1824 but not separated from New South Wales until 1859. Settler New Zealand was founded in 1840, and served time as part of New South Wales for only a year. Western Australia and South Australia were founded as separate colonies, in 1829 and 1836 respectively. Victoria was founded in 1835, as the Port Phillip District, and separated from New South Wales in 1850. All seven Australasian colonies, except Western Australia, received a large measure of self-government in the 1850s, and New Zealand was itself split into as many as ten provinces between 1853 and 1876, when its provinces were abolished. In the 1860s, then, Australasia had as almost as many little governments as the American West.[16]

In Canada, Ontario grew twenty-threefold from about 60,000 people in 1811 to 1.4 million in 1861. With the possible exception of New Brunswick in the 1830s, the other colonies of what is now Eastern and Central Canada grew more slowly. Even so, the British North American colonies together grew from about 250,000 people, mostly French, in 1790, to 3.25 million, mostly Anglo, in 1860. From 1820, the fragmented British West extended to a third continent—Africa. In 1806, the British had permanently taken over the Dutch settlement of the Cape of Good Hope, but significant British emigration to South Africa did not occur

before 1820. A second British South African colony, Natal, was founded in 1842. Anglo emigration to South Africa was much slower than to the rest of the British West, but birth rates were high and by 1865 the Cape and Natal had over 200,000 whites. In all, the settler population of the British West amounted to almost 5 million in 1860. This was only a third the size of the American West, but it matched in little more than half a century the whole settling achievement of British, Spanish, and Portuguese combined over the three centuries to 1800—not bad for a forgotten twin.

Mid-century witnessed fresh departures in America's colonization of its West. Victory over Mexico in the war of 1846–7 added vast nominal domains, though powerful Indian groups such as the Sioux and Apache remained independent until about 1880. California rocketed from 15,000 Europeans in 1848 to 380,000 in 1860. Golden California spent only two years in the chrysalis territorial phase and became a state in 1850. Texas was part of Mexico until 1836, then an independent republic, then an American state from 1845. It too grew explosively. The number of Texans went from about 30,000 in 1836 to 600,000 in 1860. The American Midwest and Far West spurted anew after the Civil War of 1861–5. Nebraska's population tripled in the 1870s, and more than doubled in the 1880s, to reach over 1 million by 1890. Kansas shared the growth of the 1870s; the Dakotas that of the 1880s. The American Pacific Northwest (Oregon, Idaho, and Washington) experienced its first boom in the 1880s. In the mountain states, Colorado quintupled in the 1870s and more than doubled in the 1880s. Its neighbours did not grow nearly as fast or as far. Southern California, whose history was very different from the north, underwent its first major boom in the 1880s, when a village called Los Angeles began to sprout. Ten new Western states were added to the union between 1864 and 1890. In the 1870s and 1880s, Australasia also experienced renewed explosive growth, centreing on Marvellous Melbourne which as we saw in the Introduction, grew to almost half a million people by 1890. Queensland and New Zealand were now prominent, their European settlers growing from about 30,000 and 60,000 respectively in 1860, to about 400,000 and 700,000 in 1890—around twelvefold in thirty years in each case. Settler Australasia as a whole grew from about 1.25 million to close on 4 million, 1860–90. The only booms in Canada, which had federated in 1867, in this period were on the east and west fringes of the Prairies. The new province of Manitoba was established in 1870, and grew to 153,000 by 1890. British Columbia joined the Canadian federation in 1871, and

doubled its population in the 1880s to almost 100,000 after decades of slow growth.

The Anglo Wests' final widespread rounds of explosive growth took place in the early twentieth century. Southern California and the Pacific Northwest boomed again, boosting—and boosted by—Los Angeles and Seattle. Oklahoma, Indian territory wrenched open for settlement in 1889, boomed in the 1890s and 1900s, and became a state in 1907. Even more spectacular was the rise of Britain's 'Last Best Wests'. In South Africa, from 1886, Anglo settlers and sojourners poured into the Witwatersrand goldfields, in the independent Boer republic of the Transvaal. Tensions led to the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902, which added the Transvaal and the Orange Free State to the British 'West'. By 1910, freshly united South Africa had 6 million people, almost a quarter of them white. Western Australia was founded in 1829, but grew very slowly for almost sixty years. It then exploded, growing almost sixfold, 1891–1911, from 49,000 to 282,000 people. The four provinces of Western Canada grew sevenfold, 1891–1911, from a quarter of a million people to 1.75 million. The prairie provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan, formally separated from the Northwest Territory in 1905, were barely settled at all as late as 1897. By 1911, a mere fifteen years later, they had grown to almost 900,000 people.

The net effect of all this was to produce two giant new entities, the American and British 'Wests' of 1920, containing 62 million and 24 million people respectively. Each 'West' was a constellation of polities, or 'new-lands'—American states and territories and British colonies and provinces, no less than fifty-one in all by 1912. The staggering demographic growth rate exceeds even that of the 'Third World' in the twentieth century, and in the Anglo Wests there was economic growth to match. Their white majorities were, on average, the richest peoples in the world. They dominated such things as world food exports and world gold production, and they hugely boosted the size and power of both the United States and Greater Britain.

Boom, Bust, and 'Export Rescue'

This great Anglo settler explosion was not a cohesive, continuous, or steady phenomenon. On the contrary, it was sporadic and frenetic, a

roller-coaster ride. Yet there was a pattern, and it consisted of a series of regional booms and busts, followed by an 'export rescue' in which shattered settler economies were saved by long-range exports to their oldlands. From about 1800, most Anglo newlands experienced one or more massive booms lasting five to fifteen years. We are therefore trying to explain both a general upward surge of Anglophone settler expansion *and* a series of spurts, or local booms. Sometimes, these booms took place in areas new to large-scale settlement; sometimes they followed long periods of more normal growth.

Many contemporaries, and historians after them, missed the sharp upward shift in the scale of newland growth after 1800 because they thought that eighteenth-century American growth was as good as it gets. In 1798 Thomas Malthus noted that the United States was doubling in population every twenty-five years, 'a rapidity of increase probably without parallel in history'.[17] Others, including Adam Smith and Benjamin Franklin, had been there before him, and scholars continue to wonder at eighteenth-century North American growth.[18] It is quite true that colonial North American populations (French as well as Anglo) grew much faster than those in Europe. But nineteenth-century Anglo newlands grew faster still. Instead of doubling their populations in a quarter-century, as in the eighteenth century, they doubled in a single decade. This required both high immigration and high natural increase. Of course, a single flotilla of migrant ships or a few wagon trains could double tiny populations, and we need a threshold to allow for this—a minimum of say 20,000 people. Our definition of a booming newland therefore involves a population growth rate of at least 7.2 per cent a year, or 100 per cent in ten years, from a base of at least 20,000. We will see that most Anglo newlands experienced these staggering decennial doublings at least once in the long nineteenth century.

In Anglo booms, populations and economies burgeoned, and the latter grew in complexity as well as size. Such 'development' was not necessarily an all-round virtue, but it did increase the dynamism of an economy. We will see in later chapters that banks, newspapers, and post offices sprouted like mushrooms, sometimes lasting little longer. Exports of farmed commodities such as cotton, or extractive commodities such as gold or timber sometimes supplemented booms, but were not essential. A thriving farm sector *was* essential, but it was aimed mainly at local markets, not exports or subsistence. The centrepiece of a booming newland economy

was a complex of activities involving growth and development: the massive importation of goods, money, and people; the attraction, supply, support, and housing of immigrants; the process of making farms and towns; and the rapid creation of infrastructure, notably transport infrastructure. Growth itself was the economy's main game. For the moment, we can focus on two simple proxies for this frenzied development: the rapid growth of boomtowns, and massive net inflows of goods and money, as well as the inflow of people necessary for mere growth.

Settler cities could explode more than once, and at first sight this was also true of their hinterlands. The population of Illinois at least doubled in each of the first three American boom decades—1810s, 1830s, and 1850s. But there is a statistical illusion here. Each boom was in a different part of the state. The process can be fully documented in the case of Ohio, where the first three booms hit different areas, with diminishing force overall: regions near the Ohio River before 1819; regions near Lake Erie before 1837; and various marginal regions, especially the Northwest, before 1857. The pattern can be traced in county-level breakdowns of population in the US census, available online.[19] Fresh farmland, or rather land freshly seized from indigenes, was the most explosive. Settler cities, on the other hand, could come to the party more than once—drawing on different hinterlands without regard to political boundaries. Montreal, New Orleans, and Melbourne, for example, all served as boom towns for regions outside their own state or colony.

Anglo booms were part bubble, and at some point the bubble always burst. The busts were called 'crashes' or 'panics' in their day; the American examples of 1819, 1837, 1857, 1873, and 1893 are well known. They caused numerous bankruptcies and other casualties, but did not necessarily lead to technical depressions, where economies shrank and real income per capita declined. What they did do was decimate growth rates. Busts were marked by the collapse of immigration and of imports of both money and goods. Exports were much less affected. Bust phases usually lasted from two to five years. During them, newlands searched desperately for economic alternatives to growth through growth. Most managed it by developing new export industries or greatly reinforcing old ones—'export rescue'. Now, instead of growth itself, the mass export of one or two staples to one or two oldlands became the main game of the newland economy. Growth renewed, but at much more modest levels than those of the boom. In this export rescue phase, oldlands and new became more tightly integrated.

I think it fair to say that the evidence for the prevalence of this rhythm of settlement—boom, bust, and export rescue—throughout the Anglo Wests in the long nineteenth century is over-whelming. The evidence comes in many forms, and is outlined case by case in Part II. The overall picture can be presented in various ways. One could speak of five or six great Anglo-worldwide rounds; or of a hundred or so booms and busts in individual newlands. A pragmatic compromise between these two extremes is to list the booms nationally and regionally—grouping American states, for example, into Old Northwest, Old Southwest, Midwest, and Far West and so on. The United States experienced seven rounds. Canada had six rounds, though four were modest in scale and geographic scope. Eastern Australia and New Zealand had three, two pivoting on the busts of 1842 and 1867, with the third bust varying regionally between 1880 and 1891. South Africa had three rounds, busting in 1865, 1882, and 1899. This schema is laid out in the table. This simple pattern of boom, bust, and export rescue will actually take us quite a long way in understanding the Anglo settler explosion.

Boom, Bust and Export Rescue in the Anglo Wests, 1815–1913

Dates	Region	Settler City	Export Rescue
		UNITED STATES	
Boom One 1815–19	Old Northwest, Old Southwest	Cincinnati, New Orleans	Cotton, cured pork
Boom Two 1825–37	Old Northwest, Old Southwest	Cincinnati, St Louis, New Orleans	Cotton, pork, grain, timber
Boom Three 1845–57	Old Northwest, Midwest, Texas, California	St Louis, Chicago, San Francisco	Grain, pork, gold
Boom Four 1865–73	Midwest	Chicago	Grain, pork, live cattle
Boom Five 1878–87/93	Midwest, Far West, West Texas	Chicago, Denver Minneapolis	Grain, refrigerated beef
Boom Six 1898–1907/13	Far Northwest, Southern California, Oklahoma	Seattle, Los Angeles	Grain, timber, fruit
Boom Seven, early 1920s	Southern California and various	Los Angeles	Fruit, grain
		CANADA	
Boom One 1815–19/21?	Eastern Townships, parts of Ontario	Montreal	Timber

Boom Two 1829–37/42	Ontario, New Brunswick	Toronto, Saint John	Timber
Boom Three, 1844–8	Ontario	Toronto, Hamilton	Wheat, timber
Boom Four 1851–7	Ontario	Toronto, Montreal	Wheat, cheese
Boom Five 1878/85–83/93	Manitoba, British Columbia	Winnipeg, Vancouver	Wheat
Boom Six 1898–1907/13	British Columbia, Prairie Provinces	Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton etc.	Wheat
	AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND		
Boom One 1828–42	Tasmania, New South Wales	Hobart, Sydney	Wool
Boom Two 1848–67	All except West Aus. and Tas.	Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide	Wool, gold, wheat
Boom Three 1872–79/91	Inland Victoria and NSW, Queensland, New Zealand	Brisbane, Dunedin	Wool, wheat, meat, dairy products
Boom Four 1887?–1913	Western Australia	Perth	Gold, wool, wheat
	SOUTH AFRICA		
Boom One 1855–65	Cape	Port Elizabeth	Wool
Boom Two 1872–82	Cape	Kimberley, East London	Diamonds
Boom Three 1886–99	Cape, Natal, Transvaal	Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg	Gold

Was this pattern peculiar to the Anglophones? As we will see in Chapters 17 and 18, the answer is no. Siberia and Argentina in particular grew in much the same strange way, and there were other cases too. But non-Anglo-settler newlands, taken as a whole, exploded less and later than their Anglo equivalents. The boom–bust pattern and the unprecedented speed of growth and development it engendered were not exclusively Anglophone, but they were Anglo-*prone*.

Timing Take-off

Time does matter in history, and before we can attempt to explain how and why this series of great settlement booms occurred, we have to know

when it began. A case can be made for dating the first full Anglo boom to the period 1790–1810, and placing it in the American states of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio, and the British colony of Upper Canada. All four made our population benchmark of decennial doubling in at least one of these two decades, and Tennessee did it in both. This was certainly extraordinary growth. But was it also extraordinary development? The question ties in with the American debates about a 'market revolution', or transition to capitalism. Was there a shift from a semi-subsistence 'moral economy' to a commercial 'market economy', and, if so, when? Or was the American frontier 'born capitalist'?[20] Chapter 2 argued that there was a precocious proto-industrial flowering in the oldland, Eastern United States, 1790–1815. But did the Western American newlands experience full booms at the same time?

Recent studies tend to reject the old view that the 'frontier farmer was well-nigh self-sufficient' in the embryonic American West of the 1790s and 1800s.[21] They may have over-corrected to a degree. Some farm produce, notably whisky, was shipped down the Mississippi to New Orleans, and livestock were occasionally driven back east across the Appalachians. But quantities were modest. Driving cattle from Ohio to New York took forty to sixty days, and only 1,500 head made the trip in 1815.[22] Ohio in 1810 might have had 230,000 people, but they had less than one acre of improved farmland each, which did not allow a lot for export.[23] Local exchange through stores was more important. Kentucky in 1800 already had 111 licensed retail stores and 280 taverns.[24] But this number was actually very low for 220,000 people with minimal transport. It amounted to one store for every 2,000 people. For comparison, Ontario in 1826 had about one store for every 200 people.[25] Cash was important to substantial trade, especially between strangers, and there was not a lot of it in early Kentucky. In the period 1796–1810, between 9 per cent and 14.7 per cent of transactions in four sample stores involved cash.[26] Lexington was proud of its market house, built in 1795, but an Eastern journalist claimed in 1810 that it sold little more than 'skinned squirrels cut up into quarters'. Indignant outcry produced a very partial retraction. 'On referring to my notes, taken at the time, I find the word ''halves'', not quarters.'[27] One might add that only half of deceased estates in two Kentucky counties in 1801–4 included knives and forks.[28] Perhaps the early death of the American subsistence farmer has been exaggerated.

Banks and boomtowns were not prominent in the American West before 1810. Kentucky had only one chartered corporation in 1801, compared to forty-six chartered banks established in 1818 alone.[29] Ohio did not establish its first bank until 1807.[30] Attempts to establish banks in Upper Canada failed before 1817.[31] The largest settlement in the American West in 1800 was Lexington, Kentucky, with fewer than 1800 people. It did grow to 4,300 by 1810, but stagnated at around that level for at least twenty years thereafter. Louisville, Kentucky, and Cincinnati, Ohio, each of which had later growth spurts, had only 1,300 and 2,300 people respectively in 1810.[32] Ohio did experience a spurt of town founding in 1803–7, when thirty-four prospective towns were laid out. But this was dwarfed by the 125 towns founded in 1815–19.[33] Experts may contest the conclusion but it seems to me that Upper Canada and the American West were dominated by growth, not development, in the 1790s and 1800s. These were 'semi-booms', not full booms in our terms.

In fact, many experts endorse the broad notion of some sort of 1815 take-off in Western settlement, though other timings range from the 1770s to the 1840s. 'Ohio experienced its first population boom after 1815.'[34] 'The population take-off . . . did not occur . . . until 1815–1818.'[35] A study of the early settlement of Mississippi and Alabama notes 'two fairly distinct waves'. 'In the period 1798–1812 the flow of immigrants was steady but, in comparison with the period 1815–1819, unspectacular.' About 30,000 people were added to the population between 1798 and 1810, 177,000 between 1810 and 1820. Alabama's population increased tenfold in the 1810s, 'most of that growth coming after 1815'.[36] Speaking of the whole old West, one leading specialist concludes that the 'great migration' from 1815 'far exceeded anything experienced on the early Trans-Appalachian frontier. It conveyed a sense of motion, of movement, a kinetic energy that separated it from the earlier frontier experience . . . Westward expansion had entered its modern period . . . The benchmark was the year 1815.'[37] The 1810s wave of Western settlers, writes another, was 'unlike any others that had come across the Appalachians'.[38] Yet another speaks of 'historic take-off in 1815'.[39]

The first full Anglo boom, then, occurred in the American Old West in the period 1815–19. Some 403,000 migrants poured into the Old Northwest between 1811 and 1820, compared with 195,000 in the previous ten years.[40] Coupled with strong natural increase, this tripled the population to almost 800,000 people, mostly in Ohio. Now there was development to match growth. Transport improvements were markedly more dramatic than in

the 1790s or 1800s. In the United States as a whole, 5,000 miles of turnpikes were constructed at a cost of $14 million between 1810 and 1820, most in the second half of the period.[41] Much of the new road building took place in New York and Pennsylvania, but some linked up to the springboards of Western settlement, notably Buffalo on the Great Lakes and Pittsburgh and Wheeling on the Ohio River. This was an important shift—from *internal* improvements, improving transport within oldlands; to *external* improvements, improving transport between oldlands and new. Some road building did take place in the Old Northwest. Ohio had fourteen turnpike companies by 1819, compared to two in 1810.[42] Public spending was limited compared to later booms, but the Federal government did spend $1.56 million on the National Road from Baltimore to Wheeling.[43] Its spending on ships and forts, the latter mostly in the West, surged from $700,000 to $14 million between 1816 and 1818.[44] Now money as well as migrants flooded in. Overseas capital, totalling $126 million net, 1815–19, poured in primarily from Britain, the old metropolis.[45] There was a massive net inflow of goods as well as capital—the US imported goods worth about $180 million more than those it exported in these five years.[46] Capital was also mobilized in the new metropolis, the Northeast, through a great flowering of banks. Overall, US chartered banks and their assets rose from 103 and $108 million in 1810 to 342 and $349 million in 1819.[47] Loans and notes in circulation each quadrupled. Again, most of this activity was in the East, but now the newlands had their share. The number of chartered banks in Ohio increased from eight in 1815 to twenty-five in 1819, and 'countless others' unchartered.[48] The South tended to be more cautious with banks, but five had emerged in Louisiana by 1818.[49]

As for urban development, Cincinnati, founded in 1788, had grown slowly to 2,300 people by 1810. After these 'long years of economic stagnation', however, it suddenly quadrupled to 9,600 in 1820—a real city in contemporary terms. Two other river ports serving the Old Northwest though not technically located in it, St Louis, Missouri, and Louisville, Kentucky, each tripled to about 4,500 in the 1810s.[50] Intriguingly enough, the biggest early 'Western' boomtown appears to have been river-linked New Orleans, acquired by the United States in 1803 along with the rest of Greater Louisiana. New Orleans' population grew from 17,000 to 27,000 between 1810 and 1820. Even this was an increase of 57 per cent, and that figure is deceptive. The high starting point resulted from a sudden doubling of the population by an influx of French refugees and their slaves from

the Caribbean in 1809, many of whom subsequently left.[51] Without this injection, New Orleans would have tripled by 1820, and up to 6,000 people died of yellow fever in 1817–18 on top of this. One specialist historian has no doubt of 'the feverish pace of economic growth in New Orleans after 1815'.[52] Some contemporaries realized that they were witnessing something new in the American West in 1815–19. 'Old America seems to be breaking up, and moving westward.'[53] Migrants now 'poured in a flood, the power and strength of which could only be conceived by persons on the spot'.[54] The West 'sprung up as if by the power of magic, and spread with a rapidity . . . that has no parallel in any part of the earth'.[55]

In fact there was one parallel and it was just across the northern border. Several Canadian historians refer to post-war depression in Canada after 1815,[56] and this was no doubt true of some regions, such as Nova Scotia, that had benefited from British war expenditure, privateering, and substituting for American ships in the British Caribbean trade. But something very like a boom does seem to have occurred in Montreal and nearby regions. Contemporary estimates imply a tripling of Montreal's people between 1816 and 1819, to 25,000.[57] This seems almost unbelievable, but a recent article does suggest that the town experienced staggering growth in this period—an annual rate of between 7.5 and 13.5 per cent between 1815 and 1819.[58] Even the lower figure is equivalent to decennial doubling, and the upper figure cannot be dismissed. The inflow of people must have been Anglophone, because the French urban population stayed static in this period.[59] A Boston newspaper noted in 1819 that Montreal, unlike Quebec City, was 'increasing hourly in population, wealth and enterprise'.[60] Montreal, it seems, was growing explosively in 1815–19—like Cincinnati and New Orleans in the United States. It did so, not as the base for Quebec Province as a whole, but for the adjacent part of Ontario and possibly the Anglo-dominated Eastern townships of Quebec Province. Population statistics for Upper Canada/Ontario are particularly varied, but some suggest growth from 60,000 in 1811 to 118,000 in 1821. This very nearly makes the cut on its own, and the growth was concentrated in the second half of the period and in the region near Montreal. The population of Ontario grew 9.2 per cent a year, 1817–21, well above the 7.2 per cent needed for decennial doubling.[61] Near Montreal, the population of the Perth and Lanark districts of Ontario grew from 2,000 to 10,000 between 1817 and 1822.[62] The Eastern townships experienced considerable growth from 1814 to 1825, growing from 20,000 to 38,000 people, in this case

largely in the first half of the period. 'Most settlers were of British origin', though they included many Americans.[63]

There was a surge in imports into Quebec City, the seaport for the Montreal region, in 1814–19, and a small flurry of bank and newspaper founding and transport improvements at the same time. Three banks were founded in Montreal in 1817–18. Until then, London-backed notes issued by the British army served as currency.[64] A new road was built from Montreal to York (later Toronto), 1815–17, and there was a clear surge in petitions for land grants 1816–18.[65] Some canal building began in 1817. We do not know how much money it cost, but we do know it cost the life of the governor-in-chief, the Duke of Richmond, who died after being bitten by a pet fox while inspecting the works.[66] There was a surge of 70,000 British immigrants to Canada, 1816–20—'the number is almost incredible'.[67] This does not include the substantial number of British soldiers who took their discharges in Canada after the war—up to three-quarters of the men in some regiments according to one account.[68] Some Britons went on to the United States, but the reverse was also the case. A settler from Kingston, Upper Canada, wrote in 1819: 'This place has grown in importance very much lately; the Yankees come in hundreds . . . It is astonishing what swarms of these people come over daily.'[69] Another source claimed in October 1816 that 1,500 new houses had been built in Kingston in less than two years, and that the population was closing on 10,000. 'Lieutenant O'Riley described the progress of the colony as of the most extraordinary nature.'[70]

It seems that, like the American Old West, parts of British North America experienced a new kind of settlement boom, roughly 1815–20. The great series of Anglo booms that commenced in 1815 was British as well as American, and it continued for a century in both British and American Wests. This leaves us with a double causal problem. How do we explain the beginning of the series, and how do we compatibly explain the beginning of each boom? It is time to look at what existing scholarship has to tell us on these issues.

Cycles and Steam, Staples and Reason

Historians of settler societies often note a boom or a bust, but do not define them consistently, recognize their pervasiveness, nor accord them much

significance. They tend to speak in terms of a continuous steady process of growth or settlement—'*the* westward movement', '*the* settlement of Australia'. On the other hand, cycles of boom and bust, and the importance of staple exports are anything but news to economic historians. In the 1950s and 1960s, the great American economist Simon Kuznets suggested that boom–bust cycles of around twenty years each characterized United States economic history from the 1840s to the 1920s, and that they included a recession period of four to seven years. This is similar to the pattern posited above. Kuznets was not in fact the first to notice it—he had at least five American precursors.[71] But Kuznets did attempt to understand these cycles, or 'long swings' as he preferred to call them. He argued that they echoed well-attested three- to four-year business cycles, but on a larger scale. Supply and demand chased each other's tails, but it was the supply of, and demand for, large-scale capital infrastructure such as railways, not of consumer goods as with short business cycles. Booms occurred as the supply of these expensive investments strove to catch up with demand. Busts occurred when supply over-shot demand—something which happened easily when construction projects could take five years or more.[72] This book converges to some extent with Kuznets and his disciples—on the existence, importance, and timing of boom and bust phases and on the endpoint of the whole series, in the 1920s. Yet there are problems with Kuznets cycles.

For one thing, as Brinley Thomas pointed out in 1961, such cycles were not restricted to the United States.[73] Indeed, Australians had noted their own cycles long before Kuznets, or his American precursors. In 1847, a denizen of bust-phase Melbourne noted that his city's progress was like 'that of a kangaroo, a long jump and then a long rest after it'.[74] Another Australian wrote that 'like the boa-constrictor, we are in the habit of bolting our immigrants and then resting until we have digested them'.[75] More important than the genealogy of cycle theory is the fact that 'cycle' is not quite the right term, because it implies a return to the starting point. Anglo booms and busts in fact involved three steps forward and only two steps back. The general trend was upward, and the coils or 'rounds' of a spiral may be better metaphors than cycles, kangaroo jumps, or even a boa's digestion. Moreover, Kuznets did not explore 'export rescue', and was very cautious about positing causes, in the process showing why his Nobel Prize was for economics and not literature: 'No claim is made that these alternations are periodic, or that we know the mechanism that

produces them . . . their designation as long swings is a semantic facility that should not mislead us into ascribing to these movements an unwarranted connotation of regular periodicity.'[76] Yet, by placing the beginning of the cycles in the 1840s America, Kuznets did imply a cause that other scholars such as W. W. Rostow might endorse—a 'take-off' sparked by the mass advent of steam transport in the form of rail. One could adjust this thesis to accommodate take-off in 1815 by shifting emphasis from rail to steamboats, whose mass advent in the United States did occur around 1815—a steam-based explanation for the Anglo explosion in general, and perhaps also for individual booms.

Stressing the importance of staples exports also has plenty of precedents, notably in the work of the great Canadian economist Harold Innis.[77] Innis has had much influence on the economic history of the British Dominions, while US staples theory has a somewhat different intellectual lineage.[78] The essence of the staples thesis is that economic development in successful settler societies was driven by the export of a small number of staple commodities to the metropolis. Exports vary in their 'linkage effects', their propensity to generate spin-offs in the economy at large, such as industrialization and urbanization. If linkages were poor, as in the fur trade and the cod trade, there was little such development in the settler society. If they were good, as in the wheat trade, there was a lot—so much that the relevant economy eventually diversified and industrialized and ceased to be dependent on one or two staple exports. The staples thesis could be taken to imply that the Anglo explosion was driven by the nineteenth-century upsurge in metropolitan demand for the relevant commodities, and that booms were the intensive setting-up phase of staples export industries in particular newlands. Booms were therefore caused by staples exports. 'The assumptions that staple exports were the leading sector of the economy and that they set the pace for economic growth lay at the heart of Innis' staples hypothesis.'[79] Staples exports 'often supply the initial impetus for the settlement of new lands'.[80]

Behind both cycles and staples explanations lies a fundamental assumption of economic history: that, given adequate information, modern humans will rationally pursue profit. This 'rational actor model' or 'rational choice theory' is hard-wired into most economic history, and is not to be lightly dismissed. It prevents the 'enormous condescension of posterity' towards people in the past, allows them agency, and makes possible econometric analysis of the past as though it was the present. There is,

perhaps, a tendency to apply rational choice theory to modern Europeans in particular, partly because these cultures are normative for most of the scholars concerned. Recently, some economic historians have questioned rational-actor approaches, but their critique tends to be limited, centreing on imperfect information and the unintended consequences of rational acts. They urge that scholars give up 'the unrealistic but tractable assumption of perfect information and began to re-conceptualize the world as a place where information is scarce, imperfect, and costly'.[81] 'The rational actions of individuals had unintended consequences.'[82] Both points are reasonable as far as they go, but do not go far enough. The following chapters will argue that rational-choice theory needs to be joined by the social and cultural history of economics. The Anglos are the people who gave us the Great Awakenings, evangelism, and revivalism, as well as industrial capitalism and explosive settlement. 'You must pray until your nose bleeds, or it will not avail.'[83] To suggest that they too were sometimes capable of, say, collective fervour, is not to belittle them, but to enrich their history by reintroducing it to their culture.

Whatever its connection with rational-choice theory, staples theory does provide us with a plausible explanation for the outbreak of the Anglo explosion, if not its stuttering, spasmodic, quality. Around 1815, demand for staples products surged in urbanizing and industrializing Britain and the American Northeast. Settlers and money poured into new lands to seize the opportunities for profit involved in meeting this demand. Kuznets cycles, once adjusted to the advent of steamships in 1815 rather than rail in the 1840s, provide an even more plausible explanation because they account for busts as well as booms. Industrialization, especially in the form of steam ships, joined settlement from 1815 and rendered it explosive. Busts occurred because supply repeatedly over-shot demand due to imperfect information. However, Part II will show that the case for staples exports as boom starters is surprisingly weak. The case for steamships is best dealt with now.

At least on the face of things, steam transport seems a very promising candidate for chief boom starter. The first full Anglo booms took place in water-linked constellations of newlands. The indented coastlines of the Tasman Sea, supplemented by a few navigable rivers, were the main highways of 1830s Australasia. The St Lawrence, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi River system performed a similar function for Upper Canada and the American Old West. Steamboats did appear on these waterways during the first booms, and their potential effect was considerable.

Before steam, navigable rivers were largely one-way highways; upriver navigation against the current was very difficult. Steamers made rivers two-way, permitting easy ingress as well as egress, and opening up vast tracts of land around navigable waterways that had hitherto been inaccessible, at least to high-volume inflows. Inland expansion became much easier. But this attractive technological explanation for booms does not stack up.

The timing of the substantial advent of steamers is almost right, but not quite. Three steamboats were operating out of New Orleans by 1815, but the first steamer did not reach St Louis until August 1817, when that town and the Old West as a whole were already booming.[84] It was not until that year that steamers were able to bypass the falls on Ohio River through the completion of a short canal.[85] Even south of St Louis, the number of steamers was tiny until 1818. 'Prior to 1817 no steamboat had conclusively demonstrated the practicability of upstream navigation.'[86] Only ten steamers were built between 1815 and 1817, compared to sixty-nine in the next three years.[87] Early vessels had weak engines, and were prone to grounding and accident. Alabama saw its first steamer in 1818, when that state too was already booming, but its engine was too weak to go far upriver against the current.[88] Steamboats had certainly become the key to the Mississippi transport system by the mid-1820s, and arguably by 1818, but they had not done so by 1815, when the boom began. The story in Canada and Australia is similar. Steamers appeared on the St Lawrence as early as 1809, but they were novelties for several years and did not make it to Lake Ontario until 1817, and then only as a promise of things to come. 'Although steamboats had plied Lake Ontario since 1817, it was not until the mid-1820s that the lake was reliably serviced by some five to six boats.' Even on the upper St Lawrence, 'not until the early 1830s were steamboats with sufficient power to overcome the rapids, put into service'.[89] Again, steamers arrived in Australia during its first boom, in 1831, but not at the beginning of it in 1828, and in numbers too small (six by 1839) to have much effect anyway.[90] Steam transport was a factor in triggering later booms, and was also crucially important in some export rescues, but it is not the explanation for the beginning of the series or for booms in general.

It is easier to puncture other people's hypotheses than to develop one's own, and this chapter has left us with more questions than answers. If not steam or even staples, then what? We need to explain why settlement

took off in 1815, before industrialization in general and steam transport in particular could provide much help. Just to make matters more difficult, we have to ensure that our explanation works for both British and American Wests, and possibly other 'wests' as well, in both the age of sail and the age of rail. Still worse, we have compatibly to explain not only the general take-off of 1815, but also the ongoing rounds of boom, bust, and export rescue. The next three chapters address these issues.

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4

The Non-Industrial Revolution and the Rise of Mass Transfer

Sugar, spice and all things nice moved along Europe's new global networks from the fifteenth century, transforming the lifestyles of elites at least. Value is usually used to measure trade, which makes intercontinental transfers of, say, Peruvian silver in the seventeenth century look impressive. But volume is actually a better indicator of the capacity of networks for mass transfer. One shipload of silver might be worth a hundred shiploads of timber. But the timber ships can bring back a hundred times the cargo—or immigrants—of the silver ship. Tons, not dollars, measure the size of linkages and the *mass* of transfers. To the end of the eighteenth century, the volume of intercontinental transfers remained modest. Portugal's great trading empire in Asia and Africa brought it 3–4,000 tons of goods a year in the sixteenth century.[1] Even in the eighteenth century, 'a year's worth of imports from Asia . . . would scarcely fill up one modern container ship'.[2] The total tonnage of Spanish ships in the Atlantic trade in 1745 was 10,000, and had never exceeded 20,000. Imports of Chinese porcelain were important enough to make 'china' the generic name of such tableware in Britain. But the East India Company, the only legal importer, is said to have brought in only 24,000 tons between 1684 and 1791—an average of only 220 tons a year. Britain's tea imports in 1750 amounted to just over 3,000 tons.[3] Migrants also moved along the trade trails at modest rates of a few thousand a year.

Flows across the North Atlantic were an order of magnitude heavier, especially after 1750, but still not vast. Rice from South Carolina and Georgia was one of the bulkier eighteenth-century exports, and it peaked

at 34,000 tons a year around 1770. Tobacco exports to Britain from Virginia and elsewhere reached 45,000 tons in 1775. British shipping in the North American and West Indian trades totalled 150,000 tons at this time.[4] Sugar was the big export from the Americas, and here the French had an edge over the British, due to their possession of the sugar-mine of Saint Domingue, the world's richest colony. Between 1698 and 1791, the British are estimated to have shipped home 4.75 million tons of sugar and the French 5.25 million tons—an average of less than 50,000 tons a year each.[5] The worldwide long-range shipment of goods may have amounted to a million tons annually in 1800. By 1840, it had reached 20 million tons, and 80 million by 1870.[6] The rate of growth in international trade by value has been calculated at little more than 1 per cent a year in each of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century, it rocketed to 3.85 per cent a year, and the shift would be even more dramatic if volume were measured instead.[7] Intriguingly enough, the growth rate in the twentieth century was lower. Before 1800 and after 1900, other peoples participated just as actively in the rise of mass transfer as the Anglophones. This chapter will show that the nineteenth century spasm of 'globalization' was not only faster-growing but also more Anglo-prone. The take-off in mass transfer appears to have begun around 1815, as Europe's world at least began to recover from 126 years of endemic general warfare.

Mass Transfer: Hardware

Between 1807 and 1815, a steam-driven revolution in transport began on both flanks of the Anglo-world. Commercially viable steam engines, small enough for ships, were developed from 1807. They first appeared in significant numbers from 1815, providing short-range ferry services across the Irish Sea, the English Channel, and on the coastal and river waters adjacent to New York City. As we have seen, steamboats appeared regularly on the Mississippi River system from 1817, and became important in the settlement of the American West thereafter. They appeared on the St Lawrence River system in Canada about the same time, and in Australia from the 1830s. Mid-range ocean steamers began regularly crossing the Atlantic in 1841, and dominated both passenger and freight transport on this run by the 1860s. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the development

of more efficient engines, which reduced coal consumption, and the emergence of networks of coaling stations combined to take steam ships to long-range routes by the 1880s. About the same time, cheap steel allowed hull sizes to grow. Steamships burgeoned, from tens of tons at the beginning of the century to tens of thousands at the end, and freight rates plummeted. The steamships of the great Canadian-British Cunard Line were 3,000 tons each in the 1860s, 12,000 tons by the 1890s, and reached 45,000 tons by 1914.[8] The growing number and size of ships meant cheaper passenger fares and freight rates. Economic historians debate the timing, extent, and reasons for a dramatic fall in sea transport costs, but agree that it existed.[9]

The mass advent of steam transport on land, in the form of railways, dates to the 1830s in Britain and the 1840s in the Northeastern United States. Trunk rail connected the American Old Northwest to the Northeast from about 1850. The mass advent of trunk rail in Central Canada came later in the 1850s. It hit eastern Australia from 1865 and New Zealand and South Africa in the 1870s. Transcontinental lines spanned the United States from 1869 and Canada from 1885. Rail cars did not burgeon in size like steamships in the late nineteenth century, but scale did increase. In 1870, there were about twenty 10-ton rail wagons to an American long-range train. By 1900 'trains of 40 or 50 cars, each carrying four and even five times as much, were becoming common'.[10] Moreover, there was an increasing consolidation of scattered rail routes into rail systems. Things, thoughts, and people could now flow over continents as easily as oceans. This was especially true in the Anglo-world. In 1875, the top five nations in terms of rail miles per capita were the United States (with 1,922 miles of rail per million people), New Zealand (1,350), Canada (1,159) Australia (998) and Britain (527). European Russia had 185 miles of rail per million people, Brazil 72, and India 34.[11] The Anglo-world retained its lead in miles of rail track per capita into the twentieth century.[12]

The steam transport revolution was immensely important to the nineteenth century rise of mass transfer, and it is a well-known story. Forty-thousand-ton steamships and giant locomotives, breathing fire, were dramatically new, and came to be icons of Progress in general and of the explosive growth of the Anglo-Wests in particular. The history of nineteenth-century technology focuses on steam-powered machines. But steam was only part of the technological story. A whole suite of older technologies also flowered in the nineteenth century. Lewis Mumford's

well-worn threefold classification of technologies is a useful starting point here: eighteenth century 'eo-technic' (water, wind, wood, and work animals); nineteenth century 'paleo-technic' (steam, coal, iron, and rail); and twentieth century 'neo-technic' (petroleum, steel, electricity, and automobiles).[13] Mumford and others assume that each stage displaced its predecessor, and it is true that neo-technic largely displaced paleo-technic in the twentieth century. But paleo-technic did not *displace* eo-technic in the nineteenth. The first flowering of the new technology and the last flowering of the old actually occurred together. In the settler newlands in particular, where the great non-industrial raw materials and energy sources—wind, water, wood, and work animals—were especially abundant, the Industrial Revolution was accompanied by a *Non*-Industrial Revolution, and it was actually the latter that gave birth to mass transfer.

The birth of trans-Atlantic mass transfer predates the mass advent of steam transport and had nothing to do with it. In 1808 Napoleon's 'Continental Blockade' and his alliances with Baltic powers virtually closed the Baltic Sea to British trade. This was Britain's main source of timber, crucial for its fleets in particular. Britain turned to its remaining North American colonies for alternative supplies. Between 1805 and 1812, New Brunswick's timber exports shot up from 5,000 to 100,000 tons. The new trade not only survived the peace in 1815, but also profited from it. By 1819, the flow of timber to Britain weighed 240,000 tons, and 417,000 tons by 1825—more than the total flow of *all* goods from all of North America a half-century before.[14] In 1803–7, only 6 per cent of British timber imports came from British North America. In 1819–23, the proportion was 74 per cent.[15] This was mega-shift indeed. Hitherto, non-European sources had *complemented* European sources, by supplying things that could not be produced in Europe, or *supplemented* them, in relatively small quantities. The New Brunswick timber trade *substituted* for a European source—lock, stock, and wooden barrel. When Baltic timber came back on stream thereafter, Canadian timber *multiplied* Britain's supply. The place in which this revolutionary change began was New Brunswick, and the time was the twenty years around 1815. Ship tonnage in the British North American timber trade as a whole increased from 21,000 tons in 1802 to 91,000 tons in 1806, 110,000 tons in 1815, and 340,000 tons in 1819.[16] This meant that in the five years 1815–19, the number of potential passenger berths and cargo space to North America suddenly tripled. For British and

Irish, unforced trans-Atlantic migration, hitherto a dream or a nightmare, suddenly became a possibility.

The peace of 1815 itself gave another huge boost to mass transfer. Britain had been at war for about half the years between 1689 and 1815. It had done well in public warfare, fleet actions, and the like, but less well in private warfare. During the War of American Independence, Britain lost 3,386 merchant ships, and during the War of 1812, it lost another 2,000. During the first years of the French Revolutionary War, between 1793 and 1800, the French took 2,861 British merchant ships. American shipping suffered too. The French took 316 American ships in their 'quasi-war' with United States in 1796–7, and the British and French seized another 1,700 American ships between them, 1803–11, for alleged breaches of neutrality. Merchant ships had to carry heavy guns, numerous crews to work them, and costly insurance. From 1815, these costs suddenly dropped dramatically as did the cost of ship-building.[17] This 'peace bonus' began in 1815 and endured to 1914. Except during the Civil War of 1861–5, it applied to American shipping as well as British.

The ancient technology of wind-powered ships also improved greatly from about 1815. Prior to that year, ships sailed at unpredictable times. Governments might run regular 'packet' services for dispatches, but the private sector did not. Regular commercial packet services began in 1816, between New York and London, and packet ships continued to grow in size and numbers.[18] New building techniques involving softer and greener timber, available in abundance in North America, made for cheaper, larger sailing ships, although it also shortened their lives. 'The common cargo carriers of the 1850s were about three times the size of those built in the 1820s.'[19] Old Britain shared in the benefits by having many of its ships built in New Brunswick. Compilations of statistics on prevailing winds and currents shortened sailing times.[20] Big, fast sailing clippers were developed by the Americans in the 1840s, but also used by the British. Before clippers, voyages from Britain to Australia and New Zealand took up to 200 days in ships of 3–400 tons carrying half that number of passengers. In 1852, a 1,625-ton clipper carrying 960 emigrants made the trip between Britain and Melbourne in 68 days.[21] Old technologies merged with new to improve sailing. Steam tugs pulled sailing ships out of harbours and rivers in which contrary winds might previously have locked them for weeks. Cheaper mass-produced metal allowed more use of iron to reinforce wooden hulls in the 1840s, which allowed them to be bigger.

Iron hulls were in common use in sailing ships from the 1860s, as was steel from the 1890s. Wind was free power, and it competed with steam on the world's sea-lanes for a surprisingly long time, dominating middle-range voyages until the 1860s and long-range voyages until the 1880s. A 5,000-ton seven-masted steel-hulled sailing ship, the *Thomas W Lawson*, was built in 1902.[22]

The Anglophones had more than their fair share of the new oceanic arteries of mass transfer, just as they did rail. The British merchant fleet was the largest in the world throughout the long nineteenth century and, until the Civil War, the Americans came second. The British ocean-going merchant fleet grew from 2.3 million tons in 1814 to 5.7 million in 1860.[23] The registered ocean tonnage of the United States tripled to 2.4 million tons in the same period.[24] Together, the two fleets comprised about half the world's merchant shipping. The United States then turned away from the oceans for half a century, disadvantaged by the shift from wood to iron and by the Civil War, and with their interests shifting inland in any case. But the British compensated by dominating steam shipping even more than they had dominated sail. The British merchant fleet reached 10 million tons in 1890 and almost 20 million by 1914. This amounted to 40 or 50 per cent of the world's total shipping and an even larger share of its ocean-going steam shipping—one estimate of the British share of this goes as high as 71 per cent in 1900.[25] Germany became competitive thereafter, but even in 1914 its merchant fleet was only a quarter the size of the British. If you hailed a ship in mid-ocean in the nineteenth century, the chances were it would answer in English.

Transport arteries burgeoned inland as well as on the oceans, using both old and new technologies. River steamboats and canals, from the 1820s, and trunk railroads, from the 1850s, permitted long-range mass transfer within continents. These forms of inland transport also magnified the supply areas for oceanic mass transfer. Until the 1820s, high-volume, heavy, low-value goods such as wood and wheat could not be profitably transported over land more than about 20 miles. Even middle-volume goods, such as wool and cotton, needed to be no more than 50 miles or so from the water. Replacing a mere trail with even a modest road allowed the replacement of oxen with more efficient horses, and extended these distances. Replacing modest roads with good roads halved the travelling time of coaches and doubled the loads of wagons.[26] As we saw in the last chapter, 'Turnpike mania', the rapid building of good quality toll-roads,

swept the United States in the early nineteenth century. The British West also spent heavily on roads and bridges. Good roads reduced the wagon freight cost, Sydney to Bathurst, from thirty pence a ton-mile in 1829 to eight pence in the 1840s.[27] The brand-new colony of Victoria, rich in gold, spent £4.8 million on roads between 1851 and 1861—over $20 million.[28] One Victorian road was used by 'The Leviathan', a giant coach drawn by twenty-two grey horses, said to be able to carry over eighty passengers.[29]

Water carriage remained best, however. New York's famous Erie Canal was built between 1817 and 1825, and linked the Atlantic to the Great Lakes in 1825. Various Canadian canals did the same a little later, via the St Lawrence River. Massive canal-building continued in the United States Old North West and in Upper Canada through the 1830s and 1840s. American canal building 'moved at a snail's pace before 1816, when all the canals in operation totalled about 100 miles'.[30] But spending totalled $125 million between 1817, when the digging of the Erie Canal began, and 1840, and produced 3,326 miles of canal—a thirty-threefold increase over 1816.[31] Canal spending in Upper Canada, heavily subsidized by the British government for strategic reasons, totalled at least £3 million (about $14 million) between 1824 and 1849—similar to US levels in proportion to population.[32] The giant Mississippi River system became two-way in the 1820s, with the mass advent of reliable steamboats. These boats improved in size, speed, and efficiency over time, and there were parallel eo-technic developments. During the 1830s and 1840s, flatboats increased in capacity from 30 to 300 tons.[33] Sailing ships of increasing size—1,600 of them averaging 600 tons in the 1870s—dominated freight on the Great Lakes until 1884.[34] These developments surrounded Eastern North America with a great circle of water transport. It was this, at least as much as the good old covered wagon, which opened up the American West. In south-eastern Australia and New Zealand, with their islands and indented coastlines, the sea served as internal transport as well as long-range link. The default highway was the beach. Ships dominated passenger transport between Sydney and Melbourne until 1883, between Auckland and Wellington until 1908, and between Melbourne and Perth until 1917.

The forgotten role of the 'non-industrial revolution' extended still further. Lumber was moved along the Mississippi by gargantuan river rafts of up to 12 acres in extent. In northern New Zealand huge timber dams

used the pent force of water to wash along ten thousand logs.[35] In the nineteenth-century settler newlands, work animals flourished as nowhere else and never before. Oxen were often favoured early, because they required less in the way of roads and fodder. Once roads were built, the more powerful horse tended to displace the ox as the main draft animal. New South Wales in 1851 had about one horse to every 1.5 people, eight times the mid-century British rate of about one horse to twelve people.[36] Horses powered much of the Anglo explosion, and their quality as well as their quantity improved over time—like machine technology. Selective breeding meant that American draft horses were 50 per cent bigger in 1890 than in 1860. The trotting speed record dropped from about three minutes a mile in 1806 to two minutes a mile in 1903, with most of the improvement taking place between 1840 and 1880.[37] Horses did not simply drag wagons and carry riders. They also powered mills, cranes, and other construction equipment, and even paddle-wheeled ferries. It has recently been calculated that, in the United States in 1850, horses still provided over half of all work energy, with humans contributing 13 per cent and inanimate sources of power (wind, water, and steam) the rest.[38] It is well known that, against some contemporary expectations, rail increased the demand for horse transport. More passengers and more freight needed more feeder transport to get to and from the trains. Settler newlands in the nineteenth century featured two full suites of technology, eo-technic and paleo-technic, side by side, and this doubled the action. Log rafts of 12 acres, seven-masted sailing ships, giant wagons with ten-ton loads hauled by twenty span, should be as much symbols of explosive settlement as are steamships and locomotives.

This rosy picture of nineteenth-century Anglo-prone 'Progress' in transport, industrial and non-industrial, is broadly true, but there are important qualifications. The long-range transfer of people became easier, but never easy. Even migration by rail in the 1870s was slow and unpleasant, taking nine days to get you from Illinois to California. 'Light was dim, the heat often sweltering, and the stench sickening, even for onlookers in stations along the way.'[39] An earlier overland migration, by Mormons to Utah in 1856, lost 225 of a thousand people to cold and starvation. Average deaths on the Western wagon trains were far lower, and more were due to disease than hostile Indians, but they amounted to at least 10,000 between 1845 and 1860 even so.[40] Migration by sea was more dangerous. Between 1832 and 1838, 252 ships were wrecked on the Britain to North America

routes.[41] Disease was a greater risk than drowning. The average death rate from disease of emigrants crossing the Atlantic in 1847 was 16 per cent—about one in six, a migrant roulette.[42] Ships were hothouses of disease, which affected children in particular. One in four children died on a voyage from Britain to Victoria in 1852.[43] Especially before the mass advent of long-range steamships in the 1880s, migration remained a risky deed.

Improvements in transport were not steady or even. They varied regionally, came in waves, and each wave tended to be two-phased. The first phase facilitated the transport of *value*—people, mail, and small-scale goods; the second facilitated the transport of *volume*—bulk freight. This two-step was danced in particular systems of transport in particular times and places. Rail in old Britain added volume to value in the 1840s, when the number of passengers increased threefold and the weight of freight sevenfold.[44] Steamers on the Atlantic entered the value phase in the 1840s and the volume phase in the 1860s. Steamers on the Mississippi entered the first phase in 1817, and the second in the later 1820s. Sailing to Australia entered the first phase in the late 1820s and the second in the mid-1840s. Step one slashed fares; step two slashed freight rates. Big sailing ships could transfer substantial volumes of casks, sacks, or bales, but they were not good at shifting large manufactured objects, such as stationary steam engines or coaches, or at shifting livestock. Early attempts to transfer breeding animals from Britain to Australia incurred losses of up to 80 per cent, and losses in the transfer of plant seedlings were also high at least until 1829 and the invention of the Wardian case.[45] Part of the Mid-Atlantic was known as 'the Horse Latitudes' because it was where horses being exported from Britain to America often died.[46] We will see that both the advent of mass transfer and its limitations explain a lot about the Settler Revolution.

Mass Transfer: Software

Money

The nineteenth-century long-range mass transfer of goods and people was matched by three other transfers: money, information, and technical knowledge. These transfers too were Anglo-prone. British capital exports 'far exceed[ed] the combined capital exports of its nearest competitors,

France and Germany'.[47] British overseas investment is estimated to have totalled only £10 million in 1815. In 1816 alone, this total was suddenly increased 150 per cent by an outflow of £14.6 million, mainly to the United States. By 1850, British overseas investment amounted to £208 million, about $1 billion and twenty times the 1815 figure. By 1913, it totalled a staggering £4.1 billion, or almost $20 billion.[48] Bear in mind that this was a cumulative *net* figure. Between 1880 and 1914 alone, British gross capital exports totalled twice as much (£8.2 billion); half was repaid, returned in dividend or interest, or lost in busts.[49] 'No other country approached this level of external lending and it has not been repeated since.'[50] The old Marxian view that the outflow of money stemmed from the exhaustion of good investment opportunities in Britain itself is questionable. A late industrial revolution meant that there were in fact plenty of promising domestic investments, such as railways. Domestic investment was safer than overseas investment and it is not at all clear that it was less lucrative. A recent study concludes that 'overseas investments were not only subject to more variation, but they also produced substantially lower returns'.[51] Nevertheless, for whatever reasons, British money flooded overseas in a myriad of forms: immigrant nest-eggs, direct and indirect investments, loans and debentures, stocks and bonds, to private concerns and to all types of governments—central, colonial, state, provincial, and municipal.

The sources of capital outflows in the nineteenth century spoke mainly English, but this is not so obvious of the destinations. Scholars often divide the British outflow into investment inside and outside the British Empire, note that the Empire received less than 40%, and imply that investors rationally pursued profit wherever it might be found. This is deceptive. The black Empire, with a population of 370 million in 1912, received about 30% of British Empire investments, while the white Empire, with 24 million people, received 70%.[52] By 1914, 12% of British investments resided in Australasia, with six million people, and only 8% in India, with 300 million. 'The colonies of the dependent Empire were, as compared to their self-governing brethren, at a distinctly disadvantageous position when it came to raising loans.'[53] Some 23% of British overseas capital was invested in the United States, and only 12% in much more populous Europe, neither of which were part of the Empire.[54] Almost all British overseas banks to 1860 were located in areas with a 'natural connection'—namely the settlement colonies.[55] British investors were not patriots—hence their willingness to

invest in the United States—but they clearly were somewhat Anglocentric. 'The British investor was more inclined to trust those who belonged to the wider British community, though the actual security offered might be identical.'[56]

The major exception was Latin America. In 1824–5, the British invested substantially in loans to the newly independent governments of Latin America, including Argentina, later to become an 'adopted dominion' of Britain's and an important site of explosive settlement (see Chapter 18). This investment bubble burst in 1825, and Argentina and other countries defaulted on their debts by 1828. In the 1830s, the British poured even more money into the United States, especially the Western states. The bust here came in 1837, and no less than nine American states defaulted on their loans. 'In all English investors lost $100 million by the states' unethical action.'[57] Barings and other British bankers worked hard to persuade all these governments, North and South American, to meet their responsibilities, and eventually succeeded. But they worked harder and succeeded earlier in the United States. By the late 1840s, the flow of British capital to America had revived. 'In six short years the major effects of an unsavory episode in the history of the United States had been largely dispelled.'[58] In Latin America, on the other hand, British lending did not revive until about 1870.[59] The difference between the six-year American penalty and the forty-year Argentine penalty was membership of the Anglo-world.

Money flowed from Anglo oldlands to Anglo Wests in various ways, old and new. Some came in the pockets of the increasing flood of migrants. Migrant poverty was far from universal, and even the poor cashed up every last farthing when making the big shift, whether across oceans or across mountains. The evidence is patchy, but migrants in the middle decades of the nineteenth century may have averaged about $100 each.[60] In the boom decade of the 1850s, this would have brought $250 million in cash into the United States—a figure similar to the value of wheat and tobacco exports combined. Migrants also dragged money in after them, through the loans and partnerships of oldland kin and friends. The oldland central governments, London and Washington, also contributed their share, financing newland administrations in the early days of settlement, financing or subsidizing public works, and often spending heavily on warfare on behalf of settlers. The most revolutionary vectors of the mass transfer of money, however, were banks.

Proto-industrialization had encouraged a proliferation of oldland banks well before 1815—from 1790 in the United States, and earlier in Britain.[61] But until about 1815 banks still financed trade transactions rather than investment. They did so through short-term loans to well-known clients on a particular transaction—a trading voyage for example. A merchant borrowed money for a few months, purchased a cargo at source, shipped it to destination, sold it, and repaid the loan with the proceeds. The bank's money was advanced for a short, fixed, term on the security of goods that already existed. The documents recording such transactions were known as 'commercial paper' or 'real bills', and more open-ended loans were frowned on. Even bankers tended to lend to people they knew, and non-bank lenders always did so. To 1800, 'personal relationships were still at the bottom of most investments'.[62] In the nineteenth century, this type of transactional credit continued but was increasingly joined by more open-ended forms: 'accommodation paper', overdrafts, mortgages, debentures, shares in joint-stock companies. We can call this 'investment credit' as against transactional credit. The scale of credit and the number of banks increased massively, and ultimate lender and ultimate borrower often no longer knew each other. The rhetoric of 'real bills' as the only sound loans continued, especially as an 'I-told-you-so' refrain during crashes, but was 'ignored in actual practice'.[63] Nominally short-term loans were made long-term in effect, by being constantly rolled over.[64] 'While the older more conservative banks confined their loans to short-term commercial ventures . . . the newer banks made short-term loans for long-term investment with the expectation that they would be renewed indefinitely.'[65] This shift too occurred around 1815. Thereafter, banks and brokers vacuumed up oldland savings and pumped them into newlands. They were helped by the fact that oldland savers were accustomed to investing in government bonds, and one thing the Anglo newlands had plenty of was governments. Through such things as banknotes, banks also greatly increased the cash supply, which lubricated fast growth, and especially transactions between strangers.[66]

To summarize a complex system, there were big Eastern American banks and smaller Western banks, some so speculative and short-lived that they made even the volatile Easterners look solid. On the British flank of the Anglo-world, there was a similar divide between 'Imperial banks', domiciled in London, and local 'colonial banks'. Most branches of both

were in the white settlement colonies.[67] Superimposed on this two-pair banking system was the Bank of England in Britain and, until 1836, the Bank of the United States. Connecting the two flanks of the system was a small but influential coterie of half a dozen London-based merchant banks, such as Barings. Especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, they were 'the principal means by which English and Continental capital was transferred to the United States for investment'.[68] This system had a roller-coaster career like that of Anglo settlement itself, and underwent spasms of boom, bust, and legislative reform. Between 1825 and 1862, British banking, imperial and colonial, progressively adopted the Scots model of large joint-stock banks with many branches, eventually with limited liability as well. America stuck to the single-unit model, and therefore had banks galore—103 in 1810, 342 in 1819, and over 1,400 by 1857.[69] Its attempts at central banking expired in 1836, and practice varied by state: some required that banks be chartered, others did not, and a few banned banks for a time. After 1865, a dual model of state and 'national' (trans-state) banks emerged. On both flanks of the Anglo-world, there was also 'a plethora of semibankers, brokers, agents, and other financial merchants', as well as joint-stock companies, insurance companies, and savings banks.[70]

This brief summary, and some banking scholarship, draws these divides too sharply—between Eastern and Western, colonial and imperial, American and British, before and after reform, branch and single-unit. American banks, and British banks before 1825, did in fact operate in informal networks despite the single-unit structure. In the United States in 1850, 600 out of 700 major banks had New York correspondents.[71] Similarly, oldland British provincial or 'country' banks had correspondents in London, even before the reforms beginning in 1825.[72] The big merchant banks were Anglo, rather than solely British, with American partners and American agents. American Easterners began investing in their West about the same time as British investors. 'Before 1815, eastern investors did not contribute to the settlement of the West.'[73] After 1815, Eastern money did flow West, though the amount is hard to measure. Ohio bank stock in 1836 was 70 per cent Eastern-owned.[74] After the establishment of the New York stock exchange in 1817, New York savings banks, insurance companies, and other companies were significant Western investors.[75] One study of a pair of New York banker/entrepreneurs of the 1820s and 1830s, Isaac Bronson and Charles Butler, illustrates both the shift west and the shift

to investment credit. Bronson was an old-school conservative, preferring to lend only transactional credit on sixty-day terms. Butler was an example of Daniel Boorstin's 'new species of American businessman'—except that there were plenty of them in the British West too. Butler specialized in investment capital 'mobilizing the capital surpluses of the East for investment in western projects'. Even Bronson was eventually forced to swim with the tide. The study concludes that 'historians must abandon the notion that frontier regions grew in isolation from the east... In the 1830s, the Old Northwest was a colony into which eastern financiers poured their surplus capital.'[76] New England banks 'proved to be extraordinarily effective vehicles for channeling savings into economic development'.[77]

Historians sometimes underestimate the role of British investment in the United States because by 1914 it amounted to only 5 or 10 per cent of American capital formation.[78] But 'the evidence is quite conclusive' that British investment was important at various times, and in various regions—namely the West during booms.[79] Between 1815 and 1840, while the Northeast was finding its feet as an investing metropolis, Britain supplied 22 per cent of American capital formation.[80] British money was crucial in the construction of American canals in the 1830s, of railways from the late 1840s, and in the rapid development of mining industries and cattle ranching thereafter. Between 1815 and 1841, American state governments alone borrowed $200 million, mostly from Britain. Western states borrowed half this amount—a per capita rate more than twice as high as the east.[81] Between 1865 and 1914, Britain invested over $5 billion in the United States.[82] Like British and Irish migrants, British money was the 'sleeping partner' in the growth of the American West.[83]

In the British West, the division between imperial and colonial banks can also be overdrawn. The former had some colonial shareholders; the latter came to raise most of their money on the London market, often directly. Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand banks had London correspondents and agents, and eventually London offices, even headquarters. Much the same applied to Western banks and other companies in the United States, with New York playing London. By the 1840s, Western and rural Eastern banks 'no longer simply drew on city correspondents. They moved into city markets and bought and sold on their own accounts.'[84] When oldlanders seemed hesitant in sending their money, newlanders went back and got it. Indeed, as the Anglo-world's financial system matured it was sometimes hard to tell the difference between 'metropolitan' and 'colonial'. In 1988,

historians Lance Davis and Robert Huttenback discovered perhaps the greatest financial con in history—the British Empire.[85] 'For the potential British investor in the years after 1880, the Empire was economically a snare and a delusion—a flame not worth the candle.'[86] They demonstrated, through a vast array of statistics, that the prime benefits of empire did not go to metropolitan Britons. They went partly to a lucky London elite, but mainly to the settler colonies themselves, inverting the theoretical relationship. This important insight is to some extent endorsed by the present study—the relationship between the 'cores' and 'peripheries' of the Anglo-world was one of mutual exploitation. But the Davis/Huttenback argument needs three adjustments.

First, it was the Anglo-world, not the British Empire, which was the site of this great 'con'. As we have seen, Britain's black colonies did not benefit and the American West did, in much the same way as Britain's white colonies. Second, the leading con-artists usually went bust. They conned themselves as well as everyone else, a matter explored in Chapter 6. Third, the conmen often crossed the boundaries between Britain and its colonies, the American East and West, the British Empire and the United States. One example was Sir Thomas Russell, who raised many millions in London and poured them into a variety of large New Zealand enterprises, mostly ill-fated. Thomas Russell of Eaton Square, London, appears in Davis and Huttenback's study as a London investor in empire, but he was also New Zealand's leading speculator.[87] He milked both ends of the system, and there were many like him, such as Sir Matthew Davis in 1880s Australia and Sir Arthur Grenfell in 1900s Canada.[88] Similarly, American financiers, such as C. P. Huntingdon and the rest of the 'Big Four' California/New York rail magnates, crossed the boundary between East and West.[89] They were well aware that the key to fundraising success was 'one of the Firm being constantly in the Atlantic States'.[90] George Peabody, the Barings, and J. P. Morgan are examples of the Atlantic merchant bankers who operated as both Britons and Americans. These groups were human filaments between oldlands and new, the Anglo-world personified, and they made money flow like water right across it.

Information

The second great category of mass-transfer 'software' was information—news, data, propaganda, ideas, and ideology. This was mainly conveyed

through the written word, and accessing this of course required literacy. Protestantism, especially Protestant Dissent, encouraged literacy to enable people to read the Bible themselves. The Protestant British were therefore relatively literate before the nineteenth century. But so were other peoples who were not prone to migrate, such as the Dutch, and, with the exception of Scotland and New England, literacy in English was still mainly an upper- and middle-class perquisite until about 1800. Thereafter, literacy spread down the social scale, with 'a particularly rapid growth in the first few decades of the nineteenth century'.[91] Majority literacy in Britain was probably still well away in 1815, but literacy as mass communication does not require a literate majority. All you needed was a literate minority large enough to give all classes independent access to written matter, even if it is indirect. There is abundant evidence of letters and printed matter being read to people in the early nineteenth century. William Cobbett, a pioneer of tracts for the working class from 1816, was 'intensely aware [that] his writings were likely to be more often read aloud than silently', and designed his text accordingly.[92] Parsons and preachers had long given the lower classes indirect access to literacy, but from the early nineteenth century virtually all lower class communities and even families had literati of their own—a trusted friend, relative or neighbour—and could access written information without the help and censorship of higher classes. We will see in the next chapter that this independent access to literacy, particularly to immigration literature and to migrant letters back home, was of great importance in the cultural history of the great Anglo migrations. It was also important to the mass migration of money. There was a sharp upturn in financial publications after 1815. 'The availability and volume of this writing after 1820 makes it seem different in kind from its earlier counterparts.'[93] Publications such as *Every Man his own Stockbroker* (1820) made 'the allure of investment vivid for Britons', and there were similar developments in the United States at the same time.[94]

The early nineteenth century in Britain also witnessed a 'print revolution'. Technological advances included all-metal presses from 1795, mechanized paper-making from 1803, and steam-powered printing presses, first used in London in 1814 and extended to American newspapers by 1823.[95] Cheap chapbooks, cheap or free religious tracts, and cheap periodicals, the 'penny press', also proliferated from about 1805. 'The phenomenon of the unsought mass audience . . . first appeared in the early nineteenth

century.'[96] More people read or listened to books, and more people read or listened to letters, as well as wrote them. Old Britain had a much greater lead over the rest of Europe in mail than in literacy. Four letters per capita in England and Wales in 1839 instantly doubled to eight with the advent of the penny post in 1840, and then quadrupled to thirty-two by 1871.[97] Only one other nation was in this league and that was the United States. There, post offices multiplied like amoeba from seventy-five in 1790 to 13,500 in 1840—twice as many as Britain and five times as many as France.[98] The speed of postal services increased with transportation improvements. A letter took thirty-two days to get from London to New York in 1820; thirteen days in 1860. This was not just a matter of steamships, but of the frequency and efficiency of high-volume mail services. The equivalent figures for mail from London to Havana were fifty-one and nineteen days.[99] The number of letters flowing between Britain and the United States reached 2 million in 1854, and tripled to 6 million within twenty years.[100] Communication between oldlands and new improved similarly. Eastern news in Cincinnati around 1800 was up to fifty days old. In 1817 it was nineteen days old, and seven days by 1841—all this before either rail or electric telegraph.[101] Mail times from Britain to Australia halved between the 1820s and the 1850s, to about sixty days, then halved again in the 1870s with the advent of the Suez Canal and long-range steam services.

From the 1840s, mail was joined by electric telegraph as a means of long-distance communication. There was an eo-technic story here too. From the 1790s, the French developed signalling systems that could carry a message 500 miles in a day. Such an optical telegraph system was installed between New York and Philadelphia in 1840.[102] In 1832, New York newspapers established a mounted express service for mail and news. The famous Pony Express of 1859 represented the peak of this trend. Its riders could cover 2,000 miles in eight days. With a touching degree of trust in their American cousins, the British sent home dispatches from China during the Second Opium War via the Pony Express at a cost of $135.[103] But electrical telegraph was one technology which did actually displace its non-industrial rivals. Invented by American Samuel Morse in the 1830s, it trumped its optical forebear on the New York–Philadelphia route in 1845. Telegraph wires reached across the American continent in 1861, rendering the Pony Express obsolete in infancy. After a failed attempt in 1858, a successful submarine cable wired North America to Britain in 1866, and the British West was wired-up soon afterwards.

Britain monopolized the manufacture of submarine telegraph cables until about 1900.[104] Telegraph remained very expensive but, from 1851 and the formation of the Reuters News Agency in London, newspapers pooled resources and made substantial use of telegraph. Common folk could not afford telegrams but, increasingly, they could afford newspapers, or at least get access to them.

Newspapers in the nineteenth century embraced the tasks now performed by television, radio, the internet, and local publishers. Their only rival in mass communication was the pulpit. The number of newspapers in Britain burgeoned from 1800, and its only rivals in this field too were the United States and Britain's own West. Of 3,168 newspapers in the world in 1828, about half were in English.[105] The average circulation of newspapers per capita in the United States rose from one in 1790 to eleven in 1840.[106] In 1810, about 21 million individual newspaper issues a year were produced in the British Isles; and roughly the same number in the United States. By 1821, the figures were 56 million and 80 million respectively—a huge upsurge in the transfer of information within a decade. In the United States, and probably Britain too, newspaper readers greatly outnumbered newspaper buyers, to the rage of newspaper proprietors. This 'massive giveaway . . . helped democratize the culture of print'.[107] From 1815, the Anglo newlands were just as addicted to newspapers as the old, if not more. Only five newspapers were founded in the whole American West to 1805. In 1854, Illinois, still a frontier state, had 150.[108] In 1843, South Australia, then barely five years old, had a dozen newspapers, one of them in London.[109] Newspaper sales per capita in New South Wales were twice as high as in Britain in the 1830s.[110] Over 200 newspapers were founded in settler New Zealand's first forty years.[111] Sprouting crops of newspapers, as well as of banks and post offices, routinely accompanied the advent of booms in the Anglo newlands.

Skill

The third category of mass-transferred software was skill—technical skills and knowledge. In early modern Europe and China, specialist skills and techniques were something you kept secret. They were the quintessential mysteries of various trades, available only to insiders. Proto-industrialization and the rise of print and literacy weakened such practices. From about 1800, published technical manuals began to proliferate, in Britain and the

United States in particular.[112] In 1805, for example, American Oliver Evans published an explanation of the construction of steam engines 'which placed his specialist knowledge in the hands of any competent engineer'.[113] Developments in patent law further inclined innovators to publish their findings. Early in the nineteenth century, Britain, the first industrial nation, sought to keep its advantage against this turning tide by banning the emigration of experts and limiting the export of machines. But 'Britain's protectionist laws against the outflow of men and machines failed to deter the efforts of industrial spies.'[114] This was especially true of American spies, who spoke the language and had good contacts in Britain. The ban on skilled emigration, lifted in 1824, had never really worked in any case. Samuel Slater crossed the Atlantic with the plans for America's first mechanized textile mill in his head in 1790, and an inflow of British experts continued thereafter, though the rate did pick up after 1824. 'Common language, culture and leadership in mechanical innovation meant that Britain continued to be the primary source of imported technology' for the United States.[115]

It was considerably harder for continental Europe, let alone such regions as Latin America, to import British technology. Swiss industrialists complained bitterly in 1830 that it was hard to get good British help. 'Not only do they cost a damned lot of money, but they are often drunkards. English workers who are both efficient and well-behaved can earn a very good living at home.'[116] A study of Brazil notes its relative disadvantage. 'Technological transfer between Great Britain and the United States in the early part of the nineteenth century was relatively quick and effective. Both countries were culturally closely related. They shared a common, language, legal and economic systems and enjoyed a common technical heritage.'[117] In the words of another study, 'the Americans exploited their language, family, business, and friendship ties to give them better access to British innovations than any other country'.[118]

The British link was surely a key factor in relatively early American industrialization. As with Britain, the experts differ on timing.[119] We saw in Chapter 2 that the case for American industrialization before 1815 is unconvincing, and the best cases appear to be for the 1820s or the 1840s. The 1820s saw the mass advent of large-scale textile factories, usually water-powered, and of steam ships. The 1840s saw the mass advent of rail, the extension of factories, and the introduction of an improved turbine that doubled the output of water-powered mills. Full American

industrialization remained largely restricted to the Northeast, and was much more water-powered and therefore rural than in Britain. But, with these qualifications, it appears that the United States edged out Belgium to become the second industrial nation, in or around the 1820s. 'Industrialization began for the United States perhaps as early as the 1820s.'[120] America's own technological contributions became increasingly important, but ranked second to the enduring British link as far as the causes of early American industrialization were concerned. Such things as mill technology, steam engines, railway technology, and iron ship hulls in the United States can all be traced to British sources.[121] The greater ease of transfer within the Anglo-world applied to all information, not just manuals. The 'systematic pirating of British books by American publishers' robbed authors of royalties but was good for the mass transfer of information.[122] In New York as early as 1817, 'the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews are reprinted as soon as they arrive and are in great request'.[123] In 1853, the United States published 420 of its own books and 313 reprints of foreign works, of which 278 were English.[124]

The British and American Wests also had good access to oldland British technology—and to Eastern American technology. Despite the abundance of pre-industrial resources such as wood, water, and work-animals, they were precociously semi-industrial. Again, this was not a matter of political connections or the lack of them. Technology itself, such as rail locomotives, was transferred to colonies such as India. But the cultural infrastructure of technology, the education systems and attitudes that created the capacity to build and run rail systems, was not.[125] Much the same applied to Latin America, where Brazil's twenty-seven locomotives in 1866 were all imported from Britain and America.[126] In the British settlement colonies and the American West, in contrast, both technology and its cultural infrastructure were transferred, and locomotives were locally built. The rapid emergence of advanced educational institutions was part of the story, but so was the Anglo-Westerner's assumption that a metropolitan quality of technology was their natural right. The same applied in banking. In Asia, imperial banks were run by expatriates. In Australasia, as early as the 1860s, 'recruitment of staff in the United Kingdom became unusual'.[127]

It is well known that the nineteenth century featured one great technological transition: the (paleo-technic) industrial revolution. What is less

well known is that it also featured two more. One was a high eo-technic 'non-industrial revolution', a massive flowering of pre-industrial technology. The other was the rise of mass transfer, which was partly a product of the other two, and of their intersection, but also of other factors such as the 'peace bonus' of 1815. The Anglo-world itself gave English-speakers an advantage in mass transfer. Almost everything moved more easily within the system than to or from the rest of the world, and no other culture group was more far-flung. The Anglo advantage in the other two transitions was actually less marked, if the two are considered separately. Britain was certainly first, and the Northeastern United States probably second, to industrialization. But Belgium and the adjacent regions of France and Germany were close behind. Similarly, Anglos controlled more newlands, rich in eo-technic resources, than anyone else. But Spanish-speakers and Russian-speakers came pretty close; their newlands too teemed with wood, water, wind, and work animals. The key point is not so much the Anglo edge in each of the two suites of technology, eotechnic and paleotechnic, but that they overlapped. Belgium had early industrialization. Russian- and Spanish-speakers had vast settler newlands. But only the Anglo-world had both.

Mass Transfer: People

In the eighteenth century, about half a million people emigrated from the British Isles. In the long nineteenth century, 1815–1924, the number rocketed to 25 million. Around 18 or 19 million of these British and Irish left permanently and, as we have seen, they were joined by 5 million Germans and perhaps 12 million native-born Americans, moving west or to Canada. This vast Anglo exodus of about 36 million people was only one of several global migrations of the era. Some 30 million continental Europeans, other than Germans, also emigrated overseas, and 7 million Russians moved to Siberia. Added to this, some 50 million Chinese and 30 million Indians migrated between 1846 and 1940.[128] In raw numbers, the Anglo exodus may seem little different from the others. In fact, for better or for worse, it *was* different. The Anglo diaspora began earlier, was more permanent, and its migrants went to reproductions of their own society, not someone else's. Southern and eastern European mass migration across the oceans, Russian migration to Siberia, and the really

massive Chinese migrations to Manchuria all took off in the 1880s, whereas Anglo migration took off in 1815. Argentina and Brazil were the biggest non-Anglo destinations for Europeans. Between 1821 and 1880 they received fewer than a million between them, compared to 10 million to the United States, over 1.5 million to Canada, and over a million to Australasia.[129]

Much non-Anglo migration was not only late but also temporary. Of the 30 million Indians who left their country in the century after 1840, 24 million or 80 per cent returned. 'It is most accurate to understand flows of people of this kind as constituting a kind of circular migration instead of an emigration.'[130] While Chinese migration overseas was significant and interesting, the main Chinese destination was nearby Manchuria. Of the 25.4 million Chinese who made this move between 1891 and 1942, 16.7 million or 66 per cent returned.[131] Swedish, Spanish, and Italian rates of return were almost as high. Of the 2 million Italians who migrated to Argentina between 1876 and 1914, 55 per cent had already returned home by the latter year.[132] One reason for high rates of return was that, from the 1880s, improvements in shipping made returning home much cheaper and easier than before. Anglo return migration therefore rose too, but was only about 25 per cent averaged over the whole of the long nineteenth century.[133] As late as 1900, 'Britons remitted far less than Southern Europeans partly because conditions were better for those who remained at home, but perhaps even more because British emigrants did not expect themselves to return.'[134] When Anglos went, they tended to stay, in contrast to most other peoples.

A third difference was that Anglos went to reproductions of their own society, while most other emigrants did not. Of the total of 56 million European overseas emigrants, 1820–1932, over 42 million or 75 per cent, whatever their origins, went to Anglophone destinations.[135] Anglos occasionally did go to other people's newlands—to Spanish Louisiana and Florida in the late eighteenth century; to Mexican Texas, 1821–36, and to the independent Transvaal in 1886–99. These regions had one thing in common: they soon *became* Anglo. Normally, Anglos went direct to a 'neo-Britain'. Spanish going to Spanish America, Portuguese going to Brazil, and Russians going to Siberia shared this characteristic but only, in any numbers, from the 1880s. Most southern and eastern European migrants went to other peoples' settler societies, not their own. Significant numbers of Italians went to Argentina, but most, along with

the great majority of Poles and Balkan emigrants, went to the United States. There, like the Germans before them, they experienced varying degrees of integration but ended up reinforcing an English-speaking society.

Neither this nor high rates of return necessarily made the migration experience any *worse* for non-Anglos. Indeed, one could make the opposite case. Southern and eastern European emigrants to the Anglo destinations specialized in retaining a foot in both worlds, so getting the best of both—a 'straddling' strategy, somewhere between settling and sojourning. 'One migration scholar encountered a Pole living in Poland after 25 years in the United States. He continued to draw two US pensions, and noted: "I go to Florida every winter." '[136] Wage differences between Anglo newlands and southern and eastern Europe were much higher than between Anglo newlands and oldlands. Straddlers benefited both ways by saving in the high-wage Anglo-world and buying land in low-price Europe. Why abandon the kin and culture of your European village for the spoils of Chicago when you could have both? But 'straddling', like sojourning, had less impact than settling on the growth of settler societies. Like our other mass transfers, mass settlement (as against sojourning) in the nineteenth century was by no means exclusively Anglo, but it was Anglo-prone.

Naturally, the fiftyfold increase in British and Irish immigration in the nineteenth century has generated numerous attempts at explanation, most emphasizing either 'push' or 'pull'. Sheer want has long been the most obvious push theory and is still going strong: '*large-scale* migration is usually associated with intolerable local conditions'.[137] Dire poverty was clearly at work during the Irish famine migration of 1846–50. But mass Catholic migration from Ireland began earlier, arguably around 1800 and certainly by 1830, and indeed provided the precedents, contacts, and remittances that made the famine migration possible.[138] It was not the very poorest Irish regions that sent the most migrants. 'Emigration was more significant in the richer than in the poorer counties of Ireland.' 'Intolerable social conditions' did play a large part in driving migration from Ireland and Highland Scotland, but are much less use in explaining emigration from England and lowland Scotland. There, to cut a long story short, 'fluctuations in emigration did not synchronise with upswings and downswings in the British economy'. The very poor found it hard to migrate without help. Assistance schemes emerged, but they accounted for only 7 per cent of

British migrants.[139] Poverty, after all, can only go so far in explaining mass migration from the richest country in the world.

Various demographic, industrial, and agricultural pushes behind British migration have also been suggested. As noted earlier, the growth of British population in the eighteenth century was a necessary but not sufficient prerequisite. Economic historians ingeniously posit a twenty-year lag between the birth of a numerous generation and its oversupply of the labour market, leading to lower wage rates and hence to an increased propensity to migrate.[140] But population growth peaked in England about 1816, while migration rates peaked about 1913, almost a century later. During this time, population growth rates generally trended down, while migration growth rates trended up. 'Population size alone was never sufficient to explain emigration.'[141] Industrialization itself, and the accompanying urbanization, could as easily be an alternative to emigration as cause of it. Industrialization/urbanization, like emigration, absorbed demographic growth. The former certainly displaced the latter in Germany from the 1880s.

Another push theory stems from the eighteenth century agricultural 'revolution'. Enclosure and improvements in labour productivity displaced agricultural workers, so making them candidates for emigration. But, in England, enclosure came too early, and major reductions in the agricultural workforce came too late, to explain the surge of immigration in the first half of the nineteenth century. 'Whereas about seven million acres had been enclosed in England between 1760 and 1815, from 1815 to 1845 only 200,000 underwent enclosure.'[142] Mechanization, increased food imports, and a shift from arable to pastoral farming eventually decimated the agricultural labour force, but not until the second half of the century. Unemployment and unrest certainly did occur, especially in the agricultural south-east, from the Luddite outbreaks of the 1810s to the 'Captain Swing' troubles of 1830. Yet rural labourers had suffered and rioted before without resorting to emigration, and the very poor were unable to emigrate without help. A refinement of the farm worker-displacement thesis is that agricultural wages rose in areas close to urban and industrial centres because they had to compete with the high wages there, but fell elsewhere. The 'low-wage' counties then supplied many emigrants. Yet 'in 1827–31 only 21% of English emigrants came from agricultural low-wage counties against 55% from industrial high-wage ones'.[143] Indeed, some experts now believe that most English emigrants were not farm workers.[144] Displaced

farm workers had the option of shifting to burgeoning industrial and urban areas.

Yet another approach, which evades the push–pull dichotomy, is to see British overseas migration as an extension of internal migration. 'In many respects transatlantic migration was an extension of migration within the British Isles.'[145] It is true that, for various reasons, English rural folk had become less rooted to place than, say, their French equivalents. But internal migration was an old story; mass external migration was not. Nineteenth-century rates of increase in the former were much lower than in the latter until 1890.[146] The notion of stage migration has been convincingly debunked for England, and high rates of internal migration could coexist with low rates of external migration, as was the case in Oxfordshire.[147] Most internal moves were very short indeed—less than 60 miles, 1818–39.[148] It is hard to see how such a shift led to one of several thousand miles to the wilds of North America or Australasia.

The classic pull theory assumes that emigrants were well-informed 'rational actors', pulled to new countries by their known economic opportunities. Such views currently have an edge on push theories, at least among economic historians. 'The dominant longstanding paradigm guiding migration analysis has emphasized that migration was a process involving rational actors who were guided by principles of economic maximization.'[149] This is one context in which rational actor models should not be dismissed too readily: migrants had brains and used them; nobody intentionally migrated to be worse off. One key 'pull' for working people was the notion that the newlands had better real wages than oldlands. This was usually true, but often not by much. The margin was easily exaggerated by ignoring the high price of newland goods, or by taking high-wage periods such as gold rushes as typical. Australian per capita incomes were long thought to have greatly exceeded those of Old Britain for most of the nineteenth century. Research using new data finds that the Australian advantage has been greatly overstated—it was about 8 per cent in 1891.[150] Could such margins really have been enough to persuade people to risk the 'little death' of a 16,000-mile permanent migration, and to risk playing migrant roulette with their children? In any case, 'quantitative studies show that earning differentials alone do not provide a good explanation for migration flows from Britain'.[151] Rational-choice theory actually works better for non-Anglo migrants, for whom wage differentials between oldland and new were much higher.

Another approach to this vexed migration debate, arguably another version of rational-choice theory, is the notion of a special Anglo desire for freehold farms. 'Importantly, only in English colonies had landed property rights seized the attention of colonizers and colonists.'[152] 'The promise of land in the colonies was the vital incentive.'[153] Yet nineteenth-century Anglo newlands were the most urbanized frontiers the world had ever seen; there were many categories of rural workers other than farm owners. Emigration was higher in frontier booms, when land was expensive, and lower in busts, when it was cheap. Widespread *land* ownership did not necessarily mean widespread *farm* ownership. Land might be urban, and rural land owned might be undeveloped or semi-developed, or too small or isolated for full-time farming. A block of potentially viable raw land might be cheap or even free, but if it was covered in forest it took at least ten years work or one thousand dollars to convert into a working farm that could actually confer independence. Alleged Anglo freehold fanatics were often surprisingly ready to lease or rent farms, and they were sometimes reluctant to go on to farms at all. The desire for freeholds was certainly an important motive but, again, it actually applied as much to non-Anglos, such as the Chinese and southern and eastern Europeans. They too loved their freeholds. The difference was that non-Anglos were more likely to use the profits of migration to return and acquire a developed freehold back home, amidst their kin and heritage. The Anglo peculiarity was not the desire for freeholds, but the willingness to accept them as raw land on distant frontiers.

Explanations for the American westward movement and for German migration are not much more satisfactory. To this day, American westward migration is seldom seen in the context of other great migrations—pan-Anglo, pan-European, or global. This is partly because it happened to be overland and 'internal', yet in this it was no different from Russian migration to Siberia or Chinese migration to Manchuria. There is also a legacy, carried by an apostolic succession of Turnerian historians such as Frederick Merk and Ray Allen Billington, of the assumption that the 'westering tendency' of Americans needs no explanation. It arrived with the founding fathers at Jamestown in 1607 and kept going to the Pacific. Americans were allegedly born feeling 'a pull towards the West, a subconscious tugging as if some primeval instinct called them there'.[154] In fact, the primeval westering instinct took a couple of centuries off, 1607–1780s. 'At first Americans moved only slowly out into the wilderness. For most of the two

hundred years preceding 1800 they clustered near the eastern coastline.'[155] America faced east, not west, until the 1780s, when the founding fathers referred to the Spanish possessions on 'our right', and the British possession on 'our left'.[156] Even the Yankee nation took a while to get moving. 'New Englanders preferred, when conditions became crowded, to move into higher elevations and even take up still poorer land than to move elsewhere.'[157] Until the 1790s, New Englanders were 'notably reluctant to emigrate'.[158] As we saw in the last chapter, the American westward movement commenced on any scale in the 1780s, took off in terms of migrants in the 1790s, and took off in terms of migrants *plus* money from 1815.

Of course, explanations more reasonable than primeval instinct have emerged, and they too tend to either push or pull. Push explanations emphasize overcrowding, and the limited and diminishing fertility of the soils in such places as New England and Virginia. Yet recent research finds that 'despite persistent notions otherwise, colonial New England's economy was flourishing in the eighteenth century', with farming growing at 'a healthy long term rate'.[159] As for Virginia, 'the ''soil exhaustion'' argument does not explain the data'—people emigrated at the same rate from good farmland as from exhausted tobacco land.[160] 'Compared to almost any European state, the country [Atlantic America] was not overcrowded, yet the push for more and better land accelerated during the 1820s.'[161] The dominant explanation for American migration as for others is the classic pull factor, rational choice, whereby people moved west for higher wages and better opportunities. Opportunities did tend to be more numerous in newlands than in old, but east–west real wage discrepancies in the United States were even more modest than those between Britain and the Dominions, when they existed at all. Recent research suggests that average incomes in the American Midwest in 1860 were actually a little below those of the Northeast, and that the same was true in 1880.[162]

The earlier sections of this chapter suggest there is in fact a third force between push and pull, namely the ease of transfer. Imagine a coin pushed across a tabletop by a flick of the finger, and pulled by a magnet from the other side. The strength of push and pull are two variables, but there is a third: the degree of friction between the surfaces of coin and tabletop. As we have seen, such friction diminished in the nineteenth century, especially in the Anglo-world, to which Germans had some access. Information,

technology, money, and goods all moved more smoothly across the table. So too did people. But this is not in itself enough to explain the Anglo exodus. The tonnage of timber ships from Canada to Britain, and therefore the availability of cheap fares for emigrants in the other direction, reached a peak in the mid-1820s. Yet the flow of emigrants reached a post-1819 nadir at that time, before picking up again about 1830. Emigration, even when it is physically safe, cheap, and easy, is an almighty wrench, removing you permanently from the familiar. When Dr Johnson in 1773 asked a poor Scot why he did not emigrate, 'he answered with indignation that no man willingly left his native country'.[163] Europeans saw emigration as 'the little death' and, as we have seen, until about 1880 it was often the big death as well. 'Emigration is, after death from starvation, the worst of necessities.' 'Emigration is a form of suicide.'[164] Americans moving west faced dangers as well, and they too were wary of 'the gloomy and depressing sensation of experiencing ourselves strangers in a strange land'.[165] An Ohio mother wrote of her son emigrating 'to seek a home in a far distant country', in this case Iowa.[166] Another woman, a Virginian emigrating to Texas, wrote 'Oh! How hard it was to part, next to death, but yet we tore away.'[167] People did not migrate simply because they could. As the best migration scholars concede, an element of mystery remains.[168] There is still a missing piece, a very large one, in the Anglo migration jigsaw puzzle. It is to be found in that most difficult of historians' terrains, the inside of people's heads.

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5
The Settler Transition

The Anglo-prone Settler Revolution of the long nineteenth century arose from the intersection of several revolutionary changes, which then fed off each other. One was the emergence, from 1783, of the Anglo-world itself, a politically and geographically divided but economically and culturally united entity capable of enhanced cross-insemination. Another was the rise of mass transfer, itself the fruit of a synergy between the first flowering of industrial technology and the last flowering of non-industrial technology. The rise of mass transfer was the technological dimension of the Settler Revolution. In this chapter, we turn to the cultural dimension: a great shift in attitudes to emigration that took place around 1815 on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Rise of the Settler

Before 1800, most Britons saw emigration as social excretion. Much eighteenth century emigration was compulsory and disreputable, the fate of convicts and people so hopeless that they indentured themselves as temporary slaves as a last resort. 'Emigration', stated Lord Sheffield in the 1780s, 'is the natural recourse of the culprit, and those who have made themselves the objects of contempt and neglect.'[1] Canada was sarcastically known as 'the Irishman's Prize', and there was talk in 1763 of swapping it for the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe. In the early nineteenth century, the British still 'looked upon a life in the colonies as socially degrading, and having much in common with penal transportation'.[2] In 1816, a *Times* of London editorial divided emigrants into two categories: paupers and fools on the one hand and, on the other, 'malignant outcasts . . . execrably base in their natures'. In 1820, the same journal published with satisfaction a letter from a migrant to South Africa. 'You told me true when you said I

may as well blow out my brains as come upon this expedition. Indeed, I have totally ruined myself.'[3] This attitude was later famously summarized by Charles Buller. Emigration was 'little more than shoveling out your paupers to where they might die, without shocking their betters with the sight or sound of their last agony'.[4] Yet, at some point in the first half of the nineteenth century, there was a somersault in British attitudes to emigration.

Thanks to the likes of Frederick Jackson Turner, Francis Parkman, and James Fennimore Cooper, the frontier settler has long been central in American ideology. It comes as something of a shock to learn that this was not always so. In the late eighteenth century, and perhaps beyond, the frontiersman was more anti-type than archetype. George Washington's view of Western settlers in the 1780s was clear-cut: 'a parcel of banditti who will bid defiance to all authority', 'savages . . . our own white Indians', even 'worthless fellows'. Other American officials repeatedly referred to early Western settlers as 'semi-savages', 'lawless banditti and adventurers', 'banditti whose actions are a disgrace to human nature'. 'The most abandoned, malicious, deceitful, plundering, horse-thieving rascals on the continent . . . the most vile and abandoned criminals.'[5] The West was 'a grand reservoir for the scum of the Atlantic states'. As late as the 1820s, it was said that 'the people of the Atlantic States have not yet recovered from the horror inspired by the term backwoodsman'.[6] Well into the nineteenth century, 'eastern fears of regression to primitivism among western settlers [remained] strong enough to stimulate missions, and the formation of Bible and tract societies, and other efforts to reclaim the migrants for a decent Christian order'.[7] Inside the border, Americans complained that barbarous frontiersmen presented a 'manifest danger of involving the Country in a Bloody, ruinous and destructive War with Indians'.[8] To this point, Americans saw the westward movement as 'Manifest Danger' not 'Manifest Destiny'. Yet, some time after 1800, the dominant representation of the frontier settler shifted from 'semi-savage' to quintessential American.

Back in Britain, emigration's image problem was resolved by what contemporaries rightly saw as 'a revolution in colonial thought'.[9] It is normally attributed to Edward Gibbon Wakefield and his fellow 'colonial reformers', and dated to around 1830, when there was indeed a surge in emigration. Scholars have long pointed out that Wakefield had his precursors, notably Robert Wilmot Horton, parliamentary under-secretary of state for the colonies, 1822–8. Under his influence, British restrictions

on emigration, nominal in any case, were repealed in 1824, a parliamentary inquiry into emigration took place in 1826–7, and six small government-funded schemes moved 11,000 people to Canada and the Cape Colony by 1826.[10] Horton was a visionary, who foreshadowed the building of the British West. 'I am unable to define why this splendid creation of the [American] western empire, which has been accomplished almost within the memory of the present generation, might not be paralleled in our own colonial possessions.'[11] But his successes were small beer, as Horton himself admitted. Wakefield maintained that Horton hampered emigration by continuing its damaging association with pauperism.[12] Another precursor has recently been suggested in the shape of Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk, who published advocacies of emigration from 1805, and practised what he preached by founding a precursor of Winnipeg in 1812.[13] I myself suspect that Wakefield's ideas of colonization, which were more sophisticated than those of Horton or Selkirk, were partly derived from various American attempts at organized settlement in the 1780s, such as that of the Ohio Associates. Here, in the nascent American West, we find such 'Wakefieldian' ideas as the need for money as well as migrants, instant townships, joint stock companies, genteel settlers, and 'the systematic mode of settlement'.[14]

Whatever its prehistory, the 'revolution in colonial thought' actually dated from 1815, not 1830. Wakefield was riding the wave of public opinion, not creating it. In 1815–20, there was a surge in British emigration corresponding with the first Anglo booms in Canada and the American West. This escapes the attention of historians because it was modest relative to later flows and because of the paucity of statistics before 1820. Yet enough evidence does exist to suggest a British and Irish emigration of about 170,000 in the period 1815–20—well above the conventional figure of 97,000, which was in any case the highest rate ever up to that time.[15] Unlike eighteenth-century emigration, the great bulk was voluntary. Furthermore, a small British government scheme for settlement in South Africa in 1819 accepted 4,000 emigrants, but was oversubscribed by 80,000, which suggests a large unmet demand.[16] There was also a surge of emigration literature. In 1810–14, according to the British Library Integrated Catalogue, the number of books published in Britain with the words 'emigration', 'emigrants' or 'settlers' in their title was precisely nil. In the next five years, 1815–19, there were twenty such publications. This is a conservative proxy for the total number of emigration books, since

it excludes such titles as Morris Birkbeck's *Notes on a Journey in America* (1817) and William Cobbett's *Journal of a Year's Residence in the United States* (1819). These early nineteenth-century emigration books noted a shift in the quality as well as the quantity of emigration after 1815.[17] 'Emigration assumed a totally new character; it was no longer merely the poor, the idle, the profligate, or the wildly speculative, who were proposing to quit their native country.' 'The mania for emigration is not now, as formerly, confined to the poorer class and such as could not gain a living at home.'[18] In 1815 itself, the young Thomas Arnold won a prize at Oxford with an essay denouncing those who saw emigration as 'an evil', trumping them with Genesis: 'And God blessed them, and God said unto them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it." '[19] Here was the creed of a new colonizing crusade.

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, an even greater migration was taking place, as we saw in Chapter 3. Over 400,000 Americans migrated to the Old Northwest in the 1810s, mostly 1815–19, and perhaps about 200,000 to the Old Southwest. Here too people noted 'the great increase in the mania for migration westward',[20] and the emigration publications known as 'booster literature' flowered.

> Look, ye sons and daughters of New England, look at what a farm can be in Eden. Come down from your granite hills, where only sheep can live. Come up out of your terminal moraines, which you foolishly call farms. Here in Illinois the life of the husbandman is fed by the bounty of the earth and sweetened by the air of heaven.[21]

In all, on both sides of the Atlantic, around 800,000 Anglos migrated in the period 1815–20—more than in the previous century. Selkirk's advocacy of emigration was not widely read. Horton's began in 1822, and Wakefield's in 1829. And how much effect could any of them have had in the United States? What we have here, it seems to me, is a tidal shift in mass attitudes to emigration that cannot be attributed to one or two particular writers.

The views of leading thinkers are relatively easily accessed through their books and papers. By contrast, change in the shared ideology of a vast mass of people is very hard to identify with confidence. This problem of the silent majority is, of course, endemic in the social history of ideas. The standard solution, one not to be despised in the absence of alternatives, is to pile up available examples of opinions in the vague hope that these are

typical. One possible refinement is the analysis of the conceptual language of substantial groups of lesser writers who are trying to persuade their still-larger target audience to do something. Such people play their various tunes on chords they believe to already exist in the minds of their readers. Their guess is more likely to be right than ours, especially when it was consistent, persistent, and widespread, and when the relevant campaign of persuasion had some success. The conceptual language of large-scale, long-term, campaigns of persuasion can therefore permit tentative deductions about popular ideology. The discourse of Protestant evangelism is one example that flowered in the early nineteenth century; the discourse of emigration is another, and some analysis of it is attempted in the next section. A complementary approach to the problem of the silent majority, or at least a section of it, is to trace changes in conceptual language through the newly available digitally searchable newspaper databases. Of course, there are pitfalls. A colleague discovered an astonishingly early use of the term 'Lesbian' only to find she was a ship. Issues are sometimes added to a database, so counts can differ over time. Advertising campaigns or political controversies that happen to use key concepts can distort the picture, and the growing use of a concept might simply reflect the growth in size of the relevant serial. One can sometimes cater for such problems, however, by eliminating advertising from the search and by looking at the *relative* frequency of use of two or more resonant concepts. I do not claim that this produces good evidence of the history of mass ideology, but only that it produces better evidence.

'Emigrant', of course, was the standard term for out-migrant, and was well established in the English language, in contrast to the French, by the eighteenth century.[22] In the early nineteenth century, three alternative terms emerged each of which reduced the stigma attached to 'emigrant'. One, favoured by the Wakefieldians, was 'colonist'. It distinguished between monied and genteel colonists and labouring non-genteel emigrants, and between organized colonization and disorganized emigration. 'Colonist' continued to be used in British discourse but, unsurprisingly given its class implications, failed to dominate as common usage. It made even less ground in the United States, perhaps partly because 'colonization' was associated with schemes to 'repatriate' black Americans to Africa. A second alternative to 'emigrant' was 'immigrant'. This word, a somewhat more welcoming variant, was coined in the United States about 1790, according to David Hackett Fischer and James C. Kelly.[23] 'Before

1790, Americans thought of themselves as *emigrants*, not *immigrants*. The word immigrant was an Americanism probably invented in that year. It had entered common usage by 1820.' Fischer and Kelly go on to note that related terms also emerged in the United States in the 1810s. '*Pioneer* in the western sense first appeared in 1817 . . . Words such as *mover* (1810), *moving wagons* (1817), *relocate* (1814), even the verb *to move* in its present migratory sense, date from this period.' This was indeed a 'radical transformation . . . a new language of migration'. But it was not solely American, and neither 'immigrant' nor 'pioneer' was its main manifestation. The third and most successful pan-Anglo alternative to the word 'emigrant' was 'settler'.

In Britain, 'settler' was used in its current meaning at least as far back as the seventeenth century, but it was used infrequently. By the early nineteenth century it had connotations of a higher status than 'emigrant'. Like colonists, settlers were distinct from sojourners, slaves, or convicts, and initially even from lower-class free emigrants. In Australia, ' "Settlers" were men of capital and, in the 1820s, regarded as the true colonists, to be distinguished from mere labouring "immigrants" . . . though eventually all Australia's immigrants were termed "settlers".'[24] As this suggests, 'settler' was more easily transferable to common folk than was 'colonist'. Other meanings of the term may have enhanced its positive loading. The word implied permanence. Like colonists, 'settlers' tended to go to reproductions of their own society whereas 'emigrants' might go to someone else's. The rise of the settler concept can be traced through the fully searchable database of *The Times* of London. *The Times*, of course, was an elite newspaper. But it did seek to use the conceptual language of its large number of readers and to speak the jargon of current public discourse. On the other hand, it was editorially opposed to emigration until at least mid-century, which might have inclined it towards the less favourable term. 'Settlers' was used very rarely in *The Times* before 1810, but the number of articles containing it surged thereafter to around 58 per cent of 'emigrants' usage, where it normally remained until a further surge from the 1890s. The increase in the use of 'emigrant' in the 1850s may be associated with the upsurge of Irish migration at that time—it was harder for Catholic Irish to become 'settlers' than for Britons. Even in *The Times*, then, 'settler' moved from 7.5 per cent of the usage of 'emigrants' in the 1780s, to 23.5 per cent in the 1800s decade, and then to 58.5 per cent in the 1810s (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. Articles containing the words 'settlers' and 'emigrants' in *The Times* digital database (automated keyword count, advertisements excluded)

Decade	'settlers'	'emigrants'	'settlers' as % of 'emigrants'
1785–9	2	27	7.5
1790s	9	899*	1
1800s	36	154	23.5
1810s	136	193	58.5
1820s	300	424	70.5
1830s	408	726	56
1840s	698	1313	53
1850s	696	2180	32
1860s	1000	1738	57.5
1870s	890	1524	58
1880s	1069	1836	58
1890s	1406	1417	99
1900s	1591	1350	118

*Probably references to émigrés fleeing French Wars.

Another database consists of 'full runs of 48 newspapers specially selected by the British Library to best represent nineteenth century Britain'. A manual count of the number of times the two concepts were used in the six years 1814–19 shows an even sharper shift towards 'settlers' (Table 5.2).[25]

No long-running databases equivalent to these seem available for the United States before 1851, and change is less easy to trace. But the *Plattsburgh Republican*, of upstate New York, used 'settler' 2.5 times as often as it used 'emigrant' between 1811 and 1820.[26] One database of many newspapers features 'emigrant' four times as often as 'settler' in the 1790s, with 'settler' rising to towards parity in the 1800s and 1810s.[27] As with *The Times*, there are signs that settler had a positive racial loading. The sixteenth

Table 5.2. Usage of words in nineteenth-century British Library newspapers online database

	'emigrants'	'settlers'
1814	105	24
1815	103	49
1816	74	43
1817	134	76
1818	92	80
1819	89	239

annual report of the American Colonization Society used 'emigrants' six times and 'colonists' five times to describe its black Liberian protégés. It used 'settler' only twice, both times when quoting Liberian sources.[28] The massive 'Making of America' database, of 9,612 books and 2,457 volumes of journals published throughout the nineteenth century in the United States, features about 40,000 usages of 'settlers', 18,500 of 'emigrants', and only 7,500 of 'immigrants'. As in Australia, emigrants to the Pacific Northwest in the 1880s 'referred to themselves as ''settlers'' rather than ''frontiersmen'' or ''pioneers'' '.[29]

In 1925, Leopold Amery became Britain's first minister for the (white) Dominions, and set about encouraging more emigration to them. 'Almost my first task was to get rid of the word ''emigration'', its association of unemployment and expatriation and to substitute . . . ''Oversea Settlement'' as the object of our policy.'[30] Amery overestimated his originality by a century or so. In 1832, English advocates of emigration sought to 'remove from the minds of persons of all classes that emigration to Canada is banishment'.[31] Upper Canada was portrayed as 'not a mere possession of Great Britain but part of the British nation overseas'.[32] The databases suggest that such thinking dates from about 1815. They also hint at a tendency to prefer 'settlers' for Anglo migrants and 'emigrants' for non-Anglos, yet this was not a matter of nationalism. British and American boosters frequently denigrated each other's Wests, but they denigrated rival polities in their own Wests with equal enthusiasm. 'I for one would rather encounter two New Zealand earthquakes than one African puff-adder or half a Canadian winter.'[33] 'Chicago papers liked nothing better than to discuss the cholera epidemic in Detroit or St Louis.'[34] Old British emigrants were notoriously prone to prefer the American West to their own. The United States 'captured the great majority of British migrants and capital throughout the nineteenth century'.[35] At the beginning and end of the period 1815–1914 Americans reciprocated by migrating to Canada in large numbers. 'Few seemed to care whether they lived under the American or the British flag.'[36] The key transfer was not British-ness or American-ness, but virtual metropolitan-ness. No longer did one lose citizenship, or standing as a central member of a central society, by emigrating. This was the 'settler transition', and it was by no means the least important of the Anglo-world's mass transfers.

An Ideology of Emigration?

In the best recent work on British emigration, historian Eric Richards may for once slip up when he writes: 'but perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the phenomenon of emigration was its sheer spontaneity; it happened outside government control and beyond contemporary understanding. It was atomistic. Millions of people departed with astonishingly little framework or ideology.'[37] Attitudes to emigration, and the attitudes of emigrants, were amorphous, camouflaged, and varied, but I think some patterns are discernible and that at the broadest level they cohered into what might be described as an ideology—*the* ideology of the Settler Revolution, or settlerism for short. Settlerism ranked in historical importance with the other great Anglophone 'isms' of its day, such as socialism, evangelism, and racism. The settler transition, a great upward shift in the standing of emigration, was the basis of the ideology but there were other important features. Settlerism took two main shapes: formal and informal. The formal variant was produced by the upper and middle-classes for themselves and for the lower classes. The informal variant was produced by the lower classes for themselves alone, and is partially preserved in collections of immigrant letters back. Formal settlerism manifested itself in 'booster literature' or 'emigration literature': books, pamphlets, newspaper and journal articles, lectures, and advertisements. It had a rich prehistory, dating back to the origins of modern European settlement in the Americas. But it really exploded from 1815. It varied over time and space, yet remained broadly consistent throughout the long nineteenth century, and was common to both the British settlement colonies and the American West. The sheer scale was impressive—we must be talking about thousands of books, one of the largest genres in nineteenth-century English literature.[38]

Quantity was not matched by quality, and booster literature proved an easy target for the satire of historians and contemporaries alike. 'True, the bison are nearly extinct, but west of the Mississippi there are vast herds of white elephants, ready saddled, and awaiting the coming of gullible Easterners.'[39] There was a counter-current of anti-emigration literature, the 'Taken In' sub-genre. The New England press in the 1820s and 1830s specialized in woodcuts of the skeletons of horses with signs stating 'I

have been to Ohio' attached to them.[40] 'I also believed in "the sunny south as the land of promise, the land of plenty, and the land of hope",' wrote a failed New Zealand settler in 1887, 'but how different were the real facts!'[41] In the words of a Canadian folksong, 'A thousand liars well rewarded, went about with books/extolling the Northwest/and the excellence of Manitoba.'[42] Contemporaries were sceptical about booster literature; they understood that it was partisan and polemical, and this and its obvious tendencies to exaggeration have led some historians to underestimate its influence.[43] Like saturation or even subliminal advertising, booster literature could overwhelm or outflank qualms through the sheer volume of volumes and by masquerading as non-advertising. Booster books almost monopolized published information about emigration destinations. They segued imperceptibly into travel literature, official handbooks, history, geography, and even novels. If you wanted published information about emigration destinations, booster literature was not easy to avoid.

Booster literature had a paradise complex. It portrayed newlands as biblical Lands of Canaan, Lands of Goshen, and Gardens of Eden, and invoked secular paradises too: El Dorado, ripe for plunder, virtuous rural Arcadia, or more organized and urbanized Utopia proper—'The Garden of Eden to be sure, but with good town and suburban lots aplenty.'[44] 'References to the [American] West were often in paradisiacal terms' and this was also true of British Wests.[45] Saskatchewan was 'the last and greatest promised land'.[46] New Zealand booster books were entitled *The Land of Promise* and *An Earthly Paradise*.[47] Gold-rush Australia was 'an El Dorado and an Arcadia combined'.[48] Just how influential this nominal Utopianism was is hard to say. But it did connect the emigration decision to a vague yet powerful pre-existing package of hopes. Reference to biblical promised lands can seem a mere turn of speech to us today, but we need to bear in mind that the nineteenth century was still a biblical age. The Bible was the best-known source of metaphor, especially to the literate lower classes. Various secular Utopianisms were also on the rise in the nineteenth century, and here boosters also sought to exploit the spirit of the age. Some looked upward to heaven for their promised land; some looked backward to an idealized 'world we have lost'. Others looked forward, to a religious millennium or a socialist paradise on earth. Booster literature encouraged people prone to seek promised lands to look *outward* for them—to the settler newlands.

Formal settlerism offered particular paradises too. Those dangled before prospective migrants by New Zealand boosters were pretty much typical of at least the British West. In New Zealand, brides, even balding ones, would find their dreams fulfilled. After two years in the country, wrote a woman settler, 'my hair, from being thin and weak, is now so thick that I can scarcely bear its weight'. 'Fancy,' wrote another New Zealand woman, 'the mother of a [servant] woman I had for a month had a wooden leg, a son of 22, and six children, yet has just been married again! No-one need despair after that I think.'[49] The hopes and fears invoked could vary by class. Struggling British gentry were reminded of their fate if their capital eroded—they would go down a class, with all the peer sneers that this implied. In the newlands, capital went further and status was more cheaply maintained. 'What is to become of the children?' New Zealand boosters asked stay-at-homes, and American boosters also put this question.[50] Some New Zealand booster literature seemed to target moneyed gentry. 'Discourage anyone who has not some capital,' wrote one, 'there is no opening for a *poor* gentleman.'[51] Another let the cat out of the bag about his target market with the statement: 'in 1857, everybody has been to Rome'.[52]

British boosters might emphasize gentility more than Americans did, but both groups wanted moneyed migrants, and investors who would send their money without migrating themselves. Boom-time rates of return on investments in newlands were often higher than those prevailing in the oldlands, and this was played up. So were the risks, and this was played down. The sheer pace of boom-time growth guaranteed profits—'a natural law almost as certain as gravitation'.[53] Boosters did not mention busts. Most boosters also wanted common folk, even poor folk if they were moral, sober, and hardworking. 'An emigration of the poor certainly, *but not of the worthless poor.*'[54] The principle that it was impossible to be hard-working and deserving, yet destitute, was to hamper welfare provision throughout the Anglo-Wests for two centuries. What formal settlerism offered lower class folk was especially consistent: a freehold family farm. In Wakefieldian versions, emigrants were to achieve this only after a long term of wage work in the service of colonists. But even here the wage worker was a farmer in chrysalis. 'The great desire of all common emigrants is to obtain land of their own.' Like many historians, boosters believed 'this was the principal motive which impels him [the common man] to emigrate'.[55] This, though formal settlerism,

was a guarantee against socialist or unionist subversion in the newlands, which depended on having a permanent working class. Dangerous radicals should know that 'the steady labourer inevitably becomes the yeoman freeholder'.[56]

The desire for freehold farms was certainly a motive for the emigration of common folk but, as we saw in the last chapter, exclusive emphasis on it may be misplaced. Formal settlerism stressed self-sufficiency and the sanctity of the freehold, and held that all working emigrants could hardly wait to hew their yeoman-hold from the wilderness. Informally, settlers were often willing to compromise with leasehold and tenancy, which freed capital to develop the farm. They did not care much about self-sufficiency—the alleged 'desire to make their own consumer goods'.[57] They sought independence from masters, not markets. Informally, independence could come from a tavern, a store, or a carting business just as well as from a farm. The potential yeoman was sometimes reluctant to fling himself into the wilderness if conditions were not optimal. There were middle-class complaints about lower-class migrants hanging about in town, leaking rural virtue. When conditions were prime, aspirant yeomen were *more* impatient than formal settlerism prescribed. Wakefield wanted migrants to serve a substantial term as wage workers and servants while saving to obtain farms, hence his high price for land. Even in the Wakefieldian settlements of South Australia and New Zealand, migrants failed to oblige him, and moved too quickly onto farms. The yeoman motive was by no means absent in informal settlerism, but it was renegotiated, diluted, and coupled with other motivations less recognized by both formal settlerism and the subsequent historiography.

Informal emigration literature was produced by common folk for common folk. It included the oral communications of sailors, sojourners, and returned migrants but this is hard to access. Migrant letters to those back home survived better, and over the years thousands have been fully or partly published, both by contemporaries and historians. Boosters selected letters that supported their case. But the informal letter writers knew their audience better, and had a somewhat different appreciation of what types of persuasion would work for them, a somewhat different conceptual language. 'Tell little Adam,' wrote Alice Barlow to her English mother from the United States in 1818, 'if he was here, he would get puddings and pies every day.'[58] A letter back from Australia was no spelling lesson, but it did carry conviction: 'i am independent of the world for i work when i like

and i play if i like this is a comfort to be highly prized . . . this is trugh god being my witness.'[59]

An intense but qualified egalitarianism pervades English letters back. Class, the existence of masters and men, was accepted; but deference and condescension were emphatically rejected. Manual workers were more valued; labour had more dignity. There were far fewer of the trappings of inequality. 'Jack was as good as his master' in dress and address. Caps were less doffed; forelocks less tugged. 'Sirs' were rare; 'Misters' were mutual. 'Workmen are not afraid of their masters, they all seem as equals.'[60] 'You feel as good as your employer and on a par with them, saying what you like . . . every one is alike, master and man.'[61] 'Jack is as good as his master here. Masters are glad to get servants, and come to hire them; no running after masters.'[62] Much was made of the fact that masters worked with their men and mistresses with their maids. This might lead to closer supervision and therefore harder work, but it also raised the status of manual labour. 'The working class call no man master—indeed, they are all the working class—it is no uncommon thing to see a judge ploughing, or a general getting potatoes.'[63]

This was not a matter of full equality, but of avoiding rubbing people's faces in inequality. 'The man who is really your superior does not plume himself on being so.'[64] Domestic service was avoided where possible, and the word 'servant' was avoided like the plague. 'No white man or woman will bear being called servant . . . Your hirelings must be spoken to with Civility and cheerfulness.'[65] Perhaps the most consistent *cri de coeur* of the settler gentry, from North America in 1815 to Australasia in 1914, was the difficulty of obtaining and keeping deferential domestic servants. William Cobbett suggested that the aversion to the word 'servant' was peculiarly American, resulting from its association with slaves.[66] But the aversion was just as strong in New Zealand, where there had never been slavery—or convicts for that matter. There, as in North America, the English practice of calling permanent farm labourers 'farm servants' was quickly ditched.[67] Aversion to domestic service was not gradually acquired, but instant, and Cobbett was right about this. 'Imagine not that you will find English servants more submissive; liberty and equality are in the *atmosphere*: the English catch them, the moment they land.'[68]

Informal settlerism also stressed equality of dress, at least on Sundays; access to home ownership (not necessarily farm ownership); and access to riding horses, which were much more numerous in proportion to people

in settler destinations than in Britain. The right and capacity to hunt, shoot, and fish was another theme of letters back. 'I can go out with my gun, and shoot what I like, and no-one says where are you going? No game laws here!'[69] 'This is a fine country, and a free country; you can go where you like here, and no one to hinder; shoot anything as you see.'[70] 'My son James goes a hunting and shooting, and I can eat partridge as well as any knave in England.'[71] Formal settlerism also alluded to the fact that 'the sports of the field are free to all' but without anything like the same frequency or relish.[72] Letters back also placed great emphasis on the abundance of food, especially meat. 'Dear sister you know that we could hardly get a taste of meat in England, but now we can roast a quarter of meat.' 'We always buy a quarter or a half of meat, instead of a pound or two.'[73] 'We bought a QUARTER OF A COW at three farthings a pound.'[74] One might think that the prevalence of hunting made game the meat of choice; instead the emphasis was usually on prime cuts of butcher's meat, with cheaper cuts discarded. Emigrants to Canada in 1820 'gave meat to their cats and dogs that they once would have been happy to eat themselves'.[75] Emigrants to Australia in the 1850s played the same tune. 'Here is very great waste of beef and mutton, it being cheap and everyone wants the best joints.'[76] 'While I write, I have a fat sheep hanging up . . . and we actually throw to the dogs enough meat that would keep a family in England.'[77] There was more to this than the mere absence of hunger. We will see in Chapter 14 that prime meat had a special resonance in British culture, connoting substance and status. The symbolism was not lost on Lord Dalhousie, governor of Canada in the 1820s, who bemoaned the workers habit of eating 'beef steaks at breakfast, dinner, & supper', and linked it to the 'utmost American impudence. Every man . . . is laird here.'[78]

There was also the matter of how the meat was eaten. 'We do not have to take a piece of dry bread, in our pockets, and go to our 6d a day work here; but we go to eat with our master and mistress; and have the best the world can afford.' 'We do not sit under the hedge to eat a bit of bread and cheese, but go in doors, and have the best that the country affords.'[79] 'When I go to work for a man, I sit at the table with the family and Jack is as good as his master.'[80]

> They don't put up dinners in this Country, but they dine along with masters and the mistresses as you call them in England, but they will not be called

> so here, they are equals-like and if hired to anybody they call them their employers.[81]
>
> It is no use of high spirited farmers wishing to come out to this country; for they will not get their servants to wait upon them as at home, and to sit down a second table to eat their crumbs. The servant is made equal with his master, in all respects of that kind, and not treated . . . as dogs.[82]

This informal settlerism echoed some elements of a well-known English folk Utopianism: 'a vision, let us call it ''Merrie England'', in which squire, parson and people were locked together in an embrace of authority, deference and mutual dependency.'[83] Both 'Merrie England' and the settler destinations were alleged to deliver good food, contentment, and mutual respect between master and man. The two diverged on the acceptance of hierarchy. The exchange of paternalism for deference between master and man, prominent in at least middle-class constructions of 'Merrie England', was absent in informal settlerism.[84] The settler Utopia seems more akin to that amorphous and egalitarian English folk Eden identified by Patrick Joyce. 'What is evident' in English popular culture, argues Joyce, 'is the extraordinary force and longevity of the vision of a lost Eden.' Joyce examined a wide range of popular songs, verses and the like, and noted 'a Utopianism that irradiates the whole literature'. It aspired to 'justice and reconciliation', and was willing to tolerate 'high ups' as long as they 'do not put on airs and act as ordinary, decent folk'. Decent food, including prime meat, was a major symbol.[85] Other sources confirm that folk literature emphasized 'equal rights and equal laws'.[86]

Formal settlerism could handle workers enjoying prime cuts. It was less comfortable with the paucity of deference and patriotism. But most subversive of all informal settlerism's themes was the idea of abundance without work. Formal settlerism always stressed the need for hard work; informal settlerism emphasized that natural fertility and abundance diminished it. 'I cannot describe to you the ease in which every one seems to live.'[87] 'People get rich here without much trouble or exertion.' 'Every laboring man's house abounds with plenty.' 'The farmer reckons to work three months in the year.'[88] 'The people will not work, they can live with the greatest of ease and don't want to be rich.'[89] This was anathema to formal settlerism. In 1819, an emigrant's guide indignantly repudiated a periodical article which claimed that, on Prince Edward Island, 'industry is not required'; 'amusement is the sole duty of the farmer'; 'the poorest families will set down to a roast pig, wild ducks, and salmon, every day'.[90]

There was a kernel of truth in the popular myths of abundance, but it was temporary. On the settler frontier, virgin land, especially forested land freshly cleared by fire, was very fertile for the first few years—the 'virgin bonus'. Moreover, most frontier farms were surrounded by unoccupied land—a vast informal common—and livestock could make a good if semi-feral living on this. Both virgin fertility and informal commons diminished over time, but informal settlerism preferred to see them as permanent. In Illinois in 1818, claimed one letter back, most settlers 'cultivate but little land, but live principally on hunting, and breeding cattle and hogs; this is done with the greatest of ease, they being surrounded by land possessed of no-one'.[91] Samuel Crabtree wrote to his brother from Virginia in the same year along similar lines:

> I believe I saw more peaches and apples rotting on the ground than would sink the British fleet. I was at many plantations where they no more know the number of their hogs than myself. Sometimes a sow, having been two or three months in the woods, returns home with ten or twelve pigs.[92]

'Merrie England' myths, notions of better times in the English past, may also have had a kernel of truth. There is some evidence of higher meat consumption and less work for common people in England around 1700, 'The Pudding Time of the early eighteenth century'.[93] The urge to see settler newlands as places where common people could live as they allegedly once had in England may stem partly from this. Samuel Bolton wrote to his mother from America in 1818 castigating fellow-immigrants who pined for England. 'The ideots [sic] seem to have forgot all the misery they seen, and to remember nothing but the *songs* about roast beef.'[94] But others placed the 'Pudding Time' of 'Merrie England' further back, in the late middle ages, or before the 'Norman Yolk'. There is an echo of that oldest, most amorphous, and most low-class of Utopias—the Land of Cockaygne, '*the* popular or folk utopia', where omelets grew on trees and spit-roast pigs begged to be eaten. Here, abundance did not require work; consumption was not moderated by self-restraint. All were equal because everyone had all they wanted but, just in case, lords had to do seven years' penance in a pigsty before being permitted entry. 'It was a penance that the peasant had already performed.' Life in Cockaygne was 'like a perpetual wedding day'.[95] In Crabtree's Virginia, 'there is enough and to spare of everything a person could desire . . . the poorest families adorn the table three times a day like a wedding dinner'.[96] But, whatever its lineage, informal settlerism

was a pervasive and subversive creed, preaching egalitarianism in form if not content and leisure and other genteel practices such as hunting, as well as economic opportunity, for (white male) common folk.

I am unable to go into even this level of depth on non-English informal settlerism. The Catholic Irish may have had their own traditions of emigration; the Ulster Scots certainly did. Studies of Catholic emigration posit 'a culture of despair', but also a 'culture of hope'.[97] 'Children learn from their childhood that their destiny is America', and also learned that America was the place where 'the people eat meat every day'.[98] Scots informal settlerism seems similar to English. One 1820s letter back from a Scots migrant to North America claimed 'the tenantry are the gentlemen of the country. They pay no rent and there is no restriction on hunting.'[99] German and Scandinavian letters seem to reveal the same folk priorities. They tell of 'soil of amazing fertility', not needing the plow or the harrow. 'You can be sure of a good and abundant life, and that without too much work.' ''No-one must take off his hat'', was a phrase repeated over and over again by immigrants from nations throughout Europe.'[100] Much later in the century, middle-class Italians complained that 'men who come back from America walk through the streets as though they were our equals'.[101] Even the French in Canada, most reluctant of emigrants, 'took pride in their regular consumption of meat and white bread which few French peasants could afford... In contrast to their French relatives, the New French could afford horses, another cherished mark of higher status among peasants. Finally, the Canadian habitant enjoyed privileges of hunting and fishing.'[102] It seems the folk aspirations revealed by informal settlerism were widespread among European peasants. What the French, and the Italians before about 1880, lacked were strong links and easy transfers to settler newlands and, therefore, trusted letters back from them.

At first sight, the informal settlerism of native-born white Americans seems to differ quite markedly from that of the English. The food, the expected level of deference, and the capacity to ride, hunt, and fish were not bad back east, at least in rural districts. American letters back therefore tended not to bang these drums. The drum they did bang, even more than the British, was abundance, and its subversion of formal settlerism's insistence on success through hard work. California in 1848, before the gold rush, offered 'two to five crops from one sowing'.[103] Dakota promised 'land that when you tickle it with the plow... laughs with its abundance'.[104] In the 1830s, in the Old West, 'there is less need for labor

for actual support . . . the calculation is commonly made, that two days in a week contribute as much to support here, as in a whole week at the North.'[105] North Carolina emigrants wrote back from the West stressing 'the bountifulness of this country', and urging kin to join them out west where the soil was 'black and rich', and 'cattle need no feeding', 'I would all but laugh to see him plow them old worn out red fields.'[106] Another settler wrote home: 'the soil is as black as your hat and as mellow as a ash heep . . . If you, John, will come on, we can live like pigs in the clover.'[107] Where was formal settlerism's Protestant work ethic here? A key symbol of abundance was the giant vegetable. California featured 'cabbages seven feet wide, and onions 22 inches in circumference . . . a 3 year-old red beet that weighted 118 pounds . . . in addition to a tomato 26 inches in circumference'.[108] Its pumpkins weighed 200 lbs, its squashes an even healthier 265 lbs.[109] Oklahoma boosters in the 1890s carefully recorded a single vine that produced over a ton of pie melons.[110] A Nebraska booster lecturing in England waved a fourteen-foot corn stalk.[111] These mega-plants were real, but they were exceptional products of the virgin bonus, or special care, or selective breeding, presented as the norm. New Zealand and Tasmania, which made special claims to fertility to distinguish them from mainland Australia, shared the American addiction to giant vegetables.[112]

The American dislike of domestic service, or at least the term servant, was even stronger than that of transplanted Britons. 'White Americans simply would not be known as ''servants''.'[113] In striking contrast to the present, they did not like being tipped either. 'Today tipping is perhaps more entrenched in the US than in any other nation. Yet it flew in the face of supposedly American values.' According to some accounts there was 'no tipping in the United States prior to 1840'. As late as the 1900s, signs read 'No Tipping! Tipping is not American'; 'Tips and servility go together.' 'This tipping business is an English importation and an abomination', argued some Americans, 'democracy's deadly foe'. Some states allegedly had anti-tipping laws as late as 1909. The antagonism towards tipping is said to have waned from 1913, as Western settlement wound down.[114] The British West shared the revulsion towards tipping and its implied servitude, and the attitude still survives in New Zealand. It seems to have been more acute in the American West than the East, and some observers noted a greater degree of Western egalitarianism in general. 'Manners are . . . of the most unrestrained sort, and one accustomed to the conventions, and deferences, and distinctions, that have grown up even in our republican

cities, is apt to find himself annoyed and embarrassed.' 'A widely-diffused, deeply stamped spirit of equality and republicanism extends through the whole social frame of the northwest.'[115] 'There is more individuality, more freedom from conventional restraint, more independence in manners and opinions.'[116]

In contrast to many historians, 1830s American booster and social commentator Timothy Flint was not fooled by rational-choice theory. 'Very few, except the Germans, emigrate simply to find better and cheaper lands.' Others were influenced by poetry, dreams, and hopes. 'This influence of the imagination has no inconsiderable agency in producing emigration.'[117] One hundred and sixty years later a careful student of imagined Wests, Gerald Nash, concluded that 'the millennial vision of the West deserves greater emphasis, perhaps, than it has received from historians, especially those writing in a secular age'.[118] Utopian or not, settlerism was a powerful, even revolutionary, ideology, transforming the concept of emigration and giving the Anglo-world the human capital to rise. We will see in later chapters how the settler transition and mass transfer fed off each other in particular times and places. Settlerism and its relatives still pervade the ideologies of the Anglo newlands, and to some extent ricocheted back into the oldlands as well.

The settler transition, of course, took place in a wider context of ideological ferment, to which this book cannot do justice. The Enlightenment, the rise of science, the French, American, and Industrial Revolutions were all packed into the half-century around 1800. One key change was in perceptions of change itself: from something uncommon and usually bad to something that was common and usually good. This was reified into the pervasive idea of infinite Progress, as against the older, finite, 'rise and fall' variety. Ideas of individualism and self-improvement spread, sometimes preached to the lower orders from above and sometimes, perhaps, self-generated. Emigrants, by definition, were people who would not accept their lot. From this pressure-cooker emerged socialism, Chartism, communism and new forms of evangelism, trade unionism, Utopianism, and racialism, as well as settlerism.

Settler Utopianism may also have blurred, merged, or alternated with the religious variety. There seem to have been an intriguing relationship between new theologies and the new ideology of migration. From the 1790s to the 1840s, the United States went through a series of religious revivals, known as the 'Second Great Awakening', entangled with the rise of

a new Anglo-worldwide religion: Methodism. The revival involved a shift from a Calvinist idea of pre-determined salvation to an 'Arminian' (after the Dutch theologian Arminius) idea of self-determined salvation, with the latter more favourable to markets.[119] It may also have been more favourable to migration. Protestant non-conformists in general and Methodists in particular were extraordinarily prominent in migrations throughout the Anglo-world. Between 1845 and 1855, according to one migration scholar, two-thirds of British emigrants were non-conformist and 20 per cent Presbyterian, with only 12.6 per cent drawn from the Anglican majority.[120] Methodists featured large in Ontario and Australia in the booming 1830s and 1850s, as well as the American West.[121] 'Methodism was wholeheartedly a revivalist movement' and, like emigration, 'the point of the revivals was to stimulate personal change.'[122] Yet there are some signs of an *inverse* correlation between settlement booms and religious Utopianism. One scholar shrewdly associates increased migration with a 'secularization of hope'.[123] It may be that religious and secular Utopianism, and migration and millennialism, were both partners and alternatives. Between the 1830s and the 1850s, western New York and Pennsylvania plus the older-settled parts of the Old Northwest were key sources of migrants further west. This region was also a crucible of religious revivalism, the 'Burned-Over District', and hosted large crops of small Utopian communities. In the 1830s and 1850s, boom decades when westward emigration was high, only eleven and twenty-two such communities were formed. In the bust-phase 1840s, on the other hand, millennial movement surged and no less than sixty little Utopias emerged, perhaps substituting in some way for the temporarily diminished attractiveness of the big Utopia out west.[124]

Settlerism, then, was a vague but powerful ideology of migration that emerged on both sides of the Atlantic around 1815. It converted emigration within the Anglo-world from an act of despair that lowered your standing to an act of hope that enhanced it. It transferred a valued identity across oceans and mountains—not simply an identity as Britons or Americans, but as virtual metropolitans, full citizens of a first-world society. Pre-existing Utopian ideas, religious or secular, collectivized hopes and packaged aspirations in a way that boosters and the writers of letters back could more easily invoke. Settlerism was not necessarily irrational in its own terms, but it clearly transcended the mundane pursuit of economic maximization. Settlers wanted a life as well as a living. Settlerism had two important relatives. One, a boom mentality, is discussed in the next chapter. The

other was settler populism, a political creed that proved to be a brake on, and sometimes rival of, elite rule throughout the Anglo-world and throughout the nineteenth century, from Andrew Jackson in the United States in the 1820s to the radical Australasian governments of a century later. Settler populism normally accepted elite rule, but insisted that (white male) common folk had rights too. They should participate in the selection of which elite faction should rule, through a wide manhood franchise. Settler populism demanded limits on class deference and class selfishness, though not necessarily on the existence of class itself. It held the ruling elite responsible for maintaining a healthy flow of opportunities for settler lives and livings, and was therefore most dangerous to the establishment during busts.

The Cloning System

While the ideologies discussed in this chapter and the technologies discussed in the last were the prime causes of the Settler Revolution, they did not operate in a political or institutional vacuum. There is no point in merely inverting the pendulum of excessively institutional explanations for the Anglo explosion. Settlerism, settler populism, and mass transfer buttressed, and were buttressed by, two pairs of Anglophone institutions. The first pair consisted of representative assemblies and the common law. It derived from Old Britain, and was successfully transferred to North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and to Australasia in the nineteenth. The second pair consisted of a wide franchise among white men and a strong tendency towards political decentralization, replicating or 'cloning' small colonial polities rather than extending large ones. This second pair was *not* British, but neo-British. In 1800, only about 3 per cent of British men had the vote, rising to about 20 per cent in England and 14 per cent in the UK as a whole with the reforms of 1832. After the reforms of 1867, about one-third of British men had the vote, rising to two-thirds by 1885. Contemporary white male suffrage in the United States, especially the West, and in the British settlement colonies was much higher than this.[125] The trend in Britain, with the union with Ireland in 1801, was towards greater centralization rather than decentralization. Yet cloning and the wide franchise were characteristic of burgeoning nineteenth-century Anglo newlands. They were less a product of British traditions than of

expansion itself, notably the competitive expansion stemming from the emergence of the politically-disunited Anglo-world in 1783.

As we saw in Chapter 1, decentralized settlements and contract colonization were initially standard practice for the great European settling societies. Iberian and Russian monarchs then succeeded in re-asserting central authority, whereas British monarchs did not. While Spain controlled its 10 million or so American subjects of the eighteenth century through two or three giant vice-regalities, extending them to incorporate new territories like Florida and Louisiana, Britain ruled its 2 million or so American subjects through thirty separate colonial governments, most with some degree of self-rule. Representative assemblies were granted, beginning with Virginia in 1619. Some British colonies were proprietary, owned by elite groups or individuals, and some proprietors might have preferred to avoid elected assemblies, or at least to restrict the franchise. But the British tradition of representation combined with two other factors to thwart them. One was relatively easy access to land ownership, which multiplied freeholders and therefore voters. The other was the need to attract settlers in competition with other colonies. 'In order to entice increasingly reluctant emigrants they had to offer ''concessions and agreements'' stipulating generous terms on which they would grant land and a share in government.'[126] 'In order to attract new settlers, colonial proprietors found it expedient to promise political and religious freedom.'[127] Similarly, British colonies found that 'property rules mimicking the common law were good for business. They attracted emigrants.'[128] The notion that the common law was an American birthright too was 'hardening into orthodoxy during the 1720s and 1730s'.[129]

There was no guarantee that all these trajectories would continue after American independence in 1783, even in the American West. Of the thirteen American colonies, seven had claims to potentially rich lands in the west. Extension west, as with 'Greater Virginia', rather than the creation of new and equal states, was a real possibility. Virginia's claims extended to eight future states. 'There was potential for an empire of Virginia.'[130] But the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, and the debates foreshadowing it from 1784, ensured that the template of American expansion was to be cloning rather than extension. Some founding fathers were motivated by convictions that new settlements should be equal with the old, to avoid fresh rebellions, and that republics should be small. The resentments of those states without western lands, and the desire to use the sales of western

lands to defray the costs of the War of Independence were also factors. The federal government offered to take over state war debts as compensation for western claims, and eventually these were all abandoned, mostly between 1781 and 1790, though Georgia held out to 1802, thereby enjoying a brief career as the largest state of the United States.[131]

The British had only four North American colonies left in 1783, Quebec, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, and only the last two had representative assemblies. American independence tempted some to end the experiment in colonial freedoms. But Britain now had to match American freedoms to attract and retain settlers, starting with the 50,000 American Loyalists who moved north. Governor Haldimand was shocked when the Associated Loyalists insisted upon 'a form of government as nearly similar as possible to that which they Enjoyed in the Province of New York'.[132] The British authorities quickly overcame their shock and carved out three new provinces for the Loyalists between 1784 and 1791—New Brunswick, Ontario, and Cape Breton Island—and conceded elected representative assemblies to the first two, as well as to Quebec. Legend associates Canadian self-government with the Durham Report of 1839, but this view has been convincingly debunked. 'Durham did not invent the idea of colonial self-government.'[133] Immediately after American independence, the British 'accepted that Imperial rule must bear lightly on the colonials' and conceded 'a very considerable amount of self-government'.[134] The new Canadian colonies were quite attractive to 'Late Loyalist' American settlers in the 1790s and 1800s, which in turn was an incentive for the United States to keep cloning new states and lowering the barriers to naturalization and the vote. Seven new states were created between 1812 and 1821, 'with constitutions that were ultra democratic by prevailing standards'.[135] If movement up the stages towards statehood was slow, 'territorial governors were denounced as being as tyrannical as royal governors'.[136]

This bidding war between, and within, the rival flanks of the new Anglo-world helped stimulate further growth of cloning and the wide franchise, as did the egalitarian imperatives of settlerism itself. Eventually, the Anglo-Wests had fifty-one separate polities—states, territories, colonies, and provinces—plus numerous failed entities such as New Zealand's ten provinces. Even the threefold staging of cloning was similar on the British and American flanks. In the first stage, a governor appointed by Washington or London would rule the colony or territory. In the second stage, an elected

assembly would share power with the governor. In the third stage, the American territory became a full state, while the British colony acquired full 'responsible government'—government by ministers responsible to the assembly. The influence of the American Northwest Ordinance on the British settlement colonies may have been underestimated.

Cloning could produce political units too small for viability, but in some respects it was intrinsically growth-friendly in settler contexts. Old colonies were reluctant to use their revenues or borrowings to develop frontiers distant from the original centre of settlement. If the new settlements split off into a separate polity, they could tax and borrow for their own development. Migrants and money were attracted by 'boosting', and cloning gave new settlements a separate brand to boost. When it became a state in 1821, 'Missouri's new status made St Louis and its hinterland more attractive to immigrants and capital.'[137] The Australasian colonies found that 'to possess a parliament house and a civil service was to possess the hormones of growth'.[138] Representative government and the common law may also have stimulated growth. Assemblies usually consisted mainly of elites, but they did broaden consent, support local interests, and give white male majorities a voice through the vote. The common law protected property rights, which encouraged trade in land, and facilitated borrowing and repayment. Whether English common law was particularly good at protecting property rights is another matter—European civil law and Chinese law were good at this too. Familiar law encouraged metropolitan investment in, and migration to, colonies. French law might have done just as well in this respect if the money and migrants had been French, but they were not. English trial by jury may not have delivered better justice, but it came from your peers as well as your rulers, and so may have supported a freeholder's sense of full citizenship more than other types of law. With this exception it tended to be the *familiarity* of institutions, more than any intrinsic superiority, which made them attractive.

Perhaps the most important effect of cloning and its associated institutions, however, was to underwrite settlerism's transfer of metropolitan status. The law 'functioned as a vivid and symbolically powerful signifier of the emigrant's deepest aspirations to retain their identities as members of the European societies to which they were attached'.[139] 'Missourians should think of themselves as full-fledged citizens of the union, entitled to all the rights and privileges that other American Citizens possessed.'[140]

The convict colonies of Australasia were naturally slower to achieve representation than North America, but they too were quick to cloning in the narrower sense of separation. Greater New South Wales was the original template of settler Australasia, but cloning took over from 1825, and correlates closely with the mass advent of free settlement. Tasmania was separated from New South Wales in 1825, New Zealand in 1841, Victoria in 1850, and Queensland in 1859. Tasmania and New South Wales gained non-elected settler representatives in their Legislative Councils in the 1820s, elected ones in the 1840s, and full responsible government in the 1850s. Institutions did matter. They contributed significantly to the explosive growth of the Anglo-world in the long nineteenth century. But they mattered most when they converged with other historical determinants such as the rise of mass transfer and the new ideology of settlerism.

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6

Colonizations

The convergence of the birth of the Anglo-world, the rise of mass transfer, and the settler transition explain *why* the Settler Revolution occurred when it did, and why it was Anglo-prone. We have also seen that actual shape of the Anglo explosion was not one of steady growth, but a roller-coaster pattern of boom, bust, and export rescue—no less than twenty regional rounds of them. This was *how* the Settler Revolution unfolded. This chapter probes deeper into the booms, busts, and export rescues, and tries to integrate our conception of them with our understanding of the rise of mass transfer and the settler transition. All these factors operated at two levels, general and particular. In general, they occurred throughout and beyond the Anglo-world, between 1815 and the 1920s. But particular times, particular places, and particular histories also experienced their booms and busts, their mass transfers and settler transitions. How do we integrate the general and the particular? How do we place the rollicking Settler Revolution in its context—what was happening before the first bust and after the last export rescue? How do we place economic booms, busts, and export rescues in their wider historical contexts—cultural, social, ethnic, and international? How do we flesh out the economic skeleton into a more human whole? This chapter seeks to pull together its predecessors into a useable model, one that Part II will test against the actual cases. To do this, we have to broaden our conceptions of boom, bust, and export rescue and translate them into the vexed language of colonization.

Settler Colonization: A Typology

'Colonization' has come to have at least two meanings: the subjugation of distant peoples, and the reproduction of one's own people through

far-settlement. It is the second, older, meaning that is the main focus here. For our purposes, reproductive colonization also implies a continuing connection between source and settler societies, oldlands and new. If economic and cultural links are strong enough, the connection need not be political—it is compatible with nominal independence. Nor does colonization in our sense necessarily imply the exploitation or supine subordination of settlers. With these cautions in mind, we can posit four types, or stages, of colonization: incremental colonization, explosive colonization, recolonization, and decolonization. Each type involved a distinctive kind of link with oldlands.

To about 1800, all settling societies practiced incremental or 'normal' colonization. Incremental colonies varied hugely; some stemmed from a single foundation, others were gradually reinforced. Some were colonies of colonies, and still others were side-effects of trade networks, strategic bases, or penal settlements. But they did share some limitations. Subsistence farming was important. Apart from highly specialized sugar regions, even plantations produced most of their own food. Unless they had indigenous majorities, like Mexico City, towns were small, few, and relatively slow-growing. New York and Philadelphia each had only 12,000 people in 1750, when the former town was 125 years old.[1] Incremental colonies faced outwards across the sea to their oldlands; the interior was the *back*-country. Links with the oldland were important but limited, normally amounting to the irregular visits of small sailing ships. *Mass* transfer, of people, ideas, money and bulky goods, did not exist. Above all, the pace of demographic and economic growth was limited, though as noted in Chapter 3 contemporaries sometimes considered it to be high. Growth rates varied, but the upper limit was a little over 3 per cent a year, which doubled a population in a quarter-century. There was nothing 'wrong', faulty, or retarded about incremental colonies. They could and did produce large, complex, and culturally rich societies; and they had long been the standard form of far-settlement. But they grew relatively slowly.

Incremental colonization was good enough for everyone until 1815, and for most non-Anglo settler societies thereafter. From 1815, however, Anglo settler societies experienced their series of booms, doubling populations in ten years, not twenty-five, and spreading far and wide across North America, Australasia, and Southern Africa. This was not simply a matter of economic and demographic growth and development, however fast.

It was also a process of societal reproduction, territorial expansion, and the sweeping aside of precursors, which was often bloody. We can call it 'explosive colonization', of which economic booms were an important part but not the whole. Now, mass transfer made its appearance, but still with constraints, emphasizing value rather than volume. It was good at the large-scale transfer of people, money, information, and ideas, but not good at transporting vast quantities of bulky goods. Massive boom-time local demand, growth through growth, was the main economic game. Money and migrants streamed in from the oldlands, namely Britain and the Eastern states of the United States. But the metropolis often seemed to have little control over the process. Newlanders did not beg for oldland support. They demanded it. Exploding newlands were strange places—rough, raw, and ruthless but dynamic. They featured a frenetic mood, an optimistic ideology, and bold prophecies about great futures, including parity with or even superiority to the oldland. The shift from incremental to explosive colonization was ideological as well as economic, and social, political, and cultural to boot.

Explosive colonization always ended with a bang, usually a big one, and the third type of colonization emerged. With the bust, grand dreams of great independent futures faded, growth slowed, and export rescue eventually took hold. Now the mass transfer of *volume* cut in. The physical links between oldlands and their Wests improved and thickened into virtual bridges—hundreds of large ships, sailing or steaming regularly; whole systems of long-range canals; whole systems of trunk railroads. Newland economies were reorganized to supply long-range exports—wood, wool, cotton, and food—to the oldlands in vast quantities. Staples exports now replaced growth itself as the main economic game. Distance was transcended, oldland and newland economies adapted to fit each other, and the Anglo-Wests became the virtual hinterlands of the great oldland cities, London and New York. Economic staples flowed one way, from newlands to old; cultural staples and manufactures flowed the other way. The relationship between oldland and new tightened, against the grain of expectations about the steady emergence of independence or parity. Collective identities shared by oldland and new strengthened along with economic re-integration, though the one did not necessarily determine the other. We can call this process 'recolonization'. It too was a multi-dimensional shift with political, social, and cultural aspects. Recolonization meant that the Anglo Settler Revolution was not only a massive expansion

but also a process of reintegration. Colonizing forces exploded outward with unprecedented velocity in the nineteenth century, but instead of fragmenting into the independent nations of Spanish American reality and British Dominion mythology, they were then reeled back, re-secured firmly to the metropolis by recolonization.

Explosive colonization followed by recolonization produced the enormous yet well-integrated greater United States of the late nineteenth century. To the 1890s, Britain acted as an additional oldland for the United States, supplementing the Northeast's supply of migrants, money, and markets to the American West and so to some extent 'recolonizing' the United States. From about 1900, the American oldland ceased to need this supplementation, and 'decolonization' from Britain accordingly took place. On the British flank of the Anglo-world, recolonization produced a strange transnational entity best known as 'Greater Britain'—Old Britain plus the Dominions, white denizens of the Dominions saw themselves as virtually metropolitan, co-owners rather than subjects of the British Empire. Greater Britain had no formal existence—except briefly as the 'White Commonwealth'—and it was geographically fragmented. But it was economically and culturally integrated through recolonization to the point where it was virtually a second United States. Decolonization here consisted in the demise of recolonization in the mid-twentieth century and the emergence of real as against nominal Dominion independence. Incremental colonization and decolonization are important as the bookends of this typology, and of this book. But it is the middle two types, explosive colonization and recolonization—together 'hyper-colonization'—that are the heart of it.

We can never, of course, ignore the other meaning of colonization—the displacement of precursor peoples. Reproductive colonizations of whatever kind very seldom took place in a vacuum. The displacement of indigenous peoples by settlers is a tragic tale, and is still often presented as a steady and inevitable process. Some indigenous peoples, particularly those with dense coastal, urban, or island populations, were so devastated by disease that they did fade before European settlement, though seldom without a fight. But others, particularly low-density, mobile, inland populations, suffered less immediately from disease and learned to cope with Europe. They raided it, traded with it, fought for it and against it, and stubbornly declined to melt to plan like 'snow before the sunshine'. We will see in later chapters that the native peoples of New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Argentina,

Siberia, and to some extent Canada all displayed this kind of resilience and adaptability, and that this was also true in the American West. These peoples could cope with normal European colonization; it was *explosive* colonization that proved too much for them. Even then, they did not go down without a struggle and, in case after case, settlement booms correlated with climactic indigenous resistance, often pan-tribal. The history of the American Old West, whose semi-boom in the 1790s and first full boom in the 1810s were outlined in Chapter 3, fits this pattern.

In eastern North America, the initial ravages of disease weakened the coastal Indian tribes. They had lost most of their land by about 1720, though not without some fierce resistance. Further inland, Indian groups adapted to interaction with incremental colonization. They traded with Europeans, played them off against each other, and fought for them as well as against them, sometimes in pan-tribal alliances. Successful groups included the Iroquois, Shawnee, and Miami in the north, and the Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole in the south. The Iroquois Confederation sometimes allied with the settlers against other Indians and the French. In New York around 1700, they were described as subjects only when out of earshot, otherwise as allies. Other groups specialized in resistance. The Ottawa chief Pontiac led a northern alliance in 1763–5 that killed 2,000 whites.[2] The campaign eventually failed, but the Indians then utilized the Anglophone in-fighting of 1775–83 to 'regain considerable power'. A recent study refers to the 'remarkable military success of Indians in the American Revolution'.[3] Other research suggests that the eighteenth-century decline in these 'woodland Indian' populations was modest, or even that numbers were stabilizing around 1770, presumably due to increased immunity.[4] The nominal area of the new United States in 1790 was 900,000 square miles, but almost half of this was unceded Indian land and 'the actual American hold . . . was minimal at best and non-existent over much of it'.[5]

In 1790, the US government tried to implement its nominal control of the Old Northwest in the face of an Indian alliance under the Miami chief, Little Turtle. An army of 1,400 men marched in, but was defeated. In 1791, a larger army tried again, and was routed, losing 918 killed and wounded, compared to Indian casualties of 61. 'Never before or after did the US Army suffer a greater defeat by the Indians.' In 1794 a third American army, this time of 5,000 troops, did manage to defeat Little Turtle. The 'Battle of Fallen Timbers' was 'little more than a hard-fought skirmish', but after five years of warfare the Indians were starving, and in 1795 they

agreed to a treaty that deprived them of some of their lands.[6] Further south, a Cherokee group known as the Chickamauga were defeated in 1794 by the Kentucky settlers, whose numbers tripled in the 1790s.[7] After a lull in the 1800s, conflict recommenced in the 1810s. A Shawnee-centred alliance led by Tecumseh joined the British in the War of 1812 and in the capture of Detroit and 2,500 American soldiers. In late 1813, the fortunes of war reversed, and the Indians and British were defeated by the Americans. Tecumseh was killed, and the United States at last controlled the Old Northwest. In the South, a similar series of events took place a little later, 1813–18, with a formidable Creek-centred group being eventually defeated by Andrew Jackson after bitter fighting.

Between 1794 and 1818, then, the tide turned against the eastern Indians, who had previously survived two centuries of European contact and settlement. One might attribute this to the withdrawal of the British from the struggle after 1814, and no doubt this was a factor. But so, foreshadowed by the semi-boom of the 1790s, was the emergence of a new form of settlement: explosive colonization, There were seven Indian–American battles in the 1790s, and none in the 1800s decade. There were thirty-three in the booming 1810s, virtually none in the busted 1820s, and sixty-three in the booming 1830s. There were fifty-three in the 1840s, a mixed boom–bust decade, and then 190 in the booming 1850s.[8] Explosive colonization changed the nature of the problem facing indigenous peoples from a scale that they could often handle to a scale that they could not. It was decisive in indigenous histories as well as settler histories, which is all the more reason to try to understand it.

Explosive Colonization

Explosive colonization was a remarkable phenomenon—human history's most rapid form of societal reproduction. It created the massive American and British Wests in little more than a century. Long-lived pioneers could and did stand in places that they had known as empty tracts fifty years earlier and watch great cities teem around them. Contemporaries compared the system's transformative power to that of a magic wand, creating instant civilization from the wilderness. Reflecting on the boom of the 1830s in Canada and the United States, Henry Dearborn wrote: 'We are witnessing the most sublime spectacle that ever attracted the wondrous gaze of

philosophy. A movement of civilization as startling and momentous as one of those earthquake convulsions, which change the entire geology of the earth.'[9] Explosive colonization was indeed earthshaking; it was also frenetic, frenzied, and ruthless—too hot for tamer retrospects to handle. It became a pale shadow of itself in most histories of particular settler societies. At the general level, explosive colonization was too broad for most historical packages—national, continental, even oceanic—to capture. Yet, from Ohio in the 1810s to Western Australia in the 1900s its fundamental characteristics were not just similar; they were the same.

The Anglo newlands varied from the sub-Arctic to the sub-tropical, but early booms did have some geographic characteristics in common. Until the mass advent of trunk rail, 1850s–80s depending on the region, water provided local and regional as well as transoceanic transport. The Tasman Sea linked New Zealand and the eastern Australian colonies more than it separated them. This was also true of the North American Old West, where the St Lawrence, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi Rivers system stood in for the Tasman. South Africa came late to explosive colonization partly because it lacked navigable rivers and large coastal indentations. Early Anglo booms preferred water-linked groups of newlands adjacent to an older colony, an incremental base. As we have seen, sailing ships were not good at the mass transfer of livestock or plants, and wagon transport was not very good at the latter either.[10] Early explosive colonization therefore required a build-up of livestock and seed-stock in a pre-existing nearby reservoir. Thus it was sheep from New South Wales, not Britain, that stocked Queensland, Victoria, and New Zealand and horses from Ohio and Kentucky, not New York and New England, that stocked the American West. 'The original type of the horses of Ohio have been diffused all over the great West.'[11] The incremental base could also pioneer adaptations to local conditions, and a busted newland could supplement the flow of migrants to a booming one. It was therefore water-linked constellations of colonies that were the most explosive. This factor helps explain the lateness of booms in isolated Western Australia and British Columbia, each of which languished in the incremental phase until the late 1880s despite much earlier foundations.

Where these geographic prerequisites were met, booms in particular newlands were triggered by particular upturns in mass transfer and by a local settler transition. Transport from the oldland improved, due to general factors such as the peace bonus of 1815 or to local factors such

as the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, which linked New York to the Great Lakes. Australia's first boom began in 1828, after improved knowledge of prevailing winds cut sailing time from Britain and the East India Company's monopoly began to crumple. Missouri's second great boom began with the establishment of 'efficient packet lines [of steamboats] from St Louis founded in 1845'.[12] Immigrants ceased to trickle and began to pour. The beginning of a boom also featured a sudden sprouting of the vectors of the mass transfer of 'software': banks, newspapers, and post offices. Early boosters strove to raise the profile of their unknown newland in the minds of potential migrants and investors, or to change its image from negative to positive. Newspapers, whose presses often also produced books and pamphlets, were prominent. 'A good editor devoted his attention to booming the town and surrounding land . . . and to spoofing the enterprises of neighboring towns.'[13] We will see that the 'Great American Desert' of the Great Plains, the Australian 'sheepwalk populated by nomadic burglars', the Cannibal Isles of New Zealand, and the Arctic wastes of Western Canada were all conceptually transformed into settler paradises. Boosters might be oldland promoters or pioneer newlanders; boosting worked best when the two were allied, and when they in turn were allied to an authenticating flow of letters back from ordinary settlers, which in turn required mail services. Steps in cloning helped achieve local transitions. The separation of a new territory or colony from an older one provided a new brand to boost. The advent of representative assemblies promised that citizenship would not be lost—and that the newland itself could borrow oldland money for development.

It was the interplay of these transfers and transitions that actually triggered booms, in a process akin to the deliberate lighting of a huge fire in damp and windy conditions. The spark, in the form of aspirant boosters was more or less a constant. Most exploding newlands either went through an incremental stage themselves or had a nearby incremental base. They therefore had ambitious pre-boom settlers who were keen to encourage the maximum possible levels of investment and migration to raise the value of their own property and guard against the awful possibility that they had thrown away their own lives and fortunes. But these sparks needed a fairly full set of different types of tinder to achieve combustion: an improvement in transport; crops of banks, newspapers, and post-offices; and a local settler transition, with some cloning to buttress it. One or two of these combustibles were not enough, but once you had something

close to the full set the combustibles nudged each other along. Better transport might encourage more migration; more migration might lead to cloning, which might in turn encourage investment. One factor might arrive first—usually the early boosters—but precedence was less important than the presence and interaction of the full set, and the operation of a cause–effect spiral. The process is traced in detail in Chapter 8 in the case of one of the earliest and smallest Anglo booms: in Van Diemen's Land, or Tasmania, from 1828.

The Progress Industry and its Allies

Fuelling the flames once the fire had started was a diverse but interacting complex of economic activities that lay at the heart of each Anglo boom. These activities were all centred on growth and development. They included the attraction, transport, supply, and support of immigrants; the provision of easy credit; speculative markets which enhanced expectations, prices and investment; and the rapid creation of towns, farms, and transport infrastructure. Contemporaries described the collective effect of these activities as 'Progress', and 'the progress industry' is a useful generic term for them. Most components are well known to historians. But few grasp that the progress industry was a motley whole, and that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts.

The most obvious element of the progress industry was the rapid construction of transport systems: roads, bridges, canals, river-works, harbours, and railroads. This was known as 'public works' in Australasia and 'internal improvements' in the United States, but government borrowing or land subsidies featured large in both—a fact obscured in the United States by the indirect role of federal government and the sometimes-forgotten role of state and municipal governments.[14] Public or private, transport projects were generally funded by vast oldland loans or bond issues, but most other inputs were locally derived: manpower, work animals, food for both, and raw materials such as wood. Such projects therefore had a double effect on newland economies. Once completed, they facilitated communications and access to markets. But they were also valuable as business-boosters during the process of construction. It was not merely that a dozen railroads in 1857 ran to and from Chicago, but that they were partly built *by* Chicago, and so helped build it. In this latter, business-boosting sense, roads, canals, or railroads which proved to be

unprofitable, or were duplicated by local rivalries, were not wasted. In the 1830s, three different Lake Erie towns succeeded in persuading the Ohio Canal Board to make them termini of the same canal.[15] This may have tripled the cost, and cut efficiency by two-thirds, but it also tripled the Progress—the farm, manufacture, and labor markets generated by canal construction.

It is not easy now to appreciate the sheer scale of the transport component of the progress industry in its contexts. Indiana's state government had contracted debts of $14 million for canal building by 1843—about seven times its total tax revenue for the period 1833–43.[16] In the 1850s, Western American states spent $370 million on rail, as much as the rest of the country combined and a far higher rate per capita.[17] Some 140,000 labourers were at work building these lines in 1859, 'and earlier in the decade, still more', and another 85,000 men were operating them.[18] Rail construction in Upper Canada in the 1850s may have directly occupied as much as 15 per cent of the male workforce—not counting the people who lived by servicing and supplying the rail camps. In the earlier Upper Canadian boom of the late 1820s and 1830s, the local government spent £2.75 million on transport works, mainly canals, while the British government spent £4 million. This spending—without counting the rest of the progress industry—substantially exceeded the total value of wheat and timber exports combined.[19] In Australia and New Zealand in the 1870s and 1880s railway construction, largely state-funded, comprised around half of all capital formation, and was pushed ahead regardless of such minor matters as profits and efficiency.[20]

Another element of the progress industry was the supply of money and credit, mainly by banks. Bank buildings were designed to inspire confidence—they, rather than churches, were the temples of explosive colonization. Oldland banks tried to be more cautious than their newland cousins, but often found that their newland employees had been infected by the local 'boom mentality', discussed in the next section. 'Woe to the director who did not extend credit freely and "equally".'[21] Speculative markets in land were important. You could not trigger a boom simply by giving away land. Booming newlands featured intensive speculation in land and a rapid rise in land values. Land speculators, especially absentee ones, were often roundly condemned in settler legend, yet 'the typical citizen was a speculator'.[22] Boom-time spasms of speculation were by no means restricted to rural land—indeed, it was often the urban land market

that was most active. There was also intensive speculation in mines and business. Nor was this super-speculation restricted to the American West. In the words of an 1855 observer in Australia:

> The Melbournians, from some cause or other, have shown themselves from the beginning of their brief history, a most mercurial race—the maddest speculators in the world. At the slightest touch of prosperity, up they go beyond the clouds, and if they met the man-in-the-moon in their flight, he would never convince them that they must descend again—till they actually fell.[23]

It seems to me that the key was not so much an Anglo differential in the commodification of land—other peoples also had active real estate markets—but a more pervasive speculative spirit, discussed in the next section.[24]

Huge inflows of oldland money funded these speculations and public works. Among the most consistent identifiers of booming newlands is the excess of imports, of both goods and capital, over exports. As we have seen, the first American boom of 1815–19 drew in $126 million of overseas money, mainly British; those of the 1830s and 1850s drew in even more. Between 1865 and 1914, Britons invested a further $5.2 billion in the United States.[25] Not all these billions went west, but on the other hand a vast amount of additional Northeastern money did go west. Britain funded its own Wests even more generously in proportion to population. New Zealand acquired about $336 million in its boom era, 1850–86; Australia, $1.2 billion between 1861 and 1891; and Canada, almost $3 billion by 1914.[26] The patterns of boom and bust can be read from trade statistics. At the broadest level, we can very roughly map the eras in which booms predominate. The United States normally imported more goods than it exported until 1873, New Zealand until 1886, Australia until 1891, and Canada until 1913. Until these years—staples theorists may have to read this twice—these economies were primarily import driven. The pattern holds good at lower levels of generalization. While there were exceptions, such as gold exports in gold-rush regions, imports of goods and capital normally greatly exceeded exports in each newland in each boom, often by a factor of two to one. Exports might also grow, but much more slowly and they often stayed static or even dropped because the booming local market competed for goods, labour, and investment. Imports would then plummet with the bust, often creating an export surplus—notionally

a healthier balance of trade. But the surplus was achieved less by rising exports than by falling imports.

The first American boom drew in a massive excess of imports over exports of $187 million in five years. The bust of 1819 then halved imports by 1821. In America's second boom, imports increased around 150 per cent, 1830–6, but then halved by 1843. Exports ran at about two-thirds the level of imports during the boom, but dipped much less during the bust, yielding an export surplus for most of the 1840s. During later busts, from 1857, as the United States economy grew in size and complexity and provided more of its own goods, bust-time falls in imports were less severe, at around 20 per cent from peak to trough, but they are still readily discernible.[27] If we could narrow these statistics to booming Western states, and include imports from the East, the pattern would be very much sharper. The imports and exports of cities give an indication of this. Philadelphia's exports to the West were four times the value of its imports in 1816 and seven times the value in 1837—both boom years.[28] Cincinnati imported $1.62 million worth of goods in 1818, at the peak of a boom. The figure collapsed over two-thirds to $0.5 million during the bust year of 1819.[29] The same thing happened in the British West, but here sub-national statistics are easier to come by. Between 1827 and 1840, during eastern Australia's first boom, imports to New South Wales and Tasmania each increased about ninefold, then came crashing down with the bust of 1842. In 1844 they were less than half the 1840 figure in Tasmania and barely a third in New South Wales.[30] The South African port of East London, founded in 1847, boomed in the 1870s as an inlet for the Kimberley diamond fields. Its imports increased tenfold between 1869 and 1882, to £2.1 million, then collapsed with a bust to £571,000 by 1886. Exports grew modestly throughout, running at about a quarter of imports during the boom but pulling ahead after the bust.[31]

Imports of capital followed a similar pattern to imports of goods, and so did imports of people. Immigration was intriguingly sensitive to busts; inflows of people fell even more sharply than inflows of goods. The American busts of 1837 and 1857 halved immigration within a year, and the 1818–19 fall was even sharper.[32] Sharp falls in later bust years can be documented in the American West, and throughout the British West. Many pre-date trans-Atlantic telegraph: clearly prospective immigrants had their ear to the ground as far as news of their preferred newland was concerned. Confirmation of this comes from a recent comparison

of German, Irish, and English migration to the United States in the 1850s. In 1853–5 there was an outburst of American nativist antagonism to Irish and German, but not English, immigration, associated with the 'Know Nothing' populist movement. German and Irish, but not English, immigration, therefore diminished sharply 1854–5, before recovering with the decline of the Know Nothings in 1856. With the crash of 1857, the inflow of all three groups halved within the year.[33] In the 1850s, despite the absence of trans-Atlantic telegraph, ordinary people in Ireland, Germany, and Britain were listening very carefully to the news from America. The same applied to Australia in the 1880s. Emigrant sensitivity to the difference between booming and busted newlands can be read from inquiries and applications to the Emigration Information Office in London. In 1887, just-busted South Australia garnered 1.7% of inquiries, and 0.9% of applications for assistance to emigrate. Booming Queensland, though younger and similar in population, attracted 11.8% of inquiries and 10.7% of applications.[34] Booming newlands were ten times as attractive as busted ones.

Facilitating the inflows of people was itself big business. Shipping companies were the first to it, and some came to specialize in the business—recruiting emigrants and contributing to booster literature as well as actually transporting people. Such shipping interests burgeoned on the trans-Atlantic route from 1815.[35] In Australia, they emerged as an offshoot of convict transport in the 1820s. By 1890, three large shipping companies had 6,500 agents in the United States from whom fares for European relatives could be bought.[36] The migration business had a popular dimension as well as a corporate one. Banking and postal facilities combined with regular shipping services to enable emigrants to readily remit money to the old country to pay the fares of more emigrants, as well as write letters back. 'Remittances appeared on the Londonderry-to-Philadelphia route in 1816 . . . the development of regular passenger shipping routes and merchant connections after the Napoleonic Wars and the development of banking relations between transatlantic ports after 1815 lowered the transaction and enforcement costs of the remittance system.'[37] Even before rail, the facilitation of overland migration could also be a substantial business. Overland emigrants trekking to Oregon and California by wagon in the 1850s spent between $25–50 million on route.[38] From the 1850s, rail companies engaged in the same game as shippers, especially in North America, and additionally involved themselves in the sale of farms to

emigrants. 'Many railroad companies were colonization agencies as much as they were transport companies.'[39] Once a rail or shipping company was committed to the migration business, it was reluctant to let go. When the supply of British, Irish, and German migrants diminished from the 1880s, such businesses turned to non-traditional sources of migrants in southern and eastern Europe. Such companies were addicted to explosive colonization, and did their best to help it along.

Governments were also great promoters of immigration; indeed in the newlands this was often seen as their main business. A British government emigration board assisted 330,000 people out to Australia between 1842 and 1869. Colonial governments themselves took over the system during and after this period, establishing networks of agents in Britain and mounting great advertising campaigns.[40] From 1845, thirty-three American state and territorial governments sent agents and publications to the New York docks and then on to Europe, hunting for migrants.[41] In the 1870s, the New Zealand government had seventy-three immigration agents in Scotland alone, and advertised in 288 Scottish newspapers.[42] Around 1910, a Canadian government emigration agent in Aberdeen sent out 7,500 school atlases (starring Canada) and 45,000 pamphlets in a single year, as well as lecturing to 6,000 people—and seeing 114 prospective immigrants in person on his busiest day.[43] An American railroad booster who trumped even this was James W. Erwin 'who by 1917 had delivered his presentation, "Wonders of the Western Country", 3,357 times to more than 1.5 million people'.[44]

The progress industry, vast in itself, had an impressive set of allies. One was war. As noted above, major campaigns against precursors corresponded with booms and often involved large injections of oldland money into settler frontiers. London and Washington pumped millions into the 'defence' of their newlands until the 1880s, and war was often big business during booms. Other allies of 'Progress' included extractive industries. The most obvious is mining, especially during the great sequence of gold rushes, from California in 1849 to the Yukon in 1896. These are discussed in Chapter 9. Other non-farm primary industries, such as fur-trapping and whaling, predated explosive colonization by a long way. But booms usually changed their character. During booms these industries intensified, often to the point of local extinction of the prey—they *became* extractive, or non-renewable. Sealing in Atlantic Canada killed about 100,000 seals a year in the 1810s. An increase of the take to 700,000 seals a year correlates with the boom

of the 1830s and early 1840s, and resulted in a downturn in numbers.[45] Whaling in Australasia began in the 1790s, but greatly intensified during the boom of 1828–42, especially in the form of shore whaling. From the 1840s, whale numbers diminished and the industry faded.[46] In the American Midwest, the boom of the 1830s generated a surge in the fur trade centred on St Louis, followed by a diminution in the supply of animals. The same boom and the steamers on the Missouri began the commercial hunting of bison for robes, and it has recently been argued that this had already reduced the southern bison herds by the 1840s.[47] The discovery of industrial uses for bison hide in 1871 combined with the tail end of another Midwestern boom to cause a veritable holocaust of bison—almost 14 million hides were taken between 1872 and 1874. The next boom, centred on the 1880s, finished off the northern bison herds.[48] When the Cape Colony and Natal boomed, or came close to it, it was bad news for the surviving ostriches and elephants.[49]

The biggest extractive industry was forestry. Even normal consumption of wood was much higher in the nineteenth century than today. Much that is now made of metals, concrete, and plastics was then made of wood, including bridges, rail carriages, ships, and some roads. Almost everything was boxed and barrelled. American wood consumption per capita in 1900 was five times that in 1970, and it was higher still before 1900.[50] Nineteenth-century newlands consumed even more than oldlands. As American James Hall noted in 1836, 'Well may ours be called a wooden country; not merely from the extent of forests, but because in common use wood has been substituted for a number of most necessary and common articles—such as stone, iron, and even leather.'[51] Firewood consumption was huge. According to one estimate, half a million New Zealand settlers in the mid-1880s consumed 3 million tons of wood a year.[52] Towns needed firewood, and so did steam ships and rail locomotives. Only 10 per cent of 4,000 American locomotives were coal-fired in 1859; the rest burned wood.[53]

Wood consumption was highest of all in newlands during booms, which literally ate forests. Millions of trees were cut and burned simply to clear farmland, and there was also abnormally huge local timber consumption. This fact is camouflaged by a tendency to overemphasize timber *exports*, partly because of staples theory, partly because export statistics are better than those for domestic consumption, and partly because of retrospect—after booms, timber exports did sometimes become very important. Chicago

around 1870 was the world's largest supplier of timber, drawing on large lumber camps on the shores of the Great Lakes. It was also the world's largest consumer of timber. 'About half the lumber was retained in the city for its own construction', and much of the rest was moved by canal, rail, and bullock dray into the interior to help build the farms and fences of Chicago's hinterland.[54] A population doubling in a decade needed several times the houses, town buildings, farm buildings and fences of a region growing normally. During an Australian boom, 'Ballarat consumed 180,000 tons of firewood, 850,000 props, 3,000,000 laths and 7,500,000 super feet of sawn timber each year.'[55] Transport and communication projects were also big users. Roads were sometimes made of planks and 'corduroy' logs; bridges and telegraph poles were wooden; canals needed timber struts and the like, and iron rails needed wood too—for ties or sleepers, and for fences to keep animals off the track. Ohio in 1870 had 6,000 miles of track and 10,000 miles of wooden fencing. A rail line required 2,640 wooden sleepers or cross ties per mile, which had to be replaced every six years or so.[56] 'Everything new is all of wood.'[57] The American boom of the 1850s consumed an England-sized chunk of forest—40 million acres.[58] Half of New Zealand's forests in 1840 were cut down or burned off by 1900, and most that remained were in mountainous regions.[59] Boom-time lumbering was a huge business, even when lumber exports were non-existent.

Boom Towns, Boom Farms

Non-farm occupations were sometimes surprisingly large in the booming newlands. Boom-phase Wisconsin in 1850 had 53 per cent of its workforce in farming, compared to 86 per cent in export rescue-phase 1860.[60] Even when most adult male newlanders described themselves as farmers, this was often a statement of aspirations and part-time occupation. Landownership was typically widespread in newlands, but many holdings were too urban, too small, too isolated, or too undeveloped to be viable farms. When the aspirant farmer was too poor to hire labour, the potential took a long time to be realized even where it did exist. A careful Canadian study shows clearance rates in forest farms of between 1 and 2 acres per year.[61] In the booming 1850s, a quarter of the farm labour force in the American West was actually engaged in clearing land and constructing farm-buildings—farm-*making* rather than farming proper.[62] 'Almost $400

million must have been invested.'[63] Farmers with little capital frequently also engaged in non-farm work, on and off the farm, and booms meant that the demand was there. In each boom phase, 'farmers' were to be found working on the construction of roads, canals, or railways and even in manufacturing. They either used their off-season for this, or left the farming to their families back home. In Upper Canada in the 1830s, 'the men were mostly absent from the settlement engaged elsewhere, as the custom was, gaining by other means of livelihood what yet the partially cleared farms could hardly yield'.[64] In Ohio, canal 'contractors depended mainly upon local farmers and farm workers for their labor force'.[65] Throughout the American West, 'great numbers of farmers supplemented their incomes by acting as sub-contractors in the construction of roads, railroads, other private and public projects and in the fuelling of steam boats and trains'.[66] Indeed, most early farms in wooded newlands doubled as small-scale forest product operations. As late as 1847, seventy-two Ohio 'farms' sold 90,000 barrel staves, 1,454 cords of firewood, and 225 cords of tanning bark.[67] A similar occupational versatility was the rule among New Zealand 'farmers' in boom time.[68] It was the progress industry—mass immigration, rapid urban development, and huge internal improvement projects—that provided the demand for farmers' non-farm products and labour, just as it did for their farm products.

Agricultural history tends to assume that settler agriculture went more or less direct from pioneer semi-subsistence to long-range exports. Sometimes, a brief 'settler's market' is acknowledged, but is seldom accorded much significance. In fact, boom-phase farming was highly commercial and dynamic, but the market was local. It was also big and varied, and the boom could last up to fifteen years. One could also supply booms in a neighbouring newland, or the newer settlements of your own. The progress industry and its motley crews, such as miners and loggers, were huge consumers of meat, bread, whisky, and leather, as were urban populations and farm-immigrants in the process of establishing themselves. When you could sell your flour locally at $12 a barrel and your pork for $55 a barrel, as in booming Minnesota in the 1850s, why worry about long-range export?[69] New farms required breeding animals and seed in quantity and as we have seen these could not easily be brought from the oldlands—an immense 'stocking' market.

There was yet another whole dimension to boom-phase farming. A crucial, but strangely neglected, category of farm product was work animals

and their feed. As we saw in Chapter 4, over half of all work energy in the United States in 1850 was supplied by horses, which were raised on farms. The demand for horses and oxen was particularly strong in newlands, during booms. Pre-boom New South Wales in 1821 had eight people to each horse. Booming New South Wales in 1851 had 1.5 people per horse, eight times the British rate.[70] In the non-booming state of South Carolina in 1860 the ratio of work animals to people was about 1 to 4.5. In the boom state of Texas it was about one to one.[71] Working animals could not graze much, but required feed—oats, hay, and corn—and farmers provided this too. Even in normal times, work animals consumed about a third of farm crops.[72] During booms, acreages of these crops often exceeded those of wheat. Oats, the favoured feed for working horses, were the leading crop in 1830s Michigan and 1870s New Zealand.[73] In effect, farmers in the nineteenth-century newlands were not just farmers, but also producers of the motors and motor fuels of the day.

'Nothing in all the strange ways of the wild west strikes the Eastern visitor as more curious than the manner in which cities are planted and grow out here. A man plats a townsite much as he would break in a few acres of farmland, and then proceeds to raise a city as if it were a crop of potatoes.'[74] Some new towns did grow from the outset 'like Jonah's gourd', a favourite phrase. Others languished for decades, growing only incrementally, before suddenly exploding. Sydney had 1,000 inhabitants at birth in 1788 and grew to 16,000 in the next forty-five years. By 1878, another forty-five years later, it had 200,000 people.[75] Cincinnati was also founded in 1788, and slowly grew to 2,500 people in 1810, but then boomed to 160,000 by 1860. Toronto, or York as it then was, only quadrupled in population 1800–25, but then exploded twentyfold over the next quarter-century.[76] Planting a town was not enough. You had to plant it in the middle of a boom, bring a boom to it or, best of all, start a boom from it.

Boom towns staggered contemporaries, and they would have staggered us too. Not even photographs capture the maelstrom of daily life in Mushroom City, because photographic subjects then had to stay still for ten seconds.[77] We need to think of a shantytown, a substantial young city, and a vast building site, all transposed upon each other, 'palaces and shanties side by side',[78] with a disturbed anthill of humans and another of animals scattered on top of that. Tocqueville noted that Cincinnati in the 1830s was growing so fast that the streets had no names, and the houses no numbers.[79]

At St Paul, Minnesota, in 1857, you did not sit quietly in your little house on the prairie.

> Emigration is pouring in astonishingly, several boats landing daily loaded with passengers. Those intending to go back in the country, usually purchased their supplies here, and the stores were almost overtaxed, so profitable was their trade. The hotels and boarding houses were crowded to overflowing. The principal business streets fairly hummed with the rush of busy life. Building was never so brisk; an army of workmen and mechanics labored night and day to keep up with the demand for dwellings and stores. Another small army was engaged in grading streets, and laying gas pipes, the air being continually shaken with the concussion of blasting rock.[80]

Boom towns were the bases of explosive colonization. They gathered, supplied, and supported the armies that marched out to the camps of the progress industry and the farms of boom-time agriculture. They provided rest and recreation, hotels, banks, newspapers, and post offices. They were also themselves sites of explosive colonization, whose lead industry was building themselves, often several times over. The denizens of Cincinnati's 1,200 buildings of 1815 might have kept quite busy building the 1,700 new buildings constructed by 1819.[81] In Melbourne in 1888, at the peak of a boom, town-building absorbed 'just over four-fifths of total private investment in the colony',[82] Melbourne tended to build in brick, but most settler cities used wood, and this was another boost to construction, although not to insurance companies. From 1845 to 1871 about three-quarters of the American insurance companies were put out of business by conflagrations. The Chicago Fire of 1871 alone 'bankrupted fourteen local companies, and forced the suspension of payments by some thirty-seven other companies with head offices outside the state'.[83] For settler cities, however, fires multiplied building activity. 'San Francisco burned and rebuilt itself at least four times.'[84] According to one estimate there were 290 major urban fires in Canada and the United States between 1815 and 1915; part of Sydney burned down in 1882, and New Zealand boom towns also burned freely.[85] Even without fires, in towns that experienced multiple booms, each brought a fresh surge of growth, revealing booms to urban historians like growth rings in a tree. 'This space-time rhythm appears as rings of building activity laid down around cities with each investment boom.'[86]

Another major industry in settler cities was manufacturing. Because sailing ships and wagon trains were not good at moving bulk, large or

heavy items tended to be made on the spot, leading to a precocious semi-industrialization. Cincinnati, a village in 1810, had a nine-storey steam mill by 1815, 1,200 workers in manufacturing by 1819, was building its own printing presses by 1823, and built 150 steamboats by 1830. It had sixty stationary steam engines by 1834, built locomotives from 1845, and was a big producer of stoves, as well as books and whisky. 'It was also the home of huge wagon and carriage industry.'[87] Adelaide, in South Australia, founded in 1836, was using steam engines by 1842 and building them by 1847. This infant city had iron foundries, cartwrights, shipwrights, and machine shops—108 small manufactories by its fifteenth birthday in 1850 and sixty-three steam-powered mills by its twenty-first birthday in 1856.[88] In effect, technology was compressed, or 'de-hydrated', in the oldlands into skills, manuals and machine tools, making it more portable. It was then 're-hydrated', and sometimes adapted, in the settler cities and distributed from them to fuel the boom. Much the same applied to information and money.

Booms are often underestimated in settler histories, partly because they were embarrassing in retrospect, and partly because economic history tends to measure the success of an economy in terms of per capita real incomes. These usually stood up well in booming newlands, but were sometimes overhauled by the sheer number of new 'capitas'. For example, some scholars note that per capita income growth in the Old Northwest, 1815–60, was not great and that levels remained somewhat behind those of the Northeast, giving the impression of very modest economic success.[89] Yet the Old Northwest's population, its number of capitas, climbed twenty-eightfold in the fifty years to 1860. To be even close to the national per capita average therefore indicated explosive economic as well as demographic growth. The tendency to use per capita figures alone to measure economic growth is understandable for slow growing oldlands, but distorts the picture in exploding newlands. The embarrassment stems from the pyramid-selling character of booms; they were a system of growth through growth, as a few commentators have acknowledged. 'Growth became a self-perpetuating process. Prosperity attracted newcomers and newcomers sustained prosperity.'[90] 'Until 1914 one of the biggest, if not the biggest, single industries in Los Angeles was the business of growth.'[91] In New Zealand, 'emigrants of 1840 sell their surplus to the emigrants of 1842, and both do the same by the emigrants of 1844'.[92] In the 1850s, a Chicago innkeeper told a visitor, 'I will take ''wild cats'' [dubious banknotes] for

your bill, my butcher takes them of me, and the farmer of him, and so we go making it pleasant all around.' He was aware of an 'inevitable hour of reckoning', but maintained that 'on this kind of worthless currency . . . we are creating a great city, building up all kinds of industrial establishments, and covering the lake with vessels'.[93]

The Hour of Reckoning

The 'inevitable hour of reckoning' did come. Booms always ended in busts, usually shattering ones. They are widely recognized by economic historians but, as with booms, their full impact is often unintentionally camouflaged. Scholars tend to focus on two questions: what caused the bust, and did it amount to a technical 'depression' in which economies actually shrink and real per capita incomes decline? American, Australian, and New Zealand literatures all feature such debates. Was the American bust of 1857, for example, the result of London and New York bankers contracting credit, or of the collapse of the Ohio Life Insurance Company? Was it due to a fall in wheat prices, resulting from Russia's return to the international market after the Crimean War, or was it just panic 'without apparent reason'—a 'terror inspired by a trifling cause or misapprehension of danger'?[94] But booms were always going to have an endpoint. The particular trigger could be any or all of the factors asserted by contemporaries and historians. If it was not one, it would eventually be another. A loss of confidence anywhere along the line was enough to end a confidence game. Shadows could even frighten each other into substance: a rumour about credit contractions could cause a speculative business to collapse and vice versa. Debating whether busts were caused by internal or external factors does not seem very useful. Did it matter much from which side of the house the first card was removed?

The question of whether busts constituted technical depressions is also of limited utility. In several American, Australian, and New Zealand cases revisionists argue that bust phases long seen as depressions were really not so bad.[95] Some growth, they argue, continued—economies did not shrink. Falling prices compensated for falling wages, and real per capita incomes held up—helped by sharp decreases in immigration. They are probably right in a technical sense, but are in danger of underestimating the wider historical impact of busts. Busts seldom eliminated growth entirely, but there are some cases of actual declines and they always slashed growth rates

to a mere fraction of boom-phase levels. Booming Milwaukee grew 44.5 per cent in population in the three years 1855–7. Busted Milwaukee grew 2.8 per cent in the three years 1858–60.[96] Busts might not lower average real wages, but they were devastating to contemporaries. Confidence collapsed, individual and collective expectations were suddenly punctured, and farms and businesses went bankrupt in droves. The impact extended far beyond pocket books.

During the first American bust, in 1819, observers felt that 'the commercial distress throughout the United States appears to be almost beyond all precedent . . . The embarrassment, however, is described to be greater in the Western states than in those nearer the Atlantic.'[97] 'The Panic of 1819 devastated western cities.'[98] The depth of the bust was inversely correlated to the height of the boom:

> Banks mushroomed . . . Prosperity seemed to be within the reach of everyone. Indeed, rarely in the history of the world has there been as much opportunity for as many individual white males as there was in the Ohio Valley in the 1810s. Economically, Ohio in the last half of the second decade of the nineteenth century appeared to be a shining proof of the possibilities of a liberal society. But the prosperity of the boom was artificial and collapsed quickly and violently in late 1818 and 1819 . . . For the citizens of Ohio, the Panic of 1819 brought profound social and ideological, as well as economic crisis.[99]

For many individuals, it was a personal crisis too. 'To be harassed by my creditors is worse than death.'[100] The next American bust, in 1837, was a 'frightful tornado'. 'The cholera never had half as many terrors.'[101] 'The nation is bankrupt; most disastrously, most disgracefully bankrupt!', announced the newspapers, reflecting sadly on 'the shattered fragments of a great nation's prosperity and pride'.[102] 'For an indication of the emotional toll exacted by antebellum failures, one need only survey newspaper reports of suicides.'[103] The terrible Australian bust of 1891 permanently took the 'marvellous' out of Melbourne. 'In the fifteen years after 1891 Victoria lost through emigration even more people than it had gained through immigration during the long period from 1860 to 1890.'[104] Twenty-two years later, in 1913, the Bust of 1891 still dominated conversation:

> With what a terrible crash the great collapse in the value of securities must have come! Every one talked to us about it, and told us tales of well-to-do ladies who in a day became penniless, and were thankful to get situations as domestic servants; of rich men who were reduced to begging for a clerk's

> stool in a shop; of crowds of employees of every kind, who, owing to the sudden bankruptcy of so many firms at once, did not know where to turn.[105]

Casualty rates do appear to have been high. Half of the 230 American banks established in the 1810s had disappeared by 1825, killed off by the bust of 1819.[106] Ohio banks were 'virtually wiped out'.[107] Astonishingly, a 50 per cent death rate seems quite common. The bust of 1837 reduced Michigan's banks from twenty-eight to two, while 'the Illinois banking system had the distinction of failing twice', after busts one and two.[108] Contemporaries claimed a 90 per cent failure rate for businesses in the bust of 1837; historians accept 50 per cent.[109] Casualties may have been a little lower in the bust of 1857, but only a little. 'In the 1840s and 1850s, somewhere between two-fifths and one-half of American business ventures ended in outright failure.'[110] No less than 65 per cent of American railroad bonds held by European investors were in default in 1876, after the bust of 1873. 'Many western roads went bankrupt again in the 1880s. If such developments had been part of some socialist ten year plan, they would have been derided as economic and social disasters.'[111] The bust of 1893 slew 15,242 American businesses, including 642 banks.[112] As for farmers, in the Old Northwest 'no matter the age of the community, between 50% and 80% of any new group of farmers were gone ten years later'.[113] 'The overall success and failure rate of Kansas homesteads was close to 50–50.'[114]

Bust tolls in the British West also read like casualty lists from World War I. New Zealand experienced 11,444 bankruptcies during its 'black' 1880s, close to 10 per cent of the adult white male population.[115] Of the 122 companies formed in Auckland between 1881 and 1884, only five still existed in 1904.[116] In Victorian sheep farming after 1842, 'only a minority of runholders survived through the disastrous depression'.[117] About half of Victorian small farmers failed after later busts.[118] The Australian bust of 1891 forced fifty-four of sixty-five banks to close, thirty-four of them permanently.[119] After a bust in 1865, claimed contemporaries, 'the whole of South Africa was in a state of bankruptcy'.[120] In the early 1920s, a bust in Western Canada bankrupted 120,000 farmers, caused malnutrition amongst two-thirds of a sample of local school children, and deprived 200 Alberta towns of between 45 per cent and 100 per cent of their populations.[121] Towns went ghost in droves in America too. 'I . . . intend to stay settled',

wrote a Western settler in 1852, 'if the town I have selected does not die out as a great many places do in this mushroom country.'[122] 'Of more than 100 towns platted from 1884 to 1888 in Los Angeles County, 62 no longer exist except as stunted country corners, farm acreages, or suburbs.'[123] US historians may still refer to 'that unique American phenomenon, the ghost town'.[124] New Zealand alone has 240 of them, and Victoria a possible 700.[125] But America did have another possibly unique institution: the ghost university. Some 516 tertiary institutions were founded before the Civil War in sixteen states, mainly Western, '412 of which were mere skeletons by 1927'.[126]

The Boom Mentality

The fiscal casualty rates of Anglophone settlers during busts make them look more like lemmings than rational actors. After 1819, people knew that busts could happen and that an individual's chance of surviving them commercially was around one in two. Yet they kept flinging themselves and/or their money into explosive colonization. Ultimately, they did so because of a persistent and consistent 'boom mentality', an ideology somewhere between 'bounded rationality' and collective hysteria. Analogies are to be found in crusades and jihads, the 'tulip mania' of the seventeenth century and the religious revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—not in the pages of Adam Smith. The boom mentality was closely related to the 'settlerism' discussed in the last chapter. It was more middle class and capitalistic than the informal version and more populist than the formal—a kind of hybrid of the two. Settlerism brought people rushing to booming newlands. The boom mentality kept them rushing after they had arrived. Its central tenets were that history in newlands happened faster than in old, that nature was infinitely exploitable, and that risk-taking in booms was pretty much a sure thing. The boom mentality spread like a virus among its young victims, and was understood as a 'mania' only when the boom was over.

One feature of the boom mentality was a propensity towards prophesying great futures for newlands, often so shameless that posterity finds it risible or embarrassing. American settlers were constantly 'boasting of western superiority and making endless prophecies of future greatness'.[127] One guessed in 1846 that the West in twenty years would have 100 million

people to the East's 20 million.[128] In the 1880s, 'a speaker predicted seriously' that Bismarck, North Dakota, 'would someday be the centre of Western civilization'.[129] The same great fate was predicted for Tacoma in the Pacific Northwest. 'No-one can doubt that the sum total of Tacoma's resources . . . are vastly superior to those of Chicago in 1852, and that it is only a question of TIME when a greater city than Chicago or New York will flourish on the more salubrious shores of Puget Sound.'[130] The settler frontier was 'that mighty empire west, which like a giant has sprung from its cradle'.[131] Giants were springing from cradles across the Pacific too. New Zealand was 'a nation that is to be a giant yet in his cradle'. 'The commerce of New Zealand is only in its infancy but this infancy is that of a Hercules from which, when it has reached manhood, we are warranted to expect a giant's strength.'[132] 'It is not enough to call New Zealand the Britain of the South . . . New Zealand is much superior to Britain . . . in predicting for it the most brilliant future we know . . . that we are far, very far, below the inevitable truth.'[133] The future also looked promising across the Tasman. As early as 1828, it was predicted that Australia would soon become 'a famous and potent nation', an empire 'greater and more populous than that from which it sprung'.[134] 'It became fashionable to depict Australia as an embryo empire in its own right . . . an imperial England at the Antipodes.' 'Population capacities of between 100 and 500 million were confidently predicted.'[135]

Perhaps we need to spend less time laughing at such prophecies and more at trying to understand them. They assumed a change in history's speed, a confidence in the capacity of explosive colonization to compress time. For the growth of cities in the American West 'the lapse of thirty of forty *months*' equals 'the same number of *years*' in the old world. A European observer noted of Westerners that 'they speculate on the future; but the future with them is not distant as it is with us, ten years in America being, as I have observed before, equal to a century in Europe'.[136] Western history moved faster than that of the East as well as Europe. 'Five years will do for this country what it took 25 to do for NY [New York].'[137] New Zealanders too were reminded that: 'the annual progress of a young fast-growing country is, of course, much greater than that of an old slow-growing country'. 'Five years in a young growing colony like New Zealand, is a period of time equal to twenty years in an old grown country.'[138] Once you believed this, great futures did seem possible. In boom-time Canada, Australia, New Zealand, or

the American West, growth rates *would* have produced the populations predicted above if they had continued for a century. The problem, of course, was busts.

One initial reaction to busts was to blame them on particular morons or swindlers—banks and governments were favourite scapegoats. Specific scapegoats particularized the causes of a bust, making it seem exceptional. If you could somehow avoid incompetent governments or crooked banks or unscrupulous big speculators, you could avoid busts. Yet two factors meant this suppressive reflex was inadequate. One was the sheer prevalence of bust-phase bankruptcy. The standard assumption was that 'bankruptcy usually turned out to be the child of fraud or mismanagement'.[139] But, after tens of thousands of post-bust bankruptcies, this forced Americans to ask 'Are we a Nation of Rascals?'[140] Middle-class morality sometimes resorted to a 'distinction between honorable and dishonorable bankrupts',[141] rather like that drawn between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor. The other factor was that the swindlers usually went bust themselves, a strange thing for genuine swindlers to do. As Albert Richardson observed in 1867, the 'convulsive growth' of the West was 'not a swindle but a mania'. Speculators themselves were 'quite as insane as the rest'.[142] Certainly the words 'madness', 'mania', 'fever', and 'frenzy' pepper accounts of Anglo booms from the first to the last.

'The new movement west seemed so sudden and irrational that many called it a "mania" or "fever".'[143] In the early American booms, 'the speculative mania . . . seemed to infect all classes'.[144] 'The zeal to purchase amounted to a fever.'[145] 'Abandon and optimism raced through every branch of economic activity.'[146] During the late booms in Western Canada, 'a hysterical and wildly unreasoning optimism . . . obsessed the whole community'.[147] In the American Old Northwest in the 1830s, 'the madness of speculation in lands reached a point to which no historian . . . will ever be able to do justice . . . Accurate reports would be dismissed as wild exaggeration, the utter abandon of the hour [was] incredible, inconceivable.' This boom, like all others, featured a 'booster spirit', a 'drive to wealth', a 'frenetic pace', a 'religious zeal', 'a general frenzy', and 'depended on a near-impossible rate of economic development'.[148] In New Brunswick in the same decade, 'rash and improvident speculation' was also the order of the day. 'Credit was boundless. All entered into speculation with their whole souls . . . Speculative fever attained new heights in 1835 and 1836.'[149] Staying with the 1830s, in the Old Southwest, observers felt that 'verily, the

people are mad', suffering from 'the raging mania for wild speculations and overtrading', a 'horrible *Mania* for speculation'. 'The mania of speculation had now seized all minds and turned all heads.' 'When did such a fever of speculation madden the brains of a whole community?'[150] We can answer the contemporary question: in a score of different Anglo booms between the 1810s and the 1920s.

We have, I think, to join the relatively few scholars such as David Hamer who take this kind of evidence seriously. Boosterism was infectious, and you had to catch it to keep up with the competition. 'He who confined his transactions, in those times, to his actual capital could stand no chance with his neighbors who availed themselves of loans.'[151] 'Visitors began by finding boasts of ''future greatness'' ludicrous and then discovered behind them a psychological truth . . . while they were initially skeptical, visitors usually seemed to undergo this kind of transformation.' Think of more recent share-market booms, where even the cynics begin investing after a seemingly endless series of their friends buy sports cars. 'Boosterism was so pervasive in the life of the young town that it became the dominant mode in which that life was perceived and interpreted.' There was a perceived synergy between individual and collective interests in the towns and farming districts of booming newlands. Their great future was your great future. 'Through the imagery of ''growth'' personal and civic destiny were intertwined.' On booming frontiers, confidence in progress was a matter of faith, not just reason—it was why you were there, and to question it was to question your own presence. ' ''Magic'' was the most frequently employed *popular* interpretation of the rise of cities in the New World. It is the one usually to be found, for example, in private letters.'[152]

The boom mentality, like the settler transition, was born in the early nineteenth century, the moment when change seemed to suddenly become commonplace. Previous limitations on the possible were up for renegotiation. There was a popular sense of 'boundlessness' in Western American settlement after 1815. Australian settlers too experienced 'a kind of ''greed of country'' which comes over the pioneer, which spurs him to great efforts'. 'For a time, there was no sense of limits.' A sober New Zealand economic historian concludes: 'there is a lot of historical evidence to suggest that the early settlers were to some extent carried away by their own enthusiasm for the process of improvement and farm formation and that they rarely stopped to calculate'.[153] Steep hillsides were burned into

sheep-walks where even sheep could barely stagger. One thing that seemed limitless was nature itself:

> Curiously enough, not even the buffalo hunters themselves were aware . . . that the end of the hunting season of 1882–83 was also the end of the buffalo . . . In the autumn of 1883 they nearly all out-fitted as usual, often at the expense of many hundreds of dollars, and blithely sought 'the range'.[154]

This arresting tableau—mystified hunters awaiting the arrival of prey they had just locally exterminated—works for sealers, whalers, fur trappers, and elephant hunters right across the Anglo-world. The faith in abundance, the importance of the conviction that nature's bounty was inexhaustible, was such that it transcended the evidence. Settlers envisaged 'an endless supply of land and raw materials', which could fuel endless booms.[155] Timber supplies were regularly assumed to be infinite until the last prime tree was cut. When animal species disappeared in a district, it was assumed they had gone elsewhere.[156] In 1885, a Canadian cabinet minister gave his considered opinion on the future of the codfish. 'I say it is impossible, not merely to exhaust them, but even noticeably to lessen their number.'[157]

There was also an attitude to risk that differs from our own. Many observers saw the boom mentality as 'a gambling spirit'. In the first boom of 1815–19, wrote one indignant American, 'the whole nation was suddenly transformed from a great, moral, industrious and frugal people into an array of gamblers'.[158] In the American West 'the atmosphere was charged with this gambling spirit'. Cincinnati in the 1830s had a moral panic over schoolboys gambling.[159] In 1850s California 'everything is chance, everything is gambling'.[160] Booming New Zealand was also pervaded by 'the spirit of gambling which, as several historians have remarked, was typical of the colony'.[161] Visiting the Old Northwest in the 1830s, Alexis De Toqueville was told: 'almost all our tradesmen play for double or quits'.[162] Charles Dilke, author of the original *Greater Britain*, found exactly the same phenomenon in booming New Zealand in the 1860s.[163] A recent study argues that, in Britain, the concepts of speculation and gambling were progressively separated in the later nineteenth century. Gambling became disreputable, speculation became respectable, even to the point where it was transmuted into 'investment'. The study dates the equivalent transition in the United States to around 1900.[164] Prior to this, in America and perhaps the British West, gambling, speculation, and investment, all

merged and blurred. Great futures, fast history, and infinite nature made the odds seem good.

Busts were not forgotten so much as set aside. Booms were the norm; busts were aberrations. In your particular booming newland, during your particular boom, infinite resources meant that it might be avoided. By 1887, after four American busts, cracks were beginning to show in these convictions, but boosters tried to cover them over. In that year, a Southern Californian wrote, 'Oh! Generation of carkers and unbelievers, neither you nor we shall see that day of reckoning... This boom is based on the simple fact that hereabouts the good Lord has created conditions of climate and health and beauty such as can be found nowhere else, in this or any other land, and until every acre of this earthly paradise is occupied the influx will continue.'[165] The bust came the next year in this case, but the boom mentality kept rekindling. It was helped, perhaps, by the fifteen- to twenty-five-year breathing-space between busts—just enough time for the next generation to half forget. Settlers were *young*. In one Illinois county in 1830, 'only 5 percent of the residents were forty or older'.[166] In 1860, only 1 per cent of the 107,000 people in Kansas were aged over 44 years. In booming Denver in 1890, 'you notice that there are no old people on the streets here'. In Melbourne in 1845, 'there are no old people, and not many even who are advanced enough to come within the denomination of middle-aged'.[167] It was not that the old folks were inside sheltering from the sun. They hardly existed. In 1854, 'those over sixty-five years of age... comprised a meagre 0.38 per cent of the population'.[168]

We should be cautious about dismissing the boom mentality as twenty spasms of collective hysteria egged on by crooked speculators. There was a crusading fervour about even the wildest boosters and speculators, who usually risked their own lives, money, and children as well as those of others. There was a kind of rationality—people did make fortunes, cities did sprout, newlands did rocket in size and wealth. The illusion was that this would go on indefinitely. There was a sense in which old bets were off; previous assumptions about the spread of opportunity, the limits on nature, the nature of risk, and the speed of growth no longer applied.

In 1932, a Briton visited one of the biggest mushroom cities of them all, Los Angeles:

> The Chamber of Commerce people told me about the concentration of fruit, the shipping, the Western branch factories... But none of these things

> seemed the cause of a city. They seemed rather the effect, rising from an inexplicable accumulation of people . . . It struck me as an odd thing that here, alone of all the cities in America, there was no plausible answer to the question, 'Why did a town spring up here and why has it grown so big'[169]

In fact, Los Angeles was not alone but, apart from that, this observer had a point. Was Los Angeles, and a thousand settler cities like it, the rational and predictable product of industrialized settlement, or growth-friendly institutions, or the metropolitan demand for staples? Or were they, like the successful New Zealand province of Canterbury, 'an instance of a great fact being founded on a great fiction'?[170]

Recolonization

Bust phases lasted from two to ten years, during which the shattered shards of the boom were usually reassembled into a new economic system, more modest but steadier. A great re-colonial reshuffle took place involving some form of export rescue: the mass export of one or two staples to one or two oldland markets. Farmers who survived the bust bought up the holdings of neighbours who had not, creating more viably sized medium units. On the other hand, large farm holdings were sometimes broken up. The trend was from large and small to medium, and re-colonial farms were on average somewhat larger than explosive colonial ones, but still quite modest. In wheat, meat, and dairy production—less so in wool and cotton—family labour was cheaper and more committed than wage labour, which gave family farms an advantage. Added to this, common folk sometimes used their political leverage to get governments to assist in the break-up of large-holdings, the provision of cheap credit, and the provision of agricultural training and research. While production dispersed, the processing and distribution of staples tended to concentrate into giant meatpacking, milling, rail, and shipping companies and combines. In both production and processing/distribution, success was to some extent built on the failure of others during the bust. Their assets could be bought for a song. This double investment meant that the Anglo explosion was bust-driven, as well as boom-driven. The Anglo-world was built like a coral reef on layer after layer of fiscal corpses.

Sometimes, export rescue took the form of a huge surge in longstanding exports, with increased volumes compensating for lower prices. Timber

exports from Canada to Britain, already quite high in 1842 at 265,000 tons, surged after the bust of that year to 608,000 tons in 1845.[171] Cotton production in the American South was under 60,000 tons in 1818, then shot up to 166,000 by 1826.[172] Sometimes, new exports were developed, as with the refrigerated meat and dairy products that poured from Australasia to Britain from the 1880s. Manufacturing shifted from boom-time re-hydration to the processing of exports, as in the vast industrial meat packing plants of Australasia and the Midwest. The production, processing, and transport of staples dominated the economy, and most output was exported to the oldland. Unlike booms, export-rescue phases were indefinite and cumulative. The Old Northwest experienced three types, pumping first wheat, then hogs, then beef to the Northeast. Australia also experienced three: wool, then wheat, then refrigerated meat and dairy products. Each new export supplemented rather than displaced its predecessors. Growth rates were far lower under recolonization than explosive colonization, but could still be quite respectable, and average real incomes tended to grow after the worst of the bust was over.

Export rescue was seldom easy or predictable, After busts, 'one and all alike waited like Micawber for something to turn up, and quite often it did'.[173] Exports had to overcome problems of low prices, inconsistency, bulk, decay, distance, and difference. Low prices were dealt with by increasing volumes. Inconsistency was inevitable with farm-made butter and cheese and farm-cured meats. Export rescue phases therefore correspond with the advent of meat-packing plants and butter and cheese factories, together with improvements in grading and quality control. Bulk was handled in various ways—improved presses compressed cotton and wool, silos and elevators improved the handling of grain. Decay was always a difficult matter with meat exports, but problems were progressively resolved: by improved curing techniques for pork in the 1820s, by the steam-transport of livestock in the 1850s, by the railing of refrigerated meat in the 1870s, and by shipboard mechanical refrigeration of meat in the 1880s. While there were exceptions, these kinds of technical innovations tended to cluster after busts; they were elicited partly by the desperate need for them. Difference was also a problem. Oldland consumers wanted quality as well as quantity; they wanted it consistently and they wanted it their way. Newland producers had to adjust to this demand. Britons did not like the taste of New Zealand's merino sheep, so these were rapidly replaced by plumper crossbreeds. Easterners did not like pork made

from mast-fed razorback hogs, so these were replaced by breeds such as Berkshires. Easterners did not much like longhorn beef either, so this was replaced by English Shorthorns—a kind of 'bio-recolonization'. Staples also had to be packaged, presented, and timed the way oldlanders wanted them. Londoners expected New Zealand spring lamb to arrive in their spring, not New Zealand's. Shared language, assumptions, habits, tastes, and experience lowered what economists would now call 'transaction costs' of this process, and created a kind of transnational social capital that lubricated and buttressed economic interaction.

Distance was transcended by another great re-colonial reshuffle. Booms bequeathed an excess of rail routes and shipping lines. After the bust, these engaged in cut-throat cost-cutting which typically halved freight rates. Here was the local version of the value–volume shift in mass transfer. Examples include steamboats on the Mississippi after the bust of 1837, railroads in the United States after the busts of 1873 and 1893, and ocean shipping after the Australian busts of 1842 and 1891. This combined with technical developments, such as the improvements in hulls and engines that enabled steamships to burgeon in size. The links between oldland and new now thickened from mere routes into virtual bridges, permitting a new—re-colonial—order of mass transfer. Re-colonial relations meant that a mega-city like London was not looking to its virtual hinterland merely for luxury or discretionary foods, or for top-ups in years of bad harvests, but literally for its daily bread—and meat. The supply had to be completely reliable, and intimately attuned to demand. The two ends of the system had to dovetail perfectly, like the two halves of a neatly broken glass.

Later chapters will argue that the tightening of economic relations correlated with a tightening of other kinds of relations as well, so turning export rescue into full recolonization. It was a matter of shared culture as well as complementary economics, and the two reinforced each other. Britain served as a second metropolis for the American West, pouring in migrants and money for its booms, and providing export rescue after its busts. Between the 1870s and the 1890s, the American West fed London, as well as New York. In this period, America was to some extent 'recolonized' by Britain. America at last returned the favour in the 1900s, when it acted as a supplementary metropolis for the explosive colonization of the Canadian prairies. From about 1900, America grew so big that it absorbed its own Western surplus. The Dominions were Old Britain's re-colonial replacement for America, and for a time, until the

1940s, they performed this function well. Their role was quite distinct from that of subject colonies; they were more similar to Kent than to Kenya. The concepts 'British Empire' and 'British Commonwealth' conceal a virtual nation, an ephemeral second United States, Britain-plus-Dominions, whose Dominion citizens considered themselves co-owners of London, the Empire, and British-ness in general. For a time, Charles Dilke's 'Greater Britain' did exist.

The case for recolonization as a historical reality is made West by West in Part II and its wider implications are discussed in Part III. But one possible objection needs dealing with here. My concept of recolonization as applied to British Dominions has been criticized from a respected quarter for implying 'a prolonged, even renewed dependence, psychological as well as economic and strategic' on the part of the recolonized.[174] A strand of American scholarship, while it does not use the term 'recolonization', does argue that the West became an exploited colony of the East.[175] There *was* a tightened dependency between recolonized newlands and their oldland, but it was mutual, and did not necessarily involve economic or cultural exploitation. The assumption that recolonization was exploitative stems from the acquired schizophrenia of the mother-word. In modern usage, it means both reproductive and subordinating colonization, which are very different things. One rule of thumb practical test of the difference is the average standard of living in 'colonies' compared to the metropolis. Common people in Anglo newlands, in striking contrast to those in subject colonies, lived, on average, at least as well as those in the oldlands. On the ideological front, denizens of the British Dominions and the American West believed themselves to be Britons and Americans, and who are we to question them? The central point is not that recolonization was exploitative or a matter of 'false consciousness', but that it was crucial in the histories of the United States, Britain, and the British Dominions, and that this has not been grasped. Explosive colonization compressed time. Recolonization compressed space. Between them, they reconfigured a large part of the world.

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PART II

Testing Wests

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Introduction to Part II

Part I of this book has argued that an Anglo-prone settler revolution took place in the long nineteenth century, and that it explains the gargantuan growth of Anglophone societies in the period. Chapters 3 and 6 posited a roller-coaster rhythm and a 'hyper-colonial' shape for this revolution. Fresh frontiers went through successive booms, busts, and export rescues, which in a wider sense comprised rounds of explosive colonization followed by recolonization. Explosive colonizations were triggered by particular settler transitions and mass transfers, and then powered more by a boom mentality than rational choice, industrialization, growth-friendly institutions, or the premeditated long-range export of staples. Recolonization re-forged the shattered settler socio-economies after the bust, now converting them into long-range staples exporters, the virtual hinterlands of the distant mega-cities, London and New York. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and Part II applies these hypotheses to the histories of particular regions at particular times.

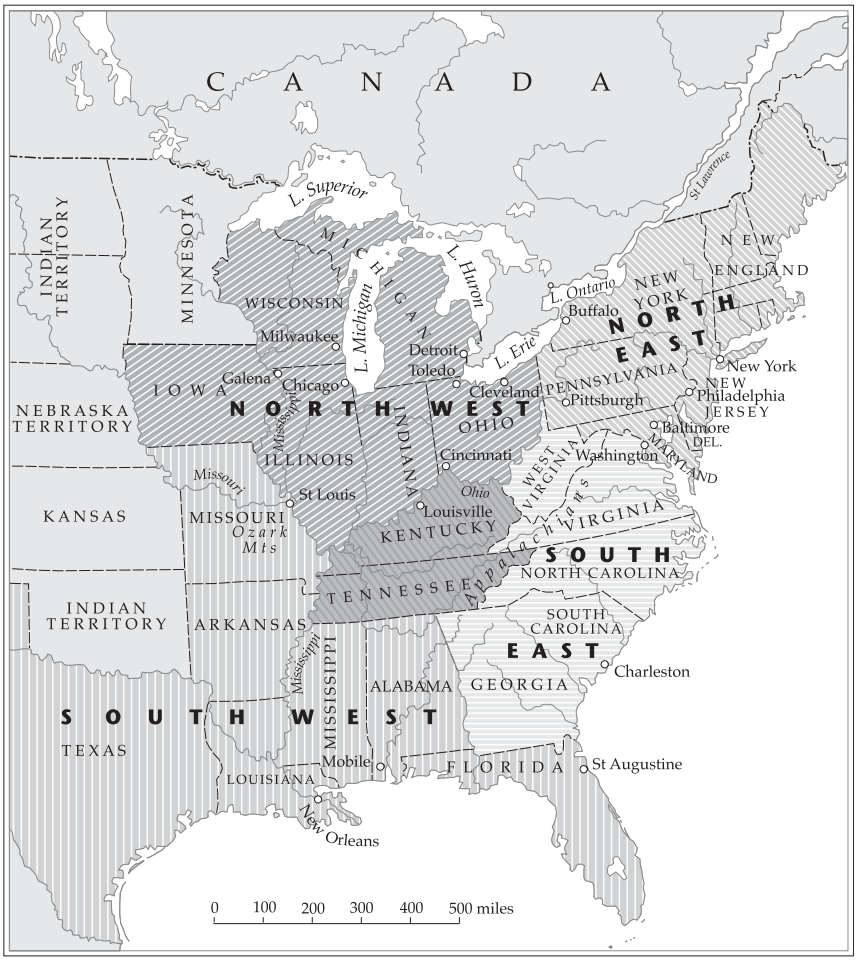
These histories are particular indeed: each is peculiar, special, and in some ways unique. Non-specialist trespassers into them risk being the proverbial bulls in the china shop, a dangerous game. I risk it in the following chapters for two reasons. First, general hypotheses should be testable, and they should be tested, otherwise they are not worth their salt. Second, re-envisioning the general should enhance our understanding of the particular. It is not, I hope, a procrustean matter of forcing particular histories to conform to the general model, but rather of offering an extra dimension to those histories. An explosive colonial society was in many respects a different place to that same society under recolonization. The

difference was as sharp as that between a subarctic and a subtropical climate. Histories of settler societies, and of their indigenous rivals, that ignore boom, bust, and export rescue are like rural histories without seasons. Factoring them back into history adds another whole colour to the historian's palette.

7

Boom and Bust in the Old West, 1815–60

The explosive growth of the American West, from about 1 million people in 1815 to over 15 million in 1860, stunned observers from the day it began. This book argues that it can best be understood as three great overlapping rounds of boom, bust, and export rescue—or explosive colonization and recolonization—pivoting on the well-known 'Panics' of 1819, 1837, and 1857. There were regional variations, but broadly speaking Boom One lasted from 1815 to 1819, Boom Two from 1825 to 1837, and Boom Three from 1846 to 1857. The process is more easily traced if we use a simplified quadratic United States, leaving aside the Far West and much of the Midwest, whose mass settlement began in the 1850s and is left for later chapters. Two of the four quarters, Northeast and Southeast, lay in oldland, Atlantic, America, and two in the 'Old West'. The Old Northwest is defined here in accord with tradition as Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, with the addition of Iowa. My definition of the Old Southwest may be less conventional. Its inner core was Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi. For present purposes, its outer rim included Arkansas, Texas, and Missouri. The last state is now usually counted in the Midwest, and this is fair for both it and Texas after 1860. But, before 1860, both were new slave states, largely settled by Southerners. Different parts of Tennessee and Kentucky arguably belonged to all four quarters. These two states never made our cut (decennial doubling from a base of at least 20,000 people) in this period, whereas all other Northwestern and Southwestern states except Florida did so at least once.



Map 3. The 'Quadratic' United States, circa 1860.

The Old Northwest

American Boom One, as we saw in Chapter 3, was brief but volcanic, tripling the population of both Northwest and Southwest, 1810–20, with most of the growth compressed into 1815–19. The bust of 1819 was correspondingly painful, as we saw in Chapter 6. A second boom began about 1825, triggered partly by completion of the Erie Canal, which connected New York City to the Great Lakes and the adjacent parts of the Old Northwest. The Erie became famous as an outlet for Western

Table 7.1. Population growth in the Old West, 1810–1860 (in thousands)

	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860
Ohio	231	581	938	1519	1980	2340
Illinois	12	55	157	476	851	1712
Indiana	24	147	343	686	988	1350
Michigan	5	9	32	212	398	749
Wisconsin				31	305	776
Iowa				43	192	675
Total Old Northwest	**272**	**792**	**1470**	**2967**	**4714**	**6826**
Louisiana	77	153	218	352	518	708
Alabama	9	128	310	591	772	964
Mississippi	31	75	137	376	607	791
Inner SW	**117**	**356**	**655**	**1319**	**1897**	**2463**
Florida	10	20	35	54	87	140
Texas	5		20	60	213	604
Missouri	20	67	140	384	682	1182
Arkansas	1	14	30	98	210	435
Outer SW	**36**	**101**	**225**	**596**	**1192**	**2361**
Total Old Southwest	**153**	**457**	**880**	**1915**	**3089**	**4824**

produce, but for its first seventeen years its primary importance to the West was as a new inlet for goods and people.[1] Also in 1825, the state governments of the Northwest itself embarked on their own ambitious programmes of canal building, designed partly to extend the Great Lakes catchment area but also to link the Lakes to the Mississippi–Ohio river system. Around the same time, steamship services on that system, after a bust-phase dip, became substantial and regular, with the advent of such things as stern paddle wheels and insurance companies.[2] This rise in mass transfer was supplemented by a settler transition, encouraged by hundreds of local boosters and their books and newspaper articles, which made the Old West seem less distant and less different, but still a prime site in which individual and collective dreams could come true. Michigan to the 1820s, for example, had a 'false reputation as a land of swamps and barren soil [that] discouraged homeseekers from entering the area in large numbers until after 1830'.[3] 'Settlers consciously avoided the territory because of negative reports on the quality of the land there',[4] until Detroit boosters managed to change their minds. Michigan accordingly rocketed sevenfold to 212,000 people in the 1830s. Neither this settler transition nor the mass

transfer provided by the Erie Canal in 1825 would have been enough on its own.

American Boom Two lasted from 1825 to 1837, during which US imports exceeded exports by $189 million, 1832–9.[5] A staggering $108 million of capital arrived in 1836–7 alone.[6] Almost 900,000 European migrants entered the United States between 1825 and 1842, more in sixteen years than in the previous 216 years combined.[7] What proportion of these inflows went west is hard to say. Most of the 852,000 migrants into the Old Northwest in the 1830s were native-born Americans. Bank loans increased 4.5-fold to over half a billion, 1830–7,[8] and this must have represented a great deal of Eastern as well as British investment. Much of this money did go west. Old Northwestern loans and discounts expanded 162 per cent, 1835–7, compared to 48 per cent in the United States as a whole.[9] These mass transfers of goods, people, and money were accompanied by information: newspapers in the United States as a whole increased in number from 500 in 1820 to 1,400 in 1840, and their size and circulations also increased. The number of post offices reached 13,000 in 1840, when postal expenditure per capita was twenty-seven times that of 1790.[10]

This round's land rush was even greater than that of Boom One. Land sales in Illinois, for example, ran at under 100,000 acres a year to 1829, climbed to 354,000 acres in 1835, then rocketed to 2 million acres in 1836.[11] There was also something of a 'lead-rush' to Galena from 1827. By 1830, 10,000 miners were sending 7,000 tons of lead by downriver via St Louis.[12] As in Boom One, the land was taken from indigenous people, who fought back. The Winnebago tribe under Red Bird resisted briefly in 1826–7, and a larger war involving Sauk and Fox Indians under Black Hawk took place in 1832. After initial success the Indians were overwhelmed by 4,000 troops, including regulars under General Winfield Scott. The war cost the Illinois state government $500,000 and the federal government $2 million, and this was not the only government help for the explosive colonization of the Old Northwest in the 1830s.[13] Andrew Jackson, president from 1828 to 1836, was notoriously opposed to speculative banking and to federal government involvement in public works. But he was able to do little about the banks until the very end of his term, and as regards public works his bark was worse than his bite. Some $16 million of federal funds was appropriated for internal improvements during Jackson's presidency, apart from land grants.[14] The Old Northwest alone received 4.5 million acres of federal land to subsidize public works in the 1820s and 1830s.[15] Whatever the federal

government did or did not do, state governments borrowed $200 million for transportation improvements, 1820–41.[16] Most of this money went on canals. New York's Erie Canal from 1825, and Pennsylvania's Mainline Canal from 1834, enhanced Buffalo and Pittsburgh as springboard cities for the Old Northwest. The youthful states of that region were not far behind in canal spending. The Ohio state government alone sunk $26 million into them, 1825–45.[17] The passion for Progress outranked rational expectations of profit. 'Most of the lateral canals in Ohio were financial failures.'[18]

America's second boom is normally said to have ended in 1837, and there was indeed a sharp bust in that year. But, according to import and immigration statistics and other evidence, this bust was at least a double-header. There was a recovery in 1839, as though people could not quite believe the news, then another bust late in the year. There seems to have been another modest recovery in 1841, before the United States descended into definite recession, 1842–6.[19] Despite its stutters, the triple bust of 1837–1842 was as devastating as any. 'No events produced more antebellum bankruptcies than the crises of 1837 and 1839.'[20] Nine states, most Western, defaulted on their debts. Recent research concludes that the bust was 'due primarily to distortions of *domestic* origin, and *not* actions by the directors of the Bank of England'.[21] Whether the domestic distortions consisted of Jackson's 'Specie Circular' of 1836, which ended the sale of federal land on credit, or in a less tangible loss of confidence among New York investors is hard to say—the specie circular did not have an immediate effect.

The Old Northwest's third boom began in the mid-1840s and had the usual characteristics: massive net imports of goods, people, and capital, banking booms, and land rushes. The Northeast was increasingly the main supplier of the West, but even so the net excess of international imports over exports, 1850–7, was almost $200 million.[22] Though most eventually restored their credit by coming to terms with their creditors, state governments were a little more wary during Boom Three. Local governments stood in for them. Local government debt expanded from $25 million to $200 million between 1840 and 1860.[23] The number and efficiency of steamships on the Mississippi increased still further, canals and river navigation improved, while plank roads boomed. The number of newspapers in the United States as a whole grew from 1,400 to 4,000, 1840–60, and post offices from 13,000 to 28,000. The vectors of mass transfer now also included telegraph. Telegraph, the first vector of instant communication, spread with remarkable rapidity—from no wires in 1844

to 23,000 miles of them in 1852.[24] Again, settler newlands were transformed from hellholes to paradises by particular settler transitions. 'The image of the Grand Prairie [of central Illinois] was reshaped in popular imagination from a dangerous, disease-ridden swamp not fertile enough to support crops to an agricultural Canaan.'[25] Boosters competed to make their particular region newland of the month in the minds of potential migrants and investors. A territory 'suddenly gets a reputation, everybody talks about it, they all flood there, until it is all explored and the best lands have been sold'.[26]

The progress industry of American Boom One specialized in turnpike roads, that of Boom Two in canals. In Boom Three it was the turn of railroads. The crash of 1837–42 had stymied the earliest Western rail projects, but the 1850s witnessed stupendous railroad-building booms, particularly in the Old Northwest. Ohio had only 39 miles of railroad in operation in 1840, but spent $140 million on rail over the next twenty years. Indiana and Illinois spent even more per capita.[27] Expenditure, subsidized by local governments and federal land grants as well as state governments, but financed mainly by private corporations, dwarfed even that on canals. Some 172 chartered railroad companies in 1850 grew to 464 in 1860.[28] Not all private investors were big businessmen. In Wisconsin in 1858, 6,000 farmers mortgaged their farms to buy railway stock.[29] Naturally, 'no section of the country surpassed the West in enthusiasm for railroads'.[30] Of the $750 million spent on railways in the whole United States in the 1850s, half went West.[31]

Economic historian Albert Fishlow has agued that American railroads were built to meet the existing demand of farmers for the transportation of their crops. They were allegedly 'built through areas of previous and abundant settlement', and represented 'a rational exploitation of opportunity' rather than the 'insanity' of legend.[32] 'Insanity' is the wrong word, but this thesis seems deceptive as far as the West is concerned. There was existing demand for rail transport, but at first it was to transport immigrants and their goods westward more than farm produce eastward. Railroads with land subsidies directed their route through land that was by definition unoccupied. 'To choose a more populous route would diminish the amount of land which the Company would receive.'[33] Communities subsidized railways that passed through their town, whether this made economic sense or not. Over-supply is surely clear. Out of Ohio's 1840–60 rail spending of $140 million, $40 million went on bankrupt lines.[34] 'Many railroad stocks, especially those for the more speculative western roads, proved a poor or

even worthless investment.'[35] Elliott West's conclusion is more convincing than Fishlow's. 'The orgy of railroad construction far surpassed the needs of the day, and people invested merely on an imagined future.'[36]

The bust of 1857 was perhaps less severe than the earlier crashes, and varied regionally even more. Damage to the banking system was lessened by the fact that the bust of 1837 had taught banks in some states to co-insure against runs on cash.[37] Still, 19,000 businesses failed, 1857–61, and there were 40,000 unemployed in New York in 1857.[38] The bust hurt most at the boom's two poles—the Old Northwest and New York City. 'The Northwest [was] particularly hard hit during the panic compared to states in the South or East, with the exception of a few Eastern states (especially New York) with close ties to the Northwest.'[39] Indiana lost fourteen out of thirty-two banks. Chicago lost nine out of ten.[40] Some blamed 'too many lawyers and not enough farmers'. 'Virtually everybody blamed the crash upon the nation's financiers.' Others blamed the British bankers, or the re-entry of Russia into the British wheat market after the Crimean War, or the collapse of 'the largest and most respected bank in Ohio'.[41] Take your pick.

Overall, between 1810 and 1860, the number of Old Northwesterners grew from about a quarter of a million to about 7 million—twenty-eightfold in fifty years. The economy developed roughly to match, starring mushroom cities. Cincinnati, the 'Queen City of the West', exploded from 2,500 people in 1810 to over 160,000 in 1860; Chicago, whose greatest growth was yet to come (see Chapter 10), rocketed from next to nothing to 109,000 people. The Old Northwest is not everyone's leading candidate for the most exciting place on earth, but this was perhaps the highest rate of growth in human history. The region was not fundamentally exceptional in terms of Anglo booms, but it was the flagship of the fleet. As such it has generated a rich scholarly literature on farming and urban growth, including some of the finest studies of their kind. Yet it seems to me that even these histories do not do full justice to the rhythms and resonances of antebellum Old Northwestern growth.

The long-range export of agricultural staples was eventually to dominate the Old Northwestern economy. But there is a danger of reading this back into earlier farming. Historians of Northwestern agriculture tend to imply that farmers went direct from a semi-subsistence phase to long-range exporting. In fact, there was an intermediate phase of immense importance between subsistence and long-range exports, based on the dynamic local market—boom-phase farming. Michigan grew sevenfold in

the 1830s, Wisconsin grew tenfold in the 1840s, infant Minnesota grew twenty-eightfold in the 1850s. Farmers in these states had all they could do to feed, supply, and stock the newcomers and the associated transport works. Booming Michigan in the 1830s 'thus far has furnished no article of export'.[42] The progress market can also be discerned in an unexplained lag between high grain production in the states of the Old Northwest and high wheat exports. Until the 1840s, wheat from Milwaukee was shipped west, not east, supporting explosive colonization in Wisconsin rather than recolonization in New York. Wisconsin did not develop a wheat surplus until the early 1850s, when a local farmer observed that 'immigrants and lumber camps, which had thus far exhausted the surplus of the area, would be insufficient markets as the wheat crop grew'.[43]

Settler cities were trumpeted as miracles during their booms, especially by their own citizens. But they subsequently fell victim to farm-first mythology or 'central place theory'—cities were the creatures of, or even parasites on, their rural hinterlands.[44] From 1959, this view was contested by more realistic appraisals of settler cities as 'spearheads of settlement' and as 'gateway cities'.[45] But even these concepts do not fully capture the functions of boom-time settler cities. They were spearheads of settlement, but they were also massive sites of it, and bases for it not only in their immediate hinterlands but also for neighbouring regions. They were gateway cities, but in booms the gates opened primarily inward, not outward—the inlet function was then more important than the outlet function. Many settler cities, of course, later became great export centres, and this was retrospectively assumed to have been their *raison d'etre* from the outset. In fact these towns spent their boom times as net importers, not exporters, something even their best historians seem reluctant to recognize. In his pioneering 1943 study of Cincinnati's economy, which detected the cycles of western settlement twenty years before Kuznets, Thomas Berry noted that for most of the 1850s, 'imports tended to exceed exports by a ratio of three to two'. He also noted that Cincinnati's imports exceeded its exports in every year but two until 1857. Yet a few pages later, he stated that 'the prime function of Cincinnati was originally to concentrate farm produce . . . for shipment downriver'.[46] Other historians of Cincinnati share the emphasis on exports over imports.[47]

American historians have generally tended to explain the great Northwestern booms in terms of staples: it was exports that powered the growth. One variant, associated with Douglass North, argued that cotton was the

ultimate engine of American growth between 1815 and 1860, even for the Old Northwest. While there were other factors, it was 'cotton which was decisive'. 'Cotton was the most important proximate cause of expansion.' 'Cotton was indeed king.' Concentrating on cotton left the South with a food deficit that was made up by the Northwest, giving it a staple export too in the form of corn and pork. 'The South was the West's major market.'[48] Historians have subsequently had years of harmless fun calculating Southern production and consumption of corn and hogs. On the whole, 'more recent research has largely refuted North's argument and has shown that the South did not, for the most part, run large food deficits. In those few, usually urban, areas that did experience periodic deficiencies, shortfalls were met by imports of food from surplus-producing areas within the South itself.'[49] The claim that cotton powered antebellum growth in the United States as a whole seems unsustainable. Yet historians show a strange reluctance to abandon it. As recently as 2001, a study claimed that 'never before, and certainly not since, has the demand for any one crop fired economic growth to the degree that cotton did in the United States in the five decades before the Civil War.'[50] A survey in 1995 showed that 84 per cent of a sample of US historians still believed that cotton was the primary stimulant of the antebellum US economy.[51]

The second, more reasonable, variant of the staples thesis would argue that it was demand for food in Northeastern cities, not the rural South, which powered Northwestern growth. Western pork and wheat did flow down the Mississippi to New Orleans, but most was then shipped back North up the coast to New York and Boston. This did become a vital market for the Old Northwest, but in successive spasms of unpredictable post-bust export rescue, while the fastest growth and development occurred during booms. The Old Northwest's three export rescues occurred soon after each bust, in 1819, 1837, and 1857. Each export rescue was superimposed upon its predecessor, supplementing it rather than replacing it. The process centred on the pumping of meat from the Old Northwest into the urbanizing and industrializing Northeast, whose urban population grew sevenfold between 1820 and 1860.[52] Pork preserved better than beef, and salt pork, ham, and bacon tended to monopolize the meaty side of provisioning. Cured pork was first exported eastward from Ohio to New York in 1825, with the completion of the Erie Canal, but slow canal travel was not suitable for it.[53] Until the mass advent of steamers on the Mississippi–Ohio river system in the mid-1820s, southward river

shipments of pork were constrained by the limitations of flatboat transport, which was one-way. A flatboat could carry cargo to New Orleans, but it was there sold for lumber, and the crew had to walk or keelboat home—a matter of several months of hard work in either case.[54] Steamboats not only supplemented flatboats as cargo carriers, but made flatboating much more efficient by taking the crews back upriver in a few days. Another constraint was that local sources of salt in the Old Northwest proved inappropriate for the mass-curing of pork. From the mid-1820s steamers brought superior foreign salt upriver.[55] Cincinnati became the centre of the hog-packing industry, earning the proud sobriquet of 'Porkopolis'.

Several historians claim Cincinnati's reign as Porkopolis began as early as 1818. 'The real beginning of commercial packing . . . came in 1818.' The town had 'attained leadership in packing by 1820'.[56] The dominance of pork exports has to be pushed back in time if Cincinnati's growth is to be explained by staples exports. In fact the city packed only 15,000 hogs as late as the 1822/3 season, and the figures did not become really substantial until the later 1820s, reaching 150,000 in 1830/1.[57] Between 1822 and 1829 pork exports downriver to New Orleans increased tenfold.[58] Downriver shipments of Northwestern wheat and flour also increased greatly. Most of this food was not consumed in New Orleans, but re-exported up the coast to the Northeast—a good illustration of just how much of a barrier the Appalachians could be. During the peak of Boom Two in the 1830s, Cincinnati's pack remained static at or below the 1830 level. After Bust Two, however, it shot up again to 305,000 hogs by 1845 and 475,000 by 1848. Cincinnati was now indeed 'Porkopolis', 'the very Hades of the swinish tribe'.[59] But how can this explain its booming growth twenty or thirty years earlier? 'Probably few who moved to the city in its early years anticipated the extent to which pork packing would dominate the economy.'[60] This unlikely meat industry, feeding New York with Old Northwestern pork via a watery loop of 3,000 miles, was a matter of export rescue, not miraculously long-term planning.

The key export rescue innovations included a 're-colonial reshuffle' of river transport which slashed freight rates after the busts of 1819 and 1837,[61] the full development of Cincinnati's 'disassembly line' meat-packing techniques, and a spasm of 'bio-recolonization' whereby meatier breeds of hog were introduced from Britain—'Berkshire mania'.[62] There was also an eo-technic innovation: making light of pork fat. In 1842, a technique

emerged for turning hog lard into lamp oil, allowing it to replace the diminishing supply of whale oil until the advent of kerosene fuel in the 1860s. By 1849, the United States could justly boast that it led the world in lard production, at 5 million tons, much of it from the Northwest.[63] Like pork and lard, flour from the Northwest continued to flow south downriver to New Orleans, and all three were again re-exported to the Northeast, with a sharp post-bust jump from 1842. There were other export markets, such as Cuba, but between 1842 and 1845, about 60 per cent of the flour and 90 per cent of the barrelled pork that arrived in New Orleans was re-exported to the Northeast, and the amounts were now considerable. In 1850, New Orleans received 100,000 tons of pork from upriver, ate a quarter of it, and exported the rest, mostly to the Northeast—say 50,000 tons of pork.[64] Fifty thousand tons of pork and 150,000 tons of wheat and flour, enough to feed perhaps 300,000 people, seems a reasonable estimate of the Northwest's export of food to the Northeast via the great water circle and New Orleans.[65]

During Export Rescue Two, after the bust of 1837–9, wheat and flour, but not pork, gained a second route to the Northeast. Feeder canals in the Northwest were completed, and wheat began to flow eastwards across the Great Lakes and down the Erie Canal. Again, this crucial development is often backdated to the 1830s or even 1825. But *exports* from the west were only 14 per cent of total lake cargoes in 1835, and still only 21 per cent in 1841.[66] On one calculation, cargo entering New York State through Buffalo averaged only 20,000 tons a year in 1832–5, and was still a fairly modest 112,000 tons a year in 1839–42. It was from 1842, after the bust, that volumes became really substantial.[67] Silos and elevators at the loading ports of Chicago, Cleveland, and Toledo, and at the great unloading port of Buffalo, decimated loading time. East-bound rates more than halved on the Erie Canal in the 1830s–50s. In 1836 54,000 tons of cargo from the west was shipped down the Erie Canal; in 1853, the figure was 1.2 million tons—a truly re-colonial flow.[68]

Export Rescue Three commenced very soon after the bust of 1857. While the lake-canal route east continued to flourish, rail increasingly displaced the river route from the mid-1850s. 'In less than three year the importance of New Orleans and the south to Cincinnati's grain trade . . . was eliminated, and Cincinnati faced squarely to the East.'[69] Chicago and New York were linked by rail from 1852, but at first the trains mainly carried passengers. It was boom phase, over-supply, and bust phase competition

from 1857 that cut rates to a level bulk exports could afford. 'The number of competing routes and the eagerness of those who control business, have reduced the prices of both freight and travel below the point of just remuneration.'[70] Between 1857/8 and 1859/60, on the major trunk routes passing through Ohio, passenger numbers increased by one-third while freight increased threefold. The shift can also be measured by net immigration into Chicago by rail. In 1856, during the boom, it was 108,000 people. In 1860, after the bust, it was 10,000.[71] As the mass inflow of people ceased for the moment, the mass outflow of exports began.

Export-rescue innovations this time included the use of icehouses to extend the meat-packing season beyond winter. Grading improved, and 1857 'marked a new phase in the marketing of meats'.[72] The canal-lake route, which still did not use steamers much for bulk freight, had always been rather slow for the transport of meat, and it was rail that solved this problem. Rail defeated distance, and it also struck a blow against decay: by transporting living animals. After 1857, hogs went east live as well as cured, and suddenly the export of beef became a possibility. Beef lent itself less well to curing than did pork; droving was slow and costly and reduced the weight of the animal. From 1860, railcars carried cattle east in increasing numbers. Total exports from the West to the East, flour and wheat, meat and timber, increased in weight from 200,000 tons in 1840 to 2.3 million tons in 1860.[73] Long-range exports replaced growth itself as the mainstay of the Old Northwestern economy. Mass wheat exports might seem predictable—New York was obviously growing too big for itself. But which came first, the chicken or the egg? And could the millions who poured west, 1815–57, really have predicted the mass advent of cheap rail freight in 1857 or the opening of a supplementary wheat market in Britain with the abolition of the corn laws in 1846? The railroad companies did not. 'The railroads at last found salvation in the tremendous outpouring of cereals to the east coast during 1860.'[74] Meat and wheat were the post-bust options that happened to work. Failed attempts at export rescue involved fruit, sorghum, sugar beet, sugar cane, hemp, and silk.[75] But, whether through miraculously long-term planning or desperate post-bust experiment and innovation, the Old Northwest from 1842 developed strong re-colonial links with the Northeast.

Southern Laggards?

The history of the pre-1860 American South has naturally been dominated by its 'peculiar institution', black slavery, and its great trauma—defeat in the Civil War of 1861–5. This section cannot engage with the rich scholarship on these two resonant tragedies. Its purpose instead is to introduce our hyper-colonization thesis and Old Southwestern history to each other. But this does bear on other Southern historical debates, such as that about Southern economic 'retardation'. Some historians seem too ready to find evidence of slow development in the South, and to value-load it when they do find it. They refer not only to the constrictive effects of slavery and cotton but also to pre-capitalist, semi-feudal modes of production, and to a culturally derived lack of economic dynamism among Southern whites.[76] Others respond defensively by berating the 'historiography of southern backwardness', by finding Southern leadership in Northwestern agriculture, let alone Southern, and even by claiming that the southern Appalachians were really a hub of world capitalism.[77] This section will also address a debate that does not seem to exist, but perhaps should. Was King Cotton the only engine of Old Southwestern growth? We have seen that it was not the main driver of the growth of the Old Northwest. But the South was cotton's kingdom, including the Southwest, which was out-producing the Southeast in cotton as early as 1833.[78] There can be no question of its great importance. So, in another test of the staples thesis, we consider whether cotton was really the only game in town in the explosively-growing Old Southwest.

The broad picture of Old Southwestern growth, 1810s–40s, is similar to that in the Old Northwest. Here too, take-off occurred in 1815, and not before. The whole seven-state region tripled in population in the 1810s, to 450,000 people. It did not quite double in the 1820s, but came close, and more than doubled in the 1830s. In the inner states (Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama) growth slowed in the 1840s and 1850s. In the outer states (Texas, Missouri, and Arkansas) it continued at or near boom levels. In short, on population figures at least, the Old Southwest participated fully in Booms One (1815–19) and Two (1825–37), but only partially in Boom Three (1846–57). Cotton production clearly played a major role in this growth, especially in the inner Southwest. The Southwest supplied over

half of the whole South's cotton output by the 1830s, and three-quarters of a much higher total in 1860.[79] At first sight, cotton planting may seem a natural ally of explosive colonization. Until the 1840s at least, cotton-growing practices depleted soil fertility in five to ten years, after which twenty years fallow was required for regeneration.[80] Cotton planters were therefore constantly seeking new land, and this was one driving force behind the Southwest's growth. But there is also something of an 'export rescue' pattern in the growth of cotton exports. Output tended to surge after each of the three busts,[81] and was helped by improvements in transport, seed types, and packing techniques clustering in those periods. Petit Gulf cotton was introduced in the 1820s, followed by Mexican types in the 1840s.[82] Cotton farming practices became more efficient and sustainable in the 1850s.[83] Freight rates on the sailing ships carrying cotton to the Northeast and Britain were slashed by reshuffles following the busts of 1819 and 1837–42. Before 1820, cotton was 'compressed by men jumping on the bag', giving a density of about 5 lbs a cubic foot. Export Rescue One involved increasing use of bales and screw presses, giving a density of 8 to 12 lbs, and Export Rescue Two dealt a further blow to cotton's bulk. 'By the 1840s bales were being re-pressed (at the ship's expense) by steam presses at the ports to a final density of between 20 and 25 pounds per cubic foot.'[84] There was some interpenetration of the growth of the cotton industry and the boom/bust/export rescue pattern.

The fit between booms and cotton-powered growth was far from perfect. Boom Two in the Southwest began before a rise in cotton prices in 1833,[85] and cotton's appetite for land was such that high land prices were inimical to it. The optimal time to buy land and extend cotton cultivation was actually in busts, when land prices were low, not during booms, when they were high. Most cotton was produced by slaves. There is intense debate about the productivity and profitability of slave labour.[86] On the one hand, planters could force their slaves to work extremely long hours—'as a rule, planters worked their hands for fifteen to sixteen hours a day'—and increasingly introduced task-based, clock-timed systems of rewards and punishments.[87] On the other hand, people whose labour is long, hard, dreary, unpaid, and coerced, sensibly seek to minimize their work. As an experiment, a 52 year-old historian performed a day's slave work, calculated according to plantation records, in three hours.[88] Either historians are exceptionally hard workers, or slaves worked to rule. Whether or not slave labour was efficient, there were ways in which it constrained booms. Slave-owners paid for their

labour upfront, rather than renting it in the form of wages, and this absorbed Southern capital. Plantation slaves produced much of their own food, and items such as cheap slave clothing and the owner's luxuries came from the Northeast or Europe, not the surrounding region. Planters moving from the Old South to the Southwest brought labour, livestock, carriages, and wagons with them rather than acquired them locally.[89] Plantations quickly developed a degree of self-sufficiency.[90] They therefore contributed little to boom-time local markets. Slaves accompanied migrating owners, or were 'sold down the river' to Southwestern plantations, but obviously lacked the mobility of free labour, which during booms flowed rapidly to wherever the action was. Unfree labour and cotton planting could live with explosive colonization, but were not particularly conducive to it.

Yet the Southwest displays virtually all the expected characteristics of explosive colonization. As elsewhere, an important trigger of booms in particular regions was the prospect or reality of increased status and autonomy. Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama became states between 1812 and 1819, and Missouri and Arkansas became territories before or during their first boom.[91] As elsewhere, autonomy had concrete advantages, permitting public borrowing and the chartering of banks, for example. But it also had less tangible effects, promising settler rather than migrant status to Anglo incomers. Other classic boom characteristics included booster literature and the sudden appearance of crops of newspapers (twenty in infant Texas in 1841).[92] Banking development was restricted to Louisiana and Alabama in Boom One, but flowered during Boom Two. Louisiana's banks quadrupled from four to sixteen between 1831 and 1836, plus thirty-six branches.[93] Mississippi established twenty-seven new banks between 1832 and 1837 including the giant Union Bank with a capital of $15.5 million. In the Old Southwest as a whole, sixty new banks with a capital of $100 million were established in the 1830s.[94] Not a lot of this money went to cotton planters, who were often financed through their factors or agents or through kin.[95] Like their peers in the Northwest, state governments borrowed massively from Britain and the Northeast. In the 1830s, Louisiana borrowed $21 million, Alabama $10.7 million, and Mississippi $7 million.[96] New Orleans City was also a big borrower.[97] 'The independent republic of Texas was conceived in debt and nourished on depreciated paper.'[98] Speculation in land, notably urban land, was rife, as was the standard 'boom psychology', also known as 'the raging mania for wild speculations and overtrading'.[99] There was

even a small gold rush on the border of Georgia and Alabama in the 1830s.[100]

Mushrooming cities are just about the last thing one would associate with the American South, and this is true of the Southeast. But the Southwest, as defined here, had two great settler cities: St Louis and New Orleans, which matched the growth of Cincinnati and Chicago. New Orleans grew from 17,000 people in 1810 to 169,000 in 1860, with growth particularly rapid during the 1830s. St Louis grew from fewer than a thousand people to 161,000 over the same period. Mere cotton ports, such as Charleston and Savannah, simply did not grow this fast or this big. Between 1810 and 1860, starting from a similar base, Charleston's population did not even double, whereas New Orleans' increased tenfold. It is not cotton exports but imports that explain the discrepancy. During 1824–39 Charleston's imports increased 50 per cent while New Orleans increased sevenfold.[101] The claim that New Orleans 'depended almost entirely' on exports is simply not sustainable.[102] New Orleans was not only a great outlet for cotton (and food exports to the Northeast), but also a great *inlet* for the settlement of the Old Southwest and, until the 1850s, the Old Northwest as well. River steamers and flatboats linked it north, skiffs and pirogues to its local bayous, coastal steamers and schooners to the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico, and large sailing ships to the Northeast and Europe. 'Until the 1840s most eastern manufactures and imported goods reached southern and western destinations via New Orleans.'[103] 'Much of Louisiana's bank money moved into Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi and Missouri.'[104] Supplying booming Texas in the 1840s and 1850s was particularly big business.[105] As New Orleans boomed, so it busted. Fourteen New Orleans banks suspended and lost their charters after the crash of 1837–42. Of 516 merchants in one city directory, only 239 appeared in 1841 and there were a further 438 bankruptcies in 1842.[106] New Orleans in the 1830s was a base for explosive colonization, like Chicago or Melbourne, as well as an exporting port.

St Louis was the base for the massive (mainly non-cotton) settlement of Missouri in 1830s and 1840s, and for states further west in the 1850s. The city grew almost fivefold in the 1840s, to 78,000 people, despite several years of bust-phase recession, then doubled again in the 1850s. It was a great centre of the fur trade, of steamboats, and of explosive colonization, 'the future seat of empire' and home to master-boosters like Thomas Hart Benton.[107] It was the 'New York of the interior', the 'London of the New World', and had 'slept on guano'.[108] Its resilience was extraordinary,

recovering quickly from busts and attracting tens of thousands through and to it despite repeated outbreaks of cholera. Five thousand people were killed by cholera in St Louis in 1849, yet still they came—60,000 people in 1849 alone, of whom one-third stayed in the city. St Louis' average annual rate of population growth between 1845 and 1852 was 14 per cent and it was not cotton that was drawing in the people and money.[109] The same was true of Louisville, Kentucky, another river port serving growth outside its state, which grew from 1,000 to 68,000 1810–60. In the early 1830s, a Louisville citizen explained why the town had quadrupled in population in seven years. 'Principally the incredible flow of immigration which is directed towards the West. Louisville has become the entrepot for almost all the goods that go up the Mississippi to provide for the immigrants.'[110] In the 1830s, even Mobile, Alabama, later a quintessential cotton port, performed this additional boom-base role. Its population barely doubled in the 1820s but quadrupled in the booming 1830s. The value of taxable property in the town peaked at $33 million in 1837, and fell to $11.7 million ten years later, which suggests boom and bust, not cotton-based growth. Townsfolk themselves perceived a decline in the 1840s, despite the fourfold increase in the volume of cotton exported. The town, they felt, had fallen from an 'active commercial city' to a 'mere depot'.[111]

If the South was booming, where was its progress industry? It did not have great canal projects in the 1830s, or great trunk railroads in the 1850s, as did the Old Northwest. There was some rail development in the 1850s, but it was relatively modest, and tended to extend the reach of existing water routes in the interests of cotton exports rather than replicate them in the interests of booming. But there was at least one type of progress industry—steam transport on the Mississippi River. The creation and maintenance of the system was shared with the Old Northwest, but the Southwest did not simply watch the boats steam by. The hazards of the river and the vulnerability of wooden steamers to fire meant that steamers required heavy maintenance and replacement—five years was the average life. Steamers in large numbers were built at Louisville and St Louis. These towns engaged in harbour works and river works to improve navigation, as did both state and federal governments. Between 1815 and 1860, the latter alone spent $6 million on river works. One important canal was built between 1826 and 1830—around the river rapids in Louisville. It employed a thousand men, 10 per cent of the Louisville workforce, and cost $750,000.[112] The regular supply and support of steamers was also a

substantial industry. In St Louis in the late 1840s, 'some thirty-five hundred men were employed in steamboat-connected enterprises, not including stevedores, harbor employees, deckhands and other crewmen'.[113] Steamers required food, labour, and above all, wood for fuel. In 1829, steamers on the Mississippi are estimated to have spent $1.2 million on cordwood for fuel.[114] By the 1850s, the figure was more like $10 million a year. Much was supplied between towns by farmer-foresters. Steamers could spend up to $100 a day on wood and their crews were well-paid for the time. They averaged $360 a year in 1850 and $430 in 1860.[115] The total running cost of a steamer in the 1850s, including maintenance and depreciation, has been calculated at $60,000 a year, which would mean that the 727 steamboats on the Mississippi River system in 1855 represented a $40 million-dollar-a-year industry.[116] When one adds the flatboats which still floated downstream in increasing numbers to 1846,[117] the steamers on the lesser rivers, and the big coastal and ocean shipping fleet operating from New Orleans, it seems clear that the Old Southwest's transport system was substantial—generating just as much Progress as a trunk railroad or two.

Slaves and slave-owners in the Old Southwest may not have been boom prone, but townsfolk and river-boatmen were, and I suspect that this was also true of the non-slave-owning white majority. These folk were particularly numerous in Texas, Missouri, and Arkansas—the Southwestern states that did the most booming. The most numerous category were upland Southern small farmers, who moved *en masse* into these three states. Ever since New Englander Frederick Olmsted began the bad press in the 1850s, these 'poor whites' have been presented 'as lazy and both physically and morally deformed'.[118] Even the better-known 'hillbilly' stereotype, though relatively benign, is patronizing, providing Americans with that important service: an inside outsider, a close 'Other'. Historians have long been revising the myths and monoliths of the 'poor white', but two elements of the traditional view have survived. First, historians agree that a distinctive upland Southern, or Southern Appalachian culture existed and spread into the Southwest—one study attributes it to Celtic roots, although others dispute this.[119] Second, most historians still believe that upland Southern farming was subsistence-oriented.[120] Folk in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas, for example, are still said to have been 'closer to hunter-gatherers than to commercial farmers'.[121] One scholar, however, argues precisely the opposite: that, until 1840, upland Southerners engaged heavily with the market, and were indeed 'born capitalist'.[122]

Explosive colonization needed food for immigrants and boom towns; stock and seed for new farms; work animals and their feed; and labour for transport works and forestry. It was not primarily slaves or slave-owners who provided this, and we have seen that it was not the Northwest either. That leaves 'poor whites'. Texas and Arkansas are often portrayed as containing a rich cotton-growing white minority and their slaves, and a poor white majority, a 'horde of sturdy hillbillies', and nothing else.[123] Yet these states grew fastest of all, from 150,000 people between them in 1840 to over a million in 1860. They showed hints of development as well, though their settler cities—New Orleans for Texas and St Louis for Arkansas—were outside their boundaries. The Anglo settlers of Texas wrested independence from Mexico in 1836 and remained an independent republic to 1845. It was initially a 'default frontier', populated by bankrupts fleeing from busts further north, and boomed on this basis in the 1840s. Its 1850s boom, which almost tripled the population to over 600,000, seems more conventional. By 1860 its few cotton planters and many 'subsistence' farmers had somehow managed to generate 71 newspapers, 1,000 barristers, 200 sawmills, 10,000 teamsters, 31 stage coach lines (one employing 300 men and a thousand horses), and 9 rail companies and 470 miles of track, as well as '40 academies, 37 colleges, 27 institutes, 7 universities, 2 seminaries and a medical college'. Horses were associated with booms, and mules with cotton growing, and Texas had many of the former but few of the latter. As noted in Chapter 6, its work-animal to person ratio was over four times that of South Carolina.[124]

You did not get more 'poor white' than the upland half of Arkansas, and some scholars still maintain that this region was always oriented to subsistence farming.[125] Yet its whites multiplied almost fourfold in the 1830s compared to twofold in the cotton-oriented lowlands.[126] The uplands included the Ozark and Ouachita Mountains, but hogs, cattle, and horses could thrive, and it also included the fertile Springfield Plain, and there was river access by steamer from 1831.[127] The federal army built roads from 1825, and helped clear the river in the mid-1830s.[128] Banking was unscrupulous but quite vigorous in the 1830s, and extended to the uplands.[129] It was mainly upland Arkansas that provided the state's surplus of almost 2 million bushels of corn and its large surplus of hogs in 1840.[130] Arkansas had the highest number of hogs per capita in the United States in 1840. Its farmers were either the biggest pork eaters the world has ever seen, or were selling pork in quantity.[131] The people of

upland Arkansas may have been primarily subsistence farmers in the 1820s and 1850s, but not in the booming 1830s. The Pine Barrens of Alabama seem similarly to have produced cattle and horses for the market when booms were on, and the same was true in Texas.[132] Interesting enough, the allegedly anti-capitalist French Acadians of Louisiana appear to have shared the Anglophone poor white participation in booms, with a surge of fresh settlement and quite large-scale horse and cattle ranching.[133] It may be that 'poor whites' were not poor when booms were nearby. They were not so much 'born capitalist' as born willing and able to become capitalist if given half a chance.

Certainly, clashes with precursor peoples suggest booms in the Old Southwest and drew in massive federal aid to the 'subsistence frontier'. The tragic Indian removals of the 1830s punished groups such as the Cherokee for adapting too well to Europe. War with Mexico in 1846–7 involved 100,000 American troops and many millions of dollars, much of it spent in the Old Southwest.[134] The surviving Spanish-speaking Tejanos rebelled against the Anglos, as they called them, in 1859.[135] The Comanche rulers of West Texas were also a resilient problem. An Indian war in 1838–40 cost the Republic of Texas $2.5 million, and there were further conflicts with the Comanche in 1849–54, 1858–9, 1862–4, and 1870–5. Between 1836 and 1860, an average of 200 Texans a year were killed or captured by Indians. The Texans liked to emphasize the deeds of their own Rangers, but without federal troops, forts, and money, and the latest metropolitan technology in the form of Colt revolvers, it is not easy to see how the locals themselves could have coped with the Comanche. When federal support was withdrawn during the Civil War, the Comanche rolled back the Texan frontier by 200 miles.[136] Even massive federal help was scarcely enough against the Seminoles of Florida. One war against them, in 1835–42, cost the Americans 1,600 dead and $30 million, mostly federal, and there were other boom-time Seminole wars in 1816–18 and 1855–8.[137] Though full hostilities in the second war did not break out until 1835, tensions were high from 1826, which must have discouraged settlement.[138] The American 'victory' of 1842 was more like a draw. Some Seminoles were bribed or coerced into removal, but enough remained to render the 'back country' insecure. A military settlement scheme in 1842–9 failed as a consequence, and Seminole raids were widely feared as late as 1858.[139] You could not even hold a theatrical party on the very outskirts of St Augustine without being attacked by Seminoles, whose chief thereafter dressed as Hamlet.[140]

Particularly effective Seminole resistance was one reason behind Florida's failure to boom before 1860, or indeed in the whole nineteenth century. The other, perhaps connected, was a shortage of poor whites. Florida had plenty of cotton but was 'without a back country populated with small-scale white settlers'.[141] In Leon County, the leading cotton producer, the white population remained static between 1830 and 1860, at 3,000, while the slave population tripled to 9,000.[142] The state had 'the most difficult American birthing',[143] but it was not for want of trying. Florida seems to have had almost all the necessary combustibles for a boom: settler representation in the territorial legislature from 1822, booster literature in 1821–3, a treaty clearing Indians from Middle Florida in 1824, the beginning of public land sales in 1825, and steam-boating on the coasts and rivers from 1828. As well as the rapid development of cotton plantations in Middle Florida, there were sugar, cattle, and timber industries. The number of banks grew from none to eleven between 1828 and 1836.[144] There were harbour, river, and road works, as well as canal and rail schemes. Yet Florida, 1820–60, had easily the slowest population growth in all the Old West. Even in the 1820s, when Anglo Middle Florida was founded, growth probably did not reach our doubling threshold. It certainly did not in the alleged boom times of the 1830s and 1850s, nor in the 1840s. Florida in 1820 had a larger population than Arkansas. By 1860, at a mere 140,000, it was less than one-third as big. Florida is the great exception in the development of the American West before 1860, and the only true Southern laggard. Booming Texas also faced formidable indigenous resistance, and Florida's key missing piece appears to have been insufficient 'poor whites'.

The Old Southwest boomed just as much as the Old Northwest in Booms One and Two, and busted to match. Its banking system was devastated by the bust of 1837.[145] The South consequently developed a particularly acute case of populist anti-bank sentiment and some states made banking illegal. Inflows of Oldland money diminished, a trend encouraged by increasing suspicion of Northern merchants. With fewer booms to support, poor whites outside Texas did less well after the 1840s, and myths of their subsistence farming became less mythical.[146] Parts of the outer Southwest boomed on, but the inner Southwest was spared the boom of the 1850s, when cotton did indeed become relatively more important. Consequently the bust of 1857 had little effect in the South. 'Southern prosperity was relatively untouched by the financial crisis of 1857.'[147] The South as a whole managed to wriggle off the boom–bust roller coaster

from the 1840s, and you certainly cannot explain Southern growth without cotton. But it seems you cannot explain it without explosive colonization either. The Old Southwestern states that boomed most often were those in which cotton was least important: Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri. Florida, where cotton was dominant, did not boom at all. Later chapters will suggest that the American Old Southwest has intriguing analogies with Australia, whose unfree labourers were convicts and whose fibre staple was wool, and with South Africa, whose poor whites were black.

Recolonization and the Old West

The American Old West was blessed with no less than three parents. During their booms and export rescues, the Northwest and Southwest were supplied with money, people, and markets by the Northeast, the Southeast, and Britain. Britain and its Irish and German ally/rivals supplied some people to booms in Texas and Missouri, but overseas immigration into most slave states was low. Britain was more neutral in providing money and markets. It funded loans to Southern states and was of course the main cotton market. After 1861, Southerners pinned great hopes on the possibility that this would bring Britain into the Civil War on its side. But both the money and the cotton tended to be mediated through New York at the expense of direct Southern links with Britain. Furthermore, Britain had poured substantially more money and people into the Northwest, again via New York. After Bust Two, Britain began to take cured meat and wheat from the Northwest, also via New York. From 1860, after Bust Three, Britain's imports of Western wheat became increasingly substantial. Though the heyday of Britain's partial recolonization of the United States did not occur until the 1870s–90s, there was already an element of it by 1860, Britain dominated overseas investment in the United States and took about half its exports. 'Of the foreign tonnage entering American ports in 1860, four-fifths was British.'[148] 'The economic growth of the United States depended on the growth and health of the British economy.'[149] *The Times* in 1851 thought that 'For all practical purposes the United States are more closely united with this kingdom than any one of colonies.'[150] The links were not yet strong enough to make war between Britain and the United States unthinkable, but the fact that they led to both North and South helped ensure Britain's neutrality in the Civil War.

The South was much more worried about being colonized or recolonized by the Northeast than by Britain. Southern newspapers decried 'The Degrading Shackles of Commercial Dependence' and feared cultural dependence too. 'All the Slave States are flooded with Yankee schoolbooks.'[151] As early as 1827, one Southerner wrote: 'We have made ourselves a tributary to the North and East—every day is augmenting our dependence.'[152] Another claimed in 1850 that 'the southern people have long stood in nearly the same relation to the Northern states . . . that the whole of the colonies, in 1775, occupied to Great Britain . . . Any nation that defers thus wholly to another is soon emasculated and finally subdued.'[153] Some historians agree. 'Evidence of the South's near-colonial dependency and underdevelopment seemed as powerful to most contemporaries as it has to generations of non-quantitative historians.'[154] 'The economic services rendered by the North may well have made the South more of an Anglo-American condominium than an exclusive province of "the informal empire of Britain".'[155] These views have some substance, but more during booms than export rescues, more in the 1830s than the 1850s, and more in the Southwest than the Southeast.

The Northeast, especially New York, was a huge contributor of money and merchants to the Southwest's booms. Northeasterners dominated commerce in Mobile and New Orleans in the 1830s. 'No other cotton port was more of a colonial dependency of New York than Mobile.'[156] But New Orleans came close. According to one source, in the 1830s 'even-eighths of the commercial houses in the city were agents of New York firms'. 'The banking business of New Orleans was also controlled by New York.'[157] Added to this, the Northeast was a growing market for Southern cotton, and much of the cotton destined for Britain passed through New York. There does seem to have been an element of Northeastern 'recolonization' of the Southwest, at least in Missouri. A study of St Louis notes that until the mid-1850s the city 'possessed stronger ties to the northeastern economy than any city outside the northeast'.[158] It goes on to argue that from 1854 rising sectionalist tensions induced Northeastern merchants to abandon St Louis and move to Chicago instead, causing a dip in the city's growth. Even so, the number of Northern-born people in Missouri almost tripled in the 1850s, and overhauled those of Southern birth, though not necessarily those of Southern descent.[159] Missouri certainly fought the Civil War as though it was Northwestern, not Southwestern. The state supplied 110,000 soldiers to the Union and only 40,000 to the confederacy.[160] 'However

indignant some of the conservative business leaders may have been, their interests lay with the Union.'[161]

The Northeast's 'recolonization' of the Southwest was effective to this extent, but no further. It was largely a legacy of the Northeast's major role in Southwestern booms, and as these diminished from the 1840s, so did the Northeast's re-colonial grip. Its grip on the South*east*'s economy—which never boomed—was probably exaggerated by Southern fears. 'The slave South was not crippled by debt. Nor was the plantation economy heavily dependent of northern credit.'[162] Northeastern merchants played much less of a role in Charleston than in Mobile, New Orleans, or St Louis,[163] and the main ultimate cotton market was always Britain. The North's commercial encirclement of the South in the 1830s and 1840s was rather like that of General Winfield Scott's 'anaconda' strategy in the Civil War, threatening to strangle the South rather than invade it direct. It aroused Southern fears, and as is often the case the fears continued after the threat diminished in the 1850s. Direct shipments from New Orleans to Europe increased, though sometimes still undertaken by New York shippers.[164] Northern holdings of Louisiana bank stocks halved between 1837 and 1857.[165] Apart from Missouri, integration between North and South was not sufficient to prevent war. Essentially, the South had seen off the threat of Northern recolonization. But it had done so by ceasing to boom in most of the Southwest and by never booming at all in the Southeast. What is more, the Southeast had in effect failed to fully recolonize its own West. The key benefit of recolonization to oldlands was that it fuelled their industrialization, urbanization, and growth with food and raw materials. The Northeast grew, industrialized and urbanized fast 1820–60, but the Southeast did not. Charleston's population did not even double 1810–60 while New York's increased twelvefold. The population of Virginia and the Carolinas increased less than 50 per cent, while that of New York state and Pennsylvania increased fourfold.[166]

Easily the most successful of antebellum America's complex of recolonizations was that of the Old Northwest by the Northeast. The Northeast funnelled British money into Northwestern booms, and sent increasing quantities of its own. The Northeast also sent increasing numbers of people, especially commercial people. 'Spreading over the Great Lakes plains and prairies, the universal Yankee nation challenged an older population of mainly southern origin.'[167] This new 'universal nation' was in fact not strictly Yankee—Mid-Atlantic people and money were even more

important than New England's contributions. New York State was Cincinnati's leading source of native-born migrants in 1841.[168] Northeasterners 'constituted a total of 92% of Chicago's commercial population in both 1850 and 1860', and most were from the Mid-Atlantic.[169] These Northeastern contributions to Northwestern explosive colonization helped set it up for recolonization, and burgeoning demand for food and lumber in Northeast cities did the rest. In 1840, Old Northwestern farmers produced 31% of America's wheat, but exported only 27% of this. In 1860, the figures were 46% and 70%.[170] In 1840, direct exports from the Northwest to the Northeast amounted to 200,000 tons, or 0.06 tons per Western capita. By 1860, they amounted to 2.3 million tons, or 0.3 tons per capita.[171] After fifty years of boom-and-bust and rollicking growth, staples exports had finally become vital to the American West. The key market was the Northeast, and the rest of the wheat exports went to Britain through the Northeast. By 1860, the Northeast and Northwest were mutually dependent and economically integrated.

A number of historians have emphasized the great contribution of the upland South to Old Northwestern settlement.[172] Despite this, the military contribution of the Northwestern states to the Northern cause in the Civil War of 1861–5 was remarkably high. In terms of percentage of military population—a measure that is not distorted by any disproportionate numbers of adult males—Indiana ranked first in the entire Union, contributing 57 per cent of its military-aged men. Illinois came a close second. Ohio and Iowa came fourth and fifth, the latter despite the fact that 'until 1854 ... Iowans betrayed a definite Southern affinity'.[173] Michigan and Wisconsin came sixth and seventh—all ahead of New York.[174] One classic study found 'a clear record of greatly oversubscribed quotas in the West as opposed to a bare compliance or actual failure in the East'.[175] Conscription was introduced in 1863, but this did not affect early recruiting, and was not very effective in any case. 'Only about 2% of the Union Army were conscripts and 6% substitutes furnished by those who had been drafted.'[176] There is no sign that recruitment in the Northwest was any more coerced than in the Northeast, or that Northwesterners underperformed on the battlefield. Indeed, they claimed with some justification that the opposite was the case.[177] The Northwest enhanced the North's military and economic power by around 50 per cent during the Civil War—probably a decisive contribution. Despite the Southern origins of some, Old Northwesterners appear to have fought like Northerners because they believed they were

Northerners, and there are signs that this sentiment intensified in the 1840s and 1850s along with economic recolonization.

One recent study concludes that, until the 1840s, Ohioans tended to see themselves as 'Westerners', an identity shared with the neighbouring slave state of Kentucky. From the 1840s, however, this Western identity increasingly gave way to a *North*western identity, playing up links with the Northeast and playing down links with the South.[178] Not all historians would agree, but many do. Some associate the shift with increasing economic integration and colonial exploitation, and some with the Northwest's strong military support of the Northeast during the Civil War. 'Financial bondage to the East through mortgage, loans, and other forms of dependence was felt by many citizens.'[179] 'The new areas continually complained of a kind of colonial status, in which money always seemed to be moving eastward.'[180] 'Had the Civil War come a decade earlier, certainly the military and economic contributions made by the upper Mississippi and Ohio valleys to Union victory would have been considerably smaller.'[181] 'The West's connection to the East had grown far closer that the cotton South's in more vital and intimate ways—in the movement of loans for land holding, railroad and mineral development, and in the movement of men.' 'If the Northwest had to chose sides, then economics makes clear where its interests lay.'[182]

> By the end of the 1840s, the North and West had become tightly linked by an extensive transportation network of canals and railroads. Consequently, the economic interaction between the Northeast and the Old Northwest not only took the form of goods, services, and capital, but also substantial flows of people—including the growing flood of immigrants coming to the new world. The South, by contrast, remained relatively isolated from these flows.[183]

Contemporary Old Northwestern commentators also noted this shift from a Western to a Northern identity, and often disliked it. The Western identity, which I would associate with explosive colonization, was not necessarily secessionist but was capable of envisaging great and distinctive futures for the region. In the 1820s, 'for the first time a sense of regional identity emerged in the Old Northwest that directly confronted the Eastern domination'.[184] From the 1840s, however, the Western regionalists increasingly became voices crying in the wilderness, berating 'the West's acquiescence to its own silencing', its 'servile dependence upon the Atlantic

States', and its 'culpable negligence' towards its own culture.[185] In the 1830s the Northwest's capital, Cincinnati, had a thriving local literary culture, though some considered it lowbrow. 'The output of published material reached amazing proportions'—88,000 books in three months of 1831. It produced its own booster literature, almanacs, literary magazines, poetry and schoolbooks, as well as religious tracts and newspapers.[186] Plays, circuses, and other entertainments abounded, however vulgar. This cultural precocity and self-confident collective identity was typical of settler colonies in boom time. But, with the increasing dominance of recolonization in the 1850s, boom-time regional culture faced 'evident decline and discouragement'. 'It was counted a tribute to the west that the numerous local periodicals failed to receive support and a point of pride that a Cincinnati bookstore sold as many as 5,000 copies of Harper's—an eastern journal.' 'The literary culture that thrived in Cincinnati at mid-century gradually dissipated.'[187] Mass rail travel in particular spelled doom for local publishing:

> As the single railroad lines developed into a network . . . [p]ublishers rapidly centralized, consolidated, and rationalized book production and promotion, a process which dramatically increased the number of books they could send out West from the northeastern metropolises and drove out serious competition from the West . . . The impact of the railroad on western literary life was that, in opening up an avenue through which cheaper northeastern-produced publications could pour, it discouraged local publishing.[188]

Something like this tightening of links had, of course, long been predicted by the founding fathers, who repeatedly used the phrase 'the cement of interest'. Through internal improvements, thought Jefferson of Westerners, 'the lines of separation will disappear, their interests will be identified with ours, and their union cemented by new and indissoluble ties.'[189] A minority of Western contemporaries resented the increasingly strong links, and a minority of historians see the Northeast as the exploitative colonizer of Western settlers.[190] The emphasis on 'interest' can indeed make the Western sharing of Eastern culture and collective identity seem mercenary. But it was not that economic links *became* cultural links; instead the former were a proxy for the latter. The vectors of economic mass transfer were also vectors of cultural mass transfer—the railroads carried books and newspapers in as well as meat and wheat out. Under recolonization, Western American culture was increasingly produced in the Northeast—identities

and attitudes as well as publications. 'The rhetoric of local wholeness, self-reliance, and progress continued to be expressed, an evasion of reality. In the 1850s, the rise of the great metropolitan centers . . . transformed hundreds of [western] towns, once centers of small local worlds, into provincial places.'[191] But they were rather wealthy provinces. I think that the perceptions of tightening economic and cultural integration between Northeast and Northwest in the period 1840–60 are accurate. But, as noted in Chapter 6, value-judging the process as merely mercenary, exploitative, or a matter of false consciousness is more questionable. Exploitation was mutual. Northwesterners lost a lot of Northeastern money during their booms, and made a lot of money from Northeastern markets during export rescue. Their average living standards were comparable to those of Northeasterners. The 'virtual bridge' created by recolonization was two-way: economic products flowed from newland to old, and cultural products the other way. The cultural products included collective attitudes and identities, but this was not necessarily a case of colonials deluded into believing they were metropolitan. However one value-judges it, recolonization in 1861 showed its power to reintegrate exploding Anglo-Wests and to help determine history—in this case Northern victory in the American Civil War.

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8

British Wests to 1850

Booming the Tasman World

Settler Australasia was founded in 1788, in the form of the penal settlement of New South Wales. It spread to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) in 1803. Early growth was modest. Convicts were not a good founding population simply because 90 per cent were male. By 1828, an emigration of almost 40,000 convicts and several thousand free settlers had produced a settler population of only 54,000 in four decades, less than a quarter female, despite high birth rates among what women there were.[1] Settlement was first crammed into the district around Sydney, and then from 1815 crept over the Blue Mountains into the interior at no great pace. 'By 1820 there were more than 100 Europeans living west of the Blue Mountains with some 30,000 sheep and cattle.'[2] But this of course was barely a drop in an Aboriginal ocean. Sydney Town did have 10,000 people and a lively regional trade importing pork and potatoes from the Pacific Islands and New Zealand, and exporting New Zealand flax and whale oil to Britain and sea cucumber and sealskins to China.[3] Apart from Sydney, New South Wales was 'a subsistence agricultural economy propped up by imperial expenditures on jail operations', and this was all the more true of Van Diemen's Land.[4] To 1828, the British colonization of Australasia was incremental—fascinating, with flashes of mercantile dynamism, but overall quite slow.

From 1828, however, all this changed, and Australasia underwent a prodigious bout of explosive colonization. By 1841, when the boom ended, the settler population had increased to about 210,000, quadrupling in fourteen years. This Anglo boom was American in pace, yet carried out at a distance from the British oldland of 16,000 miles as the ship sailed. Fresh organized emigrations from Britain, totalling about 25,000 people,

Map 4. The Tasman World, circa 1860.

established new settlements at Perth in Western Australia in 1829, Adelaide in South Australia in 1836, and Auckland, Wellington, New Plymouth, and Nelson in New Zealand, 1840–2. New South Wales grew from 36,000 to 118,000 people, 1828–41, and Van Diemen's Land from 18,000 to 57,000. At 15,000 people, Hobart, the capital of Van Diemen's Land, was about the same size as St Louis, and Sydney was twice as big. The two mother colonies supplemented British emigration to New Zealand and South Australia, provided their livestock, and did some colonizing themselves—in the Port Phillip District (Victoria) from 1836. By 1841 that district had 12,000 settlers, most in infant Melbourne. Settler Australasia was founded in 1788, but it exploded in 1828, and the second date was arguably more significant than the first.

Australasia to the 1820s was saddled with a reputation that could hardly have been worse. It was almost inexpressibly distant and different, the abode of unsalvageable savages and barely salvageable convicts. Convict crimes may not seem very terrible today, but Britons at the time tended to see them as evidence of ineradicable depravity, possibly hereditary. 'Throughout the 1820s Botany Bay was portrayed with regularity as a foul sink of moral iniquity.'[5] 'The people of New South Wales are a poor groveling race [whose] spirit is gone . . . they are no longer *Britons* [but have] . . . degenerated into Australians.'[6] New Zealand had no convicts of its own, but it did have escaped Australians, plus a reputation for indigenous earthquakes and cannibalism that was only partly exaggerated. Yet Australasia managed to boom despite the odds. One combustible was a halving of passenger fares from Britain to Australia in the 1820s. This was due partly to improved sailing directions and understanding of prevailing winds, and partly to the desire of convict- and whale-product-shipping companies to supplement their cargoes with free emigrants. Freight rates dropped less steeply.[7] It was more an easing of the transfer of value than volume. But it did facilitate the inflow of people, money, and information.

Another factor was a modest increase in the number of free settlers. The Australian governors had long made a practice of granting large tracts of land to retired officers and the like. From 1821, large grants became more focused on attracting British capitalists, who were allocated free convict labour as well as free land. The trickle of these moneyed settlers grew from about 100 to perhaps 300 a year between 1820 and 1826.[8] It was not the land grants themselves that sparked the boom. They ended in 1831;

crown land was sold thereafter, and the money used for emigration, while an extremely lively private land market emerged. But these forerunner land-grant settlers did set about assembling more boom triggers: writing booster books, founding banks and newspapers, and agitating for better mail services, full English civilian law, and political representation. 'A Legislature founded on the same basis as the Legislatures of the American Colonies can alone make us a happy and contented people.'[9] Success was slow in elected representation, but rapid on other fronts. Trial by jury in New South Wales in 1823 was followed by a new Legislative Council in 1824. It had four officials and three appointed non-official settler members—representation even if it was not elected. Reform in 1828 increased the numbers to seven official and seven non-official.[10] At least eleven booster books were published in the 1820s and 1830s on Van Diemen's Land alone. Around forty books and pamphlets on New Zealand were published in Britain between 1838 and 1843. A hundred articles a year were published on Australia in the British periodical press in the later 1830s.[11]

The moneyed land-grant settlers were well connected. Their friends at home combined with merchants with whaling and convict-transport interests to form a substantial 'Australian interest' in London, which met at the Jerusalem Coffee House. A petition in 1845 was signed 'by upwards of sixty the principal Merchants and Capitalists of the City of London, connected with, and interested in the colony of New South Wales'.[12] This human filament between London and Australia, combined with the other combustibles, managed to lever free an avalanche of money. There were some big individual investors, such as Thomas Potter McQueen, and two large companies, the Van Diemen's Land Company, which spent £227,000 in one year alone, and the Australian Agricultural Company, which had twenty-eight British members of Parliament among its shareholders.[13] But banks were the main vectors of the mass transfer of money. Settler Australasia had two banks in 1823; nine in 1828, and thirty-four in 1842.[14] Inflows of private capital jumped from £196,000 in 1827 to £424,000 in 1828 and peaked at £1.8 million in 1841. In all, £7.5 million of private capital poured into the Australian colonies, excluding New Zealand, between 1828 and 1841. Public spending, peaking at £5 million in the four years 1838–41, at least matched this.[15] The total inflow of about £16 million (over US$70 million), 1828–41, needs to be set in its context. It came to a small and recently reviled settler population across 16,000 miles,

and it exceeded worldwide British overseas investment a quarter-century earlier.

As for people, Australasia received about 180,000 immigrants during its first boom, 1828–42, mainly from Britain and Ireland but with some from Germany. The migrants were very roughly equally divided between convicts, government-assisted emigrants, and emigrants who paid their own way. The categories correspond to slaves, poor whites, and slave-owners in the American Old Southwest. Migrants were assisted out mainly through a bounty system, whereby the colonial governments paid shippers and merchants a fee to recruit people in Britain and Ireland. 'The specialist migrant brokers, strongly supported by the City, made the Bounty system into a vehicle for mass emigration.'[16] Such assistance might seem to evade the need for a 'settler transition' and easily solve the problem of 'getting peopled'. In fact, emigrant fares were not wholly paid; they themselves often had to contribute an amount similar to the entire fare to North America; mortality, especially infant mortality, on the voyage out was still high; and convict Australia had a dire reputation amongst English workers. Such people did not trust middle-class booster books. There had to be an informal settler transition, as well as a formal one, and ironically it seems that convicts delivered this.

From the late 1820s, the British authorities were increasingly concerned that the convict system was losing its deterrent power because convicts were beginning to *enjoy* Australia, and telling people back home about it. One ostensible convict ballad of 1830 ran: 'But still I can't help laughing/When I see your paupers looking so pale/There's thousands in the work house starving/While we live like lords in jail.'[17] This does not sound like the genuine article, and there may have been an element of genteel moral panic here. Convict punishment remained brutal. In New South Wales in the 1830s, one in four convicts was flogged, and 490 were hung between 1828 and 1855.[18] But there was probably some benign fire in the smoke. Once a convict's term had expired, or he or she obtained a 'ticket of leave' or some other form of early release, Australia did provide somewhat better living conditions than Britain for working people, especially during booms. 'The problem . . . was the awkward fact that convicts who behaved well . . . and were indulged with a ticket of leave or freed after the expiration of their sentence, or pardoned, were better off materially than many of their contemporaries in Britain.'[19] Convict life was never desirable, but post-convict life may well have been, and

ex-convicts may well have said so. Convicts were surprisingly literate, and they were perfectly capable of using the new postal systems, as well as word-of-mouth through sailors and the few returned convicts. There is even some rare hard evidence for this supposition. In 1838, a leading Australian settler visiting Britain talked to some assisted emigrants about to embark for New South Wales. They were convinced the move would be good for them. 'They told him they had come to this conclusion by reading letters sent home by convicts.'[20] Genteel boosters and London connections were not enough—Western Australia had them too but failed to entice settlers at this very time. You had also to have an informal settler transition. But, between them, the two transformed the seriously ugly Australasian ducklings into glorious swans in the minds of British beholders. New Zealand, the Cannibal Isles, which American whalers had found to be a 'hoal', 'a most horrid place as ever I was in', suddenly became *the* Britain of the South.[21] Australia was transmuted in British minds from 'a small and incredibly distant cesspool of depravity' to 'a veritable Arcady, in which the Golden Age of rural prosperity and individual dignity might be recaptured'.[22]

Like slavery, the convict system itself was not particularly conducive to booms. Unfree labourers had little money and so were poor consumers, and they had little geographical mobility or political leverage. But in Australia, the government 'owned' the convicts, and often used them on public works—1,500 built the Great North Road in New South Wales.[23] Once free, ex-convicts *were* boom-prone, as were assisted emigrants. Most worked, not on sheep stations as some legends have it, but on boom-farms, in boom towns, in boom-phase extraction, and in the progress industry. We will see below that the boom-time markets for livestock, work animals, meat, and leather were far more important than wool production during the boom. Manufacturing and building were also lively. Many of Hobart's 15,000 people in 1840 were busy building the town's 2,000 houses, its 100 pubs, its 4 shipyards, its 40 legal and medical practices, its 45 warehouses, and its 86 'manufactories', whose outputs ranged from glass to steam engines. 'For a new settlement which had been in existence for barely a generation, a remarkable degree of industrialization had taken place.'[24] Extractive industries boomed too. Van Diemen's Land in 1840 had forty-one shore whaling stations, which had killed 3,000 whales between 1828 and 1838. Sydney owned even more whaling stations, but most were located in New Zealand. Over eighty whaling stations were established in

New Zealand between 1827 and 1850, most run from Sydney. Boom-time extraction quickly creamed off the whales, as it did the prime red-cedar timber of northern New South Wales.

As in New South Wales, British-government expenditure on public works in Van Diemen's Land was huge. 'It has been estimated that between 1828 and 1849 more than £4 million was expended on roads, bridges, harbors and [public] buildings.' One project, a causeway over the Derwent River, involved shifting 1.8 million tons of stone and clay.[25] Servicing and building ships was a major industry. Sydney built 164 ships between 1837 and 1843 and owned 259 in 1846. About 500 ships visited Van Diemen's Land annually around 1840, all demanding supplies, stores, cargoes, and recreation—hence the hundred pubs.[26] Land buying and selling was another major urban activity. Sydney suffered from 'land mania' and featured 'champagne auctions' for speculative subdivisions, and it was worse in Melbourne. One speculator bought a town lot for £150 in 1836, sold it for £9,280 in 1839, 'and went back into the market to buy'. 'Town sites were offered for sale, complete with street signs and with cemeteries divided among the various denominations, that have not been built upon even today.'[27] Infant Adelaide also developed 'a mania of speculation'.[28] Throughout settler Australasia, the mood was one of 'bold enterprise, unreasoning confidence, and rapid progress . . . Unlimited credit was available to almost everyone.' It was 'marked by prudence in no quarter, unbounded credit and extravagant speculation were everywhere'—'a spirit of speculation, as hair-brained [sic] as the world ever saw'.[29] Is it only me to whom East Australia and the American Old West seem like twins in the booming 1830s?

Close up: Tasmania

A closer look at Tasmania, the smaller of the two original Australasian colonies, may help unravel the mysteries of boom starting. As Van Diemen's Land, this colony was an unpromising candidate for hosting the world's first Anglo boom outside North America. It was distant, young, small—a quarter the size of Britain or New Zealand—and its reputation, as the convict colony of a convict colony, was even worse than that of New South Wales. Yet it was here that Australasia's first boom began, in 1827 or 1828, with New South Wales following a couple of years behind.[30] The first step had come in 1821, when Tasmanian Governor William Sorrell

introduced free land grants and assigned convict labour designed to attract moneyed settlers. The government intention seems to have been to lower the cost of the convict system rather than to transform Tasmania into a booming colony of free settlement. The plan worked to a modest extent, and between 1821 and 1827 some 2,000 free settlers trickled in, along with 6,000 fresh convicts. These new free settlers were no more able, and not a lot richer, than their precursor elite, ex-officers and successful ex-convicts. But they did have better oldland connections, especially with London.[31]

As soon as they arrived the land-grant settlers sought to turn on the taps of mass transfer—to found banks and newspapers, to encourage booster literature, and to pressure the imperial government into allowing Tasmania to 'clone': to separate formally from New South Wales, to introduce an element of (elite) settler representation into government, and to acquire a legal system considered appropriate to free British settlers as against convicts. Each tap was turned on in stages. W. C. Wentworth's booster book of 1819 was mainly about New South Wales, but made favourable mention of Van Diemen's Land, as did an 1820 compilation by William Kingdom.[32] At least seven more emigrant guides and almanacs followed by 1829.[33] Despite struggles with a more autocratic new governor, George Arthur, a lively, even virulent, free press emerged from 1825—a new newspaper appeared almost every year. Postal services were reformed in 1828, delivering some sixteen post offices, with the number increasing to forty-seven by 1845. Moneyed settlers continued to trickle in, reinforced in 1826 by the substantial joint-stock Van Diemen's Land Company. The first three banks arrived in 1824–6, followed by two more in 1828, with a total of ten by 1840.[34] The key year for cloning was 1825, when Tasmania was formally separated from New South Wales, and acquired a Legislative Council including nominated settler representatives as well as provision for trial by jury. But here too there was a preceding stage—a high court in 1824—and a succeeding stage—enlargement of the Legislative Council in 1828.[35]

Various measures indicate a Tasmanian take-off about 1828. From a norm of around fifty a year, 1821–6, ship arrivals jumped to 131; and imports quadrupled from an average of £60,000 a year to £241,000. Local settlers 'communicated to their friends [in London] . . . explaining that a higher legal rate of interest could be obtained in Van Diemen's Land than in any other British colony. Capital soon poured in.'[36] Only

500 free settlers arrived in 1828, but over the next six years, 7,000 came in, only 2,000 of them assisted.[37] The numbers seem small, but they tripled the number of direct free emigrants to Tasmania since its foundation in 1803, and more were to follow. Between 1828 and 1840 about 15,000 free settlers entered the colony, as well as 20,000 fresh convicts—about four times the immigration of the twenty-five years before 1828.[38] The stages of each vector of mass transfer nudged the others along—a push-me, pull-you relationship. An early emigrant guide of 1822 noted 'the recent influx of several respectable free-settlers, with considerable property', and so helped to turn a trickle into a genuine influx.[39] By stages, chicken and egg begat each other.

Separation from New South Wales in 1825 gave boosters a separate brand to boost, and they lost no time in doing so. That year, the *Hobart Town Gazette* declared: 'we are different from other British colonies. We are not a tropical plantation where a few whites [are] thinly scattered among a slave population . . . We [are] a real and legitimate portion of the British people.'[40] But the brand 'Van Diemen's Land' was tainted by its past and not helped by its present. The mid-1820s featured an upsurge in bush-ranging (banditry by escaped convicts), and the late 1820s a determined and bloody resistance effort by the indigenous people, discussed below. The boosters tried to replace 'Van Diemen's Land' with 'Tasmania' as early as 1825—other suggestions included 'South Britain' and 'Little England'—but did not succeed until thirty years later.[41] Yet they did manage two other adjustments to their brand. First, they joined New South Wales in promoting a shared new general brand, 'Australia'. In the 1820s, there were only fifty-nine articles containing 'Australia' in *The Times* of London, compared to 418 for 'New South Wales' and 219 for 'Van Diemen's Land'. In the 1830s, usage of 'Australia' increased eighteenfold to 1,073, more than New South Wales (822) and Van Diemen's Land (174) combined. Secondly, the Tasmanian boosters steered their letters and newspaper reports away from the 'Van Diemen's Land' label and towards 'Hobart Town', their capital, and *The Times* shows the shift quite precisely. In 1828, 'Van Diemen's Land' appeared in forty-one articles and 'Hobart Town' in nine. In 1829, the figures were twenty-five and forty-one respectively.[42]

The qualitative evidence supports the quantitative. In March 1826, *The Times* received the Van Diemen's Land newspapers to August 1825, and noted the suppression of one for libelling the governor. 'These journals

contain no other news, with the exception of numerous accounts of depredations, highway robberies, and other acts of violence.' By 1829, Hobart Town featured regularly in *The Times* 'Money Market and City Intelligence' column, and it did so much more favourably. 'A stranger who visits that place by intervals of six or twelve months cannot help but be struck at the rapid increase. New buildings are starting up in all directions, both elegant and commodious.' Some letters published in *The Times* smack of formal settlerism. 'Van Diemen's Land, when brought into cultivation, must become an earthly paradise.' Others, even in *The Times*, were more informal. 'Plenty abounds in Van Diemen's Land, because nature governs and administers to man in spite of himself.' The writer and a couple of friends caught seventeen lobsters in half an hour, and saw twenty-four ducks killed with one shot, as well as bulls as big as haystacks, whose beef tasted better than in England. 'You see no want here, for there is none.'[43]

But Tasmania was small, with quite limited fertile land. Its boom therefore stalled in the mid-1830s. It revived between 1836 and 1842, but largely in the service of explosive settlement in South Australia and Victoria, rather than in Tasmania itself. Even so, between 1828 and 1842, Tasmania more than tripled in population, from 18,000 to 57,000 people. Imports in 1840 closed on £1 million, and ship arrivals on 500—ten times the 1826 levels.[44] Great futures were predicted—'A thriving nation on a desert coast!'—and Governor Arthur was no doubt delighted to discover that he too was 'rocking the cradle of Hercules'.[45] Hobart became a genuine boom town, as we have seen. But limited land meant that Tasmania experienced no further booms, and it does not appear to have experienced much in the way of export rescue either. It lacked sufficiently broad acres for wheat or sufficiently broad pastures for sheep. From the 1840s to the 1930s, it remained significantly poorer per capita than other Australian states.[46] Tasmania, the leader of explosive colonization outside North America, became the laggard. It arguably derived cultural and environmental benefits from this. But, after the 1830s, Hobart never again challenged Sydney.

The Tasman world's first bust came in 1842, and hit all colonies hard. A Tasmanian merchant, unaware of the American news, felt that 'so great distress and depression perhaps never overtook so rapidly any country as have overtaken this'. The colony's imports plummeted over 40 per cent, and immigration turned to net emigration, 1842–7.[47] In New South Wales

and Victoria, 'ruin was widespread—amongst traders, squatters and bankers alike'. 'The house of cards had collapsed . . . the unemployed walked the streets of Sydney . . . The colony's reputation as a field of investment was temporarily ruined.'[48] New South Wales had 629 bankruptcies in 1842, compared to fifty-six in the more normal year of 1849. This colony's imports fell from over £3 million in 1840 to under £1 million in 1844, while exports decreased only slightly.[49] Six-year-old South Australia went bankrupt, and had to be rescued by the imperial government. One-third of the houses in infant Adelaide were empty, and there were 2,000 destitute people.[50] Two-year-old New Zealand almost went bankrupt too. Its imports halved, immigration ceased, and the settler population actually dropped, 1845–6. At this time, settler New Zealand's short history seemed 'a picture of continuous retrogression and uninterrupted calamity'.[51] In the British West as in the American West, the bust was blamed on collective sin, short-sighted governments, local bankers, oldland bankers, falling prices, corrupt individuals, or malign fate. Still, recovery began from 1847, and Australasian settlers were hereafter counted in the hundreds of thousands rather than the tens of thousands, courtesy of explosive colonization.

The growth of settler Australia was based squarely on the dispossession of the Aboriginal peoples. For most of the twentieth century, this matter was often simply ignored, 'the great Australian silence'.[52] Alternatively, it was assumed that Aboriginals had faded away before the settlers easily, even peacefully. Dissenting voices date back to 1870 or before, but revision intensified from the 1970s. Thousands of Aboriginals had in fact been killed by troops and settlers. Just how many thousands became controversial from the 1990s, when the pendulum swung again and Australia's intensely political 'History Wars' broke out. Right-wingers were delighted to find that historians allegedly purveying the 'black armband', guilt-ridden, approach to Australian history had sometimes exaggerated the number of Aboriginals massacred.[53] The situation echoed that in New Zealand in the 1880s, when a historian accused a cabinet minister of participating in a massacre of Maori women and children while a young cavalry officer in 1868. The case went to the Privy Council in London and the cabinet minister won—his unit had only massacred unarmed children, not women.[54] The 'black armband' controversy tended to divert attention from the most interesting finding of the revisionists: Aboriginals had often resisted dispossession intensively, bloodily, and efficiently—a constant 'Black War' rather than a passive

fade-out. It may be that a hyper-colonial approach can take this debate a stage further.

Black War, Black Peace

Australian Aboriginals faced some unusual problems in resisting Europeans. The need to guard convicts meant that Australian settlements were exceptionally well-equipped with troops from the outset. Twenty-seven different British regiments served in Australia to 1870, and until the 1860s there were usually several thousand imperial troops in the colonies.[55] These could be used against indigenous people as well as recalcitrant convicts. Thus, despite spasms of humanitarian doubt, London met much of the overhead cost of coercing Aboriginals. The Aboriginals had some guns, but using them was considered cowardly, and spear-throwers were arguably as effective as muskets in any case. More severe disadvantages were the European monopoly of horses, and the limitations of a hunter-gatherer economy. War is the most expensive of human activities; it is therefore very difficult for tribal peoples to sustain for long; and part-time Aboriginal warriors often faced full-time regular troops. In this context, Aboriginal resistance was indeed remarkable intensive, especially in Tasmania and Queensland. But it was not constant. Though there was some initial conflict, each 'Black War', now prominent, tended to be preceded by a still-neglected 'Black Peace'. During the incremental phase of Australian colonization, despite the ravages of disease, Aboriginals coped with settlement, like the Indians of the American West. There was some raiding and some trading, but the main Aboriginal technique was to stay clear of the newcomers. With settlement concentrated in tiny coastal patches of the vast continent until the 1820s, this was relatively easy. Even spreading pastoralism was not necessarily a terminal problem for indigenous Australians. In its early stages, pastoralism was so very extensive that meeting a sheep or a cow must have been quite an event. Their modest impact on the grazing and water supply of game animals could be recompensed by taking the occasional beast for food. It was when pastoralists began to fence, and to monopolize water sources, and when they and other settlers became really numerous, that problems arose. This, of course, happened during booms.

It is therefore no coincidence that most, though not all, spasms of intense Aboriginal resistance correlate with booms. Native South Australian

resistance was concentrated at the tail-end of Boom One, in the early 1840s, and what we will later see was the beginning of Boom Two, 1848–52.[56] Aboriginals did not dispute the initial settlement of Melbourne in 1836, but 'from the late 1830s until the mid 1840s a frontier war raged, with deaths and atrocities on both sides'.[57] About sixty Europeans and numerous Aboriginals were killed. In New South Wales, Boom One sparked intensive resistance on the Liverpool Plains which 'actually retarded settlement in some districts'.[58] When Western Australia finally boomed, in and around the 1890s, Aboriginal resisters killed forty-two settlers.[59] Resistance in Queensland dwarfed even this. We will see that this colony remained in the incremental phase to the 1850s. Until then, apart from a few skirmishes, the settlers usually remained 'on very good terms with the natives'. The exception was a spasm of fighting in the early 1840s when New South Wales' first boom overflowed into the Darling Downs.[60] Queensland itself then boomed massively from the 1850s to the 1880s, with a bust period intervening 1867–72. At least 600 settlers and their allies lost their lives to Aboriginal resisters in Queensland in this period.[61] Overall, seven out of ten major spasms of Aboriginal resistance appear to correlate with booms.[62] This is no great surprise in itself, but it means the Australian aboriginals, rather than fading away pathetically or resisting constantly from the outset, actually achieved a degree of coexistence with normal European settlement. When explosive colonization came, their resistance was intense, courageous, and well-organized, though ultimately unsuccessful. One and a half million settlers backed by millions of London money, thousands of British troops, and the latest metropolitan technology, poured into Australia's booms of the nineteenth century. Some European nations might well have put up less of a fight against such a horde than did Australia's few hundred thousand indigenous hunter-gathers.

Again, we can press home this point through a brief closer look at Tasmania, smallest of the Australian colonies and home to the tiniest Aboriginal population. When the European settlement of Tasmania began, in 1803, the indigenous Tasmanians numbered somewhere between 3,000 and 7,000, with the lower figure the more likely, grouped into nine small tribes and about eighty even-smaller bands.[63] These people had long been isolated from the mainland, and Europeans placed them on 'the very lowest scale of barbarism', considered them 'infinitely inferior' even to the mainland Aboriginals, and portrayed their contact history as one of rapid

and inevitable extinction.[64] Until the 1990s, historians took much the same view, except that some interpreted it as a terrible tragedy inflicted on a harmless folk, 'dispossessed with horrifying ease'.[65] The allegedly extinct Tasmanians were seen as classic victims of European expansion, along with the Arawaks of the Caribbean. Revision took place in the 1990s. It transpired that several thousand people still carried Tasmanian genes, and that native Tasmanians had fought very fiercely for their land. But they did not fight much immediately. Settler Van Diemen's Land barely encompassed a quarter of the island to 1828, and there was little need to clash. Between 1803 and 1824, when a Hobart newspaper described them as 'the most peaceable creatures in the universe', 'the common view among colonists was that the Tasmanians were a mild and peaceful people'.[66] There was some increase in conflict in 1824–6, but real war broke out in 1827 with the beginning of the boom. In the five years 1827–31, Tasmanian aboriginal resisters estimated at between 200 and 400 people made 654 attacks on settlers and their property. Some 400 Europeans were killed and wounded, while between 150 and 250 Aboriginals lost their lives.[67]

The raids were small in scale; there were few if any battles. But raiding was the best military option available to the Aboriginals and not a function of lack of intensity, unity, organization, or strategy. At peak, in 1830, the resisters mounted 222 raids, winter and summer, deep into the settler district. About 1828, the Tasmanian tribes made 'some sort of treaty', and 'began to think of themselves as one people'.[68] 'There can no longer be any doubt that they have formed an organized plan for carrying on a war of extermination against the white inhabitants of the colony.'[69] For the settlers, if not their posterity, aboriginal resistance was formidable: 'the trouble and loss they cause and still will cause us is quite paralyzing'.[70] 'The black natives are now a very serious annoyance . . . They have just commenced a new mode of warfare by firing the crops and farm-houses. Intelligence arrives every day of disasters of this kind, and much consternation prevails.'[71] One thousand imperial troops joined some 1,700 armed settlers and trusted convicts in operations against the few hundred resisters, including the infamous 'Black Line' of 1830, 'a prodigious organizational and logistic effort for a small colony'.[72] No military operation was decisively successful, but the sheer effort of five years sustained warfare against odds of six or more to one ground down the indigenous Tasmanians. In the early 1830s, most accepted exile to offshore islands,

where they fell prey to disease. A few fought on. Even in 1841, 'the natives steadily continue their robberies'. In 1842, the last seven resisters were captured.[73] The Tasmanian Aboriginals might have sustained normal European colonization for a century; it was explosive colonization that dispossessed them within a generation. Failing to acknowledge the sheer brawn of their enemy, the Tasman boom of 1828–41, does them less than justice.

The Golden Fleece?

To the extent that it is acknowledged at all, the great Tasman boom of 1828–41 is normally attributed to burgeoning wool exports. This is the Australian version of the staples thesis: from the 1820s or the 1830s, the colonies rode to prosperity on the sheep's back. Even that fine scholar Max Hartwell accepted this in 1954 in his economic history of Tasmania. 'By 1820 the staple was wool.'[74] A growing counter-current of historians questioned aspects of this view, but early debate was sidetracked into an argument about whether wool dominated from the 1820s or the 1830s.[75] The notion of wool-powered growth remained 'the scholarly consensus' into the 1990s.[76] A 1992 study dismissed the hesitations, and emphatically reasserted that wool was the 'engine of growth'.[77] As recently as 2005, an able economic historian, referring explicitly to the 1830s, wrote that 'wool production and export dominated the embryonic economy'.[78] Australian loyalty to King Wool is similar to American loyalty to King Cotton, yet as far as powering booms is concerned it too seems to fly in the face of the evidence.

King Wool was always an unlikely boom starter. Like cotton, wool had limited spin-off benefits for the wider economy. 'Wool created no demand for a wide range of inputs from other sectors.' 'The demand for town services was not great.'[79] The demand for labour was not great either. New South Wales' 879 sheep stations in 1843 employed an average of seven people each.[80] As with cotton, the custom of giving wool exports in millions of pounds weight exaggerates their significance. In 1839, at the peak of its boom and nineteen years after wool had allegedly become its staple, Tasmania exported about 4 million lbs of wool. But this amounted to less than 2,000 tons, say five shiploads. Yet 452 ships visited the colony that year; what did the rest of them do? Wool did account for almost half New South Wales exports by 1841, but exports were only one-third as

significant to the economy as imports in that year.[81] Wool exports became important after the bust of 1842, and one could argue that clever and patient Australian capitalists had been working towards this from 1828 on some inspired fifteen-year plan. But, if so, why did they invest so much money and energy in other activities—activities that either had little to do with exports, or failed to provide long-term staples?

It is true that Australian entrepreneurs had long been interested in sheep, but during the boom they focused more on the local market—for meat and livestock for new runs—than on wool exports. 'The squatter's chief profit was the natural increase of his sheep . . . [it was] difficult to make the sale of his wool meet the expenses of the clip.'[82] Some historians attribute the bust of 1842 to a fall in wool prices in 1838. But the fall was modest, and the economy boomed on for four years after it. It was the end of the boom, not the wool price in London, which slashed the value of sheep. In 1839, despite the fall in wool prices, ewes at Port Phillip were worth thirty-five shillings each. In 1843, they sold for six shillings. Entrepreneurs were interested in many things other than sheep. The Van Diemen's Land Company's plans included sheep, but also included mining, wheat, whaling, cattle and horse breeding, contracting for public works, and banking.[83] Port Phillip booster literature claimed that vines, silk, arrowroot, tobacco, olives, oranges, pineapples 'and other tropical fruits are now being cultivated with great success'. Not to be outdone, infant South Australia also experimented with grapes, oranges, dates, bananas and of course pineapples.[84] Whaling was a serious rival of wool as an export for most of the 1830s. Whale-product exports from Sydney exceeded wool to 1834.[85] Quite a number of entrepreneurs were engaged in whaling and sheep-farming, an odd couple, and shifted emphasis to wool as whale numbers diminished.[86] Whaling too was 'a bonanza industry'. 'People are Black Whaling mad.'[87] Other trades also had this frenetic quality, so characteristic of Anglo booms. Some Sydney merchants thought they could spin flax into gold. 'The subject of New Zealand flax could generate great excitement . . . hard-headed men . . . found themselves plunging into schemes surrounded by dangers and pitfalls and spending money wildly; the language of their documents, their business agreements, and their memorials becoming more exotic as they became less realistic.'[88] In 1831 alone, Sydney traded 6,000 muskets with Maori for dressed flax.[89] But wool, whales, and flax exports combined were not the mainstay of the

boom-time economy. The mainstay was supplying the local market in the service of growth itself.

The stocking and meat markets for sheep were large and profitable, but this was also true for cattle, which actually outranked sheep in New South Wales throughout the boom. Cattle yield a dozen times the meat per beast as sheep, and they eat ten times as much grass. A very conservative stock–unit ratio would be five sheep to one cow. On this basis, cattle-raising was clearly more important than sheep-raising in New South Wales until 1843, and outranked sheep again in the 1850s. Australian farming historians find it 'difficult to determine why such large numbers of cattle were kept'.[90] Their capacity to prepare rough natural pasture for sheep may be one explanation, but sheep numbers dropped in the 1850s while cattle numbers grew. High cattle (and horse) numbers were characteristic of booms. Unlike sheep, cattle herds supplied work animals and milk as well as meat, leather, and tallow, and like sheep they benefited from the massive stocking market while it lasted. The ratio of horses to people in New South Wales climbed from one to eight in 1821, to one to three in 1844 despite the huge increase in numbers of people.[91] Breeding and feeding horses must have been big business.

Like cattle and horse-raising, arable farming has been underestimated. 'Only a crude husbandry was practiced.' 'The contemporary assessment of smallholder arable farming as inefficient and unprofitable has generally been accepted by historians.'[92] It certainly looked crude and wasteful compared to English farming, but this was always the case on frontiers where land was plentiful and labour was not. Keeping your hedges trim was a low priority. A revisionist study published in 1996 makes a good case for dynamic early Australian small farming. 'It was arable farming which was the mainstay of the economy at least until the 1830s.'[93] After all, there were boom towns, extractive industries, the progress industry, the convict system, and the burgeoning number of workhorses and oxen to supply with food and feed. Some wheat was imported into New South Wales, but mainly from Tasmania, and most food and feed was homegrown. Wheat production in New South Wales grew perhaps threefold during the boom to over a million bushels.[94] Imports were still needed, not because of the 'backwardness of agriculture in New South Wales',[95] but because the increase in people outpaced even the increase in bushels. How small farmers survived without export markets is allegedly 'one of

the mysteries of Australian agriculture'.[96] It was no mystery at all during booms.

Wool exporting did become important in the 1840s, but it was a child of the bust, not the boom—a classic case of export rescue and the re-colonial reshuffling of an economy. The bust lowered prices and wages, allowed better-capitalized farmers to pick up the runs of bankrupt neighbours for a song, and bequeathed a surplus of transport. Freight rates dropped sharply and shipping was reorganized into larger lines. The organization of wool-buying was also improved. Imports of breed-stock increased the weight of fleeces. Improved screw presses reduced the bulk of bales. New South Wales wool exports grew fourfold between 1839 and 1848 with most of the growth after 1842.[97] The precedence of wool in the Australian economy dates from the 1840s, not before, and it was more a creature of the bust than the boom. The revisionist strand of Australian historiography acknowledges the former point, but not the latter.

Wool was the main Australian export rescue; it was not the only one. In South Australia, salvation was a matter of wheat and copper exports, which began in 1844 and 1845 respectively. Again, we see a bust forcing technical innovation—the invention of the Ridley stripper, which eased bottlenecks in the harvesting of wheat.[98] In New South Wales, tobacco, tanning bark, wine, cedar timber, gum, and horses for India were all seriously considered as major exports. Wool was only one of the animal products also nominated as saviour. 'The place was in a ferment. Tallow, mutton hams, pig feed, meat meal and bone meal for fertilizer, glue, bone oil, portable soup, and now, preserved meat were all being suggested by innovative minds.' Tallow exports, from boiled-down cattle as well as sheep, suddenly became prominent. Only 35 tons of tallow was exported in 1842, 2,830 tons by 1844, and nearly 5,000 tons by 1847. There were also attempts at preserved meat exports—salt beef and tinned mutton surged briefly, 1846–9.[99] It was wool that was the long-term success, but it emerged from a whirlpool of rivals rather than leading from the outset. Still, it re-linked Australasia to Britain in the 1840s, when the flood of people ceased, and the flood of money reversed. In 1831, Australia supplied only 8 per cent of Britain's tiny wool imports. By 1850, it was supplying half of a much larger total.[100] The golden fleece did not power the boom, but it did provide the main life raft when the boom ended.

Boom Canada

The story of explosive colonization in British North America is complicated by the absence of reliable statistics until 1850 and of consistent provincial names until 1867. Canada had been split into Anglophone Upper Canada and Francophone Lower Canada in 1791. The two were reunited in 1841 and became the districts of Canada West and Canada East in the united colony of Canada. Federation in 1867 split them again into the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, and we will stick with these names for convenience. As noted in Chapter 3, Montreal and the nearby regions of Ontario boomed from 1815, possibly busting in 1821, a little later than the US West. Ontario itself boomed in the 1830s, and New Brunswick may also have undergone its one and only boom in this period. The great boom of the 1830s ended in the triple bust of 1837/1839/1842, shared with the United States. Ontario then had another short boom 1844–8, and still another in the early 1850s, which Montreal again shared. None of the other four provinces of what is now Eastern Canada experienced any booms at all, and Canada matched the explosive growth of the 1830s only in the Western Prairies in the 1900s. Apart from South Africa, Eastern Canada was the least explosive of the British Wests. But it did experience enough booms, busts, and export rescues to make hyper-colonization a crucial part of its history.

The heartland of Canadian hyper-colonization in the nineteenth century was Ontario. Its second boom began against the odds. In the late 1820s, the colony faced increasingly stiff competition for British migrants and money from the United States. Like Australia, it had an image problem. As late as 1829, William Cobbett unkindly described the British North American colonies as 'the offal of North America; they are the head, the shins, the shanks of that part of the world, while the United States are the sir-loins.'[101] But Ontario managed to boom despite him. About 300,000 British and Irish immigrants entered British North America between 1830 and 1837, three times the level of the 1820s. Most went to Ontario which began to boom from about 1830. As in Tasmania, forerunner settlers, the wealthy recipients of land grants, provided a spark. Most were members of the 'Family Compact', the network of landowners and officials who ran Ontario in the 1820s. The network dominated business and the colonial assembly, as well as the administration. Notoriously conservative

Map 5. British North America, circa 1840.

and allegedly corrupt, this group managed to provoke an unusual settler rebellion in Ontario in December of 1837, after a sharp economic bust earlier in the year. The volatile personality of the Ontario rebel leader, William Lyon Mackenzie, and the support of Americans in the colony and across the border were factors in this controversial event,[102] but our thesis might also cast some light on it. Elite rule was not exceptional, at least in the British West. Settlerism and its collateral descendant, settler populism, accepted this, but demanded that the elite compromise by not being overtly patronizing or authoritarian and by offering a wide manhood suffrage and abundant economic opportunity. It was not the Family Compact's elitism in itself but its failure to meet the compromise requirements that was the unusual feature of 1837 Ontario. Populist radicalism often followed busts, which were blamed on the governing elite and seen as breaches of an implicit populist compact.

Other than their rigidity about compromise, the Ontarian elite seem typical colonizing crusaders, always keen to spark a boom and willing to invest their own money as well as that of the public. Colonel Thomas Talbot established twenty-eight townships with 50,000 settlers by 1838.[103] 'Willingly or not, he was more engrossed in the superintending of a flourishing settlement than in the accumulation of a personal fortune.'[104] As in Australia, large free grants of land were influential in drawing in these moneyed settlers, well before the boom—Talbot had arrived in 1803. The idea was that they would undertake old-style contract colonization in return for their free grants. This did not work in itself, in either Canada or Australia, but it did build up the number of wealthy and well-connected boosters trying to spark a boom. They succeeded only when sufficient combustibles were assembled. One of these was the cheap fares provided by returning timber ships. 'Of about 40,000 new settlers that arrived in our North American colonies during the year 1830, more than 30,000 were carried by the timber ships.'[105] As we saw in Chapter 4, timber ships were a necessary condition of the early mass transfer of people to Canada, but not a sufficient one. Timber exports from Canada rose sharply in the early 1820s, while immigration declined sharply. The early 1830s advent of more powerful steamers on the St Lawrence, able to reliably move upriver against the current all the way to Lake Ontario, was a more immediate transport trigger.[106]

As in Australia, another piece of boom tinder was a shift from land grants to land sales, occurring in Ontario (and New Brunswick) around

1826. Thereafter 'land speculation was endemic to Upper Canada'.[107] Land grants generated sparks by bringing in well-connected boosters, but it took speculative land markets to help the sparks burst into flame. From the mid-1820s, individual promoters like Talbot were joined by settlement companies, imperial emigration schemes, and philanthropic organizations. London capitalists interested in Canada met at the North and South American Coffee House and the Canada Club; they had strong influence on at least three British newspapers.[108] The Canada Company, formed in 1826 with a capital of £1 million to develop and sell off Upper Canada's reserve land, established five immigration agencies in the British Isles.[109] As in Tasmania, there was a long lead-time and an element of self-fulfilling myth. The *Niagara Gleaner* of 1824 was 'much gratified to find that this province, so long neglected with respect to internal improvements, has at last attracted the attention of the monied gentlemen of England', before it had really done so.[110] Take-off in immigration did not actually occur until 1830. Boosters had to work long and hard before achieving boom ignition. From 1820, prospective immigrants were assured that Upper Canada was 'totally free of ferocious animals'. Its rattlesnakes were few, absent, or lacking in venom; its bears were 'timorous and inoffensive' and fading away like the Indians in any case. 'The climate of British America is too salubrious for doctors to realize fortunes.' To the extent that it did exist, the Canadian winter was presented as one long holiday, characterized by leisure, socializing, and fast and easy sled travel at 80 miles a day. Far from dreading winter, settlers 'hail its near approach with the greatest of pleasure'.[111] But few immigrants joined the chilly party in the 1820s. Annual inflows averaged about 12,000 in the late 1820s, half the level of 1819.[112]

Canadian boosters persisted and sharpened up their act—by denigrating their rivals among other things. In the United States 'the only law is mob law', Australia was full of convicts, while in New Zealand the settler 'is roasted for the breakfast of some native chief'. 'Canada, on the contrary suffers under none of these disadvantages.'[113] When a rival returned serve, genteel boosters wrote: 'we defy him to point any portion of the peopled earth which can hold a candle, as the vulgar would have it, to British North America'.[114] This kind of thing did not impress the vulgar, and it was not until about 1830, when letters back from common folk to common folk had begun to flow, that take-off occurred. They might not believe a genteel booster when told that Canadian bears were 'inoffensive and timorous',

but they did believe friends and relatives who told them the same thing. 'They will run away from you, as fast as they can.' The Canada Company published painstaking lists of the assets of poor immigrants who had made it to prosperity with its help.[115] But one suspects it was the letters back that really counted. Employers were 'obliged to beg and pray to get a man for a few days to help them instead of blustering, and swearing as they do over you in England'. 'There is no good beer in [this] country; but there is some very good grog; and we can sit down and drink, as well as Mr R. A. Esq. We have nobody to run over us here, and to order us out of their fields. We can take our gun, and go a deer hunting, when we likes; so we hope all that can come, will have heart enough.'[116]

Another key to Ontario's booming against odds was 'Federal subsidy'—from London. Government, Wakefieldians, and philanthropists alike wanted to divert the flow of British migrants and money from the United States to British possessions. 'It was of the deepest importance to this country that the tide of emigration should be turned from the United States to the British colonies.'[117] There was intense concern about real or imagined American expansionism. The British government pumped about £4 million into the Ontario economy in the 1820s and 1830s. London financed the Rideau Canal, built 1826–32, at a cost of about £1 million, to link what is now Ottawa to Lake Ontario, largely for military reasons. 'The British government's expenditure on Upper Canada actually exceeded that by the Upper Canadian government throughout the colony's history.' But Ontario's government was no laggard. It spent around £2.5 million on public works in the period, and its money too came from London. The colony's debt increased thirty-fourfold between 1825 and 1837. Suddenly, millions of pounds were flowing into Upper Canada. Between them, formal and informal settler transitions, improvements in physical mass transfer, and London money achieved boom ignition in Ontario, and the vectors of mass transfer proliferated. By 1841 there were thirty-six newspapers, including two in German, twelve of them in Toronto. The number of post offices went from twelve in 1812 to forty-three in 1824, to 185 in 1836, to 280 in 1845. Banking developed rapidly, until by 1837 Ontario had three chartered banks, two of them large with several branches, and four private banks. Montreal-based banks were also active in Ontario. Bank loans and discounts quintupled between 1829 and 1837, and there is a hint of a shift from transactional to investment credit.[118] These banks 'exhibited an incredibly careless, over-accommodating attitude'. As in booms elsewhere,

cautious bankers lost business or were forced out. 'A speculative fever was spreading as quickly as the cholera among upper Canadians in the early 1830s.'[119] The fever spoke English. Imports to Upper Canada more than tripled 1826–39, while those to Lower Canada increased little more than 50 per cent.[120]

The triple bust of 1837/39/42 hit Ontario hard. Immigration to British North America dived from 30,000 in 1837 to 4,500 in 1838. Imports into both Canadas fell from £2.1 million in 1839 to £1.1 million in 1843. Tea imports halved.[121] But growth recommenced in 1844 and another boom continued to 1848.

Ontario's population increased 50 per cent between 1842 and 1848, with growth concentrated in the districts of Bathurst, Newcastle, and Gore. Between them, these districts increased from 112,000 people in 1839 to 293,000 people in 1850.[122] Toronto tripled in size during the 1840s and the town of Hamilton grew almost fivefold. During the real boom years, 1844–7, imports into the United Province of Canada exceeded exports by £1.5 million, despite the facts that exports were rising and that these figures included slow-growing Quebec.[123] This short boom was counter-cyclical: the American West and Australasia were firmly in bust phase. Continuing subsidy from London seems to have acted as accidental Keynesianism. The boom of the 1850s was again modest and regionalized and funded by oldland money, but this time it was not provided by the imperial government. United Canada received responsible government in 1848. The great British merchant banks Barings and Glyn Mills began pouring money into Ontario from about 1851. By the late 1850s, 'Canadian financial operations utilized more of the funds of Baring Brothers and Company than did European securities.' Baring's generosity was restricted to Ontario: £1 million in the early 1850s alone compared to £80,000 for Quebec and £50,000 for New Brunswick.[124] Wheat export rescue occurred in long-settled regions while new regions experienced settlement booms, and Ontario enjoyed 50 per cent population growth overall in the 1850s, concentrated early in the decade and in areas newly opened by rail. But the bust of 1857 and the provincial government's heavy entanglement with unprofitable railway lines damaged its credit in London by the 1860s. The bust 'crippled all three principal Upper Canadian banks'. As usual, economic historians argue that this was not a technical depression, and population growth did continue. But it fell from around 7.5 per cent a year in the early 1850s to 1.5 per cent a year in the 1860s, an 80 per cent fall.[125] Restoring credit in London

in the hope of restarting progress was a motivation for Canadian federation in 1867.

Montreal and Quebec City were the ports of entry for Ontario, but they did not share its booms in the 1830s and 1840s. Both grew slowly in that period.[126] Montreal did share the boom of the 1850s. River-works in the early 1850s improved navigation to Montreal and allowed it to replace Quebec as the leading port for both Canadas.[127] Montreal's exports remained static 1847–57, but imports climbed from £1.7 million to £4.1 million, 1847–54, and the population increased over 50 per cent in the 1850s, compared to a 30 per cent increase in the 1830s and 1840s combined.[128] But the key boom town was Toronto (originally York). It had been founded in 1793, but grew only slowly to about 1825. It then grew eightfold, 1825–41, to 14,000, and boomed on through most of the 1840s to reach 30,000 by 1851.[129] One study convincingly rejects the customary explanation for this—that Toronto's farming hinterland was bigger and richer than that of its local rivals. This was true of Kingston, but Hamilton's hinterland at least matched Toronto's.[130] Yet the proffered alternative explanation—that Toronto leapfrogged its rivals because it was the provincial capital until 1840—fails to convince. Toronto's growth was slow to 1825, despite its being the capital, and fast in the 1840s despite its *not* being the capital. Toronto's edge over its rivals lay not in exports to oldlands but in imports for newlands. The city's trade figures in 1850—exports £75,000, imports £600,000[131]—are that of a boom base and not yet an agricultural exporter, and so was the local self-image. 'Toronto is a noble and promising city—the young giant of the west—a proud monument of British energy directed by the fostering care of Providence.'[132]

> Dwelling in a city, whose every stone and brick has been placed in its present position, under the eye of many who remember the locality as the site of primeval woods . . . we feel that we are justified in . . . telling the wondrous metamorphosis of forty years. It is meet that we should rejoice over the triumph of civilization, the onward progress of our race, the extension of our language, institutions, tastes, manners, customs and feelings. In no spot within British territory could we find aggregated in so striking a manner the evidences of this startling change; in none should we trace so strongly marked the imprint of national migration; in few discover such ripened fruits of successful colonization. The genius of Britain presides over the destiny of her offspring.[133]

Canals led the Canadian progress industry in the 1830s and 1840s, directly employing over 15 per cent of the Ontario workforce around 1830.[134] Canadian historians modestly see Ontario as emulating the American Old Northwest, yet its canal building began at least as early, and even the Americans admitted that 'the Rideau Canal is a stupendous work'.[135] Both Ontario and the Old Northwest, of course, were emulating New York and its Erie Canal, but there was a difference. New York state had about 1.2 million people when it began the Erie Canal in 1817, Upper Canada 150,000 when it began the Welland Canal in 1824. At £2.5 million, or $12 million, Canadian canal building was right up there with the United States on a cost per capita basis—below Illinois, but above Ohio and Indiana. And it was just as frenzied. 'A mania for canalling seemed to possess the people.'[136] 'In the 1820s and 1830s canal fever struck Canada. The disease was not fatal, though it appeared to be at some stages; it left its victim weakened, scarred, deficient in strength to resist a similar disease soon to come—railroad fever.'[137] Contemporaries and historians alike were bewildered by the level of waste. According to one of the former, 'economy and the Welland canal are as far apart as earth and heaven'.[138] By 1848, according to one of the latter, 'Canada had invested in a vast capacity for canal traffic—far more than the needs of its economy might reasonably justify.'[139] The Ontario government also spent almost £500,000 between 1831 and 1849 on roads. The total excludes local government and community inputs and the figures 'greatly understate the true scale of the investment that Upper Canadians made in their roads'.[140]

Timber and wheat were important Ontarian products throughout this period, 1820s–50s; it was their role as exports that varied. Whereas products like cotton or wool had little in the way of a local market, timber and wheat did, especially in booms. As we saw in Chapter 6, booms consumed wood at a far greater rate than normal times. Upper Canadian steamboats consumed up to £10,000 worth of firewood a year each and there were thirty-seven of them. Only the Ottawa Valley was principally oriented to timber exports, but even there the big take-off in exports dates from the end of the boom of the 1830s. In the rest of Ontario, timber exports were static through the 1830s, and therefore more than halved on a per capita basis, yet saw mills grew rapidly in number and became larger.[141] It was the local boom market that must have absorbed the increased production. Much the same occurred with wheat—static exports yet burgeoning numbers of gristmills. Production concentrated on spring wheat, whereas fall wheat

was the preferred type for export. In the 1830s, 'more often than not' the local price of wheat exceeded the British price.[142] Why export in these circumstances? Wheat joined numerous other farm products in strong boom-time demand. Canal construction workers were 'voracious eaters, frequently consuming four or five pounds of food and drink per day'.[143] They and similar workers such as lumbermen insisted on wheaten bread, and they also demanded meat, dairy products, rye or corn whisky, and required work animals and feed for them. Ontario farms in 1836 produced far more in the way of livestock products and stock feed than they did wheat.[144] Oats were the classic horse-feed and oat output by volume almost matched that of wheat in 1848 and 1851, not counting the corn and hay also grown for stock feed.[145] As in the American Old Northwest, farmers also participated directly in the canal-making and lumbering industries: producing forest products themselves; providing seasonal or part-time labour for large projects; and hiring out themselves and their horses and drays for transport.[146]

In the boom of the 1850s, rail took over from canals as the leading edge of the Ontario progress industry. No less than $72 million was spent on rail in the colony between 1850 and 1860—a higher amount per capita than even the profligate American Old Northwest. The Grand Trunk Line, Montreal-based but running mostly through Ontario, was a 'financial fiasco'. 'By 1857 the government of Canada was in debt for the Grand Trunk to the tune of $25,000,000.' 'The Grand Trunk was never profitable.'[147] But profits did flow to the builders and suppliers of Ontario's 1,400 expensive miles of 1850s railways. Overall, rail construction is thought to have employed up to 36,000 men in the early 1850s, or 15 per cent of Ontario's male workforce, with another 4–5,000 men working at running the rail system. Again there was a 'mania for internal development'. 'Canada had entered the railway age in a decidedly wasteful way'. It was 'a chronic builder of too many, not very useful, railway lines'. Having indulged in 'an orgy of railway building—most of it either premature or completely unsound', Ontario busted in 1857, 'suffering the inevitable hangover which follows a period of over-indulgence'.[148]

As with the American West and Australia, the stock explanation for Ontario's rapid growth, 1830–57, is the staples thesis and again this has proved strangely resistant to convincing criticism. As early as 1958, historians began questioning the continuous dominance of Ontario's great staples, wheat and timber.[149] In the 1980s and early 1990s, Douglas McCalla,

Marvin McInnis and others empirically demonstrated that these doubts had substance. 'A staple boom appears to be less the cause than the result of growth.'[150] Timber exports to Britain did become important for Ontario after 1842, and wheat exports after 1848, but they were export rescues not boom drivers. The difference between mixed explosive colonial farming and specialized re-colonial wheat farming is illustrated by Ontarian agricultural output in the booming five years 1836–41 compared to the export rescue period 1846–51. In the first period, wheat output grew 8% compared to 31% growth for livestock products and 48% for non-wheat crops, mainly stock feed. In the second period, wheat output grew 78%, much more than the other categories.[151] Ontarian wheat exports were small and irregular before the 1840s, but increased fivefold in that decade, grew especially fast from 1848, and remained a major export to the 1860s.[152] Ontario's timber exports declined with boom-time local demand in the 1830s, rose in the bust phase early 1840s, then declined again in the booms of the mid-1840s and early 1850s, then rose again. Between 1844 and 1866, pine exports doubled, oak exports tripled, and elm exports increased over fourfold.[153]

Timber and wheat products provided export rescue, but clearly did not power booms, most notably the biggest of them, in the 1830s. The progress industry and boom-time farming dwarfed exports. Government expenditure alone, imperial and colonial, exceeded wheat and timber exports between 1820 and 1840.[154] Yet, as recently as 1992, the staples thesis could still be described as 'this almost universally accepted historical interpretation'. 'The mainstream view of Canadian economic history continues to be the staples one.'[155] As with the Australian and American historiography, one cannot help but suspect that this resilience of the staples fallacy stems from a reluctance to concede that explosive colonization was driven as much by dreams as by reason.

Quebec and other 'Laggards'

Ontario boomed repeatedly in the first half of the nineteenth century. Quebec did not boom at all. Its population grew 26 per cent between 1831 and 1844, compared to Ontario's 105 per cent in the shorter period 1831–42. Over the whole period 1815–61, Quebec's population tripled while Ontario's grew over twentyfold. Even Montreal grew slowly in the 1830s and 1840s and outside that city and the Eastern townships there was

a clear discrepancy in development as well as growth. This is a particularly complex china shop for the generalist to blunder into, but a limited engagement must be attempted. Anglo contemporaries had no doubt that intrinsic French 'backwardness' was to blame for the discrepancy and some historians have followed their lead. 'The French-Canadian has almost universally been described as backward, unenterprising, untutored, and resistant to improved techniques of husbandry . . . this characterization is not just a reflection of Anglo-Saxon bias; it is shared by French-Canadian historians as well.'[156]

Some real discrepancies arose from smaller farms, less capital, and the geographical difficulty of growing corn and winter wheat so far north, whereas southern Ontario could manage both. Apart from this, recent scholarship argues that 'there is no evidence that before mid-century farm practice in Upper Canada was on the whole superior to that in Lower Canada'.[157] Wheat production in Quebec did decline sharply in the 1830s and was in gradual decline much earlier. Historians once saw this as evidence of retardation; more recent scholarship suggests a reversion to a non-market, moral economy, but there is a problem with both views. Potatoes replaced some wheat in local diets, but if we may be allowed one national stereotype, it is hard to imagine French folk, neo-French or not, voluntarily ceasing bread consumption. Instead, they imported wheat from Ontario and the United States. Without money from markets, how did they buy their wheat? There was in fact a good market case for shifting away from wheat production; in comparison with more geographically-favoured larger-scale producers further south 'Quebec wheat cost too much.'[158] What Quebec farmers may have done is turn to the supply of the neighbouring Anglo-boom in Ontario with non-wheat products. While the population increased one-quarter, the Quebec oat harvest doubled between 1831 and 1842.[159]

Cultures under siege do cling to tradition, and the notion that booming was intrinsically virtuous is more a legacy of the Anglo explosion than an exercise in reason. A Montreal priest told Tocqueville around 1831 that his countrymen had 'not got the spirit of adventure or the scorn of ties of birth and family which are characteristic of the Americans. Only ultimate necessity will force a French Canadian to leave his village and his relatives.' Tocqueville then asked a Quebecois farmer 'why the French Canadians allowed themselves to be hemmed in narrow fields when they could find fertile, uncultivated land at twenty leagues from home. ''Why'',

he answered, "do you love your wife best though your neighbor's has more beautiful eyes?" '[160] Take that, *homo economicus*. Yet the Quebecois were neo-French, not French, and in fact they both emigrated and settled. About 40,000 Quebecois moved to the United States, especially to industrializing New England, in the 1830s, followed by 90,000 in the 1840s, 190,000 in the 1850s, and many more thereafter.[161] This was either a cause or an effect of Quebec's slow growth, perhaps both, but it puts paid to notion of passive immobility.

From 1867, when federation allocated it new Northern regions, Quebec made a substantial effort to settle them—to reproduce Old Quebec in the new North. These efforts were seen as a solution to the loss of people to the United States, and were backed to the hilt by both church and state.[162] By contrast, the Quebecois resisted 'booming' in the 1830s and 1840s with every means available, including armed rebellion, and it seems to me highly probable that they did so because they rightly associated these booms with Anglicization. I am aware that the historiography of the Lower Canadian Rebellion of 1837, which was much more serious and lethal than that in Upper Canada, often ranks class above ethnicity as a cause. The Quebecois are said to have rebelled either in a traditionalist defence of the seigneur-and-priest-dominated semi-feudal old order, or in a radical attack on that order, and perhaps its new capitalist allies.[163] But can it be coincidence that the rebellion came in the midst of the first really massive Anglo inflow into Canada? Some 350,000 Anglo immigrants entered in the 1830s, five times the 1815–19 inflow and seven times the Loyalist inflow of the 1780s. One historian claims that 'for most of the French population *l'Anglais* as an ethnic figure was probably a mere abstraction'.[164] But can this really have been so in the 1830s, when the great majority of the *Anglais* immigrants passed through Quebec City, Montreal, and upriver through the densely populated French region between the two towns? One glance at the St Lawrence surely showed that the Anglos were coming.

The tragedy was that the Quebecois did not need the rebellion to prevent an Anglicizing boom. Through their control of the Lower Canadian Assembly to 1837, they were able to hamstring the efforts of Anglophone Lower Canadians to commit the colonial government to the expensive settlement and transport projects so eagerly embraced by Upper Canada.[165] Apart from the Lachine Canal, built in 1817–24 and extended in 1843–8, there was little in the way of canal-building in Quebec

Province. 'Only a small proportion of the colony's budget was voted for public works and canalling.'[166] 'Lower Canada shrank back aghast from heavy expenditures and particularly from loans. Upper Canada had no such inhibitions.'[167] Either the Quebecois were deliberately avoiding an Anglicizing boom or they were immune to the English-language-borne virus of the boom mentality. Influenced by the frustrated Anglo Quebeckers, the imperial government rejected Quebecois reform proposals in March 1837, introduced direct rule by the governor over the head of the assembly, and attempted in November to arrest their leader, Louis-Joseph Papineau, so triggering the rebellion. But the boom busted of itself earlier in the same year. The two Canadas were united in 1841 in an effort to swamp the French, but it proved to be too late, and despite some relative deprivation a dynamic French Canadian culture survived to the present.

It was the Anglo Quebeckers, not the Quebecois, who were struggling against the tides of history, and they struggled quite hard. They had an absolute majority in Montreal and the Eastern Townships from the 1830s to the 1850s, and made up as much as a quarter of the whole population of Lower Canada. Their boosting efforts were substantial, but plagued by bad luck as well as the French majority, and possibly by bad management too. From 1833 they had a colonization company, the British American Land Company, but it was less effective than its Ontario equivalent, the Canada Company, partly because it was less well connected in Britain.[168] 'The energetic colonization efforts of the BALC ultimately made little impact on immigration to the region.'[169] Anglo Quebecker booster literature was less effective than its Ontario equivalent in combating negative stereotypes. C. H. Wilson had emigrated to Quebec Province around 1820, but soon regretted it. Montreal was big and bustling, but dirty and smelling of garlic. It had given him a dose of dysentery that reduced his weight from fourteen to nine stone in six weeks.[170] British boosters of Quebec did their best to counter such tracts. From 1821, the Montreal Emigration Society tried explicitly to overturn prevailing negative stereotypes: the French were lazy, but were made so by the immense natural abundance of the land. The prejudice against French seigneural tenure was obsolete; it had been modernized, commercialized, and Anglicized and no longer implied vassalage.[171] In 1829 F. A. Evans, an agent for the Eastern townships, argued gallantly that emigration to Lower Canada was to be preferred to Upper Canada. For one thing, the latter had rattlesnakes while the former did not;

for another, Ontario was much more prone to disease. But Evans spoiled his argument by dying. 'The Publishers feel considerable regret in having to state that the Writer of the first part of this Work has, since they received the manuscript, fallen victim to cholera at Quebec.'[172]

Anglo Quebecker elite boosting appears either to have been less adept at meshing with informal settlerism, emphasizing such things as sublime scenery that were of little interest to common folk, or to have had less reinforcement from lower-class letters back. 'Most of the BALC's promotional literature of the 1830s was of little value in attracting large numbers of British immigrants who were arriving at Quebec in steerage rather than first-class cabins.' They were unable to overcome 'a sort of delusion that has sprung over the minds of Emigrants . . . that either there is no south side of the St Laurence, or that for useful purposes, it was unworthy [of] notice'.[173] One suspects that the Francophone majority remained an obstacle in the minds of potential Anglo migrants. *Settlers*, as against emigrants, went to countries speaking their language; they reproduced their own society rather than reinforcing someone else's, and this was essential to the virtual metropolitanism of settlerism. While Anglo migrants poured into Ontario in the 1830s and 1840s, they trickled into Quebec.[174]

During the 1830s and 1840s, with canals and the Great Lakes dominating its transport systems, Ontario had developed growing links with New York at the expense of those with Montreal.[175] With the advent of rail in the 1850s and the improvements on the St Lawrence River, Montreal again managed to wire itself up to booming Ontario, and the city outgrew Toronto in that decade. No less than 14,000 people in Montreal are said to have been dependent for a living on the Grand Trunk Railway alone.[176] The city became increasingly industrial, and was later a distant base for minor booms in Manitoba in the 1870s and 1880s and the massive boom in Western Canada after 1897. 'Montreal's status as a metropolis had never really rested with its regional linkages with the rest of Quebec.'[177] Quebec Province had a boom town, but no booms. Demographically, though not commercially, the French Canadians managed their own 'recolonization' of Montreal and the Eastern townships from the 1860s. This might not have been possible if earlier booms had brought in an Anglo majority.

French resistance was one key to Quebec's successful boom evasion, but it was not the only one. With the possible exception of New Brunswick,

the other colonies of British North America also failed to boom, and they spoke mostly English. New Brunswick may have experienced a boom in the 1830s but the evidence is mixed.[178] Prince Edward Island was simply too small and agricultural.[179] Newfoundland remained primarily oriented to cod fishing.[180] Nova Scotia's chances of exploding seemed more promising. As its historians consistently tell us, it had a much more diversified and balanced economy than its neighbour New Brunswick. It had the naval base of Halifax and the accompanying imperial expenditure; its farming potential was a little greater than New Brunswick's.[181] Nova Scotia traded with the West Indies, and supplied mainland North America with re-exports such as rum and molasses. There were promising boom-triggering developments from 1826–7 when construction began on the Shubenacadie Canal and a large British company, the General Mining Association, began investing in coal mining in the colony. There was also a spasm of bank-founding together with an 'exceedingly buoyant mood'.[182] But Nova Scotia's boom had scarcely gathered momentum before it collapsed. The manager of the Shubenacadie ran off with the money in 1832. Two banks suspended payments the following year, and the abolition of slavery in 1834 marked the beginning of a decline in the West Indies trade. Halifax grew only from 14,400 in 1828 to 16,000 in 1832, and emigration to 1829 at least was said to have been 'very insignificant'.[183] Overall, growth in Nova Scotia failed to reach our benchmark of decennial doubling. One set of estimates gives a population of 123,000 in 1827 and 202,000 in 1838, which came fairly close. Another gives 147,500 in 1834 and 178,000 in 1842, which did not.[184]

A 1998 study of colonial Nova Scotia's economy confirms this impression of stuttering development. 'The economic fluctuations . . . between 1815 and 1853 tell a story not of growth, but largely of stagnation.' The 1830s in particular featured a frustrating 'series of false starts'.[185] Specific factors such as the defalcating canal manager and the declining West Indies trade partly explain Nova Scotia's failure to boom. But there were also three more general possibilities. For one thing, the General Mining Association was an example of direct British investment, of the type usually associated with recolonization rather than explosive colonization. It was tightly controlled from Britain, and did much of its purchasing and recruiting there.[186] The most combustible type of oldland investment was indirect—handed over as loans or bond finance to newlanders to throw around locally. Secondly, Nova Scotia's linkages were to the rest of

mainland North America and to the West Indies, and not to metropolitan Britain. By contrast, the timber ships gave Ontario and New Brunswick strong links with Britain. Two thousand ships were involved in this trade in the 1830s.[187] Only 8 per cent of the thousand smaller ships leaving and entering Nova Scotia in a year came from Britain or were aimed there.[188] Thirdly, about a quarter of Nova Scotia's people were Gaelic-speaking Scots Highlanders, living as subsistence farmers on Cape Breton Island.[189] Apart from some coalmining, Cape Breton attracted little investment through banks or monied settlers—whose absence pleased the Highlanders, sick of lairds and clearances. Being a non-English-speaking group like the Quebecois, they were less plugged into the trade, credit, information, and ideological networks of the Anglo-world and were less prone to catch its viruses.

The Cape Breton Scots may not have been eager for explosive colonization, but this was not true of the rest of Nova Scotia which, on the contrary, was very keen to explode. Given its limited endowment of farmland and its small size, one might expect a graceful acceptance of the fact that Nova Scotia was not Illinois. Yet Nova Scotians throughout the nineteenth century were endemically reluctant to recognize its limitations: 'few contemporaries acknowledged them'. Instead they 'assumed limitless horizons, which led to excessive expectations', and cherished 'immoderate hopes about the colony's prospects'. Again and again, these hopes were dashed. 'Yet every generation rekindled the same enthusiasm.' Nova Scotia never quite managed to explode, but it was not for want of trying.[190]

Notes

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14. S. J. Butlin, 'Australian bank branches, 1817–1914', *Australian Economic History Review*, 17 (1977) 166–9 and add two for New Zealand. M. F. Lloyd Prichard, *An Economic History of New Zealand to 1939*, Auckland, 1970, 48–9.
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9
Golden Wests

In 1848, gold was found inland of San Francisco, California. The United States had just wrested this region and more from Mexico in the war of 1846–7. The subsequent gold rush brought California's first great inflow of people in 1849, and unfolded thereafter in what was to become the standard pattern. Gold presented in two main forms: 'placer' or alluvial deposits of gold dust, grains, and small nuggets distributed through soil or gravel by erosion, which could be acquired simply by washing and sifting, and seams or veins in quartz rock which required expensive deep mining and crushing. Gold fields normally went through two phases, 'open' and 'closed'. In the first, the rush proper, gold was available to anyone who could get there, acquire a pick and pan, and sustain themselves while sifting pay dirt. This last was the really hard part. Contrary to some legends, most miners found gold in the open phase, but the great majority had to spend it on outrageously priced supplies and equipment to keep mining. Supply and support, not mining itself, was the prime source of goldfields fortunes. Within a few years, returns from accessible placer deposits diminished and a more capital-intensive and longer-term second phase began, involving quartz mining or hydraulic mining, using water to wash away whole hillsides. This closed phase had much less room for the independent miner. Thus the Californian rush proper peaked in 1853 and ended with a local bust in 1855, but gold continued to be crushed and washed from the Sierra Nevada for decades thereafter.

The Californian was not the first European overseas gold rush. That had taken place in south-eastern Brazil from 1695. It was not even the first in the United States—western Georgia and the bordering states had witnessed a moderate-sized rush around 1830. But California clearly differed from these in sheer scale. The Californian rush pulled in about 100,000 people a year at peak, whereas 'it is doubtful if more that 5,000 or 6,000 people

emigrated from Portugal to Brazil in a single year at the height of the gold rush'.[1] About $40 million in gold was eventually extracted from the Georgian fields; $1.4 billion from California.[2] The California gold rush had no precedents, but it did have a sibling. Across the Pacific, in Victoria, Australia, a rush commenced in 1851 that was, literally, Californian in scale. In the first ten years of their rushes, California and Victoria each experienced a gross inflow of over 500,000 people and an outflow of about $500 million worth of gold. Peak inflows of people were the same, at about 100,000 a year, and even their long-term output of gold was remarkably similar—$1.4 billion for California between 1848 and 1905 and $1.365 billion for Victoria, 1851–1905.[3] Victoria actually outranked California in 1861 in general and urban populations. It had 538,000 people, 125,000 of them in Melbourne, while California had 380,000, including 56,000 in San Francisco. There were differences, of course, but it is not easy to think of two other such distant places undergoing simultaneously so similar a phenomenon. The notion that gold rushing was 'uniquely American' is just as false as the belief that 'the gold rushes were in essence a British imperial phenomenon'.[4]

From the late 1850s, the great Californian and Victorian rushes spawned a series of offspring. Most Far Western American states experienced a gold rush of some kind; Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana had forty between them.[5] Most were small, involving around 10,000 people each; exceptions included Pike's Peak, Colorado, from 1858, which quickly attracted 100,000 people, and the Comstock Lode, Nevada, which extracted $292 million-worth of gold and silver between 1859 and 1881.[6] British Columbia hosted two small rushes from 1858, mainly involving American miners, and there was another Anglo-American rush, later and greater, to the Klondike in the Yukon Territory from 1896, which also brought in its 100,000. Australia experienced twenty-eight gold rushes between 1851 and 1894, and New Zealand another six. Apart from Victoria, the big Australasian rushes were to the South Island of New Zealand in the 1860s and Western Australia in the 1890s. The hundred or so gold rushes of the second half of the nineteenth century were clearly an extraordinary phenomenon. At a time when superpowers had great difficulty in maintaining armies of 40,000 men across oceans, the great gold rushes transferred and supplied masses of 100,000 in a year with no formal organization at all. They were far flung, yet strangely cohesive, presenting an early challenge to the national packaging of history. In 1980, one of their best historians wondered if he

was 'dealing not with Californian or Victorian or New Zealand colonists but with a variety of the genus Pacific Man whose habitat is no particular country but the goldfields'.[7]

Recent writers, compensating for a century of neglect, emphasize the roles of non-Anglo groups in the gold rushes. In California, local Indians and Spanish Americans, especially from Chile and the Mexican state of Sonora, were initially important, and were joined by Hawaiians.[8] As many as 28,000 French-speakers went to California in the early years of the rush, over half from metropolitan France. This rare case of substantial French emigration was stimulated by the revolution and bloody reaction of 1848, which killed thousands in the streets of Paris.[9] In virtually all goldfields, North American and Australasian, an important minority were the Chinese: merchants and miners who came primarily from the environs of Canton, planning to make fortunes and return home. The Chinese were consistently peaceable, orderly, and hardworking, but were subjected with equal consistency to discrimination, harassment, and sometimes assault and murder, especially after busts. At best they were tolerated but marginalized, living in separate communities and working low-yield fields or already-sifted tailings. Very few Chinese women emigrated, but Chinese men persisted stubbornly in Old Gold Hill and New Gold Hill, as they called the American West and Australasia. Their mining camp of Round Hill, in Southland, New Zealand, was 'the southernmost Chinese settlement in the world'.[10] But we should not allow their remarkable story, nor that of other minorities, to obscure the fact that the goldfields primarily spoke English. There were some significant gold finds in eastern and western Siberia between the 1830s and the 1890s. But the Anglophone countries produced 80 per cent of the world's gold in the 1850s, and a similar proportion in the 1900s.[11]

On their own goldfields, and sometimes other peoples' goldfields, the Anglos and their allies predominated—Americans, Britons, Neo-Britons, Germans, and perhaps Scandinavians. Only 8 per cent of the 572,000 people that entered Victoria between 1851 and 1861 were not British or Australasian, and of this 8 per cent Americans and Germans ranked with the Chinese as the largest groups.[12] So much for 'the cosmopolitan nature of the Australian goldfields'.[13] A recent compendium of Californian goldfields scholarship concludes: 'foreign immigration was large during the early statehood years, but historians have tended to exaggerate its size and impact'. Other western American rushes were at least 90 per cent Anglo.[14]

There was an element of self-fulfilling prophecy in Anglo preponderance. Harassment drove most of the Indians, Spanish Americans, and even French off the California goldfields by 1852. In 1886, a vast quartz reef of gold was found at the Witwatersrand in South Africa, which by some divine oversight was located in the Boer republic of the Transvaal. But the miners and investors who rushed to the Rand in the late 1880s and 1890s were mainly Anglo, and the Boer War of 1899–1902 consolidated their near-monopoly of gold rushing with the conquest of the Transvaal (see Chapter 12). Like our settler revolution, the gold rushes were Anglo-prone. This chapter seeks to understand the relationship of settlement booms and gold rushes, and to use each to gain insight into the other.

Booms or Rushes?

Some historians use the gold rushes to explain the Anglo explosion, portraying them as decisive watersheds in the history of the relevant nations, motherlodes of modernity for Australia and the American West. 'Gold provided the springboard of growth for both.' 'Undoubtedly, gold triggered the process that exploded the highly volatile western economy . . . one can scarcely conceive of the economic history of the development of the far West without gold.' 'The Australian gold rush actually created modern Australia.'[15] Even some of the best recent studies share this view, to some extent understandably.[16] The gold rushes were immensely dramatic events, and humans have been in love with gold, the most precious yet most useless of metals, for thousands of years. Like the staples thesis and the mass advent of steamships, the gold rushes are used to explain an explosive surge in settlement and development that might otherwise seem irrational or mysterious. But, as we have seen, settlement booms were well established in both the American and British Wests well before 1848, and many Wests boomed after that date without gold. Indeed, it may be that, where gold existed, booms caused rushes rather than the other way around.

There has long been mystery about the causes of the gold rushes. Since 1969, American and Australian historians have noted that gold was discovered long before the rushes, sometimes several decades before, and this is also true of New Zealand, British Columbia, and South Africa.[17] You needed more than gold to have a gold rush. 'The gold rush was a result of a certain crystallizing in daily conversation that profoundly remade the way

men thought about "getting a start". Only a great shift in communication methods could have convinced so many people so quickly of the chances of being rich and of the possibility of traveling over oceans to do so.'[18] New transport and communications technology might seem to be at least part of the answer to the mystery of the gold rushes. After all, 1848 was roughly the time of the mass advent of Western rail, ocean-going steamships, and telegraph. Golden Wests, like booming Wests, were industrially quite precocious. Yet, like that of the early settlement booms, the technology of the great rushes was essentially pre-industrial. Sailing ships and wagon trains brought people and supplies to California, though they were supplemented from the mid-1850s by steamer and rail services via central America. Sailing ships brought the vast majority of gold rushers to Victoria. The gold rushes could have happened without industrialization.

Indeed, the rushes were an example of high eo-technic. Most Western American rushes were initially supplied by staggering feats of wagon and even pack-animal freighting. Californian goldfield freight wagons weighed up to 9 tons fully loaded, and were hauled by twenty mules. Pike's Peak, Colorado, was supplied from Missouri and Kansas by freighting companies that employed many thousands of men, wagons, and animals in the 1860s. One company alone is said to have had 6,250 wagons and 75,000 horses and oxen. In the same state in the early 1880s, silver-mining Aspen was supplied with 1,000 tons of goods a week, including disassembled pianos at $1,000 each, by mule train. Hydraulic mining, developed in California from 1850, used waterpower, not steam power, to wash down whole hillsides and sift them for gold. It was goldfields Ballarat, Victoria, which gave us 'The Leviathan', the eighty-seat coach drawn by twenty-two grey horses.[19] As late as the 1890s, Western Australian gold camps were supplied by 600 trains of horses and camels.[20] You cannot blame industrialization for the gold rushes, any more than you can blame it for the early settlement booms. But perhaps you can blame the rushes on the booms.

In 1970 Australian historian Geoffrey Blainey noted the lag between gold discoveries and gold rushes. He argued that the finding of new mineral fields in Australia 'was rhythmic, and that the rhythm had a rationale'. He believed that the rationale was 'to rescue colonial economies from depression', by which he meant the troughs of short business cycles. 'Alluvial fields were more likely to be found and, above all, explored and developed, during a recession.'[21] Blainey was right about the rhythm but wrong about the rationale. Lesser minerals such as copper did become

attractive after busts, as newlands searched desperately for export rescue. But of the fifty Australasian mineral 'rushes' Blainey lists, twenty-eight involved gold, and nineteen of these occurred during booms, not busts, including the great Victorian rush itself.

As we saw in the last chapter, Victoria, then the Port Phillip District, had shared the later half of Australia's first boom of 1828–42, and busted with it. But a second boom began around 1847. Land sales in Victoria picked up from that year, as did immigration, and the population more than doubled in the five years between 1846 and 1851, from 32,000 to 77,000. The latter census was taken in March 1851, *before* the discovery of gold in July.[22] Melbourne was clearly booming before gold. In 1848, a commentator stated that 'in the history of man, there has been nothing like the rapid prosperity of Port Phillip'. In September 1850 another wrote: 'You would not know Melbourne again—not only from the vast increase in size but also from the improvement in the style of the buildings . . . Within ten months upwards of one thousand houses have been built in Melbourne. This is not a mere guess, but ascertained from the official returns.' The same year, even *The Economist* believed that 'the rise and progress of our Australian colonies' was 'one of the wonders of modern civilization'.[23] Much the same applied to other Australasian rushes. New Zealand's South Island quadrupled in settler population, 1851–60, from 10,000 to 40,000—before the beginning of its first major gold rush in Otago in 1861.[24] Immigration to New South Wales rocketed from fewer than 1,000 immigrants in each of 1846 and 1847, to 9,000 in 1848 and 19,000 in 1849, before its rushes began in 1851. New South Wales' gold output was minor, at around 12 per cent of Victoria's. Yet its boom was anything but minor, tripling the population and increasing imports sixfold, 1851–61.[25] Queensland's first boom began in 1857; its first gold rush in 1867.

Where gold was available, it was the inflow of boom-time settlers that found it in paying quantities, and booms could and did happen without it. South Australia had no gold rush, but boomed anyway. One historian, in a striking example of the retrospective invisibility of settlement booms, attributes South Australia's 1850s growth to side effects of the Victorian rush. 'The gradual and comfortable progress of the colony in the previous years was shattered by the gold discoveries in Victoria in 1851.'[26] It is true that South Australia struggled mightily to plug itself into the supply and support of the Victorian gold fields. But 'the gradual and comfortable progress of the colony' before 1851 in fact consisted of two manic booms,

the first 1836–42 and the second beginning in 1847. South Australia's population almost tripled to 64,000 in five years, 1846–51, before gold, and only doubled in the next decade—'gradual and comfortable progress' was actually faster than gold-rush progress.[27] The real cause of Australasian Boom Two, 1847–67, was some mix of the usual triggers: the vectors of mass transfer, and a fresh step in Australasia's own settler transition. A new surge of booster literature emerged, from 1847 on Australia and from 1849 on New Zealand. The number of post offices and letters sent in Victoria tripled between 1845 and 1850.[28] The new clipper ships cut voyaging time from Britain. The prospect and reality of more cloning was also important. Responsible government for most colonies was foreshadowed from 1848, as was the separation of Victoria from New South Wales, which occurred in 1850. In most colonies, an increase in elected representation arrived in 1850, and fully 'responsible' government by 1857. Responsible government meant substantial political autonomy and, above all, a settler capacity for public borrowing. The first act of Victoria's new parliament was to borrow £8 million in London.[29] The advent of both separation and responsible government in Queensland in the late 1850s corresponds with the beginning of its first boom.

In Australasia, booms caused rushes rather than vice versa; surprisingly, the same may have been true of California. The pre-gold European population was much smaller than that of Victoria, at about 15,000 people, roughly half *Californio* settlers of Spanish descent, and half American newcomers. Mexican California was not the commercial desert of American legend. From the 1820s, a significant trade in cattle hides and tallow developed. Around 1840, this trade was worth $265,000 a year, quite an impressive figure for a *Californio* population of 6,000.[30] California was also important in supplying British, American, and Russian fur trading posts north of San Francisco, and as a base for the hunting of whales, seals, and sea otter. It was also, potentially, an incremental base for explosive settlement, and was supplemented in this respect by Oregon and Utah, which had been settled by Americans in the later 1840s, and by New Mexico. California's links with the Northeastern United States were substantial before 1848. Its cattle hides supplied the New England boot and shoe industry and were carried by New England ships. Many of the visiting whalers were also New Englanders, which may explain the particular propensity of Nantucket men to join the subsequent gold rush. About forty foreign ships a year visited California between 1840 and 1847, most of them American.[31] From 1840,

American settlers trickled in to California by sea and over land, doubling the settler population by 1848. Most came by sea, as they did after 1848. Despite some assertions to the contrary, the long, difficult, and legendary overland wagon train route appears to have been secondary. But in 1846, 1,500 Americans arrived in California overland—more than the 1,200 that went to Oregon in that year.[32] As early as 1842, a British observer had noted the growing dominance of Anglos.[33] The situation was rather like that in Texas in the early 1830s: a promising Mexican frontier unable to attract Mexican settlers and turning to Anglos instead. Like *Tejanos* before him, a *Californio* leader sounded the alarm. 'We find ourselves suddenly threatened by hordes of Yankee emigrants, who have already begun to flock into our country, and whose progress we cannot arrest.'[34] He spoke in 1845, fully three years before the gold rush.

The inflow of overland settlers diminished with the Mexican–American War of 1846–7, but the inflow of American soldiers, sailors, and adventurers did not, and some became settlers. The *Californios* were at first willing to accept American sovereignty, but competing American commanders mishandled the situation. Resistance flared up, but was all over by early 1847, and the inflow of gringos recommenced. The early settlers of California were classic boom forerunners. They produced booster books—at least half a dozen before 1848, stressing giant vegetables and 'two to five crops from one sowing'.[35] They also wrote letters back, carried by accommodating sailors and travellers—one alone took no less than 840 letters from California back East.[36] 'By 1845, the systematic encouragement of emigration was well underway.'[37] The little town of Yerba Buena, soon to be renamed San Francisco, 'enjoyed a large growth and at least a selective prosperity from 1846 to 1848'. The town grew from about 50 people in 1844 to 2–300 in 1846, to 1,000 in 1848. 'The trend was already under way.' Eighty-four ships visited the town in the year before the gold rush. 'San Francisco's realty boom, like its commercial prosperity, began before the Gold Rush.'[38] The town was already being touted as a 'destined metropolis . . . the Tyre or Carthage of the uttermost West' in 1847.[39] Mining began at Sutter's Mill, not milling at Sutter's Mine. The mill was a substantial commercial enterprise, being built in the expectation that increasing settlement would boost demand for lumber. John Sutter, a Swiss entrepreneur who had come to California in 1839, wrote: 'my best days were just before the gold discovery'. Gold itself was found by James Marshall, an early American settler working for Sutter and, crucially, the find was publicized by another

American settler and newspaperman, Sam Brannan. Brannan sent 2,000 copies of his newspaper, reporting the discovery, to Missouri by special mule train.[40] Even for California, the case for embryonic boom preceding rush seems hard to deny, and the case for boom causing rush seems quite strong.

By the early 1850s, in both Victoria and California, booms and rushes had inter-twined and become hard to distinguish. Gold was never the only game in town, and the overall pattern was similar to that of pure booms. Banks, newspapers, and postal services mushroomed in San Francisco and Melbourne, as did hotels, bars, casinos, theatres, brothels, law firms, and a myriad of other services. Prices were high. In Victoria between 1851 and 1854, bread prices doubled, butter prices tripled, and egg prices increased sixfold. Mark Twain's joke that haircuts in California cost $1,000 was not so funny at the time.[41] High prices meant high profits, and this in turn meant that the outflow of gold from pay dirt was at least matched by the inflow of cash from outside. Some came in the pockets of miners and other immigrants; more was lured in as investment by heady profit margins. 'Comparing the miner's costs and the value of their labor with returns, the *Louisville Journal* estimated that between 1849 and 1854 they had lost over $180,000,000.'[42] On another estimate, $138 million worth of goods entered California via the Panama route alone between 1848 and 1851—more than the whole reported yield of the goldfields in that period.[43] With bitter humour, a leading settler wrote in 1865: 'why when I came to California I was worth nothing, and now I owe two millions of dollars.'[44] Victoria's imports also rocketed even more than its gold-boosted exports—the total excess of imports 1851–61 was around £12 million.[45]

All this was very boom-like, and so were the substantial progress industries that developed in both California and Victoria. Victoria's new government spent heavily; and the advent of responsible government in 1855–6 boosted spending still further—to thirteen times the 1850 level by 1860. Railway construction in Australia began during this boom, about 1854, but initially road-making was just as important. Victoria spent £4.8 million on rail and the same on roads between 1851 and 1861, enough to power a boom in itself. Extremely expensive railways (£135,000 per mile) reached the gold towns of Bendigo and Ballarat in 1862 and the inland river port of Echucha in 1864.[46] Steamships were still minor as transport between Britain and Australasia, but now came into their own as local transport. They increasingly dominated regular

coast trades and the Murray–Darling River system. As in the American Old West, building and replacing steamers (seven Australian river steamers sank in 1865 alone), became important local industries, with Echucha as the Australian St Louis.[47] Building Marvellous Melbourne was itself a huge business. Envious Sydneysiders might call it 'Mushroom City', but its major buildings were 'Cyclopean in their architecture, all seem built as if to last forever.'[48]

Importing goods and transporting them to gold miners earning £8 a week was another big business.[49] In a single year of the 1850s, £629,000 in brandy alone was imported into Victoria, along with £364,000-worth of butter, as well as about £300,000-worth of timber, a large quantity of wheat, and some New England lobsters packed in ice.[50] Much was imported, but much was also home-grown. Victorian sheep numbers dropped 30 per cent, 1851–6, as resources shifted to the progress industry, but cattle numbers went up 65 per cent and horses more than doubled. Wheat production increased fivefold, 1851–61, and oat production twentyfold.[51] Victorian wheat farming was booming in the 1850s—it was just that it was booming a little more slowly than the population, which increased sevenfold. Imports came mostly from Britain, but also from America, New Zealand, and the other Australian colonies, some of which boomed accordingly—partly supplying Victoria, and partly supplying their own booms and rushes. It was the markets of Ballarat, not Britain, which transfixed Tasman farmers in the 1850s. New South Wales and South Australia doubled in population in the 1850s; settler Queensland tripled, and settler New Zealand quadrupled. New Zealand's Europeans then doubled afresh between 1861 and 1867, while Queensland's again tripled—in both cases triggering major conflicts with the indigenous peoples.[52] Overall, in its Boom Two, 1847–67, settler Australasia grew sixfold from about 300,000 people to about 1.8 million.

California achieved statehood in record time, in 1850, but its state government was less of a big spender than Victoria's. Still, the federal government massively subsidized the overland route, constructing a road between Missouri and Nevada costing $500,000 in 1856–8; building seventy-nine forts to protect this and other routes from hostile Indians; and garrisoning them with 7,000 troops. San Francisco's civic government, which received more revenue than the state government, spent $2.6 million in 1854/5 alone. The private sector contributed still more to the Californian progress industry. Millions were invested in toll roads and bridges—sixty-four of the former and 117 of the latter by the late 1850s, with a fresh set

extending to the Comstock in Nevada from 1858. As early as 1850, fifty steamers, brought out in parts by sailing ships around Cape Horn, were plying California's coasts and rivers. Private companies competitively built multiple docks, up to 2,000 feet in length at San Francisco. 'Just as the railroads were often over-built and left without traffic, so, too, were the dock companies.'[53]

The usual suspects lined up in support of both boom and rush. By 1858, San Francisco had twelve daily newspapers, seventeen weeklies, four fortnightly journals, and four monthlies, while California as a whole had at least ninety-one newspapers. At least seven banks and eighty manufacturing establishments had already emerged in San Francisco by 1850. By 1860, California had over 1,400 manufacturing enterprises producing $23.5 million worth of goods—excluding mining.[54] Nationally familiar names made their start in this boom-plus-rush economy: Wells Fargo, Levi Strauss, Folger's coffee, and Studebaker's coaches. Australian and New Zealand business history tells a similar tale. Anglo Californian agriculture originated as a cuckoo in the nest of Hispanic pastoralism. *Californio* cattle, horses, and mules fed and powered the initial rush, reinforced by half a million sheep from New Mexico. But local farming soon boomed too; California became self-sufficient in grain as early as 1854, and its cattle herds expanded to 3 million by 1860.[55] Boom-phase extractive industry ravened through the land. 'The mining industry consumed entire forests for mineshaft supports and flumes.'[56] Timber was also needed to build and rebuild San Francisco, which experienced six major fires in three years, 1849–51. Lumbering had accounted for one-third of California's vast forests by 1870.[57] Hunting industries joined the mass attack on Californian nature. In 1855 alone, about 500 whaling ships visited the coast.[58] The remaining beaver and sea otter were mopped up for their furs, and hunting game such as elk to supply meat to the mining camps was a substantial commercial business.[59] California's natives, who had controlled the interior throughout eight decades of Spanish and Mexican rule, were also subjected to mass attack and their number fell drastically. Some groups, such as the Modoc people in 1872–3, put up a remarkable fight.[60]

As always, and despite continued gold production, bust followed boom. Both Victoria and California slumped in the mid-1850s, as alluvial gold output peaked and the torrent of imports overshot demand. Even supplying a gold rush was no sure thing. Some 471 San Francisco businesses went bust in 1854–6. 'The rate of failure was probably somewhere between half and

two-thirds of all merchants.'[61] The American-wide bust of 1857 did more damage, wiping out 1,570 San Francisco businesses by 1859, leaving just over 2,000.[62] There was another local slump in 1869, when transcontinental rail brought Eastern competition for Californian manufacturers, followed by the brief boom of the early 1870s that put paid to the Modoc Indians. Then another American-wide bust, in 1873, dealt the *coup de grâce* to Northern California's booms. Three thousand companies bit the dust in San Francisco this time, and there were 15,000 unemployed in the streets. According to one authority, this bust brought California to 'the brink of violent social upheaval', and certainly Sinophobia 'suddenly came alive'.[63] The 1857 crash reached Australia too, but had a limited effect, and it was not until ten years later that Tasman Boom Two really busted. Squatter and speculator Hugh Glass, the richest man in Victoria, went broke, and a visitor in 1867 found that 'a terrible depression is at present pervading trade and agriculture in New South Wales'.[64] Queensland, then booming fastest despite the absence of gold finds, suffered an especially 'severe slump in 1867'. The crash brought down Queensland's main British banker and main British shipping line, and almost brought down the Queensland government itself.[65]

After their crashes, California and Victoria joined every other busted West in searching desperately for export rescue. Gold production continued, but at reduced levels, and was now highly capital-intensive. More was needed and in the 1870s California unsuccessfully tried silk, castor beans, and honey. 'The craze for tobacco was equally disastrous.'[66] Though historians make the staple claim that 'in 1859 it was already evident that Queensland's future depended heavily on pastoralism', this was not so clear to Queenslanders at the time.[67] After the bust of 1867, the colony experimented with exports of 'ginger, arrowroot, tobacco, coffee, sugar, cotton, cinnamon, and quinine', as well as dugong oil, turtle soup, pearl shell, and canned essence of wallaby, of which only sugar eventually succeeded in becoming a staple.[68] In the end, both California and Victoria settled on wool and wheat, yet another congruence in their histories. In 1867, Victoria 'suddenly ceased to be a wheat-importing country and become a wheat-exporting country'.[69] Victoria's wheat output increased sevenfold, 1865–88, half of which was exported. Its wool output roughly tripled in the same period, over 90 per cent of which was exported. South Australia joined Victoria in wheaten export rescue, helped by bust-phase technical innovations in the form of Charles Mullen's roller and the stump-jump plough.[70]

New South Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand joined Victoria in the second of three phases of woollen export rescue. In the first phase, after Bust One in 1842, Australian had replaced German wool in the British market, with about 20–30,000 tons a year crossing the oceans in the 1850s and early 1860s. But most British wool remained home-grown. After Bust Two, in 1867, Australian wool began replacing the domestic supply, as wool demand surged with the advent of mass-market carpets and the like and British sheep farmers shifted from wool to meat production, which required different breeds of sheep. Australian wool output soared from 33,000 tons in 1863 to 160,000 tons in 1880, again helped by bust-phase technical developments and re-colonial transport reshuffles. Mass fencing improved sheep breeding, average fleece weights increased again, and the development of new wool scouring machinery in Britain reduced the costs of sheep washing in Australia.[71] The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 freed China tea clippers for the Australian wool trade.[72] The boom as usual bequeathed an oversupply of transport, which led to cut-throat competition, which lowered freight rates. A shipping cartel, known as the 'Davis Pool' was formed in 1876. It brought prices back up somewhat and was therefore unpopular with farmers, but it did improve the reliability and regularity of service. It was helped in this by the mass advent of large iron-hulled sailing ships and long-range steamers, which shared the wool trade between them roughly equally by 1890.[73] All this meant that distant Australia's links with Britain burgeoned, from a mere sea route to a virtual bridge. In 1851, the tonnage of ships entering and leaving Australia was 1 million. Forty years later in 1891 it had increased sixteenfold to 16.2 million tons, and getting freight from Australia to London was roughly as cheap as getting it from Scotland a century before.[74]

In California, churro sheep were replaced by merinos in the 1860s. Wool exports, to the Northeast, reached a quite respectable 5,000 tons in 1870. Wheat was more important, and the main market here was Britain. Farming was large in scale—a single farm extended over 66,000 acres and produced 1 million bushels. California became one of the United States' top two wheat producers by 1880. British iron-hulled sailing ships carried the grain all the way around Cape Horn, and wheat exports peaked at 28 million bushels in 1889.[75] As in the Old West before 1860, California's booms and export rescues actually had two oldlands: the Northeast and Britain. The Northeast, led by New York, dominated to 1857.[76] But the bust of that year and the Civil War of 1861–5 meant that the Northeast had

things other than California on its mind. Britain had always supplemented the Northeast in providing oldland inputs of people, goods, and money into California's boom. In the 1850s, the people totalled about 50,000, the money $10 million, and the goods amounted to $2 million a year. During the Civil War, Britain seems to have covered for the distracted Northeast as California's metropolis, opening five banks in San Francisco and supplying an increasing amount of manufactured goods, for example. It also supplied the ships and markets for wheaten export rescue, especially after 1873. In 1882, 500 ships sailed from California with about 1 million tons of grain for Britain. By 1891 at least twenty British marine insurance companies had offices in San Francisco, and generally 'California came into direct and very close relations with the United Kingdom.'[77] It may have been Britain's role as its default oldland that led to California being described as 'too British to be typically American'.[78] But wheat exports to Britain faded away in the 1890s and 1900s, more intercontinental railroads extended their tentacles to California, and the Far West was 're-recolonized' by the Northeast.

Clearly, the great gold rushes in California and Victoria were actually booms plus rushes, and were followed by the usual busts and export rescues. Booms came first and would have continued without the rushes, though they would have been smaller in scale. This is not to say that every gold rush was caused by an individual boom. Once gold rushing was well established, once professional prospectors roamed the Anglo-Wests, rushes occurred without booms. But the settler revolution, with its non-industrial rise of mass transfer, its boom mentality, and its reconfiguring of the possible was a general precondition for the gold rushes, as well as a particular precondition of many of them. The gold rushes need to be put back in their places as a part, ultimately a subordinate part, of the wider Anglo explosion. Yet they are the visible golden tip of the iceberg. They have received a level of attention, notably in social and cultural history, that the wider phenomenon has not. It may therefore be that the golden tip can tell us something about these aspects of the rest of the iceberg.

Goldfields Culture?

As many writers have noted, the shared culture of gold rushers was intriguingly ambiguous. It was predominantly white, male, and adult,

and it was typically deficient in at least the normal forms of social control, community, and collective identity, yet it somehow worked. It was strongly egalitarian and obviously oriented to manual work, yet often saw itself as middle class. In both North America and Australasia, miners 'loathed working for wages', although they did when they had to.[79] Miners lived rough, but were sporadically affluent, and spent a surprising amount on what might be called cross-class entertainment: dog fights and prizefights, circus, and opera. Indeed the gold rushes may constitute the heyday of Anglophone live theatre. Nine hundred different plays were performed in gold-rush San Francisco in the 1850s. Auckland, New Zealand, topped even this in its days as a gold town with 611 different plays performed in 1870–1.[80] Gold rushers were seen both as heroes and as villains by the wider public: a 'national curse' and a 'national blessing'.[81] They were transnational in composition, and egalitarian in disposition, yet held strong racial prejudices. Historians consistently claim that they were highly individualistic, yet also note that they typically worked in small groups of 'partners' (North American parlance) or 'mates' (Australasian parlance). 'The rare digger without a mate was known as a ''hatter''.'[82] Perhaps most ambiguously of all, gold rushers managed to be both disorderly and orderly.

As noted above, Amerindian, Chinese, Mexican, Chilean, and even French minorities on the Californian goldfields encountered antagonism from the majority. American 'nativism' is a mistaken description for this. Some immigrant groups—British, Irish, German, and perhaps Scandinavian—were not subjected to it, but 'were usually treated as honorary Americans'.[83] A licence fee was imposed on foreign miners, but was 'rarely demanded of English, Irish, or German miners'.[84] Racism is therefore a more accurate description, but it was not of a kind that privileged all Europeans. Some Mexicans were white, and this was certainly true of the French. Yet, in California, 'the French complain that they are not treated so kindly . . . as the Germans'.[85] In general, the British goldfields returned the favour by accepting Americans as equals, as they did Irish and Germans, but emphatically not Chinese. What we seem to have here is, firstly, a folk version of the rash of nineteenth-century racial ideas that privileged northern Europeans, as against southern or eastern ones. 'Anglo-Saxon', 'Nordic', 'Teutonic' or 'Germanic' are not quite the right terms, because Celtic Irish were included—'Aryan' may be closer to the bone. What we have here, second, is a folk version of a broader Anglo collective

identity, racist but also transnational, inclusive as well as exclusive. It lacked a consistent folk label—'real white men' may have come closest. It was not sure what it was, but it was sure it was not Chinese. This most obvious of out-groups provided a negative collective identity, an anti-type, defining Us by stigmatizing Them.

This vague but powerful racial identity is apparent on the goldfields because these are the most studied sites of transnational Anglo social history, but I suggest that it was not restricted to the goldfields alone. The fit between it and the wider Anglo ethnic alliance is good. The goldfields insiders were exactly the same group of nationalities that numerous Anglo governments and private companies consistently sought as emigrants. 'European recruitment was aimed almost entirely at British and Germanic peoples.'[86] America's merchant marine in 1828 was one-quarter foreign but 'largely English-speaking and readily assimilable . . . chiefly English, German, and Scandinavian'.[87] An 'Anglo' collective identity, though nameless, vague, and amorphous, does seem to have existed, at least among wandering men.

Historians once alleged massively high levels of violence in the American West in general and the Californian gold rush in particular. The consensus now is that chaos and bloodshed have been exaggerated. 'Somehow gold rush regions remained remarkably non-violent.'[88] The pendulum may have swung somewhat too far. One recent study argues that, while the California goldfields in general may have been surprisingly orderly, there were 'enclaves of violence', with homicide rates of up to 177 per notional hundred thousand of population in the 1850s. These enclaves tended to be districts in which non-Anglo minorities were prominent, but the killings tended to be *intra*-ethnic, not inter-ethnic. Others have noted 'this narrowly compartmentalized nature of interpersonal violence on the frontier'.[89] It may be that the fact that shared Anglo collective identity was not dominant in these districts hampered the formation of instant community and the 'spontaneous order' it could generate. Such communities, created in advance of any government control, are well documented for California, and also occurred in Australia and New Zealand.[90] They created their own rules, adjudicated disputes by majority vote, and sometimes enforced them with vigilante law. Californian mining camps had 'a substantial degree of order, a consensus about how the mining was to be regulated'.[91] The notion that this 'spontaneous order' was 'the inheritance of centuries of common law' is less convincing.[92] The goldfields doctrine that 'a man

could only claim what he could reasonably work' is hardly that of Anglo-American formal law, and was fundamentally un-capitalist. Gold miners were not too concerned about *habeas corpus* or 'innocent until proven guilty' either. 'Spontaneous order' seems more likely to have come from a shared sense of fairness, closely related to informal settlerism and settler populism.

Only a small number of miners actually attended both the Californian and Victorian gold rushes. Victoria hosted about 10,000 Americans; California about 8,000 Australians and New Zealanders.[93] Given this, the similarity between goldfields cultures is striking. In Victoria in 1853, 'the equality system here would stun even a Yankee'.[94] The one major distinction consistently drawn by historians is that British rushes were much more orderly, in particular less violent, than American.[95] Americans do seem to have been more prone to gun-fighting than their neo-British cousins, for reasons that remain controversial. It is not so clear that they were more prone to *fighting*: fisticuffs were extremely common on New Zealand and Australian goldfields.[96] The classic study of the Victorian rush states: 'crime and violence were still widespread on the new fields . . . disputes were frequently settled by fist fights'. But it also says that 'despite the extent of vigilante activity, it is rather the moderation and continual regard for authority by the diggers which stand out'.[97] Victorian authorities did take a more autocratic and hands-on approach to goldfields order than the Californian, and they spent an enormous amount on policing. But this approach was deeply resented by the miners in Victoria. It eventually led to an actual battle, at the Eureka Stockade in 1854. Former Fenians and Chartists were involved, but the root cause seems to have been affronted settler populism. Like the Upper Canadian 'family compact' in 1837, the Victorian authorities failed to respect Rule Number One of informal settlerism: treating white males of any class as full citizens. ' ''We shall do no good until we get up a rebellion as they did in Canada'', says a Victorian newspaper.'[98] Whatever the causes, forty-one miners and seventeen imperial troops were killed and wounded at Eureka.[99] Did 1850s California have a violent white-on-white battle to match this? One might also note that the allegedly most-feared violent criminals of the early Californian gold rush were Australian ex-convicts, known as the 'Sydney ducks', 'who terrorized citizens at will'.[100] What kind of orderly Britons were these? And what kind of 'wild west', what kind of 'gunfighter nation', allowed itself to be terrorized by a few Australians known as ducks?

Convict backgrounds may explain the propensity to crime of the 'Sydney ducks'. But it cannot explain their alleged ability to terrorize the gun-fighter nation. Nor can it explain the Eureka Stockade, or another flaw in the story of orderly British goldfields. New Zealand authorities referred to the Victorian goldfields much as Victorians referred to the Californian: as a chaotic and violent anti-type to be avoided, and they are said to have succeeded. In New Zealand, 'relations between the miners and the authorities were particularly harmonious'.[101] 'By comparison with California and Australia, New Zealand was downright orderly.'[102] Yet revisionist research indicates that rates of arrest for assault and for being drunk and disorderly were high on the New Zealand goldfields.[103] These were rates of *arrest*; when the law was absent or tolerant, as was sometimes the case even in New Zealand, more crime went unregistered. The intriguing thing about the New Zealand case is that high levels of hitting and bingeing were *not* solely a feature of the goldfields. They were also high in the 1850s, before gold, and high in regions where there was no gold. They diminished with the great New Zealand bust of the 1880s, and appear to correlate with all booms, not just rushes. In America too, goldfields were by no means the only 'enclaves of violence'; lumber towns, boom-phase cattle towns, and rail towns were also notorious—there were claims that they were more disorderly than gold towns.[104] Goldfields disorder, and perhaps goldfields culture in general, was at least partly a manifestation of a broader subculture.

Settler societies are often divided into two sectors; rural and urban, inhabited by farmers and townsfolk. During booms and rushes, there was a third sector of equal importance: a camp sector, inhabited by what I have described elsewhere as 'crews'. Crews were wandering males working in groups—labourers on road, canal, rail, and building projects; shearers and cowboys; hunters, whalers, and sealers; teamsters, riverboat men, and sailors; lumbermen. The list is long. A ship's crew, constantly changing as men came and went, was the archetype. 'Crews were *pre-fabricated* communities into which new members could easily slot', as long as the members were the right sex and the right races, and knew the rules.[105] Miners and lumbermen dressed and drank like sailors, and sometimes got scurvy like them too. 'The life of the lumberer was like that of the sailor, and his habits had become proverbially improvident.'[106] Canal labourers in Canada and the American West shared the 'bunkhouse culture . . . found in resource-extractive industries such as logging and mining', and so did lead miners,

riverboat crews and the labourers building the railroads. Crews were the shock troops of booms, staffing the progress industry and its allies. They dressed and ate similarly, faced dangers in their daily work, lived rough, and had their own argot, jokes, songs, and yarns. They were orderly on the job, but disorderly off it. 'Strenuous in their labor and equally extreme in their recreation.'[107] They had their own definition of crime, which sometimes converged with legal definitions—neither code permitted stealing from workmates for example—and sometimes diverged. Vigilante action was illegal but acceptable, as was the propensity to get drunk and disorderly and deal violently with interpersonal disputes, especially during 'binges', 'bashes', 'benders', or 'sprees'. Where binge centres were well policed, arrest rates were high. Crew culture could generate cooperation among strangers and a degree of 'spontaneous order' as well as periodic disorder. Perhaps goldfields culture was a more middle-class variant of this wider crew culture, a worldwide but Anglo-prone subculture of wandering men.

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10

The Great Midwest

There are some issues on which one can forgive American exceptionalism, and one of them is the Civil War of 1861–5. Experts see it as the first modern conflict, by which they mean that more men and resources were mobilized and consumed more rapidly and industrially than in earlier conflicts. About half of the adult white male population was mobilized, and about a third of these became casualties, all within five years—American roulette. The direct costs of the war have been estimated as $6.6 billion.[1] The Disunited States mounted not one but two of these convulsive efforts, and somehow managed to continue westward expansion on the side—and export increased quantities of wheat. America revealed its immense dynamism, its frightening power potential. In 1865, the Union's million veterans in arms made it briefly the world's most formidable military power, easily capable of taking Canada from the British and Mexico from the French, who had intervened in that country. But most of the legions were soon disbanded, and the war had scarcely ended when the United States turned back to its core business: industrialization and urbanization in the Northeast; explosive colonization in the West; and recolonization to link the two.

Post-War Booms

As early as the 1830s, the Old Northwest began to expand and blur into that elusive region known as the Midwest. By courtesy of Booms Two and Three, the rich soils of Iowa had become home to 675,000 people by 1860. Despite sectional strife and its bloody reputation, Kansas boomed in the 1850s to 107,000 people. Boosting and supplying the rush to Pike's Peak was big—and counter-cyclical—business between 1859 and 1864, war or no war.[2] Minnesota acquired a population of 172,000 in the

1850s. Kansas and Minnesota boomed on after the Civil War, and were joined by Nebraska and the hitherto lightly settled parts of Wisconsin and Missouri—the latter now a Midwestern rather than Southwestern state. This boom, America's fourth, lasted from 1865 to 1873. Again, its scale can be read in national aggregates: 3 million immigrants poured into the United States, 1865–73, the number of banks tripled, 1865–75, and there was a net inflow of overseas capital of $1.5 billion, 1860–75, 90 per cent of it British.[3] Even more than in the 1850s, this was a rail-led boom. The United States doubled its railroads in this eight-year period to 70,0000 miles of track, mostly in the West. Even Albert Fishlow admits that rail construction now outran demand.[4] A shattering bust took place in 1873, leading to a full five years of stagnation. Around 1878, Boom Five began: Nebraska and the Dakotas doubled in the 1880s and so too, from a smaller base, did the Far Western states of Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Washington, and Arizona. In all, between 1860 and 1890, there were seventeen cases of state populations doubling in a decade in the American West, and one could add West Texas and Southern California. This fifth American boom busted in different regions at different times between 1887 and 1893.

For our purposes, the post-war Midwest centred on a tier of four states, Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas, but was divided into two distinct ecological zones, eastern prairie and western plains, each of which encompassed parts of the states bordering our central tier—Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana to the west, and Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri to the east. The rough dividing line between Plains and Prairies was the 100th meridian, which ran through the middle of our four core states. Plains and Prairies shared one major obstacle to settlement: the local Indians. They were not numerous, but their adoption of the horse and the gun had turned them into extremely formidable light cavalry. In the 1860s and 1870s, there were 1,316 engagements with Indians, mostly in this region.[5] Especially early in the period, the existence of army forts and Indian reservations did not necessarily indicate US control. Forts were less 'an unmistakable mark of imperialism'[6] than nodes in a transport network. Early reservations were often so huge that they were almost independent states, and their Indian denizens were prone to leave them whenever they wished in any case. Perhaps the most formidable of the Plains Indians were the Sioux, who dominated much of Minnesota to the early 1860s and most of the Dakotas to the late 1870s. Some Indian groups, such as the Crow and Pawnee, feared

the Sioux more than the Americans and allied with the latter against the former, maintaining independence through 'collaboration' until the 1880s. The Sioux resisted American expansion repeatedly between the early 1850s and 1890, and had some striking temporary successes, such as Red Cloud's War of 1864–7, which forced the United States to abandon two forts, and the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876, in which Custer and his men were famously annihilated. Contrary to legend, settlers themselves were seldom a match for the Sioux and their like. The eventual Indian defeat was the result of the extinction of their major resource, the buffalo; the efforts of Indians fighting on the other side; the discrepancy between part-time warriors and full-time soldiers; the repeated application of metropolitan power in the form of the US army; and the sheer mass of explosive colonization.

Prairies and Plains faced other obstacles to settlement, real and imaginary. The Plains, above all, lacked water. The Prairies had been spared early settlement by a false reputation for low soil fertility, by their genuinely tough sod that was hard to plow, and by the lack of trees. Almost everything on a settler farm was made of wood, which was also the dominant fuel, so 'wood was second only to soil in its importance to the farm economy'.[7] The problem of tough sod was solved by the steel plow, developed during the bust of 1837, and first used extensively in Illinois in the 1840s. The problem of wood was solved by the transfer of lumber from the forests bordering the Great Lakes onto the tree-less Prairies. But these practical solutions went hand in hand with the usual 'settler transition', the reversal of a negative image through booster literature and letters back. The letters back, as we saw in Chapter 5, emphasized natural abundance, ease of cultivation, and giant vegetables. The formal boosterism has been described as 'the most effective advertising campaign ever to influence world migrations'. Town boosters, state governments, and especially rail companies led the campaign. The usual boom mentality pervaded. 'A spirit of optimism infected everyone.' This was understandable. Between 1860 and 1890, the population of the four core Midwestern states grew from 136,000 to 3 million people.[8]

The federal government was a major contributor to Midwestern settlement. It financed the forts, fought or bought off the Indians, subsidized rail-building with vast land grants, and, less obviously, contributed to the boosting campaign. It published the work of its surveyors on a lavish scale. The Pacific Railroad survey cost $455,000; the twelve volumes publicizing them cost $1.2 million. Such literature seemed official and reliable, but

played down problems with the Midwest's agricultural potential.[9] Perhaps the best-known federal contribution to the settlement of the Midwest was the Homestead Act of 1862 which gave away a 'quarter section', or 160 acres, of public land to settler families, on the condition that it was developed or 'proved up' over five years. Free land, combined with the Midwest's reputation as the quintessential American farming region, can give the impression that this was a poor man's frontier, more agrarian and less monied than other boom regions. In fact, only the raw land was free; there was still the cost of breaking and fencing the land, of constructing farm buildings with purchased wood, and of buying stock, seed, and equipment. 'The cost of virgin land was just a fraction of the cost of making a farm.'[10] A specialized business investing Eastern money in Western farm mortgages began during Boom Four, 1865–73, and 60 per cent of Kansas farms had mortgages by 1890.[11] Homesteaders proving up could not raise mortgages, but they still had to have some cash or credit. 'A considerable amount of capital was necessary to break the tough prairie sod.'[12] 'Urban banks and wholesalers lent their credit to small-town merchants, and they in turn lent merchandise to their rural customers.'[13] In any case, most Midwestern farms were acquired by purchase. These agrarian-seeming Midwestern booms were no exception to the patterns of explosive colonization, which required the migration of money as well as people. A quick look at the histories of Nebraska and Minnesota, apparently two archetypal steady-growth breadbaskets, illustrates this point.

Though Nebraska became a separate territory in 1854, it experienced little settlement before the civil war. It chartered eighty-four cities and 414 towns, but they can have averaged no more than sixty people each, without allowing for farm and camp dwellers, because the 1860 population was only 29,000. Nebraska shared with Dakota a reputation as 'twin Siberias'. In 1864, subsidized rail-making began; booster literature burgeoned—Nebraska was now a 'Garden of Eden', a 'Fragment of Heaven let loose upon the earth'.[14] Statehood was achieved in 1867 and the population rocketed from 50,000 to 122,000 in the next three years, then doubled again by 1873, concentrated in the eastern, Prairie, sections of the state. 'Nebraska was not really a farming community in these early years of settlement . . . most of the harvest was locally consumed . . . the main economic activities . . . were construction, wholesaling and speculation.'[15] One should add the supply of its own boom and neighbouring Colorado's Pike Peak rush to this list of core businesses. 'By one estimate the freighting business in Nebraska City alone

employed 8,385 men in 1865.'[16] Despite parallel activity in neighbouring states, contemporaries could not resist the conclusion that what they were seeing was strange and exceptional. 'The settlement of Nebraska is the reverse of all other Territories. It was not a gradual filling up; the ranks of civilization did not advance in succession: first the hunter, then the trader, then the farmer, then the merchant, and last the capitalist and speculator. All poured in together.'[17] Some then poured out with the bust of 1873. But Nebraska boomed again from the late 1870s, and its population exceeded 1 million by 1890, with 140,000 in Omaha, the leading city.[18]

Minnesota had an even more turbulent experience of the boom–bust rollercoaster. In the 1840s it too had a reputation as a frigid waste, 'an American Siberia'. In 1849, territorial status gave its 4,000 forerunner settlers something to boost, and they did so with gusto, emitting the usual stream of literature and sponsoring an exhibition in New York in 1853. Between 1849 and 1857, a classic settler transition transformed Minnesota from the 'American Siberia' into the 'New England of the West', 'The [gold-free] Eldorado of the West', a 'perfect Eden'. Despite an outbreak of cholera in 1849, a frenetic boom ensued, aided by steamboat links to the boomtown of St Paul, later joined by its twin city of Minneapolis. 'Speculation permeated all sections of Minnesota society.' 'Stories of land values doubling or tripling in a few months became commonplace.'[19] All this was typical, but again local historians could hardly believe it.

> The boom of 1856–7 in Minnesota had its parallel in all our western states but it may be doubted whether its violence and rate were elsewhere quite equaled . . . Fortunes seemed to be dropping from the skies, and those who would not reach out and gather them were but stupids and sluggards . . . Debt was universal . . . all signs pointed to continued and increasing prosperity.[20]

Between 1849 and 1857, the settler population of Minnesota leaped from 4,000 to 150,000, a growth rate similar to that of golden California at the same time. The 'devastating Panic of 1857' then hammered the business community and halved the population of St Paul. Minnesota responded by achieving statehood and trying to raise a $5 million loan for public works. The bust prevailed, however, and was followed by the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. A terrible local conflict followed hard on its heels. In 1862, the Minnesota or Santee Sioux, provoked by disputes about reservations and annuities, attacked the settlers, killing and wounding six or seven hundred of them in one of the bloodiest 'Indian Wars' of the nineteenth century.[21]

Yet migration renewed, featuring many Germans, even before the end of the Civil War, accompanied by massive spending on rail. By 1870, the state's population had reached 440,000. The general bust of 1873 again punctured the balloon, and was again joined by a local disaster. Minnesota's harsh winters were described as 'bracing', 'invigorating', designed by nature to bring out the best in the Anglo-Saxon constitution. Minnesota's healthful climate meant it had 'no equal as a resort for invalids'. But 'in January 1873, seventy Minnesotans froze to death . . . and another thirty-one lost limbs or parts of limbs' to frost bite. Minnesota never said die, and its marginal regions—some arid, some swampy—experienced more rail-led settlement before busting in the 'big die up' of 1887, discussed below. Minnesota rebounded from all this with the resilience of the twentieth-century German economy. In 1890, its Twin Cities, with 300,000 people between them, ranked with San Francisco as the largest cities west of Chicago and St Louis.[22] 'Western promises had an uncanny way of reconstituting themselves even after they were shattered by the realities of climate or by market conditions.'[23]

The Great Plains and the Big Die-Up

Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado, were states in which the Great Plains merged into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. To the east, the Plains extended into the western sections of the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas, and south into Oklahoma and the Texas Panhandle. Before the 1870s, the Great Plains had another name: 'the Great American Desert'; a 'howling wilderness of snow and tempests'; an 'almost impassable wilderness'; 'a vast barren basin, utterly destitute of life, devoid of living streams, a Sahara without a single relieving oasis, truly, the Valley of the Shadow of Death'.[24] This image dated from the explorations of Zebulon Pike in 1806 and was well established and quite well founded.[25] The Plains were arid in summer and freezing in winter, and their natural grasses were ecologically fragile. Even Horace 'Go West, young man' Greeley accepted this to the 1860s. Greeley, whose father went bankrupt in the bust of 1819, and who himself went under in the bust of 1837, was living proof of the resilience of the boom mentality, the West's master booster. Yet he described the Great Plains as 'an excellent national boundary', a 'thousand miles of precipice and volcanic sterility', and considered sending women and children into

it to be 'palpable homicide'.[26] As late as 1875, an army officer reported that the Plains were uninhabitable and recommended that settlement be 'emphatically discouraged'.[27] Yet, from the 1870s, as the centrepiece of American Boom Five, a triple invasion of the Great Plains began, by buffalo hunters, ranchers, and farmers.

It has recently been argued that the vast bison herds of the Great Plains were in decline from as early as 1790, but there were still millions of bison left in 1870.[28] Up to that time, their exploitation for European markets was limited to buffalo robes, which came from prime beasts and required expert preparation, usually by Indians. Around 1870, a new tanning process was developed which allowed buffalo hide to be processed into leather of a toughness that was found to be particularly suitable for machine belts. This shift corresponded with the height of American Boom Four, and the usual boom-phase extraction destroyed the southern bison herds by 1873. Between 1872 and 1874, 1.37 million hides were sold, suggesting twice that number of bison deaths. One hunter alone killed 20,000 beasts in the 1870s. With the beginning of Boom Five in 1878, hunting of the northern herds intensified. Up to 5,000 hunters and skinners, in crews of four to six men, participated, and the northern herds too were gone by 1883.[29]

The bison were still breathing their last when their first replacements began to drift onto the Great Plains, in the form of Texan longhorns. In another well-known story, feral cattle accumulated in Texas during the Civil War were rounded up and driven north to railheads such as Abilene. Some went east to urban markets and some went west to the Plains to stock new ranches. The process began in Boom Four, 1865–73, and really took off in Boom Five from 1878. Ranchers simply moved their herds onto public land, and tried to keep others from doing likewise with line camps, illegal barbed-wire fences, and Cattlemen's Associations which tried to enforce the local closing of the range. The cattle were cheap, the land was free, there was growing urban demand for beef, and with a few good seasons Great Plains ranching appeared a licence to print money—a 'beef bonanza'. British speculators invested $44 million, Easterners even more, and Eastern and Oregon livestock joined the longhorns in an effort to improve the herds. Cattle numbers in Nebraska and Kansas shot from 130,000 in 1860 to 2.6 million in 1880, with another 1.7 million in Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. In the last three states, 335 ranching companies were formed, nominally capitalized at $316 million. Cattle numbers peaked at a minimum of 7.5 million in 1886; some estimates suggest many more.[30] In 1886–7,

however, came a terrible drought followed by a devastating winter. Great Plains cattle numbers collapsed in what became known as 'the Big Die-Up'. 'As many as 60, 80, and even 90 per cent of the cattle perished.' Their bones joined those of the bison. Cattle numbers in the United States as a whole increased 50 per cent in the 1880s, to 60 million, then dropped back to 50 million by 1895.[31]

One recent study, demonstrating a touching faith in the free market, suggests that ranchers spontaneously allocated themselves just the right amount of range, thus avoiding a 'tragedy of the commons', only to be undone by intrusive governments, small homesteaders, and the weather.[32] On the contrary, it seems that the ranchers created the tragedy of the commons, by grossly over-stocking the natural grasses of the Plains. 'By 1880 a steer on the range needed 50 acres to fatten up, where a decade earlier 5 acres had been sufficient.' The ranchers were 'bankrupted by weather and, more, by overexpansion'.[33] 'The system was in acknowledged collapse before the calamity of 1886–7, which is often blamed for the demise of open-range ranching . . . [it] was not merely maladapted to the Great Plains; it was not sustainable in any environment and would have collapsed in even the lushest and mildest of settings.'[34] The Great Plains ranch rush of 1878–86 was not a case of export rescue but of boom-phase extraction—of natural grasses—to the point of extinction. Even at peak, 'large-scale ranching all told accounted for merely 14.4% of slaughter beef production in the United States.'[35] It was on the feedlots of the Prairies and the Old Northwest, not the Great Plains ranches, that sustainable beef farming took place.

Buffalo hunting and ranching did not bring many people to the Great Plains. That was done by the third invasion, by more typical Anglo settlers—town boosters, merchants, railroad workers and above all farmers. The Dakotas, Montana, and Wyoming had fewer than 200,000 people between them in 1880, and many of those had arrived since 1878. By 1890 they had 750,000 people. To these should be added the similar number who settled the Plains sections of Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado. The population of the western or Plains section of Nebraska increased tenfold in the 1880s while the rest of the state merely doubled.[36] Though most farms were small money came too. The United States spent $4 billion on railroads in the 1880s, twice the level of the 1870s or 1890s, three-quarters of it in the West, and much of that on the Plains.[37] 'In Nebraska in the 1880s, track mileage had been greatly overextended, and the railroads were usually

over-capitalized.'[38] The settler transition behind this mass movement was one of the greatest of all, transforming the Great American Desert into 'Nature's great flower garden where Eden might have been.'[39] This booster campaign was so extreme that it generated contemporary sarcasm. 'A real estate agent rampant' or 'a drove of railroad stock being watered' was suggested for the Dakota Coat of Arms. Boosters, it was said, 'insisted that the people of Montana never became ill except from overeating'.[40]

But the irony was mostly retrospective; after all, the migrants and money did come. The boosters needed scientific or pseudo-scientific help in making the ex-desert flower. It came in two forms; the notion that 'rain follows the plow', and the doctrine of dry farming. Strange as it may seem, people at the time seriously believed that plowing increased rainfall, and they were backed by some scientists. Dry farming, deep plowing to preserve moisture for dry seasons, may seem more reasonable but it too was eventually 'found to have no empirical basis'.[41] With unusually high rainfall, and helped by Plain's modest 'virgin bonus', wheat farming seemed quite promising in the mid-1880s. But it rapidly depleted the fertility of the fragile Plains soils: it was 'a farm system that mined soil nutrients'.[42] The terrible twins of harsh winters and dry summers afflicted the Plains from about 1886, and by 1893 this third invasion too was in full retreat.

Leader of the Pack

While the Plains perished, the Prairies flowered. The steel plows, the lumber, the migrants, and the money that made this possible came mostly through one place: Chicago. Chicago's volcanic rise, the mystery that began this book, was truly remarkable. In sixty years, a single lifetime, it grew from perhaps a hundred inhabitants in 1830 to 1.1 million in 1890. As we have seen, it was far from unique, but it was the archetypal settler gateway city, and the biggest of them all. From when its growth first began, about 1833, it was a port on an inland sea—the 95,000 square miles of the Great Lakes, which were all linked by canal by 1855.[43] This gave Chicago a trunk route to New York via the other leading Great Lakes port, Buffalo, and the Erie Canal. During Boom Two, in the 1830s, Chicago colonized its immediate hinterland by boat and wagon. In the 1840s, canals, especially the Illinois and Michigan Canal completed in 1848 extended these 'fan' or feeder routes. In the 1850s, large-scale rail-building *from* Chicago greatly

extended these fans south and west. 'In 1856 thirteen railroads centered in or were connected with Chicago which was served by 104 trains daily.'[44] At the same time, multiple railroads were built *to* Chicago from the Northeast, establishing a second eastern trunk route between the oldland and Chicago, increasingly its chief agent for western colonization. From the late 1860s, western trunk railroads extended from Chicago to the Far West. By the 1890s, there were half a dozen transcontinental railroads spanning the United States, 'all but one of which eventually aimed towards Chicago'.[45] Chicago was thus the 'break point', or gear shift, between no less than five systems of transport: the Great Lakes/Erie Canal system, the feeder canals, the eastern rail trunks, the southern and western rail fans, and the western rail trunks.

Whether or not Chicago processed the things that flowed into and out of it, it transformed them from one species of carriage to another. The point is made with precision in William Cronon's brilliant study, *Nature's Metropolis*. Lumber came into Chicago on hundreds of sailing ships from the forests bordering the Great Lakes. Each ship was towed, presumably by steam tugs, to a lumber yard with a water frontage of one hundred feet. The wood was unloaded, shifted about 200 feet to the rear of the yard, where it was reloaded onto rail wagons at the yard's own siding. In this compressed space, one of the world's first *inland* mass transfers of bulk was achieved, in its way as momentous as the first mass shipments of timber from New Brunswick to Britain at the beginning of the century. Thanks to Chicago, the tree-free Prairies got their wood. A similar alchemy was achieved with wheat. Wheat came into Chicago by wagon, canal, river, lake, and later rail, but it always came in sacks. After Bust Two in 1837/42, and even more after Bust Three in 1857, it was transferred from the sacks at Chicago into an 'elevator'—a multi-level building with a steam-powered chain of buckets which lifted the wheat to grading and storing levels, then poured it direct into railcars or the holds of ships. It was unloaded at Buffalo by the same process in reverse. Without changing a kernel of wheat by one atom, this system transformed it from something which was stacked in sacks to something which could be poured like water. Chicago's wheat exports (to the Northeast and to Britain) rose from a mere 40,000 bushels in 1841, to a modest half-million bushels in the late 1840s, to 7 million bushels in 1859, to 10 million in 1865, and to 13 million in 1871. By 1875, the city's grain trade was worth $200 million a year.[46]

Chicago's third and most famous magic trick, after the transubstantiation of wood and wheat, was the industrial conversion of live animals into dead meat—meat that was packed and preserved (cured, pickled, or chilled) to enable it to be transported long distances. This art, as we saw in Chapter 7, was actually pioneered by Cincinnati from about 1825, but it was Chicago that raised it to its highest pitch. Pork, which was cheaper and preserved better than beef, came first. In 1851/2, Chicago had packed only 22,000 hogs and presumably exported even less. By 1861/2 it packed half a million, and the Civil War soon boosted this figure further. In 1862/3 Chicago's hog pack, at almost a million hogs, pulled ahead of Cincinnati's for the first time. In 1877/8, Chicago packed four million hogs.[47] New York consumers preferred fresh meat and, with the advent of rail, dead meat was always supplemented, even exceeded, by live meat—hogs and cattle railed live for slaughter to the cities of the Northeast. In 1871, along with 1.2 million dead hogs, Chicago exported 1.1 million live hogs and 400,000 live cattle. The introduction of iced rail cars in the 1870s shifted the balance back towards dead animals. Dead cattle exceeded live for the first time in 1883/4, and numbers rocketed after about 1890.[48] By 1900, Chicago's Union Stockyards were the terminus for no fewer than 14 million animals.[49]

So far, this is a well-known story. Chicago's exports were quite staggering, and have naturally tended to monopolize the attention of those historians interested in economics. One gets the strong impression, even from Cronon, that Chicago's growth was powered mainly by its staples exports. This focus, it seems to me, has operated to obscure two equally vital aspects of the Chicago phenomenon, namely busts and booms. A study of the American meat trade states on the same page that 'Chicago's rise to prominence in the meat trade did not occur until the Civil War' and that 'Chicago grew into a metropolis largely because of the meat trade.'[50] It is true that the meat trade did not become significant until 1860, but by then Chicago was already a great Western city of 109,000 people. The otherwise-admirable Cronon is similarly more impressed by Chicago's exports than its imports. We discover that the city was a grain *importer* in the 1830s only in passing, and do not discover at all that it was a net importer overall as late as 1857. Exports were only half the story of the city's growth. Its four export surges stemmed from the successive boom, bust, and export rescue of four hinterlands: Northern Illinois in the 1830s; Wisconsin, Iowa, and eastern Minnesota in the 1850s; the rest of the Prairies in 1865–73; and the Great Plains in and around the 1880s. Each bust prompted a huge

surge in Chicago's food exports. Each boom prompted a huge surge in the city's other main industry: growth.

In 1836, 456 lake ships sailed into the infant port of Chicago. They carried thousands of immigrants, and Northeastern goods worth $325,203. 'The exports they carried away were valued at only a thousand dollars.'[51] At the beginning of the next boom in 1849, 'the city seems for the most part to consist of shops'.[52] By the peak of the boom, the shops numbered fifty-three hardware stores, sixty-three dry-goods merchants, sixty-nine booksellers and printers, and 492 grocers as well as seventy-three hotels.[53] Flour milling also boomed in the 1850s, but not for long-range export. 'Most of the increase . . . went to feed the rising population of the area.'[54] 'For much of its first two decades of existence, Chicago ran on promise.'[55] The building industry accommodated not only growth but also the prospect of growth. 'Between 1868 and 1873, for example, enough lots were subdivided and offered for sale in Chicago to house one million people, at a time when the city's population was only about four hundred thousand.'[56] Building railways, canals, and plank roads out from Chicago, with Eastern and British money, was a leading industry, and during booms the town brimmed with immigrants. In the mid-1850s, seventy-four trains a day left Chicago filled with immigrants for the Midwest. 'The lots of five hundred Illinois towns, many of which never existed except on a plat and are now cornfields, were offered for sale in Chicago. Chicago was the ''hatching place of the brood of western towns'', it was the center of a speculative whirlpool.'[57] There were comparable surges in immigration, town founding, and importing during the next two booms.

Chicago continued to be a net importer at least until 1848, and possibly as late as 1860, when its imports seem to have amounted to only $72 million of its $170 million total trade.[58] Admittedly, urban import and export figures are deceptive. They measure short-range as well as long-range trade. But in this case it is local trade that is understated. Chicago's massive lumber trade was in fact regional, not national. New York State imported over a million tons of lumber a year by the early 1870s, but it imported it from Maine and from the Great Lakes direct to Buffalo, not through Chicago. Chicago's lumber went to two main markets, the towns and farms of its tree-free hinterland, and the building of the city itself. Roughly half of the lumber received stayed in town throughout the period. In lumber as in many other things, Chicago was 'its own best customer'.[59] The great fire of 1871 killed 300 people, destroyed 17,500 buildings and did between $200

and $400 million in damage,[60] but it also generated that amount of extra demand for rebuilding. Fluctuations in lumber receipts correlate closely with booms and busts. Cronon surely gets the cart before the horse when he states that 'trains that carried wheat and corn east would have gone back empty—at a loss—had there been no lumber to help pay for the return journey'.[61] The farms had to be built—with wood—before the wheat and corn could flow. The vast lumber industry was part of a still larger progress industry, which overall ranked equally with exports in Chicago's economic history before 1890.

Bust joined booms in powering Chicago's growth. While there were exceptions, surges in Chicago's exports and the innovations that facilitated them, tended to correlate with busts, or rather with the few years after them. In our terms, Chicago experienced four cumulative export rescues in the five or so years after each of Busts Two through Five, in 1837, 1857, 1874, and 1887/93. During the first, which specialized in wheat, the usual post-bust competition halved freight rates on the Great Lakes, 1841–5.[62] Apart from the steel plow, noted above, Cyrus McCormick's horse-drawn mechanical reaper was invented in 1837, but did not achieve large-scale production until 1848, the same year that telegraph links between Chicago and New York were established.[63] Harvesting had always been a bottleneck in wheat production. Wheat had to be reaped quickly when ripe, and all farms wanted labour at the same time. The mechanical reaper increased the amount a person could harvest by about 50 per cent. Also in 1848, the Illinois and Michigan Canal was completed, multiplying grain receipts in Chicago within a year, and the Chicago Board of Trade was formed.[64] It addressed an important problem for re-colonial economies: the grading and quality assurance of products from distant, multiple and anonymous suppliers.

After the bust of 1857, grading was improved still further and eventually taken over by the state to guarantee fairness. 'During the hard times that followed the Panic of 1857, the [Chicago] Board of Trade finally worked out a solution' to wheat-grading problems.[65] Corn exports from Chicago, hitherto well behind wheat, began a steep climb from 4 million bushels in 1859 to 36 million in 1871. Some went to the Northeast, but wheat was the favoured food grain there and most corn was probably recycled through Chicago to feed lots where hogs and cattle were fattened.[66] Farmer expenditure on machinery increased greatly, up fourfold in Iowa in the 1860s, and the use of women and children's labour also intensified. This

was no doubt stimulated by the Civil War's competition for male labour, but it was also a transnational feature of re-colonial farming.[67] The marked upsurge in Chicago's hog pack is also generally credited to Civil War demand, but in fact began with the bust of 1857. The Chicago pack increased 150 per cent between 1856/7 and 1860/61—before the Civil War, though the war did provide a further stimulus.[68] The hogs were carried east by the new trunk railroads, whose freight rates fell sharply after 1857. Before 1857, hog packing had been restricted to the winter, because the meat went off too quickly in summer. From 1858, the packing season was extended into summer by the use of ice-cooled slaughter-houses. 'Ice-houses became natural adjuncts to meatpacking plants.'[69]

Chicago's surges in exports, driven by busts as well as booms, continued after 1873. Wire binders in the 1870s 'virtually doubled the amount of grain that a prairie farmer working on his own could harvest'.[70] Barbed wire, the cheapest form of fencing, was patented in 1873 and began its revolutionary spread.[71] Wisconsin, a part of Chicago's hinterland, began its shift from wheat to dairy products, especially cheese.[72] Rail rates fell, fast intercity freight services proliferated, and gauges became more standardized; specialized livestock cars were introduced, reducing the cost of transporting live animals, and summer packing became widespread.[73] More novel still was the advent of refrigerated transport: special railcars using a mix of ice and salt, sometimes cooled by a steam-operated fan. This at last permitted the mass transfer of dead beef. Railed livestock had to be fed and watered, and almost half their weight was inedible. Animals always lost weight and sometimes died en route. Freighting dead meat therefore halved costs. Iced rail cars are usually dated to the late 1860s, and the first actually dates back to 1853. But these were novelties and experiments, and the real take-off occurred from 1873. The fall in rail rates was paralleled by a fall in lake shipping rates. Steamboats, already dominant for passenger transport, began to take over in freight as well.[74]

The rolling Midwestern busts of 1887–93 brought the fourth and final re-colonial surge in exports and innovations. Rail rates for livestock had dropped after 1873, but the rail companies resisted investment in expensive and specialized iced rail cars, forcing meat companies to provide them themselves. From the later 1880s, prompted by Gustavus Swift's use of the Canadian Grand Trunk Railroad to break their cartel, the American companies came to the chilled-meat party. Consumer resistance to long-dead beef was overcome (see Chapter 16), the underlying American

preference for beef over pork triumphed, and the big five meat companies expanded from eighty-nine branch houses in 1888 to 517 in 1899.[75] Rail systems became increasingly integrated after the bust of 1893; steel rails were introduced; engines became more powerful and trains became larger. Rates dropped, by an average of 60 per cent between 1865 and 1900 on one estimate, and by much more on others.[76]

In all, Chicago grew in four successive surges of explosive growth, and four cumulative of bust-driven surges of exporting. The boom surges were faster than the export surges. Chicago's population more than tripled in the 1850s and almost tripled again in the 1860s, but grew 'only' 80 per cent in the 1870s, when bust years predominated, 1873–8. Growth then accelerated again in the booming 1880s, with the city's population more than doubling in the decade. In most years, booming and export rescue flourished at the same time in different parts of Chicago's hinterland. Wheat-centred Export Rescue One continued for Chicago's inner hinterland, from the later 1840s, while Boom Two raged in the outer hinterland. Hog-centred Export Rescue Two continued through the later 1860s, while Boom Three ravened through yet wider hinterlands, and so on. Before 1893, Chicago simultaneously performed explosive colonial and re-colonial functions for different hinterlands and these dual engines were the secret of its remarkable growth. Chapter 16 will argue that the leader of the pack then added a third, decolonizing, function from 1893.

Laggard Wests

There were laggards in the booming American Midwest and Far West in the second half of the nineteenth century. New Mexico, Oregon, and Nevada, never boomed at all, while Utah, Montana, Wyoming, and Arizona boomed only once each and that weakly. Initially, Colorado looked like it would be a laggard too. Its great gold rush to Pike's Peak drew in 100,000 people between 1859 and 1864, but proved to be something of a damp squib—a rush without a boom, and not much of a rush at that. Only $27 million of gold was produced between 1859 and 1870, although the wagon freighting companies of Kansas and Nebraska did receive a great boost—one box of peaches sold for $60.[77] The bubble burst in 1864–5; the territory's population increased by only 6,000 to 40,000 in the 1860s; Denver stayed static at a meagre 4,500 people; and many

towns went ghost.[78] But Colorado achieved statehood in 1876 and with it a second coming. Rail-building, cattle-ranching, boosting, and immigration boomed, as did the deep mining of lead, silver, and gold, as well as Denver itself. The city grew sevenfold in population in the 1870s, then tripled again in the 1880s to 106,000 people. By 1888, it boasted a 400-room hotel and a nine-storey office building.[79] Between 1870 and 1890, Colorado as a whole experienced a net immigration of 290,000 people and its population shot up tenfold to 413,000. Like Nevada, Colorado had a rush without a boom in the 1860s, but then, unlike Nevada, managed a real boom in the 1870s and 1880s. One difference may be that Colorado's main links were with the east, especially New York, while Nevada's were with less populous California.[80]

New Mexico was the oldest neo-Europe in the West, dating from the seventeenth century, and it was not Anglo. Its mainly Spanish-descended population numbered a substantial 62,000 in 1850, just after it became part of the United States. Small farms predominated, together with flocks of churro sheep. New Mexicans were happy to earn money feeding the goldfields, but like the Quebecois they were not keen on booming because they rightly associated it with Anglicization. As in Florida, there was also a formidable Indian group nearby, in this case the Apache, whose resistance also spared Arizona much in the way of booms. Yet New Mexico did receive Anglo forerunner settlers, from about 1866, and they tried hard to get the territory to join the Midwestern booms of the period. Rail arrived in 1880 and 2.5 million pages of promotional literature were distributed in the single year of 1884. The Spanish and the Pueblo Indians were portrayed as adding an exotic touch, a dash of history. But New Mexico's Anglo boosters failed, the state never boomed, and Spanish-speakers remained the majority until at least 1930.[81] As with Quebec, Anglos were reluctant to emigrate to destinations where they would be a minority. Minority status did not accord with settlerism, formal or informal. It was not just a matter of ethnicity, but of being full citizens, instant insiders. Mormon Utah, whose settlers were very Anglo, also attracted relatively few non-Mormon settlers and, like Quebec and New Mexico, Utah was not sure that it wanted them. Less booming not only facilitated the persistence of difference but also provided some immunity from busts. 'Theocratic Utah was not quite depression-proof, but it survived the 1890s better than most parts of the West.'[82]

To be sure, there is also a sense in which Utah and New Mexico—and Oregon—were victims of their own demographic success. Very early

settlement in New Mexico, and comparatively early settlement in Utah and Oregon, in the 1840s, created populations that were relatively large when regional booms began. Doubling in a single decade was therefore harder. Utah and Oregon did grow fast in their foundational period, the 1840s and 1850s, but from a base well below our 20,000 threshold. Utah did boom in the 1860s, though barely, when non-Mormon settling and sojourning increased, and supplying mineral rushes in neighbouring Colorado and Nevada became big business.[83] Oregon came close to booming in the 1860s and 1870s, and it was part of a wider Pacific Northwest, also including Washington and Idaho, that did boom in the 1880s and 1900s, as we will see in Chapter 13. We might conclude that the weakness of booms in Oregon and Utah is something of a statistical illusion. Yet there was a very real difference between these two states and their neighbours, Colorado and Washington. In 1870, Utah had over twice as many people as Colorado, and Oregon well over three times as many as Washington. By 1910, the order had reversed. Colorado's population was well over twice that of Utah and Washington's was almost twice that of Oregon. Denver and Seattle had long overhauled Salt Lake City and Portland. 'Oregon's rate of population growth was less rapid than would be expected in so favored a region.'[84] Oregon experienced 'a generation of relatively slow, incremental American settlement'.[85] That insightful American historical geographer, D. W. Meinig, also notices the difference in growth between Oregon and Washington, and with it a divergence in business cultures. 'An old, stable, conservative Portland-Williamette establishment cultivating its strong sense of pioneer stock and the virtues of community and continuity' coexisted with 'an aggressive, progressive "Seattle spirit" powered by enterprising individuals'.[86]

Among western laggards, Nevada was perhaps the extreme case. Like Colorado, it experienced a rush without a boom in the 1860s. Its population may have reached 100,000 in 1864, when it became a state, but fell back to 42,000 by 1870—here was a shrinking West. Silver mining at the Comstock became more capital-intensive in the next decade, so there was less stimulus to immigration than in a rush proper. But silver continued to pour out, the population increased 50 per cent by 1880, and Virginia City employed twenty-three hairdressers. In 1879, however, silver production collapsed, and Nevada became the West's classic failed state. The population dropped again to 47,000 in 1890, and dropped further to 42,000 in 1900—a reversion to the level of 1870. There was some growth in the 1900s, but

Nevada had to wait until the 1930s to be saved by legalized gambling and easy divorce—perhaps the strangest, as well as the latest, form of export rescue experienced by any Anglo-West.[87] Before that, Nevada was 'America's most dramatic demonstration of the impermanency of a society based solely on gold and silver mining.'[88] 'Nevada was an empty shell of a state, in dire need of an economic base to attract population.' '"What's the Matter with Nevada?" became a persistent question well into the twentieth century.'[89]

'Clearly the matter with Nevada was an absence of natural resources', after the demise of silver in 1879. Some 86 per cent of the state was arid, defined as insufficiently watered for farming. Yet this did not prevent massive boosting campaigns.[90] The same applied to other laggard states, Arizona, Wyoming, and Montana, where boosting had somewhat more success. They too had limited natural endowments of fertile land and other resources. Arizona territory, well known for its aridity, was separated from New Mexico in 1863. It had some modest gold, silver, and copper strikes, but its mining did not fully take off until the spread of electric wires boosted the demand for copper in the 1900s. Arizona had only 70,000 acres under cultivation as late as 1890, as well as perhaps the toughest of all resisting Indians, the Apache. Some 5,000 federal troops were still chasing Geronimo in 1886.[91] Yet, despite the absence of arable land and major mines, despite the presence of the Apache, and a reputation as the wildest of Wests, or perhaps because of these things, Arizona's boosters were particularly energetic. They portrayed Arizona as 'The Garden of America', perpetuated an 'image of easy prosperity', downplayed the Apache threat, and even promoted 1880s Phoenix and Tucson 'as centers of refinement and morality'.[92] Remarkably enough, they had some success after the advent of rail in 1880. The territory's population rose from 40,000 in that year to 88,000 in 1890—technically a boom, but a pretty miserable one compared to Colorado, Nebraska, and the Dakotas in the same decade.

Wyoming also had a limited natural endowment—'soil of questionable fertility, an extremely short growing season and all too frequent droughts'.[93] But it too had no intention of being constrained by these mere facts. As soon as it became a separate territory in 1869, its few thousand forerunner settlers began boosting. The bust of 1873 stymied their plans. 'The disappointing lack of progress in Wyoming in the early 1870s led to calls for the territory's dissolution.'[94] But the boosters renewed their efforts, and by

1877 were confidently anticipating the 'speedy creation of a large and prosperous commonwealth'. They did manage to triple the population in the 1880s, though only to 63,000. Further promotional efforts in the early 1890s and in the late 1900s had little success, and for decades thereafter Wyoming continued to disappoint its denizens. 'After a hundred years, Wyoming state officials were left holding the bag of anticipated progress that never materialized.'[95] It was a similar story in Montana. From 1869 it was advertised as being 'full of richness and promise . . . the youngest and fairest of our national sisterhood', a place where 'palaces spring up in the wilderness, cities among the mountain tops'. It founded Billings as 'a second Denver' in 1882; exhibited at world fairs in 1884, 1893, and 1898; and founded its own promotional state fair in 1903.[96] Montana had its greatest success in the 1880s, when it boomed quite impressively from 32,000 to 132,000 settlers. 'Yet most of the territory was too arid or mountainous to attract farmers.'[97]

Three factors, perhaps, caused these Wests to lag, apart from the cultural differences that made Utah and New Mexico less attractive to mainstream Anglo settlers. One key variable appears to have been railroads—not the availability of trunk routes, which became fairly general, but the actual rail-making that led to successful Midwestern progress industries. Between 1870 and 1900, only 300 miles of railroad were constructed in Nevada, compared to 4,300 in its booming neighbour, Colorado. Wyoming built only 700 miles of rail, and Oregon built only half the amount of booming Washington. Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona were also fairly modest builders of railroads. Montana was not, with 3,000 miles, and it is no accident that it was the least 'retarded' of the laggards.[98] Another factor may have been timing. Wyoming became a territory in 1868 and a state in 1890, and each step in cloning stimulated a surge of boosting. But the rail companies were already busy elsewhere, and bust followed quickly in each case. Newlands had to seek migrants and money when oldlands were in the mood to send them, and without too many rival destinations. The third factor behind lagging was the obvious one: relatively limited natural endowments. What was remarkable, firstly, was the consistent refusal of aspirant boosters to recognize obvious natural limits and, second, their success in attracting even modest numbers of settlers onto non-viable terrain. We will see in Chapter 13 that later generations were even more addicted to this dangerous game.

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11

Melbourne's Empire

Marvellous Melbourne

In 1891, the 55-year-old settler city of Melbourne contained almost 500,000 people. It was larger than the ancient cities of Cairo, Mexico City, and Madrid. It was also 15% bigger than Buenos Aires, 30% bigger than Sydney, 80% bigger than San Francisco, 550% bigger than Sao Paulo, and 900% bigger than Los Angeles. Three hundred trains a day serviced its suburbs, taking workers to 3,000 factories and workshops. Melbourne had 300 buildings with elevators, one of them twelve storeys high, reportedly the tallest building in the southern hemisphere. One hotel had seven storeys and 500 rooms. Standing on the corner of the two main streets, you could see at least twenty banks, built like temples. Government House was larger than India's; Parliament House was the biggest in the British Empire. 'No British city outside London could boast of as many large public buildings.' In the Centennial Exhibition three years earlier, 2 million people had visited 2,000 paintings, many from Europe, and listened to 260 orchestral concerts. More building was planned. 'A replica of the Eiffel Tower in Victoria Parade' was on the drawing board.[1]

Marvellous Melbourne ruled Victoria, a colony as populous and rich in 1890 as the American state of California. Melbourne's empire extended much further. 'Victorian pastoralists owned large areas of the Riverina and many stations in Queensland.'[2] Even if they were not Victorian-owned, sheep runs in southern New South Wales' Riverina had to export through Melbourne, which was also a prime market for coal from northern New South Wales, beef from Queensland, and timber from New Zealand.[3] 'Victorian-controlled capital moved along with British capital to exploit other areas of Australia', including the new mining centre of Broken Hill.[4] Broken Hill was in New South Wales, but was not linked to Sydney

by rail until 1927.[5] Melbourne was 'the financial centre of Australia'.[6] It was also the financial centre of Fiji, where its money founded sugar plantations, and New Zealand, whose West Coast was 'an economic dependency of Victoria'.[7] Melbourne's tentacles even stretched to New Guinea, part of which its client-ally, the colony of Queensland, tried to annex in 1883.

Melbourne grew first with the second half of Tasman Boom One, 1828–42, then with Boom Two and the associated gold rush, 1847–67. But it was Boom Three, 1871–91, which took it to its pinnacle, along with much of the rest of the Tasman world. In these two decades settler Australasia grew from under 2 million Europeans to 3.8 million, and growth was not evenly distributed. Tasmania and Western Australia did not boom at all, and nor did the older-settled rural parts of Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia. But inland regions of these three colonies did boom, as did their capital cities, along with New Zealand and Queensland as a whole, each of which roughly tripled in settler population. Outside Queensland, gold was a bit-player in this boom, Melbourne and Scottish investment were the supporting actors, while London money was the star. About £210 million poured into Australia during the boom, with perhaps another £40 million flowing into New Zealand.[8] This money was supplied by Old Britons, but its spending was not controlled by them. 'It was not with the British investors that the initiative lay.'[9] Instead, colonial politicians and businessmen, who were often the same people, went to London and whistled its spare millions south like Pied Pipers. Australasian banks and finance companies established British offices and sought deposits as though they owned the place, which they thought they did. The hunt for funds 'bypassed the formal British securities market almost entirely; most were raised by direct solicitation of British savers'.[10] 'Twenty-one Australian banks advertised [for] deposits in the *Scotsman* in November 1890.'[11] One Australian finance company alone had eighty agents in Britain, twenty-one of them in Scotland and fifty in London.[12] Australasian companies floated themselves on the London Stock Exchange, but were British companies only in name. British companies in New Zealand 'owed their foundation to initiatives taken by . . . New Zealand groups . . . Although they were British companies with a head office in England or Scotland, they operated in fact as if they were New Zealand companies domiciled in New Zealand.'[13] 'Indeed, the early quarrels between the home and colonial boards suggested that the colonial directors regarded their London

counterparts as officials in a branch office of an Auckland concern.'[14] Even the colonial managers of British banks in Australia to the 1890s had 'great power and wide freedom' and were 'rarely over-ruled' by London. 'By contrast the first quarter of the 20th century saw a substantial transfer of power to London.'[15]

The leading destinations of this avalanche of British money were rail, housing, farming, and the speculations and support industries associated with all three.[16] Investment in pastoral runs was quite large, but much went on buying over-priced land, some of it marginal, rather than to increasing wool production for export. Freeholding was stimulated partly by the threat of closer settlement, an increasingly fraught political issue, but also by the boom mentality. In 1861–75, which included the post-1867 surge in woollen export rescue, Australian wool output increased an average of 11 per cent a year. In 1876–91, despite at least twice the level of pastoral investment, output increased at an annual average of only 4 per cent.[17] Victoria's cattle numbers doubled for the local market, while sheep numbers stayed static for export.[18] Regions such as Gippsland in Victoria specialized in breeding horses.[19] Manufacturing for the local market burgeoned. Employment in manufacturing in New South Wales quadrupled, 1870–90, and tripled in Victoria.[20] Victorian brick production quintupled, 1880–90, a spin-off of the building boom.[21] Timber newly made accessible by rail was cut like grass as usual, and was the leading item of rail freight.[22] New South Wales' last great stands of red cedar were sacrificed to progress.[23] As fuel, timber now had to be supplemented by coal. Northern New South Wales' coal production tripled, 1874–85, to 3 million tons, to fuel trains, steamers, and the sprouting crops of urban fireplaces. The significance of exports declined, from 27 per cent of Australian gross domestic product in the 1860s to 15.5 per cent in the 1880s.[24] So much for claims that 'wool was still king'.[25]

This round, rail-making was the leading edge of the Australasian progress industry. About 14,000 kilometres of railways were built in Australia in the 1870s and 1880s, with close on another 3,000 in New Zealand, largely by the state. By 1890, Australian governments were spending £40 million a year, mainly on rail. Australian historians, unhampered by an Albert Fishlow, are in no doubt that much of this was built ahead of any conceivable demand, and the duplication and waste is notorious. Rail-making was characterized by 'waste, inefficiency and misdirection'.[26] 'Much capital was thus spent in duplicating existing transport facilities and capturing traffic already well

served.'[27] One scholar has recently argued that this irrationality is explicable by 'public choice theory'—the tendency of government bureaucracies to be carried away by their own momentum and interests, as well as political expediency.[28] Yet spending in the private sector was just as extravagant. At peak in 1888, over 80 per cent of Victorian private investment went into Melbourne buildings. Expenditure on housing was even greater than that on rail, and many houses were built without people to live in them, or without jobs for those who did.[29] We are looking at a boom mentality here, shared by public and private sectors alike.

This boom mentality had all the features we have come to expect. All were 'intoxicated with the idea of growth for growth's sake . . . the boom was not a conspiracy but a contagion'.[30] 'Melbourne went mad . . . a mad scramble for quick wealth . . . A mindless pursuit of mammon . . . all rationality was lost.'[31] Again, historians note 'the buying mania', 'the wild gambling spirit', the 'blatant materialism and super-optimism', the 'determination to pour good money after bad in the blithe conviction that prosperity was at hand'.[32] Again, neither contemporaries nor historians could believe that *their* boom frenzy was not unique. 'The reckless and quite unwarranted borrowing' was accompanied by 'an unprecedented outbreak of the gambling spirit'.[33] It was 'an outlandish boom which is not paralleled in any period of Australian history'[34]—except in every other boom period. As the boom peaked, however, a shrill note of denial crept into contemporary comment. A Victorian newspaper in 1890 chastised 'certain timorous souls' who were expressing doubts, and declared: 'there is no evidence that we are on the high road to destruction'. In 1892, as Armageddon was under way down south, *The Economist* nervously maintained that 'there is no parallel between an Australian and a South American loan, and we think there never will be'.[35] A geographer, Griffith Taylor, had the temerity to suggest that Australia was environmentally too fragile to sustain the hundreds of millions of people frequently projected. 'Taylor was effectively hounded from the country.'[36]

Armageddon, the last and greatest Australian bust, unrolled between 1891 and 1893 in a series of shocks, each of which seemed terminal, and the 1890s in eastern Australia were bleak. We have the usual fruitless debate about internal and external causes, and the usual deceptive claims that this was 'serious slump not depression'.[37] But, if real incomes per capita held up, it was only because the number of working capitas dropped precipitously. People, especially young men, flooded out of Victoria. The

colony lost 104,000 people, net, 1891–8.[38] Victoria's birthrate plummeted to the lowest in Australia because of the emigration of young adults. 'In five years, 347 state schools were closed.'[39] Half or more small farmers and big run-holders alike went broke. Of twenty-eight land and mortgage companies in Melbourne 'only two survived intact'.[40] Of the large trading banks, twenty-two failed, 'leaving 10 still in existence'.[41] The numbers seem small compared to bank casualties in American busts, but these were branch-bank networks, not single unit banks as in the United States. Fifteen large banks that busted had 983 branches, while thirteen that survived had 725.[42] In American terms, therefore, almost a thousand banks closed in Australia in and around 1893—well over half the total.

Some banks closed temporarily and paid back their depositors over a decade or two, but £5 million was still owed as late as 1913.[43] The surviving banks no longer acted as conduits of British money and purveyors of growth. 'By 1900 British deposits had largely disappeared from Australia.'[44] Other businesses also died like flies. In Victoria, 'Insolvencies multiplied, numbering 1,024 in 1892 and 1,109 in 1893, while the suicide rate increased markedly.'[45] The corporate death-rate of a thousand a year continued to 1894.[46] Many businessmen avoided bankruptcy through secret 'compositions' with creditors but were ruined anyway. One Melbourne business leader paid 6.75 pence in the pound on his debts, another managed only half a penny in the pound. As for the highest flier of all, Sir Matthew Davies, 'all his companies disappeared with losses to the public of over £4 million'.[47] On one estimate, fifty-nine Victorian towns went ghost; a more comprehensive study makes the total look more like 700.[48] By 1893, 'a sense of apocalypse gripped Victoria', and it lasted a long time.[49] In 1904, the bust remained 'painful to dwell on, and the scars which it inflicted are not yet healed'.[50] Even in 1913, as we saw in Chapter 6, a visitor to Melbourne found that 'every one talked to us about it'. 'By 1914 the economy had recovered.'[51] But this was over twenty years later and it was not the same economy. In the forty years 1851–91, the population and economy of Victoria grew over 1,300 per cent. In the next forty years, they grew 60 per cent. The bust of 1891 took the Marvellous out of Melbourne, and it did so permanently.

The rest of the Tasman world shared Victoria's experience, with regional variations. In New South Wales, the boom was not quite so steep, the bust not quite so sharp, and the recovery not quite so slow. The state's historians sometimes celebrate this difference, but it was not vast. The New

South Wales government actually borrowed more (£43 million between 1875 and 1893) to fund its boom than did the Victorian government (£38 million). When the bust came, Victorian savers had 66 per cent of their bank deposits frozen, while in New South Wales the figure was 'only' 55 per cent. The number of bankruptcies in New South Wales actually exceeded those in Victoria. In western New South Wales in 1897, 65 per cent of pastoral runs, the freeholds having bought up at great expense in the 1880s, were owned by their mortgagors—financial institutions or their remnants.[52] But it remains true that New South Wales overtook Victoria in population by 1901, and that Sydney overtook Melbourne by 1911, if only in the snail races of re-colonial growth. In South Australia, the north experienced a 'massive boom' between 1872 and 1883, together with a 'near-frenzy' of rail-making. The population of the newly settled northern district more than tripled, while Adelaide's almost doubled.[53] Drought and other factors ended the South Australian boom early, around 1884, and bust times also varied in New Zealand. This neo-Britain, on which I have written in detail elsewhere, experienced two great booms, 1855–67 and 1870–86.[54] The first was led by provincial governments and provoked the astonishing Maori resistance of the 1860s. A pan-tribal organization, the Maori King Movement, united traditional enemies and mustered armies of up to 3,000 warriors to oppose the British in the Waikato War of 1863–4. Maori earthworks, which looked very like stretches of the Western Front in World War I, neutralized British numbers and artillery and inflicted some remarkable tactical defeats. The settler provinces of the North Island were no match for united Maori. But 12,000 British regulars and 5,000 military settlers from Australia and the South Island, with armoured steamships and cannon throwing 110-pound shells, proved too much, even for the King Movement. A rump of independent Maoridom persisted in the central North Island until about 1890. A second boom, this time led by the central government and rich settlers, took place from 1870. It busted in the South Island in 1879 and in the Auckland region in 1886. But the two booms did increase the settler population of New Zealand twenty-twofold in thirty-five years, 1851–86, from 26,000 to 580,000.

The most explosive Tasman colony of all in the 1870s and 1880s was Queensland, and here too indigenous resistance was fierce. It killed hundreds of settlers and culminated at Battle Mountain in 1884, where the formidable Kalkadunga people were finally defeated.[55] The newly autonomous colony of Queensland had boomed manically in the early

1860s, and busted to match in 1867. Recovery came in the early 1870s, and is sometimes attributed to a rush to the Palmer goldfields in 1874. Gold did become significant in this second great Queensland boom of the 1870s and 1880s. Five to 15 tons a year of the precious metal came from several medium-sized rushes.[56] But recovery actually began before the Palmer rush of 1874. 'Towards the end of 1871, and certainly by the middle of 1872, there were distinct signs of economic recovery.'[57] Gold was only one major contributor to the boom; another was the progress industry. Imports doubled, 1870–5, then doubled again by 1882, by which time they were almost twice the level of exports, gold included.[58] Bank branches increased from thirty-one in 1870 to 200 in 1890, along with eighty-seven insurance companies; post offices from forty-six in 1865 to 1,053 in 1895. This boom increased Queensland's population almost fourfold, 1868–91, to 393,000 people.[59] Brisbane doubled in population in the 1870s, then doubled again in the 1880s to a genuine mushroom city of 104,000 people, despite modest exports.[60] Export-prone sheep in Queensland declined from 8.5 to 5.5 million, while boom-prone cattle tripled to 3.1 million, 1868–78.[61] In the latter year, on the conservative five to one stock ratio, cattle farming was three times as important as sheep farming in Queensland. Manufacturing was precocious, and prime timber was 'completely gutted'.[62]

As was often the case in Australasian booms, the state took the lead, borrowing a staggering £25 million in London between 1874 and 1893, spending it on such things as harbour works, 2,200 kilometres of rail, and massive boosting and emigration schemes.[63] In 1892 alone, Queensland's Agent-General in London and his network distributed 685,000 publications of various kinds, all boosting Queensland as the newland of the month. In 1881–90, 135,000 overseas migrants poured into Queensland, two-thirds state-assisted, comprising 5 per cent of all United Kingdom emigration in the period.[64] Private capital also poured in, from Melbourne and London. Between 1886 and 1890, a mere five years, forty-seven new mining companies were floated in Britain to exploit Queensland gold, copper, and tin. As in the American West, most were more successful in exploiting their shareholders, intentionally or not. 'Only a dozen of the 47 companies were able to pay dividends.' But £6 million poured into the Queensland economy, some into mining equipment that was never used.[65] Again steep boom was matched by sharp bust. There was a downturn in 1886, but Queensland recovered to join Victoria and New South Wales in the great bust of 1891. Around half of small farmers and big

run-holders alike went broke. 'Few industrial plants survived the holocaust of the 1890s.'[66]

'It is difficult to understand', states a recent study, 'how, in 1890, any thoughtful Australian would have believed that the new decade would be as prosperous as the past four.'[67] This seems an unfair use of retrospect. In 1890, in the mindset of the day, the Tasman world could reasonably look forward to an American-sized future. Its leading state, Victoria, was as large and rich as California, and more highly urbanized. If the growth rates of the past forty years had continued for another forty, an American-sized population of around 100 million would indeed have been achieved. But, as we will see in Chapter 13, an unsuspected ecological limit had been reached. Australia and New Zealand's great futures were re-colonially downgraded, and their frenzied explosive colonial pasts were tamed into an era of virtuous but plodding pioneers. There was a sharp shift in culture, as well as economics. For Victorians, 'material progress was slower, the breezy optimism was gone; they were chastened, quieter, and in the future to become more staid and conservative'.[68] South Australia went 'from a dozen years of accelerating expansion to well more than a dozen of stagnation, from an era of high hopes and progress to one of shattered confidence'.[69] In the booming 1880s, talk of nationalism, separation from Britain, and republicanism, had been 'commonplace'.[70] From 1893, 'the expansive years were over and with them the nationalism which trumpeted the possibilities of the future'.[71] Federation in 1901, which was emphatically not a declaration of independence from Britain, owed much to the bust of the 1890s.[72] Like the Canadian colonies in 1867, Australians believed that unity would help restore their credit in London. Victoria, from seeming destined to lead, now accepted parity with New South Wales, which was in turn less frightened of being dominated by Melbourne.

By the 1890s, 'Australia's original reputation as the working man's paradise had been exploded.'[73] It had been based on settlerist assumptions about the infinite bounty of nature. 'Australia . . . is a land, which, with very little effort on the part of man, can be made as it were to flow with milk and honey.'[74] Now a new version emerged, re-forging paradise to emphasize quality over quantity, and the welfare state over natural abundance. Liberal and even Labour governments emerged from the bust in several Australian colonies to pursue this vision. New Zealand did not join the Federation, and so left the Tasman world for a time. But otherwise the same post-bust changes have been documented for it. Projections of its ideal population

declined from 50 million in the nineteenth century to 5 million in the twentieth. After its great bust in the 1880s, New Zealand ceased to see itself as an embryonic replica of Britain, an 'Infant Hercules', and accepted a more modest role as an exemplary paradise, 'the world's social laboratory', a title also claimed by South Australia. As Australasia's presumed future shrank and was tamed, so was its past. Amoral but dynamic explosive colonization was written out, and a new past, starring sober, steady, and virtuous pioneers, was retrospectively written in.[75]

Australasia Recolonized

The false half of staples theory—that staples exports powered booms—should never blind us to its true half, namely that staples exports rescued most settler economies after their booms had busted. By 1914, staples exports, old and new, had hauled Australia out of the doldrums of the 1890s, though the new kind of growth was much slower. As we saw in Chapters 8 and 9, Australian wool production made two post-bust surges: from insignificance before 1842 to 60,000 tons in 1867, and to 200,000 tons by 1890. Now wool surged for a third time, and by the late 1920s Australia was producing 400,000 tons of wool.[76] A retreat from marginal lands in the 1890s improved productivity; the availability of cheap barbed-wire fencing from the 1890s improved breeding; and fleece weights increased yet again. There was also another bout of re-colonial reshuffling in transport. Competition after the bust of 1891 suspended the Davis shipping cartel, which reformed and invested in larger ships in the later 1890s, but not before Australia–Britain freight rates had halved, 1890–6.[77] By this time, Australia had saturated even British demand for wool, but other European countries were now making the shift from wool-oriented to meat-oriented sheep farming. These new markets, later joined by Japan and the United States, took care of Australia's extra production and encouraged a shift in the location of wool auctions from Britain to Australia from 1896. Some Australian historians have seen this shift as the beginning of Australian economic independence, but I think they overstate the case.[78] British-Australian companies continued to dominate the financing of the industry, and Britain remained the leading market. It was more stable than other markets, which fluctuated dramatically. It remains true that, during the twentieth century, Australian wool increasingly became an international

as well as a re-colonial commodity. But wool's relative importance was diminishing, from 55 per cent of total exports in 1891 to 30 per cent in 1901, and the other exports were aimed squarely at Britain.

Australian wheat production tripled between 1891 and 1911, while exports increased seven-fold in value. Bust-driven innovations included the use of super-phosphate and the introduction of better wheat varieties. Wheat exports weighed about 200,000 tons in the early 1890s; 2 million tons by 1919; 3 million by 1930. Britain took 75 per cent of Australia's wheat exports in the 1900s.[79] Whatever the case with relative value, wheat dwarfed wool in volume, and in the scale of the links it created between Australia and Britain. New exports included dried fruit, which went mainly to Britain,[80] and an increasing range of mined metals. These had international as well as British markets, but there was a re-colonial shift in the Australian mining industry too: from Australian ownership, using British indirect investment for finance, to British ownership, reflecting the increased importance of direct investment. 'Australians owned nearly all the mines until the late 1880s, but by 1900 British investors probably predominated.'[81] The Queensland sugar industry also went through a re-colonial transition after the bust of the early 1890s. The industry began in 1864, and was dominated by large plantations using indentured Melanesian labour for the next quarter-century. Subsequently, European small farmers increasingly took over the production side of the industry, using mainly family labour, while processing and distribution remained large-scale. A subject expert dates this shift to 1888, but his own evidence shows that it came in the early 1890s. The number of small sugar farmers increased from 202 to 366, 1889–93, then rocketed to 1,387 by 1895, 2,610 by 1901, and 4,300 by 1911.[82] The transition from large to small sugar producers was greatly helped by governments, which financed cooperative mills and provided protective tariffs. The state was influenced partly by racist 'White Australian' hesitations about the Melanesian labourers used on large plantations, but also by the bust-phase discontent and political leverage of would-be small farmers. Sugar exports burgeoned, at first to other Australasian colonies and then, from the 1920s, to Britain. In 1939, Britain took 95 per cent of Australia's sugar exports of around half a million tons.[83]

The other two big new kids on the Australasian exporting block were meat and dairy products. Australia began experimenting with the export of canned meat after the bust of 1842, but had very limited success. The next

post-bust surge, after 1867, fared better. The Melbourne Meat Preserving Company, the largest concern, set up in 1868. 'There was some Australian innovation in can making.'[84] The exporting of Australian canned meat, almost entirely to Britain or to British ships and garrisons, peaked at 10,000 tons in 1883. This was not a lot, and 'colonial tinned mutton' remained marginal—institutional food or a reserve of last resort for the British carnivore. During the 1870s experiments in refrigeration proliferated across the world, with Australia taking a pioneering role. Its first refrigerated meat ship arrived in Britain in 1880.[85] Australians had other things on their minds in the booming 1880s, however, and their meat exports were worth only £200,000 a year, 1888–90. After the bust of 1891, exports began to rocket. By 1898–1900, they had increased elevenfold in value.[86] Victoria's frozen mutton and lamb exports then increased a further sixfold, 1902–13, to over 2 million sheep.[87] By 1913 Australia and New Zealand supplied 260,000 tons of sheep-meat to Britain, about 30% of its consumption and over 50% of its imports.[88] Queensland took to specializing in frozen beef, 94% of which went to Britain in 1938, where it constituted 52% of imports of frozen (as against chilled) beef.[89] At that time, around 90% of Australian sheep meat exports were taken by Britain, as well as 94% of butter and 97% of cheese.[90] By 1940, Australia and New Zealand were pumping 620,000 tons of meat a year into Britain's gaping maw. In all, the annual flow of food alone across the 16,000 miles of ocean between Australasia and Britain must have amounted to 4–5 million tons. Most wool might not go to Britain, but most ships did.

In most respects, New Zealand was the junior partner in British Australasia, but this was not the case in sheep meat and dairy exports, where New Zealand held a clear and long-term lead over Australia. 'The development of the freezing industry in Australia was not undertaken on such a scale as in New Zealand.'[91] This was partly a matter of climate, terrain, and a shortage of New Zealand alternatives but also of accidental timing and desperate human agency. It was Australia, not New Zealand, that pioneered refrigerated voyaging, but as noted above Australian interest diminished during its great boom of the 1880s. New Zealand busted earlier—1879 in the South Island—and consequently embraced export rescue earlier. New Zealand in 1882, when its great refrigerated exporting career began, was not a natural mutton supplier for Britain. It had plenty of sheep, but they were the wrong kind. British mass consumers did not like the gamey taste of New Zealand's dominant merino. So the merinos were quickly

replaced with meatier crossbreeds—only one-third of New Zealand's flock was merino by 1892. The story was similar with butter, which was mostly farm or store-made, and which British consumers complained had a 'fishy taste'. So a vast number of dairy factories sprang up producing Briton-friendly and reliable full-cream butter and cheddar cheese. Freezing works, or meat-packing plants—43 by 1922—did the same job for sheep-meat. Sheep were bred smaller and killed earlier to accommodate the London preference for smaller roasts, and spring lamb arrived in Britain's spring, not New Zealand's.

New Zealand meat and dairy exporting to Britain was a classic re-colonial industry. It wove a grand cross-class, transnational alliance. Small and medium farmers dominated production, and were involved in processing through the cooperative ownership of many dairy factories. They used their substantial political leverage to obtain massive state help: credit, agricultural education and research organizations, and ultimately national producer boards to coordinate marketing. There was still room for big business and for British business. Large British shippers, such as P&O and Shaw Savill and meat-packers like Borthwick and Vestey, were intimately involved. Most New Zealand meat sold at Smithfield, London, while twenty-seven firms in Tooley Street, south of the river, stored and distributed New Zealand butter and cheese. By 1939, 127 large refrigerated steamers linked the two ends of the system.[92]

The biggest teething problem of all facing the export of frozen meat was that it had no pre-existing market. In 1880, most Britons could not afford prime cuts of butcher's meat such as lamb roasts, and those who could were intensely suspicious of long-dead meat from far away. New Zealand pioneered a shift in British attitudes and remained dominant in the frozen lamb market. 'Too much stress cannot be placed on the part which New Zealand lamb has played in attracting a better class of customers; frozen meat in general has been popularized extensively by this means.'[93] One anecdote of genteel conversion has survived. In the early 1880s, the son of Canterbury sheep-lord John Grigg entertained his college rowing eight to lunch at Cambridge University. Young Grigg's father had just shipped him some experimental frozen lamb, and it was served to the unsuspecting rowers. ' "You will think me damned greedy, Grigg, but the lamb is so good I must ask for a third helping." I was delighted, and then I told them the lamb was from New Zealand much to their surprise.'[94] Oxbridge rowers were not enough of a market, and New Zealand meat

exporters benefited more from, and helped create, a huge surge in British mass meat-eating. There was a fivefold increase in British meat imports, 1870–1900, and domestic production held up. There were similar but somewhat later increases in the consumption of butter and cheese. The lower middle class and the upper working class were shifting to prime roasts, and it was frozen meat imports, led by New Zealand lamb, that enabled them to do so. There were many factors involved in this shift, but one was New Zealand's ability to claim it was British, and be believed. It was not a matter of mistaking Canterbury, New Zealand, for Canterbury, Kent. 'British New Zealand Lamb—the best in the World', read advertisements in Britain, 'New Zealand Lamb—British to the Backbone'. Lamb carcasses wore rosettes stating: 'I'm British from New Zealand.'[95] No wonder a New Zealand politician claimed in 1930 that 'the Empire will become an economic unit like the forty-eight states of America'.[96] A half-century earlier, a prescient commentator had written: 'Virtually, the exportation of frozen meat makes the colony of New Zealand as much a province of England, as easy a source of supply for the London market, as Yorkshire or Devon.'[97]

Notes

1. *IHS: A*; Geoffrey Serle, *The Rush to Be Rich: A history of the colony of Victoria, 1883–1889*, Melbourne, 1971, 272–87; Susan Priestley, *The Victorians: Making their mark*, Sydney, 1984, 132, 136; David Day, *Claiming a Continent: A new history of Australia*, Sydney, 1996, 135; A. J. Christopher, *The British Empire at its Zenith*, London, 1988, 109; Michael Cannon, *The Landboomers*, Melbourne, 1966, 10.
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3. Serle, *The Rush to be Rich*, 47; Garry Witherspoon, 'The determinants of the pattern and pace of railway development in New South Wales, 1850–1914', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 25 (1979) 51–65.
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7. Phillip Ross May, *The West Coast Gold Rushes*, Christchurch, 1962, 480; Henry Gyles Turner, *A History of the Colony of Victoria: From its discovery to its absorption in the Commonwealth of Australia*, 2 vols., London, 1904, 259.

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17. R. V. Jackson, *Australian Economic Development in the 19th century*, Canberra, 1977, 63–4.
18. *AHS*, 80–1.
19. Priestley, *The Victorians*, 84.
20. *AHS*, 288.
21. Boehm, *Prosperity and Depression*, 143.
22. Geoffrey Blainey, *Black Kettle and Full Moon: Daily life in a vanished Australia*, Camberwell, Victoria, 2003, 227.
23. Kingston, *A History of New South Wales*, 81.
24. D. N. Jeans, *An Historical Geography of New South Wales*, Sydney, 1972, 304; Pinkstone, *Global Connections*, 43
25. Brian Fitzpatrick, *The British Empire in Australia: An economic history, 1834–1939*, Melbourne, 1949 (orig. 1941), 102.
26. Serle, *The Rush to Be Rich*, 81.
27. Jeans, *Historical Geography of New South Wales*, 183–4.
28. H. M. Boot, 'Government and the colonial economies', *Australian Economic History Review*, 38/1 (1998).
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31. Don Garden, *Victoria: A history*, Melbourne, 1984, 197–8.

32. Boehm, *Prosperity and Depression*, 249, 252; Serle, *The Rush to Be Rich*, 50, 271.
33. Turner, *A History of the Colony of Victoria*, ii, 292–3.
34. Serle, *The Rush to Be Rich*, 247.
35. Boehm, *Prosperity and Depression*, 160n, 167n.
36. Day, *Claiming a Continent*, 175.
37. Blainey, *A History of Victoria*, 141. Also see Boehm, *Prosperity and Depression*, 293, 303; C. R. Hickson and J. D. Turner, 'Free banking gone awry: The Australian banking crisis of 1893', *Financial History Review*, 9 (2002) 147–67.
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12

Boers, Britons, and the 'Black English'

Britain controlled the Cape Colony from 1806, but substantial British settlement did not begin until 1820. In that year, 4,000 British settlers joined some 40,000 white Afrikaners of Dutch, German, and French Huguenot descent. In the 1840s, Britain established its second South African colony, in Natal. The British abolished slavery between 1834 and 1838, and partly because of this about 12,000 Cape Dutch farmers, known as Boers, trekked north in the 1830s and 1840s and established their own little republics in the interior. These consolidated into the Transvaal and the Orange Free State by 1860 and, except for a brief period, 1877–82, remained independent until defeated in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902. All four European polities had subject African majorities, and until the 1880s also coexisted with independent African neighbours: Xhosa, Zulu, Pondo, Sotho, Pedi, Venda, and others. To complicate matters further there was a category of African and mixed-race groups allied to Europeans but with their own agendas, notably the Griqua, Tembu, and Mfengu.

Contrary to notions that the British settlement of 1820 energized the long-somnolent neo-Dutch, South African socio-economic growth was unimpressive until the 1850s. Indeed, the decennial doubling of a European population appears to have occurred only once in South African history—in the Transvaal in the 1890s. Since the Transvaal was Boer-controlled at the time, and the vast gold reefs of the Witwatersrand were an exceptional stimulus, one could argue that South Africa experienced no Anglo-booms at all, in our terms. South Africa would then rank as a non-explosive Anglo-owned newland, like Quebec or New Mexico, and we could turn with some relief from the resonant complexities of its history. South Africa was indeed something of a laggard when it came to explosive colonization. But

Map 6. Southern Africa, circa 1890.

if black African populations are included, decennial doubling or something close to it does seem to have occurred before the 1890s and outside the Transvaal. We can discern three South African booms or near-booms, circa 1855–65, 1872–82, and 1886–99. The first two occurred in the Cape Colony only; the third in the Cape, Natal, and the Transvaal.

The Forgotten Boom

Unlike most Anglo-booms, South African Booms Two and Three were in fact sparked by mineral discoveries—the first of diamonds at Kimberley

around 1872, the second of gold at the Rand in 1886. These two booms are well recognized in South African historiography, and their commencement about 1872 is generally seen as the revolutionary watershed that 'wrenched South Africa out of her agricultural slough and hustled her into the modern world'.[1] Boom One, 1855–65, on the other hand, appears to be neglected. To the extent that it is recognized at all, it is attributed to wool exports.[2] It is true that Cape wool exports rose substantially in the boom period—from a mere 2,700 tons in 1850 to 5,500 in 1855, then to 11,000 in 1860 and 22,000 tons in 1875. But these figures were modest compared to Australia (100,000 tons in 1875), and, as we have seen, even in Australia wool exports could not power booms alone.[3] South Africa's first bust can be dated to either 1862 or 1865, and in neither case is explicable by a major decline in wool prices or volumes. It is presumably for this reason that the bust is said to have been 'triggered by the collapse of the Cape's wine exports'.[4] But these had been negligible since the 1830s, and there is something contradictory about a boom begun by the rise of wool exports and ended by the decline of wine exports. The bust looks much more like a classic collapse of investor confidence, and while there are some ambiguities, the boom had many of the markers of explosive colonization.

Until the 1850s, South Africa under the British survived economically much as it had under the Dutch. Exports, first of wine and then of wool, were tiny, and the main sources of overseas money were government expenditure and the servicing of visiting ships and troops. Imports were modest, but higher than exports, and fluctuated according to the size of the army stationed in the Cape. Unlike North America and Australasia, South Africa had no navigable rivers or major coastal indentations allowing access to the interior. But, in the 1850s, the advent of regular steamer services between the Cape and Britain, and coastal services between the East and West Cape, eased the access problem.[5] Representative government was introduced in the Cape Colony in 1854. There was a flurry of booster literature, 'often highly misleading'.[6] Goods and money flowed in. Imports climbed from £1.175 million in 1855 to £2.8 million in 1862. 'Twenty-three banks were founded in the Cape between 1850 and 1863.' 'Metropolitan capital entered South Africa in a torrent in the early 1860s.'[7] There are signs of urban mushrooming at Port Elizabeth though apparently not Cape Town—growth tended towards the Eastern Cape.[8] The new colonial government also began borrowing from London in the manner

born, and poured money into roads and harbour works—£120,000 per year for the former and over £400,000 in total for the latter—and there are other signs of a progress industry and boom-time farming. Oat production, for example, rocketed with the boom and fell with bust. Wheat and maize production doubled, 1852–65, and there were no exports of any of these products. Commercial hunting, especially for ivory in the interior, intensified to the point of local extinction.[9]

The imperial government poured in millions, mainly in the shape of increasing military expenditure. The eighth Cape Frontier War of 1850–3 cost London £3 million, and dealt the resilient and formidable Xhosa a major blow. The Xhosa 'frankly admit that though the white men had never before conquered them, they have been conquered in this war'.[10] The war ended as the boom began, but the new governor, George Grey, managed to keep the whole army at the Cape in peacetime despite London's urgent desire to reduce it, a feat he also managed in New Zealand. Then in 1857, the defeated Xhosa underwent a terrible self-immolation, killing their own cattle on the instructions of millennialist prophets. Some two-thirds of the 105,000 Xhosa in 'British Kaffraria' (the Ciskei) either died of starvation or emigrated to the Cape or the Transkei, and their lands became a site of boom-phase settlement. Between 1856 and 1865 the population of the Cape, black and white, more than doubled from roughly 267,000 to 566,000. European immigration rose sharply, but remained modest,[11] and most of the new people were black children and black immigrants from outside the Cape frontiers. The formal annexation of British Kaffraria in 1865 added about 80,000 people, but few of these were now local Xhosa, and most were black and white settlers from the Cape. The bust could be dated to 1862, when there was a terrible drought, but import statistics suggests some recovery to 1865. When it came, the bust was as sharp as any. In his recent economic history of South Africa, Charles Feinstein makes little of the boom, but he acknowledges the bust: the Cape experienced 'a serious depression' between 1866 and 1872.[12] Contemporaries felt that 'the whole of South Africa was in a state of bankruptcy'.[13]

All this looks very like a classic Anglo boom and bust, which needs to be put back into South African history. Yet it remains true that the boom had its peculiarities. The shifts in the statistics are not as sharp as in most other cases, and there was a paucity of Anglos, discussed below. There was also the unusual coexistence of a surge of (wool) exports with the more general boom. But wool exports were still 're-colonially' transformed

after the bust of 1865 through the introduction of industrial wool-washing. South African wool was not normally washed on the farm, due to the lack of suitable water supplies. For this and other reasons, it was widely seen as inferior in quality to Australasian wool.[14] After 1865, however, Eastern Cape wool was increasingly washed *en masse*, using steam power, at Uitenhage, near Port Elizabeth. 'By 1875 10 of the 12 Uitenhage woolwashes used steam power and the thriving industry employed 800 people.'[15] The earlier emergence of large-scale staple exports without the usual prerequisites may have been caused by burgeoning British demand in the 1850s, as woollens manufacture converted fully to steam power and by a decline in the growth of Australian wool production from 1851, when the goldfields and the progress industry delivered an alternative market for sheep and diverted labour and capital. Another factor might have been the boom-time increase in ships bearing imports to the Cape and seeking a return cargo. Despite increasing wool production, ships were still leaving 'half empty' in the 1850s and 1860s.[16] Half may be an exaggeration. In 1862, 1,140 ships totalling 386,000 tons visited the Cape and Natal, allegedly 'reflecting the rapid growth of the pastoral industry'.[17] But that year's wool exports of about 12,000 tons would scarcely have half-loaded a tenth of them. As in other settlement booms, the Cape's growth was driven more by imports than exports.

Boers and Britons

South Africa's second boom, 1872–82, was also restricted to the Cape Colony and shared other characteristics of the first, namely public works, black and white settlement on the eastern frontier, and high military expenditure—almost £2 million in 1879 alone.[18] The new ingredients were massive rail spending and the diamonds of Kimberley. Early diamond finds were dismissed as ostrich crop stones, but from 1870 the trickle of diamonds from the Kimberley region could no longer be blamed on regurgitating ostriches.[19] The area was claimed by the Orange Free State, but was swiftly seized by the British. A rush brought in 20,000 whites and 30,000 blacks as early as 1871, but seventy-four companies soon dominated. Trade in shares joined diamond production as the leading activity. Kimberley featured that familiar 'unexampled speculation' and 'speculative mania'.[20] Its population fluctuated, but may have peaked as

high as 70,000 permanent and temporary inhabitants. Supplying the town and mining region by ox wagon was a £2.5 million a year business—a sum that exceeded diamond exports until 1878. Bread and 'Cape Smoke' brandy, 'a popular necessity on the fields', were four times the Cape Town price. Crime was three times the Cape Town rate.[21] Unlike gold, demand for diamonds was not unlimited, and the mining companies repeatedly tripped themselves up by glutting the market until Cecil Rhodes achieved a near-monopoly in the 1880s.

A Cape-wide boom began in 1872. The population of the Cape as a whole increased 75 per cent, 1868–80, but would have at least doubled in the Eastern Cape and multiplied around Kimberley.[22] Net British immigration totalled about 25,000 between 1873 and 1883—high for South Africa—but again, most of the new people were black immigrants, now from as far away as Mozambique. Imports rocketed from £2.5 million in 1871 to £9.3 million in 1882. Diamonds were not the only stimulus. The Cape Colony moved from representative to fully responsible government in 1872, and upped its 'responsible' spending to match. Between 1873 and 1883, £1.8 million was spent on harbor works and £14 million was spent on rail by 1886. Diamond exports ran at between £1 million and £3 million a year in the 1870s, and the Cape government's revenue increased fivefold to £3.5 million between 1870 and 1882.[23] The stimuli of rail and diamonds were largely separate; a line did not reach Kimberley until 1885. The bust hit Kimberley in 1881 and 'bankrupted more than half the mining companies'.[24] It became general in 1882, causing another 3,000 bankruptcies, 1883–6 and an alleged 'mania for suicide'.[25] Cape imports dived to £3.7 million in 1886; the advances of the largest bank fell from £6 million to £1.9 million, 1881–6. The bust was also reflected in the decline of letters posted and of rail-passenger traffic.[26]

Boom One had dealt a crippling blow to the Xhosa, who had previously resisted European settlement quite successfully for a century, as the sheer number of wars against them (nine) suggests. Now Boom Two put paid to the autonomy of other powerful African peoples. Neither the Boers nor the British settlers of the Cape and Natal were capable of doing this themselves. The Cape Colony's 'Gun War' against the Sotho of 1880 failed at a cost of £3 million, and the Transvaal Boers were defeated by the Venda in 1867 and the Pedi in 1876. Partly for this reason, there was little immediate resistance when the British annexed the Transvaal in 1877. African success stemmed partly from the acquisition of guns through

seasonal work at the Kimberley mines and elsewhere in the Cape. From the mid-1870s, however, working conditions at the diamond mines worsened. There was less tribal control, more company control, and less payment in guns. In 1878, the large British army in South Africa grew even larger as it prepared to crush the Zulu kingdom, which blocked the expansion of Natal. The Zulus showed at Isandhlwana that they were a match for the British in courage and skill, but they were not a match in the capacity to sustain a long war. The British broke up the Zulu kingdom and also defeated the Pedi and the last of the independent Xhosa in 1877–9, as well as taking over nominal control of the Sotho from the Cape Colony after 1880. It was the application of massive metropolitan resources combined with explosive settlement that defeated these resilient African groups. The Boers then rebelled successfully against the British in 1881 and restored their independence. They could win defensive victories against Britons, but not sustained offensive victories against strong black groups.[27]

Boom Three, 1886–99, was based in the Transvaal and its Rand goldmines, South Africa's 'Golden West'. But the boom extended to the Cape and Natal as well. The Rand mines were vast, but consisted of a deep reef of quartz containing tiny ratios of gold requiring much machinery and capital to extract. The usual rush phase of individual miners and small locally financed mining companies were therefore very brief. The latter were mostly killed off by a panic in 1889–90, when a layer of pyrite was struck. But deeper mining and cyanide-processing soon expanded production afresh.[28] Between 1886 and 1892, the Rand was supplied from the Transvaal and Natal by ox wagon. The rail line from Cape Town arrived in 1892, that from Durban in 1895. A third line, from Delagoa Bay in Portuguese Mozambique, arrived in 1894. These ports competed desperately to complete their railways and plug into the Rand. Natal alone spent £6 million on this by 1896.[29] Supplying imports to the Rand, managing the reverse flow of gold, plus the rail-making itself and the growth spinning off all three, meant something close to booms in the Cape Colony and Natal. The latter doubled in population between 1890 and 1904 (from 543,000 to 1.1 million), and the Cape came quite close to doing so too (from 1.3 to 2.4 million). Cape Town grew from 79,000 to 170,000 in the same period, and Durban more than tripled in size to 64,000. The Transvaal's statistics are affected by the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Boer War in 1899, but it probably grew even faster in the preceding thirteen years, doubling to over 1 million.[30] Certainly Johannesburg mushroomed,

growing from virtually nothing in 1886 to a city of over 100,000 in 1896, complete with electricity and motorcars.[31] The Transvaal boom drew in about 100,000 white 'Uitlanders', mainly Anglo, but it drew in far more black emigrants and was run by the non-Anglo Boer republican government.

From the 1890s to the present, British sources have claimed that the Rand boom to 1899 was badly managed by the Transvaal Boers, hence the need for the Jameson Raid of 1895 and the conquest of the Boer states in 1899–1902. The Transvaal lacked votes for Anglos, growth-friendly British laws, and a progressive government encouraging to British investment, and was instead managed by the Biblical patriarch President Paul Kruger and his feudatories. 'The portrayal of Kruger as antediluvian may have become more muted in recent times, but the supposed inability of the ZAR [Transvaal] administration to address adequately the demands of a modern mining economy and a society composed largely of immigrants remains largely intact.'[32] Kruger may have believed that the world was flat, but it appears that he nevertheless presided over a highly successful boom. By 1899, the Transvaal was the world's leading gold producer and had attracted £75 million of foreign investment. The government 'vigorously encouraged the mining activities'.[33] Its revenue rose from an average of £188,000 in 1883–90 to £4.2 million in 1895, and it borrowed at least £4.5 million as well.[34] It made sure that gold was not the only game in town. Anglo banks were welcomed—twenty-four branches by 1888—and an 'Afrikaner Bank' was established in 1891.[35] The government loaned money to white farmers to develop agriculture, spent £155,000 on new buildings for itself at Pretoria, and allied with private companies to control the crucial dynamite industry and the Delagoa Bay railway. Private construction also boomed. Brick-making became a major industry. In 1895 alone, 2,538 buildings were constructed in Johannesburg.[36] Even before rail, supplying the Rand was a vast enterprise, an ox-wagon-based eo-technic industry even larger than the supply of Kimberley before 1885. Transport services alone were valued at £2.75 million in 1889, not counting the supplies carried.[37]

Naturally, the huge influx of blacks and whites into the Transvaal caused tensions. The Boers were determined to retain political control from the outset, and therefore denied the Uitlanders voting rights. This irritated the latter, most of whom were British, but not to the point where many

sought British intervention. Governor Hercules Robinson of the Cape believed that 90 per cent of Uitlanders preferred a republic to British rule because Britain was soft on the blacks.[38] A *Times* correspondent reported that 'they [the Uitlanders] none of them want to see the British flag hoisted here'.[39] Kruger hardly cramped their style in Johannesburg, where the only thing Biblical was ritual comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah. 'Monte Carlo superimposed on Sodom and Gomorrah.' 'A great, fiendish, hell of a city which for glitter and gold, and wickedness . . . beat creation.'[40] The Transvaal boom needed a boom mentality, and it seems that it was provided by Anglos and blacks, not by Boers. There was the usual 'speculative mania' in mining shares and anything else available. 'Folly and fraud reigned supreme . . . millions of money have been literally thrown away.'[41] Economic control would probably have satisfied the British government. Like the white immigrants, most of the money and goods that poured into the Rand were British. But with the completion of the Delagoa Bay railway, the Transvaal became less dependent on Britain. In 1893, Britain and its colonies supplied 80% of its imports, while Germany, in second place, supplied 14%. By 1897 the figures were 64% and 32%. The Transvaal government's first major loan, in 1892, came from Britain; the second, in 1899, came from continental Europe.[42] These were worrying trends for the likes of the Cape's new governor, 'British race patriot' Alfred Milner. It was the success of the Transvaal economy, not its failure, which concerned Milner and his ilk. A British minister feared that the Transvaal would grow 'into a United States of South Africa'.[43] This, combined with the trend towards less dependence on Britain, determined Milner and other key decision-makers on war.

The Second Anglo-Boer or South African War, 1899–1902, began with humiliating defeats for the British. But vast imperial resources—447,000 troops, no less—with the active help of some black African groups, eventually crushed the Boers.[44] The British then poured in money and migrants to get the Rand working again, swamp the Boers, and turn (white) South Africa into a genuine neo-Britain. 'We cannot assimilate the Boers at present if at all', stated a British newspaper, 'if we cannot assimilate them we must swamp them.'[45] Milner notoriously 'wanted a massive infusion of English-speakers'.[46] At first sight, he got them. At last, large numbers of European immigrants flowed into South Africa—about 360,000 between 1900 and 1909, most of them British. British money and goods also flowed in between 1902 and 1904, and a fourth boom seemed

under way. But it was aborted by a bust in 1904, followed by recession to 1910. The problems with the migrants were that they included few women, and that they did not stay. Some 300,000 quickly flowed out again in 1904–8.[47] 'That the introduction of British women was indispensable to demographic anglicisation was self-evident' to Milner. They were to marry Anglo males and outbreed the Boers. But despite Milner's efforts and those of voluntary agencies, only 2,000 women were assisted out to the Transvaal, as against the 60,000 believed to be required.[48] It might seem that Anglos were reluctant to stay in a particular time and place—the post-war Transvaal. But the hesitations of Anglo migrants applied to South Africa as a whole, and were an old story. The number of overseas-born in the Cape Colony in 1891 was only 51,000. Anglo *settlers*, as against sojourners, may have numbered around 100,000 1891–1910, and inflows remained small thereafter. In 1926, only one-third of South African whites were of British or Irish descent.[49] Total Anglo *net* migration to South Africa was dwarfed by that to New Zealand, let alone Australia or Canada. The fact was that 'Britons showed little interest in emigration to South Africa.'[50] One could argue that dislike of blacks, or dislike of the discrimination against blacks, were factors. But Anglos did not like migrating to Quebec or New Mexico either, where other Europeans were in the majority. Anglos simply did not emigrate to be a minority. This underlines the enduring importance of the settler transition, which was deficient in South Africa.

The 'Black English'

It was blacks, not Boers or Britons, who supplied the muscle and energy behind the South African booms. From the white perspective, the problem was that they did not do it in the way they were supposed to. What whites wanted from blacks was labour under unreasonable conditions—tight control to the point of semi-slavery, and wages so low they were sometimes only a tenth of those earned by white workers. Blacks were naturally reluctant to accept this, leading to a white mythology of black indolence. Blacks could be forced to work on white terms through restrictive labour laws and the absence of alternatives, such as land sufficient to subsist. Such circumstances were consistently achieved with the Bantustans of the twentieth century.[51] In the nineteenth century,

the situation was more varied. Landless labourers, domestic servants, and tenants holding white farmland for rent or labour services, were tightly controlled and poorly rewarded. But Africans who owned a decent patch of their own land or had secure tenure, as well as tribally organized seasonal migrant workers, had more opportunities. Historian Colin Bundy has shown that they took them. From the 1860s to the 1880s, some blacks 'responded more effectively to economic change than white landowners'.[52] Bundy describes such Africans as 'peasants', which is somewhat deceptive. They farmed for the market, hired themselves out as labourers, and engaged in entrepreneurial activities, especially ox-wagon transport. But his evidence for their active, independent, and successful engagement in a changing South African economy is strong. His 'rise of the South African peasantry' corresponds closely with our Booms One and Two, 1850s–80s.

The leading edge of African participation in these booms was a group known as the Mfengu or Fingo. The Mfengu are thought to have come from Natal in the 1820s, fleeing tribal wars and to have become client-allies of the Xhosa. Around 1835, they were invited to transfer their allegiance to the British. They did so, and were given land on the Eastern Cape frontier. Subsequently, they fought the Xhosa as allies of the British in the last three Cape Frontier Wars, and gained land each time. Some historians now suggest that the Mfengu were actually Xhosa who had chosen to collaborate,[53] and there are some indications that being Mfengu was as much a strategy as an ethnicity. One source refers to a Xhosa chief who 'lived as a Fingo for some 20 years'.[54] Their rate of population growth, from the original 16,000 in 1835 to 230,000 in 1891, also supports this view—black immigrants from outside the Cape must have passed as Mfengu.[55] What Bundy and other South African historians have failed fully to realize is the crucial role of boom conditions of 1855–65 and 1870–82 in their success.

'It was the Mfengu', writes Bundy, 'who set the briskest pace in the practice of peasant agriculture.'[56] They grew some merino wool for export, but not in significant quantities during Boom One, and three other boom-time activities were more important. First, they supplied food and work animals to the boom-time market—to new settlers, black and white, to growing towns, and to camps of soldiers and road workers. During Boom Two, massive rail construction in the Cape provided another huge market. Second, the Mfengu were key providers of transport, of the ox

wagons that dominated South African freight before the mass advent of rail in the 1880s. A wagon and team of up to eighteen oxen represented an investment of £100 and the Mfengu owned many hundreds of them. 'Every Native who becomes civilized takes a wagon.'[57] Black 'transport drivers' dominated the supply of the Kimberley diamond fields until 1885, when rail arrived, and of the Rand until 1892. As we have seen, ox-carting was no quaint marginal activity but a huge industry, similar to pre-rail supply of Far Western goldfields in the United States in the 1850s and 1860s, and the Mfengu were Wells Fargo. Thirdly, the Mfengu provided labour, but only in strategic boom-time industries where wages were relatively high and conditions relatively good. For example, they dominated the loading and unloading of freight at Port Elizabeth.[58] The Mfengu were also leading participants in the mass resettlement of the Ciskei and the Transkei during Booms One and Two—black frontiersmen. The ninth and last Cape Frontier War of 1877–8 looks more like a case of Britain assisting Mfengu colonization than the inverse. The Mfengu were, noted contemporaries, 'a people always on the move', 'experienced colonizers', and 'very grasping'—so grasping, indeed, that they were sometimes known as the 'black English'.[59] Like the 'poor whites' of the American South, the Mfengu were not poor during booms.

The Mfengu, it seems, were a case of black explosive colonizers, staffing and supplying the progress industry as well as settling themselves. Their numbers increased fourteen fold, 1835–91, an explosive rate of growth, and their wealth, at first, grew to match. They were joined by many other black South Africans, from both inside and outside the boundaries of the Cape Colony. 'In many regions there was a short-lived but very significant development of successful African peasant farming, stimulated by rising demand from the white economy.'[60] During Boom Two, the Griqua had a thriving trade in cattle and horses. One Griqua farmer alone had a stud of 400 horses.[61] The Sotho were nominally subjects of the Cape between 1871 and 1884 but were in fact autonomous. They are said to have made £500,000 a year in the early 1870s supplying the Kimberley diamond mines.[62] The Tswana also participated in this trade, as did Transvaal blacks, who were later very active in supplying the Rand in the 1890s.[63] The Pedi supplied over half of Kimberley's black workers in 1873–5. This built on a trend originating in Boom One, when 'a pattern developed of Pedi males, generally under the direction of their headmen, traveling hundreds of miles to labor on the farms and in the

towns of the Cape Colony'. Cape Africans preferred well-paid work on rail construction to the diamond mines.[64] All these groups were consumers as well as producers and workers, and the so-called 'Kaffir trade' was the main business of merchants in places such as Queenstown in the Eastern Cape. 'Although commerce with the local White farmers and the settler hinterland was important to Queenstown, it could not compare with the African trade.'[65] Natal blacks, sometimes mission educated, also 'entered wholeheartedly into Natal's new capitalist economy', and supplied the Cape and Kimberley with more transport, workers and goods—they were 'the Yankee peddlers of south-east Africa'. 'Like Kansas farmers—or, for that matter, like the White settlers of Natal—African Christians acquired a boom mentality.'[66]

In the early 1870s, black migrant workers at Kimberley were tribally organized, and paid partly in guns. 'None were as yet fully proletarianized.'[67] From about 1876, a well-known process of consolidation and increasing control of black workers took place. By the 1880s, tribal control of black workers was diminishing; closed compounds rather like prison camps for workers were becoming the norm; wages were dropping and proletarianization was in full swing. A similar process took place on the Rand from about 1895, with black workers recruited by white agencies rather than tribal chiefs. This was part of a wider turning of the tide against black 'peasants' as well as workers, which Bundy dates to 1877–81 and associates with drought and war. Sotho, Pedi, Zulu, and Xhosa all clashed with the British in this period. The average number of cattle owned by Natal blacks in 1905 was one-third of the 1875 level.[68] I would add the bust of 1882 to the tide-turning factors. The point here is that booms and busts, including the neglected first boom of 1855–65, should be added to the remarkable story of the rise and fall of black South African economic agency in the nineteenth century. If white hegemony had crumpled in the 1890s rather than the 1990s, and South Africa had fully utilized its human resources, then it might indeed have faced an American-sized future.

The Boers lost their war but won the peace, rather like Southern whites after the American Civil War. Unable to obtain Britons, and unwilling to embrace black citizens, the British authorities resorted to reconciling with their defeated enemies. Whites, Boers included, were allowed to reassert their ascendancy in the Transvaal. As Milner put in his inimitable way: 'You have only to sacrifice "the nigger" absolutely and the game is easy.'[69] As early as 1903, a Boer leader noted with satisfaction that: 'the Kaffirs

are gradually beginning to see that . . . the two white races are standing together'.[70] Self-government was restored to Transvaal and Orange Free State whites by 1907, the four colonies of South Africa were united in 1910, and all electorates except that of Natal were dominated by Afrikaners. British Natal did have two registered black voters in 1903, but 'both of them were believed to be dead'.[71] The last vestige of real parliamentary representation for blacks passed away in 1936. Most Boers accepted British rule on grounds of the need for white solidarity, and some Afrikaners even came to identify with the British. British-South African recolonization consolidated economically, and proved resilient. In 1913, 88 per cent of South African exports went to Britain.[72] With massive state help, white farmers developed a food exporting industry, beginning with refrigerated fruit in the 1890s. Over 70 per cent of the food went to Britain in the 1930s, along with most South African gold, and Britain still took the majority of these products in 1960. Britain provided 91 per cent of South Africa's overseas investment in 1913, and still provided 62 per cent in 1956. 'South Africa remained surprisingly dependent on Britain as a customer and supplier in 1960.'[73]

Economic recolonization was not matched by the cultural variety however. 'The King's Afrikaners', cases of Afrikaners identifying with the British even to the point of voluntarily fighting for them in the two world wars, are fascinating and have received recent attention.[74] But there were also cases of reverse assimilation—Anglos identifying with the Afrikaners, and Afrikaner assertions of their own identity and language appear to have outweighed pro-Britonism. Half the Afrikaner population opposed participation in World War I, and over 11,000 joined a rebellion.[75] White South African enlistment for World War II was low compared to Australasia. Half of those who enlisted are said to have been Afrikaners, but the evidence for this is not convincing. In any case, this was below their share of the white population; some had economic reasons to enlist; and others were attracted by an intensive Afrikaner-oriented recruiting campaign which targeted the Boer military heritage rather than loyalty to Britain.[76] 'From 1939 onwards, one senses a growing feeling among "British" South Africans of being a cultural minority struggling to find a home in an "Afrikanerized" South Africa.'[77] Afrikaner-dominated governments attempted economic decolonization in the early 1930s and late 1940s. They failed, but succeeded from 1960, when South African left the Commonwealth.

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13
Last Best Wests

In the late 1820s, the British settlement colony of Western Australia was founded with settlements at Albany (1826) and Perth (1829). The latter, on the Swan River, was the main settlement and had a moment of fame in Britain—'Swan River Mania'—before lapsing into 'virtual stagnation' in the 1830s.[1] Growth remained very slow, and in desperation the settlers volunteered to host convicts in 1850. Despite the inflow of 10,000 convicts and £1 million of British government money between that year and 1868, the colony still failed to boom. Like its sister laggard, British Columbia, it was isolated from the action on the other side of its continent, and had to watch while the other six colonies of Australasia boomed. An attempt at local rail-making in 1874 and the arrival of telegraph in 1877 failed to trigger anything, though Perth (population 5,000) boasted 'a certain sleepy charm'. By 1881 the fifty-year-old colony of Western Australia had a population of only 29,000.[2] Victoria, by contrast, acquired over 1 million people in its first half-century, New Zealand half a million. Over the next thirty years, however, Western Australia joined the boom–bust party, its population increasing almost tenfold to 282,000 by 1911, while Perth awoke into a settler city of 107,000 people. Western Australian historiography appears to have little doubt over the identity of its Handsome Prince: gold. 'Gold transformed the colony economically and socially.'[3] Goldfields were discovered from 1886, and by 1901 Western Australia was emitting over 50 tons of gold a year, combining with the Witwatersrand to make the British Empire easily the world's leading gold producer. It eventually also became a major wheat exporter, but was not even self-sufficient in wheat until 1906.[4]

As with California, Victoria, New Zealand, and Queensland, there is reason to suspect that a forgotten boom caused the gold rush, not vice versa. The 1886 rush was minor, distant from Perth, and brief. 'The

remote Kimberley gold field in north-west Australia was rushed in 1886 and was in decline by 1887.'[5] The main fields, around Kalgoorlie 350 miles inland of Perth, came on stream from 1892, and Western Australian gold production was insignificant until then. Yet the colony's population had already doubled in the ten years prior to 1892, imports and the number of bank branches had tripled, while public debt and public expenditure had increased more than fourfold.[6] Cattle (but not sheep) numbers rocketed in the 1880s, a common sign of a boom.[7] Perth was not linked to the east by rail until 1917, but a spurt of local rail-making, from 1883, may have been a boom trigger. Spending eased off from 1887, restarting in 1890 with the belated advent of responsible government, thirty-five years after the rest of Australasia. The new government's first move, of course, was to borrow and spend an extra £1 million, but it was 'completely unprepared' for gold rushes. 'The colony entered the final decade of the century in a mood of optimism, yet a major goldfield had yet to materialize.'[8] Gold from the ground did supercharge the boom, but was helped by a massive inflow of paper gold from Britain—a public debt of £40 million by 1914, coupled with up to £70 million invested in real or alleged gold mining companies.[9] Still, gold-rush triggered or not, Western Australia had finally achieved a boom, It was a counter-cyclical boom, on a 'default frontier', and Victorians in particular abandoned their busted colony to share it.[10] 'While the other colonies suffered degrees of depression, Western Australia boomed.'[11] Australia now had its 'Last Best West', and it was not the only one.

Between the 1880s and the 1920s, the settler revolution boomed into the last viable frontiers of the Anglo newlands, from Western Australia to Oklahoma, Southern California to the Yukon. It also went beyond them, in two senses: beyond the Anglo-world, to Siberia, the Argentine pampas, and elsewhere, and beyond viability, into the marginal arid lands of the Great Plains of the United States, the Canadian Prairies, and central Australia. In these late cases of explosive colonization, the boom mentality reached boiling point, and colonizing crusaders honestly believed they could transform deserts and arctic wastes into promised lands flowing with milk and honey. The staggering thing is that, sometimes, they were right.

Map 7. Last Best Wests, circa 1900.

America's Last Best Wests

The Pacific Northwest

The American Pacific Northwest consists of Oregon, Washington, and sometimes Idaho, and was originally known as the Oregon Country. Its American settlement began in the 1840s. Settlers, many in family groups, covered a staggering distance by wagon train from the American East and Old West and then, with the help of a federal government in bellicose mood, muscled aside British and Indian precursors. This foundation has intriguing analogies with other far-settlements of the period, in South Australia, New Zealand, and Utah. All had small-scale, long-range, particular Utopian visions, and myths of select stock. The Pacific Northwest experienced a brief economic upturn in the early 1850s, supplying food and timber to California, and a flurry of excitement in the 1860s with a minor gold rush to Idaho.[12] But for its first forty years it failed noticeably to boom. As we saw in the last chapter, Oregon was something of a 'laggard west'. Slow growth is sometimes attributed to virtuous Oregonian indifference to filthy lucre, but the absence of markets after California became self-sustaining was also a factor. The northern offshoot of Oregon, the area inland of Puget Sound that became Washington State, also grew slowly, despite few claims to outstanding virtue. 'As late as 1880' the little lumber towns of Seattle and Tacoma 'were experiencing only very modest growth'.[13] The whole three-state region had a population of 280,000, about one-third that of Minnesota and not much over half that of New Zealand, in both of which settlement had also begun in the 1840s. Suddenly, around 1880, the Far Northwest exploded, and by 1910 it had 2.14 million people, approaching an eightfold increase in thirty years. 'The region's economy careened along like a roller coaster, as it alternated between seasons of boom and bust.'[14]

The Pacific Northwest experienced two huge booms, centred on the 1880s and 1900s, and both are indelibly associated with rail-building. The first transcontinental in the region, the Northern Pacific, reached Tacoma on Puget Sound in 1883, and 'revolutionized Washington history'.[15] A branch later extended to Seattle, which received its own transcontinental line, the Great Northern, in 1893. 'By 1909 four transcontinental railroads traversed the state of Washington.'[16] Rail was not the whole story, however.

It was in 1877, six years before the advent of rail, that 'the first real surge of immigration began'.[17] The first boom settlers came by steamship from San Francisco to Portland and moved inland into Washington and eastern Oregon, where they generated the usual boom-time tragedy for even the most adaptable of indigenes. The Nez Perce Indians of the Wallowa area had peacefully coexisted with Europeans for two generations. During the late 1870s, 'white settlement east of the Cascades was increasing to the point where it touched off the Yakima and Nez Perce Wars'.[18] In 1877 a few hundred Nez Perce battled two thousand federal troops and volunteers, initially with amazing success.[19] Most were eventually forced to surrender, and their agony was repeated among Bannock and Yakima Indians around the same time. Yet again these groups, particularly the Nez Perce, had coped with decades of European trade and settlement before they were finally run down by explosive colonization.

What drew the settlers was not just the prospect of rail, but also a major settler transition. Efforts to promote the 'Oregon Country' had been going on since the late 1820s. But much of the Pacific Northwest was still seen as an unfortunate amalgam of desert and frozen waste—'the Great Columbia desert'.[20] From 1877, this image was transmuted into 'the Great Columbia Plain', 'the Great Northwest', or 'the Inland Empire'. One writer alone, Robert Strathorn, produced twelve booster books on the region between 1877 and 1890. Those he tempted into unsuccessful migration included his own father and brother. By 1911, one expert considered the Northwest's boosting 'the best colonization literature than I know of anywhere'.[21] Dream-makers, as well as rail-makers, boomed the Pacific Northwest, but it is true that many of the former worked for railroad companies. Rail magnate Jay Gould demanded that his boosters 'create a New Northwest of the imagination'.[22] As early as 1883, the Northern Pacific Railroad had distributed 2.5 million publications, advertised for settlers in 167 US newspapers and 25 Canadian, established a network of 831 agents in the British Isles and 124 in continental Europe, and sent a mobile exhibition in a rail car through 10 Eastern US states. It also built and ran railroads.[23]

The booster literature in this and other 'Last Best Wests' did reach new heights—or depths—of scale, professionalism, and sophistication. It touched the usual nerve-endings—giant vegetables, instant cities, self-raising livestock—and it 'located the West within a wider discourse of Utopian progress'.[24] It also developed new themes such as the danger

of missing the bus—'Uncle Sam's Farm is growing smaller every day.'[25] Between 1905 and 1911, a 'Bureau of Community Publicity' mounted seventy-five separate campaigns for various Pacific Northwestern towns. 'One is simply amazed at the vast amount of money, energy, patience, and persistence there is devoted to setting forth the resources, advantages, capabilities and wonders of this part of the continent.'[26] There was a new hint of self-awareness in the boosting as the old genre of emigration literature segued into modern advertising. 'Under our modern system of competition, natural advantages alone, do not speed the growth of towns. There must be men behind; men of faith, pluck, enterprise, integrity, and advertising knack.'[27]

Boosting and rail-building on this scale required massive injections of oldland money. Prior to about 1880, investment in the Pacific Northwest had been mainly local.[28] Oregon had only one state chartered bank in 1882. It had eighteen in 1886.[29] Smaller Seattle sprouted at least six banks in the same period; still-smaller Spokane, ten by 1893. The number of banks and much else was determined not by the city you had but by the city you hoped for. The usual cast of characters—newspapers, post offices, and mortgages—proliferated. By 1893 'Washington's mortgaged indebtedness per capita was the highest in the US'—at interest of up to 36 per cent.[30] Extraction ravened through coastal salmon stocks, first in the Columbia River in the 1880s boom, and then in Puget Sound in the 1900s boom. Again, an industry of long-standing (canning of coastal salmon had begun in 1866) went suicidally wild in boom time, although salmon canning offshore did revive with the advent of oil-fuelled refrigerated boats.[31] The Northwest's lumber industry was massive, accounting for half of all economic growth on one estimate, and is sometimes said to have focused on exports from the outset. But it seems the boom-time market was local. The region's overseas exports totalled around 350 million board feet a year in the early 1900s, while production was around 7 billion board feet. Production dipped sharply with the busts. Some timber may have gone by rail to other parts of the United States, but the pine forests of the Southeast, newly opened by rail, were the major suppliers at this time.[32]

Competitive urban boosting reached fresh heights. After watching their district grow from 3,000 to 18,000 people in the 1880s, the citizens of Bellingham Bay felt they were breathing down New York's neck. 'In ten years time there will be little difference between the two cities.'[33] Cities such as Seattle simply spent themselves into existence. Failure is an orphan,

while success has many fathers, and successful Seattle was no exception. One proud parent was 'Prince' Henry Villard, the 'Moses of the Northwest', a German journalist with an unusually comprehensive approach to booming coupled with a propensity to frequent busting. Villard's early dominance of both rail and steam shipping and access to both German and British capital may have helped spark the first Pacific Northwestern boom. A hero in Seattle, he was a villain in Tacoma. 'For high-handedness, audacity, fraud, and widespread injury to the people, the financial exploits of no other man, living or dead, can furnish a parallel to those of Villard.'[34] James J. Hill of the Great Northern Railroad was another putative father of Seattle, or 'Jimhillville', and city engineer R. H. Thomson was yet another.[35] Thomson found some of Seattle's hills inconvenient, so he flattened them in a series of 'regrades' that ultimately moved 50 million cubic yards of earth. The result was controversial, but it boosted business. 'In that exuberant era the very word "boom" was enough to fire the popular imagination, precipitate mass migration, and influence regional economies. And when booms ended, they were sorely missed.' One realtor in Villard-free Tacoma was getting sick of waiting for a boom in 1887. 'I have been dying by inches for the past twelve years here under this steady growth process. Steady growth in a new town means three generations before it comes to anything . . . and if we ever expect to do anything, we must make a spurt—in short, we must boom!'[36]

Naturally, the booms ended in busts, the first in 1893. The Northern Pacific Railroad went bankrupt for the second time, and 'panic toppled banks like scythed wheat', including seven of Spokane's ten. In the 'Inland Empire' around Spokane 'the economic downturn of 1893 led to the failure of most of the district newspapers'. Failed banks owned failed buildings. 'Foreclosures threw most of the major buildings in Spokane into the hands of lenders.' In the Northwest as elsewhere, the bust of 1893 was no petty downturn, but ruined thousands and 'scarred everyone who lived through it'. As in other parts of the United States and in Western Canada, the boom of the 1900s was arguably a double-header, with short but sharp busts in 1907 and 1913. Export Rescue after the bust of 1893 came mainly in the form of wheat. Oregon had gradually built up a substantial wheat trade before this, and was suddenly joined by Washington State after the bust of 1893. That state's harvest of 9 million bushels in 1890 became 26 million by 1900 and 37 million by 1910. That year, the equivalent of 24 million bushels of wheat was shipped out of the region. New varieties of wheat

suitable to the area, such as Turkey Red and Jones Fife, were developed in the bust-phase 1890s.[37]

Boom and bust in the 1900s stimulated a new set of staple exports. It was in this decade, not earlier, that the Northwest became a big lumber exporter. After the bust of 1907 a 'new wave' of lumbering began, using the little engines known as 'steam donkeys' to access trees that had hitherto been inaccessible.[38] From 1909, multiple trunk railroads and their greater capacity for bulk transport facilitated the distribution of Pacific Northwestern timber overland to the rest of the United States.[39] The Panama Canal, opened in 1914, did not become fully operational until 1920 and this combined with a near-halving of steamship rates from 1921 to give Pacific Northwest lumber an all-water route to the oldlands of Britain and the US Northeast. In 1926, the Pacific Northwest took the lead from the South as America's leading long-range timber exporter.[40] The region also joined Southern California as a fruit frontier. In 1895, Washington State produced only 1.2 per cent of US apples; by 1914 it produced 15 per cent, adding pears to its export repertoire in the 1920s when a glut in apple production occurred. Iced rail cars were one key innovation, but railing apples long-range required heating in winter, and from 1914 apples were increasingly shipped to the Northeast via the Panama Canal. Like New Zealand dairy farmers, producers organized apple cooperatives to assemble, distribute and market their wares and the analogy extended to 'virtual freshness'. The apples were eaten when they were months old, 'but Washington's producers did not want to be known for stored apples. Their advertising emphasized size, color, quality and crisp freshness.'[41]

Behind these export-rescues lay two early-twentieth-century developments in mass transfer that revolutionized the functional geography, not only of the Pacific Northwest, but of the whole west coast of North America. One was the consolidation of trunk rail from a patchwork of routes into a system—a system with the capacity to transfer bulky or perishable goods across the continent. This stemmed partly from the replacement of iron rails by steel. Steel rails comprised 30 per cent of US rails in 1880; 80 per cent in 1890.[42] Another factor was a great re-colonial reshuffle in rail transport after the bust of 1893. Further technical innovation took place, adding airbrakes, doubling engine power, and tripling or even quintupling the freight capacity of a railcar. Trains of twenty 10-ton cars became trains of fifty 40-ton cars. This combined with cut-throat competition, followed by consolidation and cartel arrangements, to reduce freight costs

by two-thirds, and greatly improve speed and reliability, 1870–1910. 'The shakeout of the 1890s depression had done wonders for a "system" that fell far short of being a system.'[43] The second great transport development was the opening of the Panama Canal, which as noted above did not take full effect until 1921. Suddenly, the ocean distance between the Far West and New York shrank by three-quarters. By 1929, 31 million tons of cargo a year passed through the Canal.[44] Neither the Canal nor the newly consolidated rail system mattered that much for the transfer of people, valuables, and information—these had flowed easily across North America well before 1893. But they did matter for the transfer of bulky goods such as timber, and perishable goods such as fruit, which could now dismiss distance.

Aided by this elision of space, the Pacific Northwest's export rescues seem to have amounted to a full recolonization of the region by the Northeast. Multiple trunk rail systems, plus great steamships and the Panama Canal, created not one but two virtual bridges. Wheat, lumber, and fruit flowed one way, and even large capital goods could flow the other. Pacific Northwestern rail-wagon factories became 'practically only repair shops', the percentage of workers in manufacturing actually dropped, while the lumber industry was 'increasingly under outside control'.[45] 'The dominance of extractive industries . . . has led many western and US historians to view the region merely as an "economic colony".'[46] The Pacific Northwest was an 'extreme case of economic dependence'.[47] Yet locally, when times were good, 'there was little apparent hostility to eastern exploitation of our natural resources'.[48] Washington State may have been a province of New York, as New Zealand was a far-flung province of London, but in neither case, despite a few dissenting voices, did the locals seem to mind.

California's Second Coming

As late as 1879, the old Spanish settlement of Los Angeles was 'still a mere village, mostly Mexican . . . and the country round was practically a desert'.[49] The population of the whole of California was still only equal to that of Victoria, at 860,000 people, and in 1870 only 5.5 per cent of these lived in southern California.[50] The Los Angeles region had prospered briefly through cattle ranching for the northern California boom/rush market, but drought in 1862–4 damaged this business. Early boosters attempted to join the boom of 1865–73, and Los Angeles County did double in

population in the 1870s, but only to 33,000 people. From the 1880s, however, California experienced its second coming, led by Los Angeles rather than San Francisco. By 1930, Southern California had experienced three great rounds of boom, bust, and export rescue, or colonization and recolonization, centred on the 1880s, 1900s, and 1920s, and had drawn permanently ahead of its northern rival. Whatever the case with the first, it was not gold that made this second, greater, California. Southern California's natural endowment was poor without human help—irrigation to turn desert farms and the twentieth-century rise of the automobile to provide markets for the oilfields. Los Angeles was the ultimate booster city, a producer of dreams woven from dreams, but huge and real for all that.

Los Angeles had two squabbling corporate parents: the South Pacific Railroad and its own entrepreneurs, acting in unison as the Chamber of Commerce and the local government. The first Chamber was established in 1873 to counteract the bust of that year, but it expired in 1877. Before dying, the Chamber gave the Southern Pacific Railroad a $610,000 bribe to locate the terminus of a branch line in Los Angeles. It duly arrived in 1876, followed by trunk lines in the 1880s. San Diego, with the only decent natural harbour south of San Francisco, was the obvious terminus for rail, but the Southern Pacific did not want maritime competition on its routes—the logic of capitalism was not always the logic of efficiency. Rail was not in itself enough to trigger the first Southern California boom, which began about 1880. The Southern Pacific arrived too early. Its first competitor, the Santa Fe, arrived too late, in 1885. By that year, the population of Los Angeles County had already more than doubled since 1880.[51] Federal spending of three-quarters of a million dollars on a makeshift harbour on the coast 20 miles from Los Angeles came earlier.[52] Rail-making was important, employing 18.5 per cent of the workforce, but so was boosting, which surged from about 1880.[53] As we will soon see, Southern California was the place 'where boosterism became almost a second religion'—one could arguably delete the 'almost'.[54] Immigrants, speculators and visitors—three highly interchangeable categories—poured in, and not a lot of anything poured out. 'As would long be the case, incoming passenger trains were more important that outgoing freights.'[55] Most of the 214,000 people who came to California in the 1880s were aiming at Los Angeles and the surrounding region.[56] In 1886, a local noted that 'the growth and development of Los Angeles has been so recent and rapid that the citizens . . . have their hands full attending to the business

and other wants of the thousands from the East who flocked to their favored land'. The region's most important export was probably letters back east, which increased tenfold between 1880 and 1887, and joined the formal booster literature in sucking in people and money. By 1887 Los Angeles had twenty-seven banks, and spending on real estate had reached $96 million.[57] The town's population grew from 11,000 to 50,000 during the 1880s, and that of the ten southernmost California counties, including LA, from 76,000 to 313,000. The figures at the peak of the boom, in 1887, were higher still.

Los Angeles busted in 1888; its population fell over a third in the next two years, as did that of the surrounding counties.[58] 'Southern Californian banks either closed their doors or fell like dominoes.'[59] Kern County lost 62 per cent of its school children.[60] Growth in the ten southern counties plunged from 311 per cent in the 1880s to 22 per cent in the 1890s, though Los Angeles itself still managed to double. About 1898, a second great boom took off, and 700,000 people entered California in the 1900s decade, most heading south.[61] Public works employed a lot of them. Between 1909 and 1912 the number of municipal employees in Los Angeles increased sevenfold.[62] William Mulholland, Superintendent of Waterworks, built his famous 240-mile aqueduct to the Owens Valley, 1902–13.[63] Los Angeles spent $3 million a year on its urban transport infrastructure, and a lot more, from 1899, on developing a decent harbour. Rail building around Los Angeles was massive, and the city tripled in size, 1900–10, to 320,000 people, while the ten counties doubled. 'Los Angeles deliberately taxed and spent its way into growth.'[64] Southern California experienced the two general busts of 1907 and 1913. Growth was slower in the 1910s, and Los Angeles failed to double, but it did permanently overhaul San Francisco as the biggest city in California. A new boom commenced about 1917. America's entry into World War I was a factor, as was the completion of the Panama Canal. During the 1920s, Los Angeles again more than doubled in population, from 577,000 to 1,238,000. A city which had been 5 per cent the size of San Francisco fifty years earlier was now twice the size. Some 1.7 million settlers poured into California, 1920–9, over three-quarters of them to the south. This boom too featured massive public works—$60 million was spent on Los Angeles harbour-works alone in and around the 1920s, with at least another $24 million on roads for the newly proliferating automobiles.[65] 'Even in the manic market of a frenzied land rush, subdivision outran need . . . Los Angeles subdivided itself into a city

of seven million people half a century before the realities of population caught up with the speculations of real-estate investors.'[66] This last boom busted with the Great Depression from 1929.

Southern Californian boosterism was truly remarkable for its energy, volume, and persistence to about 1930. This has led some of its historians to refer to 'unprecedented promotional methods', and Californian boosting did have some unusual features, such as the capacity to convert tourism into settlement. 'In 1921 some 60 percent of the resident population of Los Angeles had originally come to the city only to visit.'[67] Booster groups were particularly numerous, varied, and well-organized: The California Immigrant Union, The Grangers' Immigration Bureau, The Immigration Association of California, The Southern Pacific Colonization Agency, The All Year Club.[68] There were emphases on not missing the bus, on denigrating rivals, and on countering pessimists, which may have been uncommon in their vehemence. 'You have seen the other fellow carry off the prize before. Will you stand idly by and see him do it again?' 'He or she that hesitates is lost.' Rival San Francisco was a 'Charnel house, a leper depository'.[69] A Los Angeles newspaper headline might win the all-time prize for anti-pessimism. 'Kill Pessimists, Bishop Advises.'[70] Yet, on the whole, Southern Californian promotional methods were anything but unprecedented.

Like many other Anglo newlands, Southern and Central California had to overcome a bad reputation. In the 1860s and 1870s, the region was known as an 'arid wasteland' populated by Mexican bandits and rough and violent cattle barons. Malaria was prevalent in some districts until the 1880s. From the 1840s, a booster counter-current struggled to transform Southern California into a climatic paradise, where 'disease of any kind is very seldom known'. 'It is common for people live to be 100 to 115 years old.'[71] Booster books such as those of Charles Nordhoff expanded on this theme in the 1870s. But settlers were not convinced until the 1880s, when letters back were added to booster literature. There was now more emphasis on well-tried themes, such as the good old earthly paradise. Southern California was 'perfect bliss on earth', an 'Earthly Eden unsurpassed', 'A Southern California Paradise'.[72] Another old settlerist nerve struck by California boosters was the availability of a life as well as a living, leisure as well as wealth. A 1900 booster book stressed that the American 'takes naturally to southern California . . . where he can make a living and enjoy life at the same time.'[73] 'Ho! For California!', exclaimed one settler recruiting

poster, 'The Laborer's Paradise. Salubrious Climate, Fertile Soil, Large Labor Returns'. It was renowned for excellent crops '*and for the ease with which they can grow to dimensions and perfection unattainable elsewhere*' (italics in the original).[74] Old myths of natural abundance buttressed new myths of perfect climate. 'Los Angeles—where Nature Helps Industry Most.'[75]

Los Angeles volcanic growth, from 11,000 to 1.24 million in fifty years, on a site lacking water and a port, was perhaps the classic example of grandiose settler dreams made real through human agency. 'Los Angeles did not just happen or arise out of existing circumstances . . . Los Angeles envisioned itself, then materialized that vision through sheer force of will.'[76] Boosters 'did not so much foster the growth of southern California as, more simply, they invented it. There is water because they went and stole water . . . There is a port because they dreamed of a port.'[77] Settlers came in search of the 'California Dream'. But it was not the California dream, or even the American dream. It was the last and perhaps greatest example of the settler dream, and had much the same characteristics as a century before.

Southern California's busts of 1873, 1888, 1907, and 1913 were followed by the usual desperate hunt for export rescue. 'Practically every means of utilizing the land's resources was tried at least once in southern California' including ostrich farming and the cultivation of silk, rice, and rubber trees. One lucky find was oil, which was discovered in commercial quantities near Los Angeles in the 1890s. Production was only 1.4 million barrels in 1897, but increased to 9 million in 1902 and 77 million barrels by 1910.[78] California was lucky not just in the oil, but also in the timing. Until the 1890s, the market for oil, as a fuel for lamps and stoves, was limited. From the 1890s, railways and later ships began to use oil fuel and then oil-burning automobiles came on the scene *en masse*. Added to this, the Panama Canal cheapened the shipment of heavy oil to the Northeast. 'Oil from Los Angeles doubled traffic through the Panama Canal.' Seventy per cent of Canal traffic in 1925 went to or from Los Angeles.[79] Further finds in the 1920s boosted production still further, and by 1924 California's oil production was the highest in America, although it was later overhauled by Texas. Oil was joined by motion pictures—an odd couple, but 'two welcome windfalls'.[80] Filming in Los Angeles began in 1907; Cecil B. de Mille made his first Hollywood movie in 1913. 'All major US producers were in Southern California by 1920.'[81] Even the most dedicated rational-choice theorist would have to doubt that Los Angeles boosters of the

1880s had planned on the oil and movie industries. But by 1930 the odd couple were worth $327 million and $129 million a year respectively to the California economy.[82] California's third great rescue export was a matter of fruit, especially orange ones, and this is an issue reserved for Chapter 16.

Canada's Hour

In 1867, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia united to form the Dominion of Canada, and were joined between 1870 and 1873 by Prince Edward Island, the new province of Manitoba, and distant British Columbia. Almost immediately, the new Dominion government inaugurated a bold policy of national development. It was designed to generate booms wherever possible, notably in the Northwest Territories and Rupert's Land, newly acquired from the Hudson Bay Company as part of the federation deal. Federation itself was arguably part of the strategy, intended to speed recovery from the bust of 1857 and the depressed 1860s and consolidate and coordinate rail-making and efforts to acquire oldland money and migrants. From 1867 to 1896, the new Dominion government made determined attempts to create booms. In 1872, it introduced homesteading legislation to match that of the United States. In 1881, it legislated to encourage corporate colonization, resulting in twenty-six colonization companies, and licensed large-scale ranching. In the early 1880s, it provided support estimated at $85 million to the vast Canadian Pacific Railway, which succeed in reaching the Pacific coast of British Columbia in 1885, running through what were to become the prairie provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. The federal Ministry of the Interior always saw boosting 'colonization'—its own preferred term for settlement and development—as its prime task.

There were two modest successes, in Manitoba and British Columbia, in and around the 1880s. A micro-version of the present-day province of Manitoba was carved from the Northwest Territories in 1870. One initial motive was to damp the resentment of the local Métis and Indian peoples at their involuntary transfer from the largely nominal rule of the Hudson Bay Company to the Dominion of Canada. The Métis were a mixed-blood French-speaking group who saw themselves as both European and Amerindian.[83] Another motive was cloning for growth, and Anglo settlers began to trickle in. Rail arrived in Winnipeg from the United States in

1878, and the Canadian Pacific arrived in 1882, a year after the boundaries of the province were extended. Between 1878 and 1883, a small but classic boom took place. Manitoba's population grew from 25,000 in 1871 to 62,000 in 1881 to 153,000 in 1891, with much of the growth concentrated in 1878–83.[84] Winnipeg became a boomtown, complete with banks, boosting newspapers, and precocious semi-industrialization. It saw itself as the Chicago of the North, with most of Western Canada as its destined hinterland.[85] A bust hit in 1883, when '75 per cent of the businesses in Manitoba were broke'.[86] The boom had overflowed into what is now Saskatchewan, to which many Métis had moved in the late 1870s.[87] This, together with the simultaneous demise of the buffalo, helped spark the 'Métis and Indian Rebellion' of 1884–5. Though some historians tend to discount it, this resistance was determined and pan-tribal and achieved some successes before being overwhelmed by money and numbers—8,000 Canadian troops and $5 million.[88] The Métis and great Indian tribes such as the Plains Cree had survived a century of European contact as powerful and autonomous communities but as elsewhere, explosive colonization proved too much for them.

British Columbia in 1881 was a long-standing slow-growing incremental colony like Western Australia, with around 20,000 settlers and 26,000 Indians.[89] Its first fur-trading post dated from 1805, and its career as a crown colony from 1849. Minor gold rushes in the late 1850s and early 1860s had failed to generate booms, though there was a modest extractive export economy in the form of gold, timber, furs, and canned salmon. Victoria on Vancouver Island, not the timber hamlet of Vancouver, was the main town and port.[90] Over the next decade, the Indian population declined and the settler population tripled. Vancouver grew from 300 to 14,000 people. As usual, historians used to attribute this boom to staples exports, in this case lumber. As early as 1979, however, a British Columbian historian punctured at least this example of the staples fallacy. The arrival of the Canadian Pacific and the imports it brought in, not the long-range exports it took out, were boom triggers, enhanced by banks, boosting, and speculation. Interesting enough, the boom began in Vancouver a little before the arrival of rail. Construction and real estate speculation were Vancouver's main industries. Lumber production did expand, but mainly for local markets.[91] This boom ended with the widespread bust of 1893.

With these modest exceptions, federated Canada's gallant early efforts to explode were 'largely a failure for the first three decades of confederation'.[92]

There was a 'general failure of the Dominion to attract settlers to the West'.[93] The twenty-six colonization companies of the 1880s in Western Canada managed to bring in only a thousand settlers between them.[94] Earlier efforts to explosively colonize the Huron Tract in Northern Ontario, for which a population of 8 million people was predicted, also came to little. 'Try as they might, the collective efforts of settlers and engineers could not conquer the Canadian Shield.'[95] 'The almost passionate longing for some boom' went unrequited.[96] Between 1860 and 1900, the population of the American West almost tripled, and that of Australasia almost quadrupled, while that of all Canada grew only 66 per cent. Why did explosive colonization fail in Canada between 1857 and 1897?

One simple answer is the United States. 'The pull of the colossal US economy delayed Canadian economic development', 1870–1900.[97] As we have seen, the American Midwest and Far West went through two massive booms in this period, 1865–73 and 1878–93. During these, the American West attracted far more British migrants and money than did Canada, and to add insult to injury drew in substantial numbers of Canadians as well.[98] Canada did benefit to some extent from these American booms, by supplying them with food, work animals, and lumber. It therefore shared in the busts of 1873 and 1893—the chastening experience of busts without booms. Moreover, foreign boom markets were vulnerable. US suppliers took priority, and the US government could and did change the rules, for example by revoking a reciprocal trade agreement of 1854 in 1866, and by increasing tariffs in 1891. Canada was America's default supplier, and it was sometimes also America's default market. There are signs of US dumping of manufactures in Canada in the bust phase 1870s. Canada dealt with this to some degree with its National Policy tariff of 1879, and Montreal and Toronto industrialized substantially. But US imports gradually overhauled British in the Canadian market. We have also seen that Australasia was booming as vigorously as the American West, 1860s–80s, and until its bust of 1891 it too out-competed Canada in the hunt for British migrants and money.

After four decades of disappointingly normal growth, 'Canada's hour struck' quite suddenly, in 1897. By 1906, Canada 'was conscious, uproariously conscious, that her day had come . . . the poor relation had come into her fortune'.[99] The four western provinces experienced one of the latest and greatest of all Anglo booms, growing tenfold to 2.5 million people between 1891 and 1921, with most of the growth between 1897 and 1913.

This gargantuan boom of Canada's 'Last Best West' is attributed to one or more of four factors: the advent of rail; improvements in wheat farming and processing techniques; the filling-up of the prime lands of the United States; and improvements in Canadian boosterism under the aegis of a new minister of the interior, Clifford Sifton, appointed in 1896. Rail was a necessary but not sufficient condition. The advent of the Canadian Pacific contributed to the small booms of the 1880s in Manitoba and British Columbia, but the transcontinental trunk had been in place for twelve years before the big boom began. As for the wheat industry, in the 1880s cheap steel improved ploughs and replaced stone-grinding in mills with steel rollers, more capable of dealing with North American hard wheat. New varieties of wheat, notably Red Fife and Marquis, were developed, better suited to dry prairies. On this basis, the Western Canadian boom seems an unusually rational one—'export rescue' did not simply turn up, but was predictable and predicted. Perhaps the Anglos were finally wising up. But, as with rail, the timing was not right. The big rise in wheat prices post-dates the beginning of the boom.[100] Red Fife and steel roller mills were being used in Manitoba in the 1880s, well before the big boom.[101] Marquis, which eventually became the dominant variety, was not developed until 1908.[102] As for forward planning, 'the great increase in the wheat output of western Canada in 1901 and 1902 took the railways by surprise'.[103] The third possible boom trigger, an end to the supply of fresh American Wests, does not work either. It is true that, for the first time since the 1810s, the United States contributed to, rather than siphoned off, a Canadian boom in the 1900s. No fewer than 600,000 Americans, as well as US money and goods, flowed into Canada between 1897 and 1913. But this was part of a wider new tide of American settlement. Southern California, the Pacific Northwest, and Oklahoma were all booming vigorously in the 1900s, attracting even more Americans than Western Canada.

The contribution of Sifton and Canadian boosterism to the great boom is disputed. One historian claims that 'promotional literature appears to have had little to do with the flood of immigrants after 1896'.[104] Another thinks that Sifton's role has been exaggerated, and notes that emigration agents were responsible for only 10–20 per cent of immigration in the mid 1900s.[105] Yet Sifton was a particularly able and determined colonizing crusader and also, given the preceding decades of disappointing growth, a desperate one. Like other Anglo boosters, he preferred Anglo settlers, and drew the line at Africans and Asians. But he was more willing to

venture into the middle ground—especially Eastern Europe—than his successor, Frank Oliver, and many other Canadians would have liked. Sifton's multiculturalism was limited in both intent and effect. He chose groups he saw as unusually sturdy Slavs, preferably German-speakers like the Russian Mennonites. He believed that even these required more 'winnowing out' than British or American immigrants, and he successfully sought to balance them with much larger numbers of Anglos.[106] In 1921, only 13.65% of foreign-born people in the three Prairie provinces came from Estern Europe, compared with 42% from Britain and Ireland, 26% from the United States and 10% from Scandinavia and Germany.[107]

Sifton's exceptional success in attracting immigrants to Canada was as much a product of wider circumstances, noted below, as of his own energetic efforts. But those efforts certainly were energetic. Sifton clearly upped the tempo and honed the edge of Canadian boosting. His department had six immigration agents in 1896 and 300 in 1899. Its budget climbed tenfold to $4 million a year during his reign. The momentum continued to pick up after his departure in 1905. By 1914, Canada was distributing almost 3 million pieces of literature in its preferred migrant sources, including 365,000 school atlases and 60,000 sets of lantern slides. At least seventy-five books on western Canada were published in Britain between 1885 and 1914, often with the encouragement of Canadian boosters; eight appeared in 1911 alone.[108] Canadian boosting in the 1900s seems to have been unusually strong in images: maps, photographs, lantern-slides.[109] Despite the efforts of booster-scientist John Macoun in 1882, Sifton's predecessors had never quite managed a 'settler transition' in the image of the Western Canadian Prairies and parklands. The region was seen as 'the Siberia of the British Empire'.[110] Sifton and company, by contrast, do appear to have generated the crucial shift, stretching the facts to do so. 'Snow was never mentioned in the blizzard of pamphlets his department issued. "Cold" was another taboo word. The accepted adjectives were "bracing" and "invigorating".'[111]

Sifton was a classic exponent of the boosting technique of organizing visits from oldland opinion-leaders such as newspaper editors, and making sure they returned with the desired impression. In 1901 alone, Canada organized 107 such group visits from the United States.[112] A New Zealand anti-booster once unkindly compared such visitors to 'Judas sheep', after the tame ewe who repeatedly leads newly arrived flocks to the slaughter house, but they did their job. If the memories of 800 Saskatchewan

settlers are anything to go by, this tidal wave of boosting did have its effect on emigration decisions, though it was often seen as exaggerated in retrospect.[113] Ironically, resentment at being 'taken in' from settlers who nevertheless remained on the prairies is evidence of successful, as well as dubious, advertising. The 'Last Best Boost' banged the old drums of settlerism. Book titles invoked hopes, dreams, aspirations: *The Golden Land*, *The Land of Hope*, *The Wondrous West*, *The Last Best West*.[114] Britons were told that in Saskatchewan in the 1900s, as in Illinois in the 1810s, you were free to 'walk on the grass with a shotgun', enjoy better health, and quickly acquire your yeoman freehold. 'Success was laid out with almost mathematical certainty.'[115] In popular fiction and travel writing, as well as more obvious propaganda, emigration to Canada was 'a holy act and a contribution to the extension of God's empire on earth', 'failure was forgotten'.[116] There was also a new, and perhaps desperate, element: a defiance of doomsayers and knockers. Are you 'one of the persons who ACTS when OPPORTUNITY beckons?' Do you have the guts 'to take a chance on absolute certainty'. 'So be an optimist, a boomer, a booster. Have faith. You have to have faith in your religion. Hate the heretic. Pity the non-believer, the Wish-I Had.' 'When a man stops dreaming he stops PROGRESS.'[117]

Circumstances did favour this classic colonizing crusade, but they were not primarily a matter of new wheat varieties. Extra-Canadian factors were important. British migrants and investors had been hurt by the disastrous Western American and Australasian busts of the early 1890s, and that decade marked a low point in British emigration. As usual, British willingness to move themselves and their money began to recover after about five years. Australia was so damaged in British minds by its 1891 bust that, with the exception of Western Australia, it was out of the migrant and money market, a happy conjuncture for the Canadian West. American oldlanders reacted rather like their British counterparts, recoiling from western investment after 1893, then beginning to return to it five years later. But US development was such that it no longer needed a supplementary British oldland to finance and people its booming west. British money and migrants went instead to Canada. Indeed, America in the 1900s now had the spare capacity to supplement British inputs into Western Canada, hence the inflow of 600,000 American settlers and their money.

Anglo-worldwide circumstances meshed with Canadian effort, which meshed in turn with the boom mentality. The merger of factors, human

and circumstantial, cultural and economic, is illustrated by finance. Leading up to the boom, there was an improvement in, and increased Canadian influence over, the financial 'filament' between Canada and its British oldland. As in Australasia, the pattern was one of settlers going and getting British money, not passively waiting for it to come to them. The Bank of Montreal became the government's London agent in 1892, replacing British bankers. Its president lived in London between 1896 and 1905, serving as Canadian High Commissioner on the side.[118] 'The most successful of the Canadian finance capitalists, like [Max] Aitken (later Lord Beaverbook) and [James] Dunn, migrated to London.'[119] So also did Arthur Grenfell, who raised about $60 million between 1906 and 1913, before going bankrupt in 1914.[120] Robert Horne-Payne was another London-based Canadian master borrower, said to have been responsible for loans of $500 million.[121] Like their Australasian equivalents, these financiers remained Canadian, as well as British. They addressed British investors directly, without the mediation of British merchant banks. One might think that the British investor was 'the last person to be captivated by the romance of Empire . . . Yet nothing is farther from the truth . . . British investors had their own version of the romance of Empire.' 'Canadian railways seemed again to have become a device for siphoning money away from the British investor.' The mining boom in British Columbia 'had much more to do with the ebb and flow of British capital than with the health of the British Columbia mining industry'. 'British investors, often acting on the flimsiest of information and often behaving in a manner more reminiscent of lemmings than of shrewd capitalists, set out to make a profit in those far-off lands of which they had read so much in the imperial propaganda. In the end, they probably lost more than they made.'[122] Grenfell remarked in 1907 that 'most Canadians think they have only to arrive in London with ideas and everyone is prepared to fill their pockets with sovereigns'. Actually, they were right. Between 1900 and 1914, outside investment in Canada rose from $1.225 billion to 4 billion, 72 per cent of which had been provided by Britain.[123]

Some of this money flowed into the industrialization of Montreal and Toronto, each of which grew 75 per cent in population in the 1900s. Some went into Northern Ontario and the Lakehead region, which boomed in this period.[124] But most went to Canada's new great West—in fact some of Montreal and Toronto's growth came from servicing the Western boom. As in the United States, this was arguably a double boom, with one bust

in 1907 and another in 1913. In both Saskatchewan and Alberta, the land thought to have agricultural potential came in two types: partly wooded, moister parkland; and open drier prairie proper. Between 1897 and 1906, settlement concentrated on the parkland. There was then a brief but marked bust in 1907. From 1908, it was the turn of the Prairie proper, and this boom too busted quite quickly, in 1913. The busts were short but sharp. Immigration fell more than half in each.[125] In the first, rural land sales fell from nearly a million acres to 164,000, 1907–8.[126] In the second, building permits in Saskatoon plummeted from a value of $7 million in 1912 to $20,000 in 1915. 'By 1913, all business in Saskatoon had come to a stop.'[127] Export rescue also took place sequentially. Wheat exports did rise from 1905, but the really big surge was from 1912, with another from 1922.[128] In other words, the Prairies seem to have experienced two complete rounds of hyper-colonization in sixteen years, squashed in upon each other and further obscured by the effects of World War I. Before 1912, wheat was by no means the only game in town, and probably not even the main one. High exports were 'only achieved long after the period of prosperity had begun'.[129] Alberta's wheat production was less than 4 million bushels in 1906, much of which went to local markets, compared to 116 million in 1934, the great bulk of which was exported. In 1904 wheat exports from all Canada were only 400,000 tons, compared to 3 million tons in 1913 and 10 million in 1928.[130]

The major economic activity during the boom itself, as usual, was growth—the creation of rails, roads, towns, houses, fences, and farm buildings. The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) had completed its main trunk in 1887. It was a private company, but received tens of millions in federal subsidies, land grants, and tax exemptions. It spent lavishly on promoting settlement and on building 3,300 miles of western branch lines between 1897 and 1914. The CPR spent $85 million on supplies and equipment in 1912 alone, and employed 120,000 men in 1915. Like some sadistic Handsome Prince, it 'galvanized a sleeping country into activity. The West was awakened by the touch of steel.'[131] Amazingly, the CPR was joined during the boom by two more transcontinental Canadian lines, the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific. $300 million was spent on the former, and $250 million on the latter, which 'cost twice what it should have cost and there was neither the population nor the traffic to sustain it'. 'If one line north of Lake Superior was an economic risk, what could justify three?' By 1911, twenty-four railway lines ran from Winnipeg.

'Nobody seemed to care if rail services were duplicated.'[132] Up to 125,000 men worked on building these lines, quite apart from those employed to run them and the farmers, merchants, contractors, police, publicans, and prostitutes serving and supplying them. By 1917, the three trunk companies had received $640 million in municipal, provincial, and federal government support, and private money also poured into the bottomless pit of Canadian rail-making.[133]

The progress industry, not wheat exporting, was the boom-time prairies main employer. 'At first, many poorer immigrants had to raise capital for homestead development by working in mines, lumber camps, and on railway section gangs.' 'Settlers of all nationalities relied on off-farm work.'[134] As in most booms, horses were in high demand. Some ranches seem to have specialized in them rather than in cattle.[135] Oats, not wheat, were Alberta's leading crop in 1900, with 62.5 per cent of all crop acreage.[136] Coal for the locomotives was another important Alberta industry. Coal production in the province grew from 242,000 tons in 1897 to 3 million tons in 1910, employing 6 per cent of the workforce.[137] The Prairie's many boomtowns were engaged less in wheat production or processing than in building themselves. Calgary grew elevenfold to 44,000 people, 1901–11, Regina fifteenfold to 30,000; Edmonton sixfold to 25,000; Saskatoon over a hundredfold to 12,000. The towns concerned spent and spoke as if this growth would continue indefinitely.[138] Saskatoon's 12,000 or so inhabitants had an $8 million civic debt by 1913. 'The Eyes of The World Are Upon Regina The capital and Wonder City of This Mighty Province Whose Growth Can Be No More Stemmed Than The Waters Of The Sea.'[139] As we have come to expect, banks proliferated, credit was easy, and speculation was rife. Prairie bank branches increased from 71 to 870, 1901–14.[140] 'In the Canadian west more or less everybody speculates in land.'[141] 'Petty speculation by farmers was practically a universal motive for moving to the frontier.' 'Men in all walks of life had the idea that borrowing money was the national pastime.'[142] 'The boom mentality was a disease that people caught from each other.'[143]

In a recent (2003) defence of staples theory, an economic historian refutes older arguments that the Prairie 'wheat boom' of 1896–1913 contributed little to per capita growth in the Canadian economy as a whole. He argues convincingly that this boom contributed massively to Canada's growth in per capita incomes, 1896–1913, which he calculates averaged an impressive 4.75 per cent annually, but then attributes the growth to wheat exports.

Not all booms boosted per capita incomes, because sometimes the growth of 'capitas' outran the growth of incomes, but clearly this one did. The trouble is that wheat exports were not yet huge in this period, averaging about $40 million a year. In the period 1914–29, wheat exports *were* huge, at over $300 million a year, but growth in per capita incomes was low, at 0.9 per cent. It was the boom, not the wheat, that generated high growth.[144] Again, the staples fallacy shows a Rasputin-like reluctance to die.

Recolonizing Canada

For a century after the bust of 1857, Britain and the United States competed to recolonize Canada, though recolonization took a back seat during the great Western Canadian boom of 1897–1913. All the natural advantages, and increasingly the advantage in size, lay with the United States. The Canadian–American border lacked natural obstacles. There were no Appalachians or Urals, not even a Rio Grande. Rivers, rail systems, and the Great Lakes ignored the border. The two countries shared a language; contained many people with connections in both; and did not consider each other to be military threats after 1870. The US economy had entered a new stage of industrialization during the Civil War, and became the world's leading manufacturer by the end of the century. In these circumstances, it was natural that the Canadian and US economies should increasingly interpenetrate. In 1887, even a senior British official 'argued that a north–south flow of trade appeared to be the logical result of the geography of Canada and the United States and that commercial union of the two might not be that disastrous for Britain'.[145] Britain was normally Canada's leading supplier of imports to 1875, but the United States inexorably overhauled it thereafter. The Canadian tariff of 1879 delayed the trend, chopping US imports by 40 per cent, 1878–80, while leaving British imports largely intact. But America took the lead as Canada's supplier of goods in the 1880s and extended it thereafter. By 1913, Canada imports from the United States were three times the value of those from Britain. Even the Ottawa Agreement of 1932, which tightened and formalized economic links between Britain and the Dominions, did not greatly affect US dominance of Canadian imports.[146] Considering that most Canadians lived right next door to New England, Chicago, and Detroit, this is hardly surprising. What is surprising

is that, in areas other than imports, links with Britain survived and even strengthened.

US capital entered Canada in quantity from the 1900s, notably through the establishment of branches of US manufacturing firms. 'Yet eventually American capital was replaced by British and eastern Canadian funding . . . the penetration of American capital did not pick up again until after the end of the Second World War.'[147] In 1900, Britain supplied 85% of outside investment in Canada, 77% in 1910, 53% in 1920, and 60% in 1939.[148] Britain outranked Canadian domestic investment too. 'British residents still held over 50 per cent of the share capital of Canada and Newfoundland in 1930.'[149] America was an important but fluctuating market for Canadian exports. Peaks in this trade correlated with American settlement booms and troughs with busts. Occasionally, boom supply pushed America ahead of Britain as a Canadian export market. But this was rare between 1870 and 1920; it happened only in 1873 and 1888–9—the peak of American booms. During the 1890s, British–Canadian recolonization tightened. Between 1894 and 1900, Britain took an average of 60 per cent of Canada's exports compared to 28 per cent going to the United States, and Britain retained a substantial lead until 1917, when it was more than twice as important to Canada as the United States as an export market. In the 1920s, parts of the US West went through yet more booms, while Canada did not, and the United States was ahead of Britain as an export market in nine of the twelve years 1920–31.[150] In 1932, the combined effects of the Ottawa Agreement and the Great Depression brought Britain back into the lead, which it retained for the next ten years with the single exception of 1939. As late as 1946, Canada supplied 86% of Britain's imports of flour and wheat (or 60% of its total consumption), 50% of its fertilizer, 40% of its wood, 75% of its bacon, and 50% of its eggs.[151] Britain may not quite have starved without Canada, but it would certainly have gone without breakfast.

The success of Canadian exports was not just a matter of an increasing surplus, but of careful adjustment to the British market. From the 1870s, wood was increasingly displaced as Canada's leading export by animal products, especially beef, cheese, and bacon. Here, Canada had to compete with US exports, but eventually did rather well through better, or at least more British-oriented, quality control and by avoiding or delaying the restrictions placed on US cattle for fear of disease. In 1877, Canada shipped 20,000 live cattle to Britain; in 1898 it shipped 212,000; in 1920,

315,000. 'Canada secured a privileged position in the great and expanding livestock market of the mother country.'[152] Canada's export of bacon and ham to Britain was even greater, and even more carefully attuned to British demand. Pork-product exports suddenly rocketed from half a million pounds in 1909 to 51 million in 1910, reached 254 million lbs, or 113,000 tons, in 1919, and remained high until 1948.[153] 'Canadian farmers became attuned to the preferences of the British market and learned how to produce lean "Wiltshire side".'[154] The farmers of Ontario also managed to replicate the farming of Cheddar, a village in Somerset, and again they did so rather better than their US rivals. 'The Canadian cheesemaker had for his standards of quality the best of the English and Scotch cheddars.'[155] By the mid-1890s, sending cheddar to Britain, like coals to Newcastle, 'had become Canada's leading export'. Dairy-product exports in 1900 were twice the value of wheat exports. At its peak in 1903, this re-colonial dairy industry pumped over 100,000 tons of Canadian cheddar into Britain, comprising 80 per cent of Ontario's output and 95 per cent of Britain's cheddar imports.[156] New Zealand took over as mega-Cheddar thereafter but to a considerable extent, Ontario agriculture, 1870s–1940s, was a large-scale substitute for Somerset and Wiltshire.

It was not until 1910 that wheat became the leading export, and by the 1920s Canada was the leading wheat exporter in the world. Western Canadian wheat farming underwent a re-colonial reshuffle towards medium-sized farms, large mills, large distribution cartels, and government grading, and now dominated the Western Canadian economy. Again, Britain was the core market. 'The British market for Canadian wheat and the Canadian system of grading and handling grew up together.' 'For many years the British market took well over 60 per cent of our wheat exports.'[157] Canadian wheat earned premium status, but 'that status was itself acutely dependent on British milling practice'. Soviet wheat dumping and the depression threatened Canadian wheat exports around 1930, but the Ottawa Agreement redressed the balance. 'The general significance of Canadian wheat supplies to Britain's food position did not diminish after 1935; in fact it increased during successive phases of stockpiling, war, and reconstruction.'[158] Until the 1940s, it was not nearby America but distant Britain that recolonized Canada, and depended on it as a virtual hinterland. Chapter 15 will show that the economic links were matched by cultural and ideological ones.

Wests Too Far

Canada's hour had indeed struck, but it struck too hard for some. Given the bust of 1913, 'the Great War was a lucky break for the Canadian Prairies'.[159] But from about 1920 it became clear that the Prairies boom, especially in the more arid prairies proper, had tempted people onto land that simply could not sustain small farms in normal times. Even before the Depression of the 1930s, about half of the prairies wheat farmers had failed.[160] In 1921–6, 120,000 farms were forfeited on the prairie belt of Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1921–6. Some districts lost 80 per cent of their schools. Over 200 towns in Alberta and 62 in Saskatchewan lost between 45 per cent and 100 per cent of their populations.[161] New dry farming techniques were tried, and rain-makers were hired, but neither science nor superstition did much good, and falling wheat prices conspired with the weather to compound the disaster. The value of Canadian farm production halved between 1921 and 1931.[162] Then, just when it seemed things could get no worse, came the 'coldest winter in history', in 1931, followed by drought, plagues of gophers and grasshoppers, and the Great Depression itself, culminating with 'the legendary evacuation of Southern Saskatchewan'.[163] 'The entire sequence, from pioneer settlement, rise to maximum population, and succeeding severe and irrecoverable decline, took place within a very short time span of ten to thirty years. Over-optimism about even the short-term capacity of these areas produced the pattern.'[164] A 1940 study revealed that many thousands of Canadian settlers had thrown away their lives and fortunes on dry belt soils that were 'not marginal but sub-marginal'.[165] Ruined settlers blamed the government, the banks, and the railways. 'They rarely acknowledged that the settlers themselves had demanded that the drylands be thrown open. And they almost never admitted that they too had participated in the lie.'[166] Larger, mechanized farms were built on the fiscal corpses, and massive wheat production continued, but the careers of most small farmers did not.

Canada was not alone in the agony of over-extension. As early as the 1870s, South Australian explosive colonization had plunged over 'Goyder's Line', the northern limit of viable wheat farming. 'Goyder's Line of Rainfall is all nonsense', claimed the boosters.[167] But it was not, and disaster struck the northern wheat farmers in the 1880s and 1890s. Between 1883 and 1892, South Australian acreage in wheat fell, and wheat yields per acre halved.[168]

Queensland and New South Wales were also tortured by over-extension, which combined with the bust of 1893, rabbit plagues, and prevalent drought to devastate marginal areas. In New South Wales, in 1893 alone, 'eight million acres of leased pastoral land was abandoned'.[169] 'Over-grazed properties were literally blow away by the wind.'[170] New South Wales' sheep population fell from 62 million in 1892 to 26 million in 1903. It did not regain the 1892 peak until 1956. Sheep numbers in Queensland dropped even more sharply, 1893–1903, from 21 million to 7 million.[171] Even the relatively benign environment of Victoria experienced droughts and dust storms.[172]

In the United States, little seemed to have been learned from the 'Big Die Up' on the Great Plains in the 1880s. There was a fresh surge of settlers into marginal regions in the 1900s, and a further surge in the 1910s.[173] One site of this late boom was the hitherto unsettled parts of Montana and the Dakotas. Eastern Montana more than tripled in population, 1910–20; while North Dakota as whole increased 150 per cent, 1898–1915.[174] North Dakota's banks multiplied even faster, from 102 in 1895 to 671 in 1910.[175] It was as much over-extension as the normal bust that pricked this balloon. Settlers persisted with 'dry farming', discovering again that it did not work. 'The drought of 1917–1921 in Montana finally dashed these notions.'[176] A five-year drought is not really a drought, but evidence of normally insufficient rainfall. 'Settlement took place during a period of unusual rainfall, but when drought returned between 1917 and 1921, such farms failed in waves of "homestead busts".'[177] Half of Montana's farmers had failed by 1925, and casualties were much higher in some districts. The number of farms in Cascade County fell from 2,111 in 1916 to 1,241 in 1923 and 743 by 1929. Some 80,000 homesteaders entered Montana in 1909–18. 'By 1922 about 66,000 or 88% had given up.' 'More than half of Montana's commercial banks failed between 1920 and 1926.' In North Dakota, 'more than 500 banks failed in the 1920s'. Growth stopped, and it stopped permanently. North Dakota's population in 1990 was lower than in 1920. In 1990, Billings County, North Dakota, had only 11 per cent of its 1910 population.[178] The experience of parts of West Texas were not dissimilar. There, over-extension onto non-viable farmland resulted in 'millions of dollars lost and thousands of lives blasted'. The route out for new settlers was said to be littered with empty tin cans; the route back with lark feathers and rabbit bones.[179] Small farmers returning to the Great Plains after 1900 also met a grim fate in the 1920s and 1930s. Continuous

wheat growing on farms too small for much fallowing stripped the soil of fertility and water. As in New South Wales, when high winds followed drought, dust storms literally blew farms away. It was not just Depression, but also over-extension that pushed 3.5 million off their 'Dustbowl' farms in the 1930s.[180] The two surges of settlement onto the Great Plains, 1880s and 1900s/1910s, comprised 'the largest, longest-running agricultural and environmental miscalculation in American history'.[181]

In the early twentieth century, all over the Anglo-world, explosive colonization reached its peak and overflowed into non-viable lands, 'beyond the margins of the good earth'. Here, small farming was scarcely possible even during booms, let alone busts. 'The optimism of the Anglo-American that he could conquer any country [meant] that there was almost a conspiracy to conceal the fact that in the West there was little water or rain . . . the term "arid" was angrily avoided.' The human cost was high. 'Tens of thousands expended all their money and the most precious years of their lives in discovering what could not be done in the semi-arid region.'[182] In Western Canada and Central Australia too, settlers retreated as fast as they had advanced, routed in nature's last stand against the boom mentality. They left little monuments in the form of derelict farmhouses, still visible throughout the Anglo-Wests. Poor farmers were the most obvious victims of over-extension, and one might be tempted to shake one's head at the deluded optimism of these simple folk. But there are cases of the rich throwing their money away with similar crusading fervour. US historian Richard White has studied the career of a Canadian rail entrepreneur, Frank Shanly, who engaged in project after project between 1860 and 1875.

> He lost money on almost every job [but] . . . kept believing he would profit when in fact he kept losing. To some, this is inconceivable; Shanly's persistence must be evidence that, somehow, he was profiting from his efforts. Businessmen simply do not keep doing things that lose money. To such a view one can only suggest that 'entrepreneurial spirit' is not always the most rational motive. This spirit—an exceptional drive, almost a craving, to succeed, along with a deep faith in one's ultimate success in the midst of everyone else's failure—is a powerful set of beliefs which, apparently, was common in Victorian business culture.[183]

Non-rational investment and non-rational migration came together in gold rushes to regions that had no chance of booming. As we saw in Chapter 9, the great rush that took 100,000 people to Pike's Peak, Colorado, was ultimately a chimera—Pike's Peak *and* bust.

> The expense of simply carrying goods to Colorado surpassed the value of the reported gold coming back . . . The conclusion seems inescapable. From 1859 to at least 1866, Colorado was a major losing proposition . . . What is remarkable is that so many continued to pour such a concentrated stream of capital into a place that sopped up money like an unquenchable sponge . . . [Colorado was] an economy of fantasy . . . Much of the mid-Victorain West experienced something similar.[184]

You did not have to go to Pike's Peak to lose your money there. Between 1860 and 1901, at least 518 joint-stock companies were formed in Britain to invest in the gold, silver, and copper mines of the American West. 'Of these only 57—or one in nine—ever paid *any* dividends.'[185] British investment in the mines of British Columbia, Western Australia, and Queensland had the same kamikaze quality. This is often ascribed to deliberate fraud by unscrupulous promoters. 'Many promoters found it was far more profitable to mine investors than to mine ore.'[186] No doubt this was sometimes true, but a study of the 518 British companies just mentioned finds that 'deliberate fraud promotions' were 'relatively few'. At its fervent height, with prime destinations becoming scarce, the boom mentality led settlers and investors alike beyond the boundaries of mere reason. Gold rushes *and* settlement took place in places so isolated and marginal that the impossibility of permanent settlement should have been obvious. By the 1860s it was clear that alluvial gold deposits on most fields were dug out quite quickly. It may have made sense to rush to these places for a year or two, seeking gold. It did not make sense to intend to stay. Yet many did.

In 1868–70 a brief rush took place to White Pine, Nevada. Shanties were thrown up, but so was a permanent town, which 125 years later was subjected to an archaeological dig. 'Although the occupants of the permanent site types did not stay more than one or two years . . . the types of artifacts recovered suggest that . . . the occupants were anticipating a long-term residence where they could reconstruct Victorian society.'[187] A rush to New Zealand's west coast, a thin, rain-sodden strip of land between the Southern Alps and the Tasman Sea, took place in 1865, with its main base at Hokitika. The town had a bad harbour and next to no hinterland, yet its settlers came to stay. Within a couple of years, the town had 7,000 inhabitants and claimed up to 30,000, including sojourners. It had 102 hotels, an opera house seating 1,200, three theatres, a cricket club, a skating rink and a waxworks museum. Some of its buildings had elevators and several floors. Contemporaries believed it to be 'the most rising place

on earth', another Marvellous Melbourne in the making.[188] 'San Francisco itself did not rise so fast.'[189] The population plummeted from the 1870s. A century later Hokitika was still only half its 1867 size. From 1881, Aspen, Colorado, a silver mining town, grew with similar speed to Hokitika, in a location that was equally obviously not boom-viable. It too boasted an opera house, skating rink, and numerous hotels within a few years. By 1887 'the frontier atmosphere had long since departed', helped on its way by the advent of electric streetlights in 1885. Aspen's population peaked at 12,000 in 1893, plus 5,000 transients. But it collapsed in the 1890s and by 1910 was smaller even than Hokitika, falling to a nadir of 705 in 1930 before its second coming as a ski resort.[190]

You might think that the denizens of the sub-Arctic Yukon would have faced up to the fact that they lived in a temporary gold camp. Not so. Dawson City, in the Canadian Yukon, was founded in 1898. 'Dawson's location was in every way inferior', but it 'blossomed over-night as a full-blown city'.[191] It received representation in Parliament in 1900, and had four newspapers by 1902. Its population is said to have peaked around this time at up to 30,000 people. It boasted 'a number of roomy hotels with ample first-class accommodations', a public library, churches and schools, a Doric-columned three-storey courthouse, and lavish public parks and sports facilities. It also had electricity, telephones, and motion pictures. By 1912 its population had collapsed to 2,500 along with its hopes of greatness.[192] It had 697 inhabitants in 1981. Except for White Pine, these towns at least survived. Many gold towns with equal hopes did not, and became ghost towns. But many ghost towns were never gold towns; they were failed boomtowns. The two types met the same fate, and were creatures of the same mentality. The Settler Revolution built whole nations in a single lifetime, but it destroyed many of its friends as well as its enemies.

Notes

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PART III

Recolonization at Large

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Introduction to Part III

This book began with two urban mysteries. One, the explosive growth of settler cities like Chicago and Melbourne, has, I hope, been solved in the preceding chapters. The other was the growth of London and New York into mega-cities *before* the modern agro-industrial revolution made this generally possible. In 1890, London and New York were the only two cities in the world with more than 2.5 million people. Precocious mega-cities were only one of three ways in which the Anglo-world functioned as the wider world's guinea pig in the nineteenth century. The Anglos were also the first people to experience industrialization. Chapter 2 argued, along with some of the experts, that this occurred first in England, between 1800 and 1820, then in the Northeastern United States in the 1820s. It was not until the 1830s that a non-Anglo country—Belgium—was blessed or cursed by revolutionary industrialization, and the wider spread of industrialization occurred still later. Thirdly, the Anglos from 1815 were the first people to undertake explosive colonization, followed by recolonization. Explosive colonization rapidly gave the Anglos vast 'Wests'. Recolonization allowed the Anglo oldlands to integrate with these Wests, so boosting the bulk and power of the United States and 'Greater Britain'. This process made the United States a superpower and gave Britain an extra half-century of that status. The following chapters explore the intersections between these three phenomena.

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14

Urban Carnivores and the Great Divergence

Urban Carnivores

Great cities suck in their sustenance from hinterlands or town-supply districts. For cities to grow, hinterlands have to grow too, or improve their productivity, or both. Urban histories that focus on towns alone are therefore only half the story. Because cities contained disproportionate numbers of their region's elites and middle classes, urban consumers demanded both quantity and quality, especially in their food. London consumers wanted wheaten bread, not barley, rye, or oat bread; white bread rather than brown; prime cuts of fresh meat rather than salt meat or offal, and butter rather than lard. London's food consumption was disproportionately large. London accounted for 27 per cent of English taxable income in 1850, 45 per cent by 1912.[1] Its middle class was 'doubtless the largest mass of such people anywhere in the world'.[2] Though a poor minority of Londoners were famously afflicted by poverty, made all the worse by sharp contrast, 'average consumption per head in London was at least double the national average'.[3] Grain was the most important basic foodstuff by bulk, and urban consumers demanded wheat, the premium grain. In 1800, 58 per cent of British grain consumption was wheat. By 1900, the figure was 95 per cent.[4] 'London bread consumers were the most spoilt of all.'[5] Meat was the most important basic foodstuff by value, and Britons in general and Londoners in particular were notoriously big meat-eaters. In 1734, Smithfield, their main meat market, which had once witnessed the execution of 200 Protestant martyrs, martyred 600,000 sheep and cattle. Numbers grew modestly to about 800,000 in 1794, but then doubled to just over 1.6 million by 1828, and peaked at almost 3 million beasts in 1853, when dead meat began to be railed in.[6]

Meat has cultural resonances of increasing interest to scholars, some of which we noted when looking at the informal motivations of emigrants in Chapter 5. It was the essence of food, representing the rest, as in the phrase 'meat and drink'. Urban carnivores were particularly particular about their meat supplies, and prone to moral panics about disease and decay. Meat was somehow embroiled with individual and collective identities. It symbolized human domination of nature, and was a marker of prosperity and status, of being one's own master. English culture contained 'numerous connections between eating beef and patriotism and being British'. 'John Bull and roast beef had become popular national symbols.'[7] Britons also liked their sheep meat, which was priced higher than beef per pound after 1820. 'English pride centred upon its mutton, however, and the most prized livestock was sheep.'[8] The very poor ate little meat, but everyone else compensated by gobbling it. Meat consumption rose from 87 lbs per capita in 1860 to 127 lbs in 1914. While workers averaged around 100 lbs of meat a year, the middle class is thought to have averaged 200 lbs, and the upper class 300.[9]

From about 1870, real wages began to rise at the upper end of the urban working class. 'Between 1870 and 1935 real wages in London doubled.'[10] These workers joined the queue for prime cuts of butcher's meat—and butter. 'Per capita consumption of fats quadrupled in Britain between the 1880s and the 1930s.'[11] In 1888, both British and American urban industrial workers spent about 30% of their food budget on meat and 20% on dairy products, compared to 17% on cereals and less than 7% on fruit and vegetables.[12] 'The one idea which the working classes possess in relation to improvement in diet, and which they invariably realize when wages are high, is an abundant supply of butcher's meat.'[13] 'Meat, for those who could afford it was almost an obsession.'[14] This was true of Londoners in particular, where more people *could* afford it. Meat and mega-cities were both leading edge of, and symbol for, a wider issue: the problem of supplying food and raw materials to industrializing and urbanizing oldlands whose populations were growing, while maintaining or improving standards of living, and doing this before the agro-industrial revolution of the twentieth century made it generally possible. Bread riots by the urban under-classes were nightmare enough; meat riots, heaven forbid, would involve the middle classes.

In 1600, when London with about 200,000 people was about half the size of Paris, its basic food came 'principally . . . from some few shires near adjoining'.[15] Despite the fact that London's population grew fivefold, this

remained largely the case for the next two centuries. The shires became less few, but were still mainly confined to southern England. London in the eighteenth century drew its coal from Newcastle, its timber from the Baltic, and its luxuries from all over the world, but most of its basic food was still derived from local sources. As late as 1813, Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex still produced 59 per cent of London's wheat.[16] One key to the persistence of local supply was urban farming. Even in central London, folk kept chickens, ducks, rabbits, and pigs. Brewers and distillers fed more pigs on their waste as a sideline—the pigs reportedly died drunk.[17] As late as the 1850s, 'a considerable proportion of the pork consumed in London was "town made", or at least produced in its immediate suburbs'.[18] Urban dairies or cowsheds also kept pigs as a sideline, sold surplus cattle for beef, and supplied milk as their major business. Until well into the nineteenth century, London 'dairies', in effect small dairy farms, kept cows as well as sold milk—Islington was known as 'Cow Town'.[19] London was surrounded by 'town-fields' and fattening farms, in which cattle driven in from the hinterland could be fattened, and by market gardens—15,000 acres within 10 miles of London in 1800—fertilized by horse manure carted out from the city. London's main export, by volume, was dung.[20]

Another key to the persistence of local supply was the increasing transformation, integration, and specialization of London's hinterland. This process led, for example, to 'the conversion of Middlesex to monoculture of hay during the 18th century'.[21] As well as wheat, Suffolk produced dairy products, Essex produced oats, and Kent produced fruit. Livestock were driven in from the south Midlands.[22] Turkeys and geese were also driven to market. The turkeys were given leather shoes for their march to Christmas; the geese refused to be shod.[23] Specialization increased agricultural productivity because particular products were grown in those parts of the hinterland best suited to them, and because specialized farming was usually more efficient than mixed farming, requiring fewer types of equipment for example. A 'London effect' therefore joined turnips and enclosure in boosting English agriculture, and also in boosting proto-industrialization. 'Long before the nineteenth century, London was driving the British economy by its massive demand for the two fundamental "f's", fuel and food.'[24]

A third key to feeding eighteenth-century London, and an exception to the rule of local supply, was the extension of the hinterland, sometimes to regions that were quite distant, but which had good communications

with London. Cheshire and its cheese were the classic example. In 1766, Daniel Defoe noted that Cheshire 'though remote from London is one of those [counties] which contributes most to its support'.[25] 'As early as 1750 London's wholesale cheesemongers monopolized the trade in Cheshire cheese.'[26] 'The impact of London on the inner ring of Home Counties and on those beyond . . . was clearly not simply a matter of geographic propinquity.'[27] These new hinterlands were transformed like the old, and their output became tightly tailored to London demand. Specialized regional links with the capital developed. Particular hinterlands developed relationships with particular London coaching inns: inns in Friday, Bread, and Wood Streets served the west Midlands.[28] The Welsh supply of meat to London and the development of the London Welsh community were two sides of the same coin.[29] London's hinterlands specialized not only in producing what London wanted, but also in processing, packaging, and marketing it the way London wanted. As well as live sheep and cattle, Wales supplied pigs, but they were harder to drive, and were processed into the lean bacon Londoners liked in Wiltshire. Wiltshire bacon became the London standard which aspirant new suppliers had to match.[30] The trouble was that London kept on growing, and it grew far faster in the nineteenth century than in the eighteenth, increasing sixfold in population 1800–1900, as against merely doubling, 1700–1800. As early as 1580, when the population was only 100,000, Queen Elizabeth I was worried about finding London 'victual food and other like necessaries for man's life, upon reasonable prices, without which no city can long continue'.[31] By 1851, with the population at 2.6 million, Queen Victoria should have been much more worried. But London managed to keep itself fed in two main ways. The first was by intensifying the eighteenth-century processes of transforming and extending the contiguous hinterland. The second was to outsource; to turn to overseas suppliers for basic foodstuffs.

Urban farming continued and intensified. Most of London's milk was town-supplied until the 1860s, and dung exports to the surrounding market gardens reached 450,000 tons by mid-century.[32] The droving of livestock to London boomed in the 1820s and 1830s, and extended its reach. Long-range droving, an eo-technic innovation, was a surprisingly complicated business. It required quite an infrastructure of nightly stopping places at which drovers could be accommodated and stock could be fed. Even so, livestock lost weight on the drive, and marshes near London were all grassed to provide finishing feed. Longer-range droving could be a two- or

even three-stage process. Sheep and cattle from Wales, the North, and even Scotland were fattened in the Midlands then fattened afresh in 'finishing fields' near London before their one-way trip to Smithfield. British droving began reaching its limit around 1840. The heavier breeds being developed were less suitable for droving; travelling herds increasingly conflicted with other traffic; turnpikes and the extension of arable land reduced suitable roads and feeding lots.[33] The advent of steam transport alleviated this problem and eventually replaced droving. After a phase of concentrating mainly on passengers, rail turned to freight as well, and by the 1860s Midland dairy farms were timing their milking to catch the London train. Steamers and later rail were both used to carry livestock and, from about 1850, dead meat as well.[34] Steam shipping made western Cornwall a part of London's hinterland district around 1838 for the supply of early vegetables. Aberdeen became London's prime beef supplier, like Wiltshire for bacon, first through long-range droving, then through steam ships, then through rail.[35]

The extension of London's hinterland in the first half of the nineteenth century to virtually the whole of Britain was also a process of national integration. Road communications improved dramatically even before steam, with turnpikes and better services. 'Road passenger traffic probably increased sixteenfold between 1790 and 1835.'[36] The time it took to travel between London and a provincial city at least halved. The amount of freight carted into London increased threefold, 1796–1840. Coastal shipping into London increased to about 3 million tons in 1840, and although most ships carried coal, others brought in at least 200,000 tons of grain a year. In 1805, London was at last fully plugged into the Midlands canal system.[37] Steamers took integration up another notch from 1815, and rail yet another from about 1840. From 1800 to 1850, the 'London effect', the extension and transformation of hinterlands, joined seed drills and high farming in causing a surge in agricultural productivity. Over the whole of the eighteenth century, the increase in productivity was about 59 per cent. In the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, it was about 70 per cent—a remarkable achievement.[38] But, even more than in the eighteenth century, it was not good enough. Between 1800 and 1850, the population of England increased 100 per cent—much more than the increase in English food supply—and the population of London increased 150 per cent. By 1815, London had outgrown Britain, and Britain as a whole could no longer feed itself.

Recolonization and the Anglo Divergence

By the late nineteenth century, Europe and the United States had diverged from most of the rest of the world through industrialization as well as expansion. The Introduction to this book surveyed two approaches to this 'Great Divergence', unfairly but conveniently labelled Eurocentric and Sinocentric. I concluded that the Eurocentric approach tended to deny or evade the plain fact that industrialization emerged first in Britain, and that the Sinocentrists were probably right to date China's demise as centre of the world economy as late as 1750 or 1800. We also saw that particular countries or regions at particular times had experienced great proto-industrial flowerings that were extraordinary but not unique. Such blooms may have occurred as early as the eleventh century, in Sung China.[39] Blooms featured mercantile capitalism, advanced agriculture, proto-industrialization and relatively high population growth, as well as surges of cultural and scientific creativity. In the eighteenth century, both Britain and China were blooming, and so was France. The problem was that, like all previous blooms, population growth meant these eventually encountered resource constraints, limits to the food, fuel, and fibre that that could be produced with existing technologies. This could lead to 'Malthusian crises'—famine, disease, and rebellion, which ended the bloom. Alternatively, it could lead to a labour-intensive expansion of agriculture, an 'involution' that prevented famine but also prevented the transition from bloom to industrialization by expanding the rural sector. China, argue the Sinocentrists, took the latter option and arguably encountered the former as well from the mid-nineteenth century. But parts of Europe, they claim, were able to evade the trap by accessing the resources of the New World.

The idea of a 'New World Bonus' stimulating the European divergence is an old one, and comes in three forms: a cash bonus, from mined or plundered bullion and the profits of the slave and luxury trades; a biota bonus, from new types of plants; and a resource bonus, from 'ghost acres' in the New World growing necessities, basic raw materials, for the old. The problem with the cash bonus idea is that the European countries that for a time received the most bullion, Spain and Portugal, actually did the least blooming. A leading economic historian has calculated that even in Britain, even as late as the 1820s, trade with the non-European world, contributed only about 7 per cent to British gross annual investment—'the

periphery was peripheral'.[40] Others estimate the contribution of British colonies to its gross national product at this time at around 2 per cent.[41] I am not wholly convinced by such calculations, but Chapter 4 of this book did show that the volume of goods transferred between Europe and the world was very modest until 1808. The goods transferred, moreover, were usually not basic resources but luxuries, though often addictive ones. One should also note the costs of the New World to European states through the need for constant warfare to protect and acquire them. The conquest and defence of colonies from indigenes, rivals, and rebels in the eighteenth century cost Britain more than 2 per cent of its national product. There was an important New World biota bonus, in the form of potatoes, sweet potatoes, peanuts, maize, and other crops, and it has been argued that only this averted famine in Europe from the late eighteenth century.[42] But this bonus was shared by Britain, Western Europe, and China, and also by non-bloomers such as Eastern Europe. It cannot explain the great divergence.

The 'Sinocentric' scholar to have developed the New World bonus thesis in most detail, Kenneth Pomeranz, focuses on the basic resources provided by 'ghost acres' overseas. He accepts that Britain was the first place to industrialize but, unlike this book, opts for an early industrial revolution, around 1780. 'Massive windfalls of fuel, fibre, and perhaps even food would have to be found somewhere for an industrial revolution to occur and be sustained.'[43] While some historians claim that 'Britain's perennial dependence on imported grain dates from 1792', early imports even of grain were in fact modest and sporadic, top-ups in years of bad harvests, and did not extend to other types of food.[44] Wheat imports from outside the British Isles averaged only 3 per cent of consumption, 1811–30.[45] 'Britain was largely self-sufficient in "temperate" products such as grain, meat and dairy produce . . . until the later 1830s.'[46] Britain was not a significant importer of basic foods in 1780 or 1800, and in any case wheat imports, such as they were, came more from Europe than the New World. Pomeranz has therefore to focus on outsourced products that indirectly affected food supply—cotton and timber—and on sugar, which he claims made a transition from luxury food to basic food around this time. He calculates that sugar supplied 4 per cent of British calories in 1800 and 22 per cent by 1900. The latter figure is scarcely believable and is too late anyway, while the former is insignificant.[47] Furthermore, over the nineteenth century, European sugar beet increasingly

replaced tropical sugar cane in supplying Britain's sweet tooth—sugar ceased to be a New World bonus.[48] Like sugar, cotton was not something that Britain produced itself, but Pomeranz suggests that cotton imports replaced wool-growing acreages, freeing them up for food production. He calculates that Britain's cotton imports in 1815 of 100 million lbs saved 9 million acres of sheep farming land, or almost a third of England. On this basis, the 1,000 million lbs imported in 1861 would have saved 90 million acres, or roughly three Englands—a bonus indeed. Again, the figure is not credible. Cotton did not replace wool (Britain's raw wool consumption multiplied six and a half times in the period 1800–1900[49]) but added a new mass-consumption textile to it—cheap silk as it were. Moreover, much of the cotton Britain imported was of course re-exported as fabric.

Pomeranz is on firmer ground with timber, which constituted as much as half of Britain's imports by weight around 1800. These imports may indeed have freed up a substantial acreage for farming. But Britain had been importing large amounts of timber since the seventeenth century—it was no new development in 1780 or 1800 or 1820. What did change, as we have seen, was the source of supply, in 1808, when access to Britain's traditional Scandinavian suppliers was blocked by Napoleon's continental system. British North American supplies merely replaced Baltic supplies for the first few years but from 1815, when the Baltic came back on stream, they added to them—providing genuinely fresh 'ghost acres' for the first time. The new supply was specifically tailored to the British market, to a greater extent than the Baltic, which also supplied parts of continental Europe. This was one of two early examples of 're-colonial outsourcing'. The other was wool. Britain was a leading producer of this, but faced growing demand for mutton, and good wool sheep did not make good meat sheep. 'So long as Englishmen are fond of fat mutton they must not expect to grow fine wool.'[50] But Britain was importing only 5 per cent of its wool in 1806,[51] from Spain and Germany, and as we have seen Australian supplies, and wool imports generally, did not become really significant until the 1840s. On the whole, it seems to me, Pomeranz has got the right thesis but the wrong timing. From 1808, with timber, and from the 1840s, with wool, Britain drew on its settler colonies for 'ghost acres'—acres that had been transformed by re-colonization into virtual British acres, virtual hinterlands of London. But there remains a missing piece in my hypothesis too. The acres of farmland freed by timber imports from Canada were not

enough to make up Britain's food deficit, 1815–40, and major outsourcing of wool came too late. The missing piece is Ireland.

Shorn of retrospect, the eighteenth-century Irish economy appears to have been moderately healthy with fluctuating, but generally growing, linen and cotton trades centred on Belfast and a thriving provisions trade centred on Cork, supplying the British army, navy, and merchant marine with salt beef and pork. Mixed farming plus the potato fed the population (4 million people in 1790) reasonably successfully and though Catholic-Irish owned very little land, they did have small rented plots and their landlords did need their labour. Food exports to Britain itself were limited. Livestock exports to Britain were banned to protect British farmers from competition until 1758, and all restrictions on trade were not removed until 1824. Reactions to the rising of 1798 and the parliamentary union of 1801 led to 'a shift in economic decision-making from Dublin to London',[52] and this may have helped trigger a transformation of Irish agriculture during the nineteenth century, tailoring it to Britain's needs. From about 1800, Irish farming increasingly split into two: a subsistence sector feeding the poor Catholic masses on potatoes, and an export sector meeting Britain's shortfall in food. Between 1785 and 1815, Britain's food imports from Ireland increased fivefold in value, and surged even more from 1815.[53]

One crucial flow was wheat and other grains. In 1815, Ireland supplied 57% of Britain's wheat imports; in the mid-1820s, 70%; in the mid-1830s, 90%.[54] By 1845, 40% of Ireland's wheat production was exported to Britain.[55] Sailing ships were satisfactory transport for grain, but this was less true for live animals. Exports of these from Ireland to Britain were limited until 1815, to a maximum of 80,000 beasts—scarcely a snack for proliferating urban carnivores.[56] From 1816, however, steam came to the import rescue, effectively bridging the Irish Sea by the 1820s. A voyage that could take up to seven days under sail was reduced to a reliable fourteen hours. Recent research on Irish shipping shows 'the increasing orientation of the Irish economy towards Britain'. 'In the 1830s nearly half of all the steamship tonnage that entered British ports, coastal *and* foreign, came from Ireland.' Live animals now began to pour across the Irish Sea. 'In the 1830s and 1840s . . . Ireland was regularly shipping 100,000 [cattle] beasts a year to Britain. In addition, 200,000 sheep and lambs and 3–400,000 pigs were being exported, trades which had hardly existed before the 1820s.'[57] Wheat and meat were joined by butter, cheese, and eggs—between 60 and 90 million eggs a year in the mid-1830s. In all, Ireland contributed

70 per cent of Britain's basic food imports in 1815, and 75 per cent in 1825.[58] It was Ireland that made up the difference between British food output and food consumption during the first decades of the Industrial Revolution.

Unlike grain farming, this new livestock trade did not need much Catholic cottier labour, but it did need land. Poor Catholics became increasingly marginalized in terms of the export economy, and increasingly dependent on the potato, while the best farmland fed England—hence the terrible consequences of the Potato Famine of 1846–7. 'Total Irish exports in 1845 could have fed over two million people.'[59] They did feed over 2 million people, but the people were English, not Irish. In short, Britain 'recolonized' Ireland from about 1800, but in contrast to the settler newlands, the mass of the people were not part of the re-colonial political economy. They lacked the leverage of newland settlers, and experienced recolonization's costs without its benefits. After the Famine and the abolition of the Corn Laws in 1846, the flow of Irish wheat to Britain diminished as cheaper alternatives became available. By 1900, Ireland's wheat acreage was only 10 per cent of that in 1850. But the flow of animals continued and increased, peaking at 2 million beasts, or 75 per cent of Ireland's output, in the 1890s.[60] Between that decade and 1914, conditions for poor Irish Catholics, much diminished in number by famine deaths and emigration, improved and many received back their lands in freehold.[61] In the first half of the nineteenth century, Catholic Irish were treated as semi-savages—marginalized indigenous peoples; by the early twentieth century, they were treated as semi-settlers. But the recolonization of Ireland did provide some crucial 'import rescue' for Britain from 1815. Import figures for England or Britain conceal the fact that it was not until the 1840s that imports of basic foods from anywhere other than Ireland became consistently significant. The transformation of Ireland into a virtual hinterland of London began a process in which Britain increasingly drew its food from overseas. This 'outsourcing' may not have caused the industrial revolution, but it did permit it to continue.

Britain's population kept growing, as did the number, appetites, and surplus cash of the urban carnivores, and from the 1840s Irish food was no longer enough. London's population quadrupled between 1820 and 1900, to 6 million people. Britain turned to multiple overseas sources—European, American, and colonial—for the necessary increases in its food supply. Neighbours in continental Europe were obvious suppliers, and they were important between 1846 and 1875: livestock from France and Germany;

butter and cheese from the Netherlands; wheat from Prussia and Russia.[62] Butter and cheese imports from continental Europe to Britain tripled between 1850 and 1870.[63] Livestock imports were negligible until 1844, then grew to 200,000 beasts by 1850, 400,000 by 1860, and 700,000 by 1864, when the continent supplied 10 per cent of Britain's beef and 5 per cent of its mutton.[64] One European country, Denmark, became a long-term, Anglo-adapted food supplier. Denmark underwent something like a re-colonial transformation, but without the colonization, and without the brutally high costs of the Irish trial run. Even in the 1860s, 5 per cent of Britain's grain imports and 15 per cent of its live cattle imports came from Denmark, and thereafter Denmark comprehensively converted its economy to suit the British food market. It imported British breeds of pigs and dairy cattle to improve productivity and adjust it to British tastes. It transformed its infrastructure and its mix of farm products to serve this trade; and it accepted a high degree of dependence on agriculture and on the British market. The Danish government built a whole new port for the British trade between 1868 and 1878.[65] Denmark increasingly specialized in bacon and butter for Britain. In 1871, butter comprised 10% of Danish agricultural output and pork 12%. By 1900, the figures were 44% and 24%.[66] By this time, Britain took 75% of Denmark's food exports, which amounted to 60% of its total exports.[67] But even Denmark was not a perfectly reliable outsource. Its increasingly populous and powerful neighbour, Germany, wanted food too, and Germany invaded Denmark twice in seventy-five years—in 1865 and 1940.

The rest of continental Europe was a still more problematic food supplier. Unlike Denmark and the Anglo newlands, France and Germany did not import British breed-stock or embrace permanent dependence on the British market but exported surpluses of what they had, when they had it. Prussian and Russian grain exports depended on good local harvests, and on the vagaries of international politics.[68] The Crimean War of 1854–6 interrupted the flow of Russian wheat, and there were several subsequent Russian war-scares over rivalries in central Asia. By 1913, only 5 per cent of Britain's grain imports came from Europe.[69] Added to this, Britons were not known for culinary adventurism. They were particularly suspicious of foreign meat. Meat from non-Anglo sources was more likely to encounter restraints on the grounds of real or imagined disease. French and German cattle seemed scrawny compared to selectively bred British bovines.[70] Their standard seemed 'very much below that of domestic animals'. 'A great deal

of uncertainty surrounded the trade in European cattle.'[71] In 1847, the Royal Navy took the bold step of importing tinned beef from Galatz in what is now Romania, then still under Ottoman Turkish nominal rule. The supplier, Stefan Goldner, did his best, marketing his product from an address in Houndsditch and changing his name to Stephen. But the discovery of offal in his tins provoked a moral panic. A parliamentary select committee raised 'the possibility of sabotage in his factory at Galatz' by 'disgruntled workers', which seems an unlikely form of industrial action in the Ottoman Empire. Goldner lost the contract and the navy replaced his beef first with American and then with Australian tinned meat. Whether there was anything actually wrong with Goldner's beef, or whether it was simply not British enough, is an interesting question.[72]

All in all, Britain preferred to be supplied by fellow Anglophones. One source of indirect food supply was Australasian wool, which as we have seen provided a substantial and increasing proportion of British wool consumption from the early 1840s. This enabled British sheep farmers to shift emphasis from wool to meat, so boosting domestic mutton production until the 1870s. Canadian wheat imports were quite significant in the 1850s and 1860s, as was Canadian cheese, live cattle, and bacon from the 1870s. But the main Anglophone British food supplier of the later nineteenth century was the American West. Significant food exports from the United States to Britain began after the bust of 1837, and came initially from the Old Northwest. Grain exports increased in 1847 after the abolition of the Corn Laws, and then fell back before surging again during the Crimean War, but until 1860 they did not normally exceed a modest 100,000 tons. Exports of cured meat—salt beef, bacon, and salt pork from Cincinnati—began in 1845 and were also modest, not exceeding 20,000 tons before 1860. There were teething problems with this most sensitive of foods. 'The Britons would have none but the best.' 'The first pork sent . . . was of such poor quality that it did not give satisfaction and . . . it was only when packers, cutters, and hewers had been brought over from Cork and Liverpool that the products were packed in a manner satisfactory to the fastidious Britons.'[73] Londoners disliked fatty American bacon, which was consumed by the Irish instead, who sent their own leaner bacon on to London.[74] It was not until 'the US curers had taken the trouble to prepare a product suited to local tastes' that these problems were overcome. British breed-stock, grading systems, and processing techniques were imported. Cincinnati and Chicago learned English ham and bacon cures more easily

than continental Europe, and found it easier to use English brand names such as 'Welsh Wiltshire'.[75]

After the bust of 1857, American food exports to Britain surged, despite the competing demands of civil war armies. 'During 1861–2 a large proportion of the hogs packed in Chicago were cut for the London and Liverpool markets.'[76] Freight rates across the Atlantic dropped 75 per cent 1860s–1900 as improving steamships virtually bridged that ocean.[77] After the bust of 1873, American food exports surged afresh. Grain exports regularly exceeded 1 million tons from 1873, reaching up to 4 million tons around 1900, most bound for Britain. 'By the 1870s, over 50 percent of grain imports into Britain originated in North America and this increased to nearly 70 percent by 1900.'[78] This replaced not only alternative outsources, such as Russia, but also British wheat acres, which declined sharply from the 1870s. British wheat output plummeted 60 per cent, 1873–94.[79] America sent Britain over 40,000 tons of cheese and butter as early as 1863–4, and amounts grew thereafter. American cheese production adapted to the British market and depended on it. First New York and then Wisconsin produced cheddar, and 'more than 75% of the total cheese output of the United States were exported' to Britain.[80] American livestock began replacing continental European animals in the British market from 1868, peaking in the 1900s at 400,000 beasts a year.[81] In the 1870s, livestock were joined by chilled beef as the refrigeration revolution began. A live cow cost five times as much to ship across the Atlantic as a dead cow.[82] Meat exports from America to Britain rocketed from 40,000 to 400,000 tons during the 1870s alone. 'By 1890, the US contribution to the British meat supply had become substantial, representing over 25 per cent of the total meat on the British market. In that year, the meat supplied to Britain by the United States was nearly equal to the combined amounts from all other foreign countries and Ireland.'[83] Between about 1860 and 1900 the Midwestern farmer was dependent on the British market, and Britain was dependent on American food. A re-colonial relationship between the two countries intensified in this period, and is discussed in Chapter 16.

Britain imported a lot of wood and wool from its settlement colonies in the first half of the nineteenth century, but not a lot of food. From the 1850s, this began to change with the advent of Canadian and Australian wheat exports. From the 1870s, as we have seen, other foods began to be exported in significant quantities, such as Canadian cheese, bacon, and livestock and Australian canned meat. Except for a surge during World War I,

American food supplies to Britain diminished from about 1900, because the United States' own burgeoning population and living standards absorbed more and more of its agricultural output. From 1900, the Dominions replaced the United States as Britain's chief food supplier. After the busts of 1907 and 1913, massive supplies of Canadian wheat, carefully bred and graded for the British market, came on stream. 'The Empire taken as a whole . . . emerged as the largest and most dynamic wheat exporter and built up sufficient capacity to supply Britain entirely on its own.'[84] The refrigeration revolution extended to Australasia in 1880, and imports of dairy products and sheep-meat from this source began. Australasia supplied 20.8 per cent of British butter imports in 1913, and 51 per cent in 1925.[85] Canada replaced the United States as chief cheddar supplier in the 1880s, and was in turn replaced by New Zealand in the 1900s.

Beef chilled better than it froze, but chilled beef decayed quickly and Australasia was too far away for this trade until the 1930s. Argentina, the 'adopted dominion', slotted into this niche, a matter discussed in Chapter 18. But Australasian mutton flooded into Britain, especially London. Between 1880 and 1916 Britain imported 225 million frozen sheep and lambs—150 million from Australia and New Zealand and 70 million from South America, mainly Argentina. London carnivores consumed 134 million of the Australasian sheep and very few from anywhere else. South American meat went to the provinces.[86] 'The provinces tended to prefer leaner Argentine beef and lamb. There was a broadly similar division in preferences for Danish and New Zealand butter. The former was preferred in the north; the latter in the south. There appears to be no really satisfactory explanation for this regional variation in consumer tastes.' The bias of British meat and dairy imports towards London, and London's bias to dominion supply, persisted as late as 1954, when 42% of all British butter imports, 61% of cheese, 63% of frozen lamb, and 80% of chilled and frozen beef (now from Australia and Canada) went to London.[87] 'The London market was, to a greater extent than in the country at large, supplied by foreign meat.'[88]

But was the meat really foreign? Reports on London's meat supply routinely distinguished between 'American', 'Colonial', and 'foreign'.[89] Britons were much happier being supplied by the Anglo-Wests. In 1897, the House of Commons debated the issue, with A. J. Balfour stating that America would never allow the transatlantic flow of food to fail 'as it would affect her interests, apart from her inherent sympathy for

Britain'. Sir Charles Dilke, Mr Greater Britain himself, comforted worried colleagues by noting that imports of Russian wheat were declining, while those from North America were growing. 'If the United States, Canada and Australia can feed us', he said, 'we are independent of Russia, as the interests and advantages of those countries would be so strong that we could rely upon them to supply us.'[90] By 1914, Andrew Bonar Law 'would willingly accept reliance on Canada for the whole of Britain's wheat supplies'.[91] By this time, the dominions supplied almost half of Britain's wheat imports, 82 per cent of its cheese, and around three-quarters of its sheep-meat.[92] 'For townspeople—over 80 per cent of the population—food came to Britain in ships.'[93] On the other side of the seas, feeding Britain in general and London in particular became the white empire's main business. In 1910–12, 60 per cent of all exports from settler colonies went to Britain. 'Surprisingly [sic] . . . the figures for the dependent Empire are much smaller.'[94]

Between 1815 and 1914, then, Britain increasingly outsourced its basic food supplies, to a much greater extent than any large nation had ever done before. First Ireland, then parts of Europe, then the American West, and then the British West became London's virtual hinterlands. Without this, it is hard to see how industrializing Britain, with its rising population and rising consumption expectations, could have taken the strain of sharply diminishing per capita food supplies. Outsourcing worked best when it was accompanied by a comprehensive transformation of the supplying economy, and this in turn worked best when it took the form of recolonization. Except in Ireland and Denmark, explosive colonization was a precondition of recolonization, rapidly creating a whole new socio-economy. This is not to suggest that hyper-colonization caused industrialization, but it did sustain it. Industrialization in turn did not cause hyper-colonization, but it did supercharge it, notably with steam transport. British re-colonial outsourcing had another whole set of profound implications: it helped create that strange far-flung entity best known as Greater Britain.

Notes

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15

The Rise and Fall of Greater Britain

It is easy to assume that great cities export mainly manufactured goods in exchange for their imports of food and raw materials. London was an important producer of consumer goods, some of which it exported. The notion that the Industrial Revolution passed London by has recently been convincingly debunked.[1] Yet it remains true that heavy industry was increasingly delegated to auxiliary cities like Manchester, Birmingham, and Glasgow. The London shipbuilding industry, for example, collapsed in the 1860s because it could not compete with Scottish shipyards.[2] London's leading exports were in fact financial and cultural services and products—credit, insurance, broking services, books, plays, newspapers, journals, art, images, toys, games, fashionable clothing and the like. London dominated the British press. 'The capital's virtual monopoly of the news media reinforced metropolitan dominance over the regions.'[3] Among London's cultural exports to its fully integrated hinterlands were widely shared collective identities. This is not a matter of economic determinism; it was not simply that people identified with their economic hegemon in mercenary fashion. Rather, it was a function of the fact that the transport and communication networks that supplied and informed London worked both ways. They created a zone of mutual interaction, embracing all the regions they integrated. Such zones of interaction are necessary prerequisites of collective identity. 'The nation is only created by public communication about it.'[4] In the century 1750–1850, networks centred on London spread first throughout England and then throughout Britain, and so helped forge a new British collective identity.[5] In the century 1850–1950, London performed the same service for a wider entity, and it was not the Empire as a whole.

Greater Britons

One cannot go far in talking about British collective identity before engaging with Linda Colley's outstanding treatment of the subject. Colley argues that between 1707 and 1837, England, Scotland, and Wales 'acquired some common sense of Britishness' that 'must be called British nationalism'. It was 'an invention forged above all by war'—by the endemic conflict with France in particular.[6] A quick trawl through our old friend *The Times* Digital Archive, searching 'titles, citations, abstracts' only, supports Colley up to a point. In the late 1780s and 1790s, the word 'English' outnumbered the word 'British', but in the 1800s decade the use of 'British' rose to over twice that of 'English', and remained well ahead in the next decade. This may well reflect the unifying death-struggle with Napoleonic France, as per Colley. But 'English' regained the lead thereafter, and extended it to the 1860s, when 'English' was used over three times as much as 'British' (3,726 to 1,058). This is less convenient for Colley. Semantic Britonism did rise during the Napoleonic Wars, but faded thereafter. Colley's Britons, perhaps, were temporary, reverting to being English, Scots, and Welsh after the unifying ogre of Napoleonic France had disappeared. In the 1870s, 'British' pulled back towards parity, but 'English' still led by about 50 per cent. In the 1880s, 'British' drew ahead and now it continued to do so. In the decade of the 1900s, 'British' was used almost five times as often as 'English' (3,724 to 796). In the next decade, that of World War I, use of 'British' rose to almost seven times that of 'English'. If *The Times* is anything to go by, war did intensify Britonism, but the long-term triumph of the concept dates from the 1880s, and so cannot be explained primarily by wars.

The shift towards 'Britain' in the minds of Old Britons seems to correlate with the rise of a still broader conception of Britonism, which was associated with changes in attitudes to empire, or at least to the white empire. In 1868, Charles Dilke coined the term 'Greater Britain' in his book of that name. The book was well reviewed, but its title did not enter the language immediately. In the 1870s, the phrase 'Greater Britain' appeared on only seventeen articles in *The Times*, usually referring to Dilke's book. In the 1880s, usage rose to 136 and then to 344 in the 1890s, sufficient to suggest that Greater Britain had made its way into at least middle-class conceptual language. An 1886 *Times* article referred to Britain plus settler colonies as

'what is now generally called Greater Britain'.[7] 'Greater Britain' occasionally included the United States, but it seldom included the black empire. Most often it was applied to Britain plus what became the Dominions. A parallel development was the formation of a 'Colonial Society' in London in 1868, founded to promote great unity and understanding between Britain and its settler colonies. Many of the founders were themselves settlers or ex-settlers. Other organizations with similar aims emerged such as the Navy League and the Emigration League.[8] These developments merged with a changing perception of geo-politics and global space. 'Steam and telegraph have abolished distance.'[9] German unification in 1871 and the rise of Russia and the United States created a 'feeling that the day of small nations was passing away'. Some Britons, old and new, concluded that: 'only by gathering together the several nations of the Empire can we cope in the international balance of power'.[10] 'Somehow the empire had to be reorganized so that it could continue to compete with states like Germany and America that had huge resource bases and growing populations. Many believed that the way forward lay in drawing the self-governing Dominions closer to Britain in order to augment its strength.'[11] 'Imperial' political federation was advocated increasingly loudly, with an 'imperial' customs union as the first step, most famously by Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1895 to 1903. A series of conferences were held in London, beginning in 1887, where the premiers of the settler colonies met with old British politicians.

More 'Greater British' tracts were published, searching for terms that encompassed Britons abroad as well as at home. In 1891, M. H. Hervey, who had spent twelve years in Australia, advocated the term 'Britannic', like 'Germanic', a suggestion taken up by Richard Jebb around 1913, and sporadically revived thereafter.[12] Perhaps the most famous tract was J. R. Seeley's *Expansion of England*, in 1883. 'Whether good or bad . . . the growth of Greater Britain is an event of enormous magnitude . . . here too is a United States. Here too is a great homogenous people, one in blood, language, religion and laws, but dispersed over a boundless space.'[13] The great futures envisaged by Anglo-Wests undergoing explosive colonization were collectivized into one Greater British whole. Chamberlain predicted in 1889 that Greater Britain would have 'an Anglo-Saxon population of something like 100 millions of beings' in fifty years, which was roughly correct.[14] Twenty years earlier, Dilke had prophesied that 'no possible series of events can prevent the English race itself in 1970 numbering

300 millions of beings . . . Italy, Spain, France, Russia, become pygmies by the side of such a people'.[15] Others thought even bigger. 'The British people were now [1897] a hundred million strong [sic], and it was estimated that in another hundred years they would be a thousand million strong.'[16] 'Imperialism took on an increasingly popular mantle in British politics', writes Paul Rich. 'It served in effect as the surrogate nationalism which had not been fully formulated for domestic British politics. The notion of a "Greater Britain" of Anglo-Saxon nations had been championed since the 1860s by a broad spectrum of opinion.'[17]

How far Greater Britonism stretched beyond intellectual circles is a controversial matter. The concept segued into 'popular imperialism', and some dismiss this as a force in British culture. From the 1880s, however, the evidence is against them. John Mackenzie and others have documented a widespread popular imperialism in Britain from that time.[18] British school texts began to emphasize the colonies, especially the settlement colonies. Emigrants to these were 'friends who have gone from among us, yet still seem to be part of our nation'.[19] No less than fifty voluntary organizations emerged to encourage emigration to these white colonies, rather than to the United States. In the 1900s they, or the wider shift in attitudes that they symbolized, at last succeeded in diverting emigration from the United States to the Dominions. Between 1891 and 1900, only 28 per cent of British emigrants went to the settler colonies, the rest mainly to the United States. In 1901–10, for the first time, a majority of emigrating Britons—63 per cent of 3 million—went to the Dominions. In 1913, the figure was 78 per cent.[20] It was not as though the United States had no booms for Anglos to go to—we have seen that Southern California and the Pacific Northwest were booming massively at this time. The shift in preferred destinations is likely to have been related to the rise of semantic Britonism and Greater Britonism, and perhaps also to the more mundane but related fact that migration to the Dominions was increasingly 'expected to be no more traumatic than migration from Yorkshire to Lancashire'.[21] We saw in Chapter 11 that New Zealand successfully marketed its lamb in London as 'British from New Zealand'. Surely this implies some Old British mass buy-in to the concept of Greater Britain? The Old British 'consciousness of a "Greater Britain" ' around 1900 is 'often missing from, or passed over with embarrassment in, the existing literature'.[22] Even the current resurgence of interest in the idea of Greater Britain does not do the reality justice.[23] Historians focus on the rhetoric, and the fact is that this

failed to produce a politically federated entity or even a customs union. But Greater Britain was not just a failed idea. It had no formal shape, no federal constitution, yet it was an important economic and cultural reality, a creature of recolonization.

As we have seen, wood, wool, and food flowed into Britain in greatly increasing quantities in the nineteenth century. Between 1800 and 1900, the volume of imports into Britain increased twentyfold.[24] As the early twentieth century unfolded, more and more of this vast flow came from the British Dominions. These products, and the ships that carried them, comprised the economic and technological flesh and bones of Greater Britain. The ships also carried some of the cultural vectors of the system, such as books, mail, and newspapers, and more were carried by new technologies of interaction such as submarine cables and, later, airwaves and aircraft. London, centre of the system, was not only the political capital of Britain and the British Empire, but also the cultural and economic capital of Greater Britain. It bound that entity together with webs of words and images, a service it had earlier performed for Old Britain and Old Britonism. Recent research has unravelled Greater British press and broadcasting systems, based in London. 'During the 1840s a ''steamship press'' developed in London to reciprocate the flow of printed news arriving from the colonies.' London mediated between Greater Britain and Old Britain. Reuters News Service, founded in 1851 and based in London, collectivized the high cost of telegraphed news and helped create 'an imperial press system', that ensured 'that newspapers in the colonies received news from a British perspective'. 'The emergence of an imperial press system helped to reinforce London's position as the news hub of the British Empire and further displaced some parts of the Empire from the attention of the British public, perpetuating and enduring pattern; coverage of events in tropical Africa, and in Britain's Asian territories apart from India, remained sporadic and limited in scope.' The same bias applied to British radio broadcasting when it flowered in the 1930s. BBC reports from Africa or Asia were 'comparatively rare'. 'It was the ''white population under the British flag'' that the BBC sought to reach when it established an Empire Service of broadcasts in 1932.'[25]

Around 1903, 12.5 million lbs of mail left Britain each year for the Empire, mostly the white empire, reciprocating the inward flow of food. Only 3.25 million lbs of mail went the other way. A survey of 1907 postal information reveals more of the pattern. India received 3,675,000 lbs of

mail from Britain, and returned 818,000 lbs. Canada received over 5 million lbs of mail and returned 1.36 million. Per thousand of population, Indians received 11.6 lbs of mail and sent 2.59 lbs, while Canadians received 675 lbs and sent 185 lbs. In terms of mail received per capita, Canada's link with Britain was fifty-eight times as strong as India's.[26] The Dominions received more letters than the black empire, and they received more books too, even books about themselves. Britain controlled the South African book trade. 'Until about 1930 most Canadian publishers were agents or incorporated branch firms of famous British houses.'[27] Australia and New Zealand had quite healthy local publishing industries during their boom years. From the 1890s, however, there was an 'increasing dominance of the Australian market by British publishers'. By 1930, the Australasian book trade was 'almost entirely in British hands'. Even maps and wall charts were 'chiefly from the United Kingdom'.[28] None of this is to say that London's informational hegemony was complete or uncontested. Local publishing and other discourse continued. US publications and seductive cinema also proliferated, providing populists and young people in Greater Britain with a denomination of dissent. But, between the 1890s and the 1930s, these inputs were outranked in the Dominions by London's cultural web. Books, news, mail, and the like were the nervous system of Greater Britain, and as in old Britain they could carry identity as well as information.

The histories of Australia, New Zealand, and Canada as independent nations share a curious characteristic: nobody knows when they began. 'If asked when and how their country became independent, most Australians can only cough and stammer . . . some will point to the federation of the Australian colonies in 1901, some to Gallipoli in 1915, some to Australia's turn to the United States for protection in 1941.'[29] Two studies, published in 1988 and 1999, have equally emphatically dated Australian independence to 1931 and 1986, and a case can also be made for the 1960s.[30] Similar lists could be made for Canada and New Zealand, and perhaps South Africa. The difficulty in identifying national birthdays is arguably explained by the gradual, stop–start growth of independent nationhood, or conversely by the gradual decline of pro-British sentiment as time increasingly intervened between Dominion denizens and their motherland. The trouble with this is that Dominion Britonism seems actually to have *increased* in the early twentieth century. Until the busts of the 1880s and 1890s, with some lag thereafter, Australian and New Zealand independent nationalisms were quite feisty young beasts.[31] They were not necessarily anti-British, although

the Australian *Bulletin* did call Empire Day 'Vampire Day', but envisaged great futures independent of and equal, even superior to, Old Britain. The busts shattered confidence, and the tightening re-colonial relationship with Britain and its cultural webs offered an alternative identity, as Dominion Britons, provincial but privileged by good access to British money, migrants, and markets. In a seminal article published in 1971, or rather an article that should have been seminal, Douglas Cole described the process.

> A New Australian Man, a coming Australian race created by climate, soil, and social system, became strong in the later part of the nineteenth century . . . The idea, however, never took more than a marginal hold upon Australians. The idea of a new racial type was more than counterbalanced by the continued, strengthened, and competing forces of white and British [identities] . . . The new Australian type faded after 1900 before these competing ethnic ideas.[32]

Here, in some ways, was a provincial collective identity. But it made the Dominions provinces of a superpower; hinterlands of the world's greatest city; and co-owners—*not* mere subjects—of the world's largest empire. 'It was a Britishness . . . tailored to the outlook, aspirations and anxieties of a settler-colonial population, but it was also crucially an expansive concept that was *believed* to be shared by fellow Britons around the globe.'[33]

We can probe these issues a little deeper in the case of Australia, whose Britonism to the 1960s is a matter of recent debate. Historians Kosmas Tshokhas and Neville Meaney can be taken to represent the opposing views. According to Tshokhas, 'imperial sentiment and Anglo-Saxon solidarity counted for little when it came to money and markets'.[34] Using mainly economic and political evidence, he revives the idea of the gradual evolution of un-British nationalism. 'From federation in 1901 the new Australian Commonwealth built on its political independence from the United Kingdom.'[35] Through both world wars, economic policy was 'driven more by Australian nationalism than by loyalty to the Empire'.[36] Tshokas makes three key claims. One is that the Australian wool industry increasingly disengaged from Britain and became Australian-controlled and international in its markets, so decolonizing the economy. There is some truth in this but, as we saw in Chapter 11, wool was no longer Australia's only leading export after the 1890s, and the British market remained the bedrock of the wool trade in any case. According to another expert, widening wool markets 'did not simply represent the weakening of ties with Britain as some economic historians have supposed'.[37] Tshokhas's

second claim is that Australia's leaders fiercely protected its economic and strategic interests against Britain from 1914 at the latest, for example by obtaining good deals on wartime trade with Britain under the so-called 'commandeer' arrangement. 'Australian governments did not behave in a subservient, compliant manner.'[38] This is a little hard to accept of Viscount Bruce and Sir Robert Menzies, who wanted to name the Australian dollar the 'Royal' in the 1960s. Yet it may be true in general. But British and Australian interests were not seen as conflicting. There was 'a powerful sentimental assumption that the interests of Australia and the British World *ought* ultimately to coincide'.[39] New Zealand obtained the same commandeer deals as Australia without the same political assertiveness. In any case, in his most recent publication, Tshokhas seems to retreat from his more extreme positions, for example by accepting Australian 'economic interdependence with Britain'.[40]

Tshokhas's third claim is that Australia industrialized from World War I, despite Britain's opposition, and so further decolonized. This is an important issue, and in fact all the Dominions eventually protected their domestic manufacturing industries from outside competition, including British competition, using tariffs or import controls or both. The imported content of manufactured goods in Canada fell from 23% to 16%, 1913–37; in Australia from 39% to 25%; in New Zealand from 44% to 40%; and in South Africa from 97% to 60%.[41] Protection of local manufacturing in the two latter Dominions increased from 1938. Although British branch plants could get around these barriers, and tariffs against British goods were consistently lower than tariffs in general, 'British preference', this did hurt British manufactured exports to some degree. But it also enabled the Dominions to generate an export surplus to repay British loans, to pay interest, and to pay dividends on British investments. In the Greater British political economy, the old British finance sector outranked the old British manufacturing sector. As Peter Cain and Anthony Hopkins have concluded, 'peripheral [i.e. Dominion] industry was not suppressed for the sake of metropolitan capitalism; instead metropolitan industry . . . was to some extent sacrificed to the interests of metropolitan finance.'[42]

Neville Meaney, in striking contrast to Tshokhas, states bluntly that 'the evidence that Australians thought of themselves primarily as British is overwhelming'. 'This Britishness was probably stronger in Australia than in Britain itself; Australians had, in the words of the original "Advance Australia Fair", a "British soul".' 'British race patriotism was dominant

until the 1970s.'[43] Meaney goes on to claim that, nationalism being 'a jealous god', this left no room for an autochthonous Australian identity. I would not go so far; people can have more than one collective identity, especially if plural identities can telescope into each other. One could be Scots and British, Welsh and British; why not Australian and British? But on the whole, the evidence does appear to support Meaney. Leading politicians repeatedly voiced Australian British sentiments, and they cannot have been too far out of kilter with their publics or they would not have been leading politicians. 'The British peoples form one great nation', thought Viscount Bruce.[44] In 1914, according to another Australian prime minister, 'Australia today is as truly British as Britain itself.'[45] According to yet another, Billy Hughes, Australians were actually 'more British than the people of Great Britain'.[46] In 1938, Australians were 'in a unique degree dependent on the continued existence of Great Britain, and that is why I say I am an Imperialist as well as an Australian'.[47] In 1948, thought Menzies, 'the boundaries of Great Britain are not on the Kentish coast but at Cape York and Invercargill'.[48] As late as 1958, H. V. Evatt, leader of the Labor Party, declared that 'to Australia and New Zealand British stock was vitally important and should have preference'.[49] It was not just politicians. In an opinion poll in late 1947, 65 per cent of Australians preferred to keep a British nationality rather than have a separate Australian one.[50] The Australian Broadcasting Corporation, like its New Zealand equivalent, condemned local accents in broadcasters 'well into the 1960s'.[51] Australian cross-dressing comic Barry Humphries reveals the mood in early 1950s Melbourne:

> With Peter Dawson on the radio singing 'Glorious Devon' and 'Old Father Thames', and the young Princess Elizabeth soon to be enthroned, we had little or no interest in our vast and inhospitable hinterland. When I left school, I could point to a map of England and show you exactly where Huddersfield and Wolverhampton were, but I hadn't the faintest idea where Alice Springs was, and had never heard of Ayer's Rock.[52]

I have made the case elsewhere for a staunch New Zealand Britonism, intensifying from the 1880s and persisting until at least the 1960s.[53] As for Canada, Anglo-Canadians had two special incentives towards a Greater British collective identity: French and US neighbours. A strong British connection buttressed Anglo-Canadian hegemony over the Quebecois, and provided an antidote to creeping Americanization. Again, Britonism

was not a given which gradually diminished over time. It seems to have competed with an independent nationalism that emerged from the booms of mid-century and revived with the booms of the 1900s, associated with the concepts of 'Canada First', and 'the True North strong and free'.[54] The latter concept parlayed Nordic racialism and climatic determinism into a recipe for Canadian superiority. 'Canada's unique character derived from her northern location, her severe winters, and her heritage of ''northern races''.' As in Australasia, this notion of a great and independent future was not wholly incompatible with Britonism. Canada would be 'the Great Britannic Empire of the North'.[55] But it did 'draw a line between Canadians loyal to their soil and those who place their citizenship in a subordinate or secondary position'.[56]

Such ideas seem to have declined in the 1870s and 1880s. In 1890, Charles Dilke visited Canada again and noticed 'less separatist feeling than in young Australia'.[57] Nationalism revived in the booming 1900s, but had to compete with 'the imperial attachment of the bulk of the English-Canadian population' and with a developing Canadian variant of Britonism which emphasized the United Empire Loyalist tradition.[58] According to this, the Loyalists were select stock, sifted out from disloyal and lower-calibre Americans, who underwrote Canadian Britishness. Again, the two identities were not seen as incompatible. The United Empire Loyalist Association, founded in Ontario in 1896, wanted 'a sound Canadian spirit throughout this portion of Greater Britain'.[59] Many were among 'those Canadians who joined to a Canadian patriotism, in which they yielded to none, the fervent hope that the future of Canada would be part of the future of Greater Britain'.[60] As recolonization set in anew before World War I, 'empire was becoming more, not less, of a force in Canadian affairs'.[61] 'Ethnic identity was not Canadian, but emphatically and intensely British . . . yet Canadian Britons were not simply Britons overseas; they were Canadian Britons with a deep attachment to Canada.'[62] Economic links with the United States strengthened in the 1920s, but as we saw in Chapter 13 the British connection reasserted itself in the 1930s. In that decade, 'state-school textbooks in western Canada expressed strong imperial attachments to British civilization and celebrated British army victories as their own . . . Canada was primarily a part of the Empire and being Canadian was similar to being Welsh, Manx, or from Yorkshire or Guernsey.'[63] 'Feelings of national and imperial unity coexisted, and seemed complementary, certainly to most English Canadians.'[64] Even after

economic decoupling from Britain did occur, around 1950, Canadian Britonism persisted. Recent research 'makes a persuasive case for the ongoing appeal of Britishness among English Canadians into the 1960s'.[65] The 1965 edition of a book of Canadian historical statistics used these categories: 'Foreign', 'Canadian', and 'Other British'.[66]

Better Britons

One consistent marker of an Anglo newland under recolonization was a racially exclusive immigration policy. From the 1880s to the 1960s, the British Dominions set up and maintained 'great white walls'.[67] Asians were the best-known victims of this prejudice, but the walls were not in fact strictly white. Eastern and Southern Europeans were kept out too. A few scholars have argued that the motivation was not racialist, but a desire for cultural homogeneity.[68] This is unconvincing. An illiterate Norwegian woodcutter who spoke no English was preferred to an equally illiterate, white, and monoglot Russian woodcutter from a few miles away. The 'logic' was racialist: Scandinavians and Germans were seen as kindred races to the English and Russians were not. 'Anglo-Saxonism' is the term normally used for this belief. But the social history of ideas does not care about logic, even the dubious logic of racialism. Increasingly, from the late nineteenth century, the 'kindred races' included Celts, who were emphatically not Anglo-Saxon. A concept of imagined racial kinship emerged which was sometimes labelled 'the British race', a notion no more reasonable than that of the 'Austro-Hungarian race'. Rational or not, the concept could be quite flexible and useful, even selectively inclusive. If one stressed their Norman and Breton origins, French Canadians were Nordic and Celtic too, and cousinhood was still more easily attached to the Dutch and German Afrikaners. Remarkably enough, an attempt was even made to Aryanize the Maori of New Zealand as sun-tanned whites.[69] But these spasms of inclusion should not obscure the fundamental racial exclusionism of Dominion immigration policy. The policy was not imposed by Britain, which on the contrary was politically embarrassed by explicit discrimination against Indians and Chinese, although Britain did put quite a lot of effort into encouraging British emigration to the Dominions. The Dominions cherished their racialist immigration barriers because they believed it kept them British, not just white. Overlooking its Irish, Australia claimed to be 98

per cent British; and New Zealand outbid this with 98.5 per cent. Racialist immigration policy underwrote a sense of kinship with Old Britain, creating a further web—of 'crimson threads'—to hold the Greater British system together. Conversely, extending immigration to non-traditional sources, even if they were still white, was a sign of decolonization.

Dominion Britons sometimes claimed superiority to Old Britons, let alone other races. New Zealand, Ontario, and South Australia all had myths of select stock that could be mobilized for this purpose. A bracing climate—bracingly cold or bracingly hot depending on whether you were Canadian or Australian—could also build Better Britons, as could the tough frontier environment in general, F. J. Turner-style. The other side of this coin was the idea that Old Britons were degenerating due to the decadent seductions of over-civilization, the propensity of the allegedly unfit lower classes to breed, and the unhealthy miasmas of excessive industrialization and urbanization. In this context, the Dominions could be portrayed as a new reservoir of British virility, preserving British virtues somewhat better than the old. Sporting victories over Old Britain were enlisted in this cause, as were the allegedly superior deeds of Dominion soldiers on shared battlefields. Old Britons did not necessarily accept this, and sneers about 'colonials' persisted. But they were no worse than sneers about Scots or Welsh, or even English provincials. Expatriate Better Britons had access to the most exclusive Old British circles, in art, literature, science, industry, the professions, the media, and politics. Claims of Better Britonism seem particularly shrill today, but they were quite important. Along with high Dominion living standards and high technological and cultural transfer, they make it hard to see the Greater British system as one of exploitative colonialism. Some Greater Britons even toyed with ideas of decentreing the Empire. Richard Jebb was not bothered by the possibility that 'in the fullness of time the children shall surpass their grey mother, in all save honour'.[70] In 1911, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies considered a partial Dominion takeover of the black empire with equanimity. 'It is not unreasonable to contemplate the ultimate absorption of the West Indies by Canada; of the Pacific Islands by Australia and New Zealand; of Rhodesia and the native protectorates (even of Nyasaland) by South Africa.'[71] According to this line of thinking, if Greater Britain had survived to the present, its capital would be moving from London to Vancouver about now. Certainly, the Dominions fought for Britain as though they co-owned it.

Linda Colley has made good use of the French wars of 1689–1815 to test the extent and intensity of English, Scots, and Welsh Britonism. In Chapter 7, we briefly used the American Civil War to test the 'Northernness' of Westerners. We found that Old Northwesterners fought as hard as Northeasterners, dying like Northerners because they thought they were Northerners as well as Westerners. Now we turn to the same exercise applied to World War I and Dominion Britonism. Between 1914 and 1918, the white Dominions enlisted 1.3 million soldiers, over a million of whom served overseas, mainly on the Western Front in France. Some 144,000 of these men were killed, which brutally demonstrates a high level of commitment—14.5 per cent of Australian soldiers died, compared to 11.8 per cent of Old British soldiers.[72] Canada and New Zealand introduced conscription, but the vast majority of their troops were volunteers, as were all Australia's. A substantial minority, especially of the Canadians, were British-born, but this was not true of the majority. Australia rejected conscription in two referenda, but the experts are unanimous in attributing this to factors such as the strength of trade unionism, rather than anti-war or anti-British sentiment. These Dominion soldiers added about 20 per cent to Britain's army, and perhaps more in effective fighting strength. Military superiority over Old Britons was a fundamental tenet of Better British mythology, and we should be sceptical of it. 'A certain mythic quality had been allowed to develop around the figure of the Dominion soldier.'[73] Yet many Old Britons, including the commanding general Douglas Haig, believed that Dominion troops did have an edge. They were physically bigger than Old Britons for one thing, and organized in 'national' divisions, which encouraged *esprit de corps*. Class barriers were less rigid, which meant that talent was more quickly promoted from the ranks.

Whatever the case with the question of quality, the 20 per cent Dominion bonus on troops mobilized understates their actual contribution to the British war effort. A higher proportion of Dominion than British troops served in combat units as against support services. The Dominion's economic input was also considerable. 'The combined domestic product of Canada, Australia and New Zealand in 1913 was almost 40% of Britain's, and amplified its war making power correspondingly.' 'Canadian wheat stood between Britain and starvation in 1917, and in that year Canada also produced between one-quarter and one-third of all the shells fired by British artillery in France.'[74] Because Dominion deployment to the Western Front was somewhat slower than that of Old Britain, Dominion troops

were particularly important in the decisive year of 1918. 'These soldiers, and the war economies behind them, made a difference—some would say a decisive difference—in the outcome of the war. They provided the back-up the German army never had.'[75] 'Australian and Canadian divisions formed the core of the great offensives that broke enemy resistance on the Western Front and in Palestine. By the end of the war Britain depended on its colonies to keep the impetus on the battlefield, to feed it, and to clothe it.'[76] These are not the conclusions of chest-thumping Dominion military historians, but of distinguished scholars Avner Offer and Jay Winter.

Historians discussing such issues often make the point that the Dominion contribution was matched by India, which also provided a million troops. As a test of Britonism, the key number is mobilization in proportion to population, and here India was obviously very far behind. Deaths in battle test commitment, and about one in twenty Indian soldiers died, compared to one in nine for the Dominions. Furthermore, the proportion of self-inflicted wounds amongst Indians seems to have been far higher than in the Dominion forces. Amongst Indian troops in 1917, 'between 25 and 50 percent of wounds were found to be "on left hand and foot, probably self-inflicted" '.[77] Any notion that this somehow denigrates Indians is totally misconceived. The Gurkhas of Nepal, who arguably gained some autonomy from their military collaboration, may have had some identity of interest with Britain, as might the Sikhs of the Punjab who were surrounded by rivals. Apart from that, why should Indian troops fight hard for a power that was exploiting them? For all the talk of Britain's civilizing mission and the benign Raj, millions of Indians died unaided in terrible famines in the late nineteenth century; barely 10 per cent were literate by 1911; and British soldiers were soon to be massacring unarmed Indians at Amritsar. Dominion membership of Greater Britain delivered high living standards, high literacy, and high technology and culture-transfer, a first-world lifestyle, as well as a wider sense of identity. Indian membership of the British Empire delivered none of these things. Hence the vast, but perfectly understandable, difference in wartime commitment.

The contribution of the Dominions in World War I substantially raised their status. This was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and the Statute of Westminster in 1931, which raised the Dominions to nominal equality with Britain. The term 'British Commonwealth', used occasionally from the 1880s, now became entrenched, and was normally applied

to Britain plus the white Dominions, with 'British Empire' sometimes reserved for the black colonies.[78] Talk of formal federation had died away. There had never been much chance of it because the Dominions valued their political autonomy—from each other as much as from Britain. Each had a similar but separate re-colonial relationship with Britain; they were spokes of a wheel whose hub was London. From 1929, the Great Depression shook Greater Britain as it did the rest of the world, and Britain and the Dominions sought to protect themselves from it by seeking still greater economic unity with the Ottawa Agreement of 1932. Historians still debate who fooled whom at Ottawa, at which seven British cabinet ministers were present. British officials felt that 'the Dominions are prepared to ask for everything and concede nothing'.[79] 'None of our masters has the backbone of a louse.'[80] Others felt that 'far from dictating terms' the Dominions had to bow to Britain's requirements.[81]

Whoever was duped, if anyone, trade between Britain and the Dominions, already high, increased greatly. 'Measured by current prices the overall increase was one of widespread if unspectacular gains, but measured by volume the growth of sales was massive.'[82] Even the increase in value was not bad. 'By 1937 the value of British imports from imperial sources was 70% greater than in 1931' and this 'obscured a far greater expansion of volume'. Between 1929 and 1938 the volume of British imports from Australia and Canada more than doubled.[83] Imports from other food producers, including the virtual Dominions of Denmark and Argentina, dropped, and these countries were increasingly obliged to buy British if they wanted to sell British at all. Argentina's share of British imports fell from 27% to 15%, 1929–37, a disaster for that country.[84] The Empire's share of British imports by value rose from 27% to almost 40%. As usual, it was the white empire that benefited. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand contributed well over three-quarters of the increase in empire imports. By 1938, Britain imported 88% of its wheat, 96% of its butter, 76% of its cheese, 74% of its fruit, and about half of its eggs and its meat. Canada and Australia between them supplied two-thirds of the wheat; Australia and New Zealand supplied the sheep-meat, frozen beef, and half the dairy products, while Argentina continued to supply chilled beef.[85] The total weight of produce flowing from the Dominions to Britain was in the order of 10 million tons, including around half Britain's food consumption. At this time, Germany was 87 per cent self-sufficient in food, and France 86 per cent.

Ottawa benefited Dominion exports, for which Britain was then the only possible market, but prices were low, and Old Britain also benefited. 'The dramatic fall in food and raw material prices probably played a major part in the domestic recovery of the British economy in the 1930s.'[86] We should not overestimate Ottawa, which consolidated rather than created the Greater British economic system. Long-standing informal factors were also at work. 'The sharp increase in Dominion exports was also the result of informal preferences, improved competitiveness, and energetic marketing.'[87] But, by 1939, Greater Britain was at its peak economically and, possibly, culturally. 'Far from being a period of popular disillusionment with empire, if anything the inter-war years witnessed a deeper cultural penetration of imperial ideals.'[88]

The white Dominions mobilized 2.4 million troops in World War II, and also contributed massively economically, on the sea, and in the air. Dominion penetration of Royal Air Force aircrew in particular was remarkably high, similar to the Scots penetration of the upper levels of the British army around 1800. A staggering 46 per cent of Bomber Command pilots were from the Dominions, and German cities discovered the hard way that Greater Britain was a reality.[89] This was a bigger war, however, and once the Americans and Russians had come in Britain could probably have done without the Dominions. But it could not have done so as a great power, and in the immediate post-war years the Dominions were integral to its efforts to keep that status. For their part, the Dominions had to some extent turned to the United States during the war for military protection and export markets, but they were keen to turn back the clock after 1945. What spelled doom for these efforts was less Dominion nationalism than a combination of the decline of Old British relative power and interest in empire, the revival of British farming, and the spectre of submarine warfare.

Greater Britain and its re-colonial system, of course, had always been fundamentally dependent on the British navy's control of the sea. Relying on distant lands for your daily bread and meat was only possible if you were confident that the sea-lanes were, and would remain, secure. Britain's rule of the waves dated from 1815, and remained intact until 1914. From 1900, however, reliable diesel-engined submarines were developed. Initially, 'only a few anticipated . . . that the submarine would operate independently of other warships and become the principal adjunct of economic warfare'.[90] The German submarine fleet in 1914 was only a third the size of the French. But the Germans developed U-Boat warfare quickly and by 1918 had sunk

9 million tons of Greater British shipping—half the total tonnage of 1914.[91] Here was a blow to the very jugular of Greater Britain. But ship-building just managed to keep up with the losses. During and immediately after this war, Britain attempted to improve its agricultural self-sufficiency. But, in 1921, for various reasons, it reverted to the strategy of dependence on the Dominions. 'Perhaps the most astonishing feature of the interwar period was the British Admiralty's general dismissal of the submarine threat posed by Germany.'[92] It was only during and immediately after World War II, in which the U-Boat threat was even greater, that Britain took permanent steps towards greater self-sufficiency through such things as the consistent subsidy of its farmers and belated engagement with the agro-industrial revolution. British domestic wheat production doubled during the war, and farming mechanized rapidly.[93] For a brief period, Dominion dominance of the British food market continued, and even increased in percentage terms in a diminishing market. In 1948, New Zealand alone supplied over a third of Britain's meat imports and over half its dairy imports, with Australia and Canada supplying about half of the rest, as well as 98 per cent of Britain's wheat imports. But Old Britain's wartime policy of 'higher production at all costs' continued, and by 1952, total agricultural production was 50 per cent higher than in 1939. 'Output grew more rapidly between 1945 and 1965 than in any period before or since.'[94] By 1981, for the first time in about 180 years, Britain was self-sufficient in cereals.[95] The Dominions decoupled from Britain in the 1950s and 1960s with varying degrees of rage and reluctance, whose details need not detain us. Britain's first bid to join the European Economic Community in the early 1960s was a clear declaration of intent to apply euthanasia to Greater Britain. When it finally did join, in 1973, Greater Britain was no more, and mourning was short-circuited by the growing pretence that it had never existed.

Greater Britain was a relatively short-lived entity, with a life-span of less than a century, say 1880s–1960s. But it was big and powerful in its day, a virtual United States, which historians of the period can no longer ignore, nor dismiss as a failed idea. A certain embarrassment about Greater Britonism, mirroring that of Old British historians, is discernible among post-Dominion historians and is perhaps understandable. 'The vigorous loyalty to the British Empire that flourished in Canada before the Second World War remains disconcerting for the historians working in a framework of anachronistic ideas about Canadian nationality.'[96] Canadian

historians stressing the British connection have been denounced as 'imperial apologists'.[97] New Zealand's leading historian, John Pocock, has been accused of sentimental nostalgia for doing the same thing.[98] In the early 1990s, a doctoral student embarked on a study of the 1954 Royal Tour of Australia. 'I was repeatedly challenged to explain the value of examining an event so unambiguously situated within Anglo-Australian culture. We'd been through long years of national immaturity and now we'd grown up. There was no need to keep dwelling on it.'[99] It is as though the one-time Dominions share a shameful secret—a protracted adolescence, decades long, spent firmly tied to mother's apron-strings—which is best forgotten. But, while it did have its costs, there was arguably nothing cringing or demeaning about Dominion Britonism. It was much the same as Midwestern Americanism. However, even if this is not accepted, forgetting important phenomena simply because they embarrass some in the present is not an option for historians.

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16

The Rise and Rise of Greater America

The Really Special Relationship

In his recent study of the making of the modern world, Christopher Bayly paused briefly to reflect on unsolved mysteries of nineteenth-century international relations. 'Why, for instance, after two savage and destructive wars, and despite widespread British support for the Confederacy during the Civil War, did the United States and Britain drift together over the course of the 19th century?'[1] I would answer this question in terms of the partial recolonization of the United States by Great Britain. This was not a matter of political hegemony or even alliance. There were possibilities of renewed warfare between the two countries in the 1840s, the 1860s, and perhaps even as late as 1895–6, when a dispute over Venezuela's borders turned bellicose.[2] It was, rather, a matter of economics and culture. In 1815, while Washington D.C. still smoldered from its attack, Britain suddenly disgorged unprecedented quantities of money, migrants, and manufactured goods into the United States. The Northeast's nascent manufacturing sector reeled from the shock of this competition, but the British money in particular helped ignite the American West's first full settlement boom, involving economic development as well as population growth. Britain performed the same service for the great American booms of the 1830s and 1850s, and continued to do so after the Civil War for the booms of 1865–73 and the 1880s. After each spasm of explosive colonization, busted Wests sought export rescue and it was Britain, as well as the American Northeast, that provided it. The exports were mainly a matter of cotton until the 1840s, but after that, as we saw in Chapter 14, food began to flow across the Atlantic in increasingly vast quantities. At its peak, in the 1890s,

the American West provided 70 per cent of Britain's grain imports, which now greatly exceeded domestic production, and a similar proportion of its meat imports from anywhere other than Ireland. This flow created a 5-million-ton bridge between Britain and America, permitting—indeed, demanding—a remarkably intimate relationship.

American meat-lord Gustavus Swift finally cracked the British market, but had to scuttle across the Atlantic bridge many times first. 'Swift is said to have crossed the Atlantic twenty times before he succeeded in establishing Chicago dressed beef in English markets.'[3] British investors scuttled in the other direction. One Scots investor spent five years in the United States on eleven trips between 1874 and 1900. In these years, Britain and the United States were in some respects a single economy. In 1890, there were more American stocks listed on the London stock market than on the New York stock market. 'London had more American banks than New York.'[4] British breeds of cattle were again bio-recolonizing the Midwest—British shorthorns made up 77 per cent of the pedigree cattle in the United States in 1870.[5] American production of iron and steel climbed, but fine steel for machine tools still came from Sheffield as late as 1900. 'America was remarkably dependent upon Sheffield, as contemporaries recognized.'[6] This really special relationship had its social side. The Northeastern elite not only prospered, but also gentrified, Anglicized, and developed a taste for titled British spouses. There were at least 319 American marriages into British titled families between 1783 and 1914, 263 of them between 1870 and 1914, whose offspring included Winston Churchill.[7] Pedigreed people as well as pedigreed cattle were to a large extent Anglo-American.

The cultural dimension was even more important. Books continued to stream across the Atlantic, mostly westward. By 1874, the bridge carried 6 million letters a year as well.[8] Until 1890, most of the people using the bridge were Anglos and their allies: Irish, German, and Scandinavian. Between 1820 and 1890, 82 per cent of emigrants to the United States were from these groups plus Britain.[9] America's ethnic mix remained mainly Anglo until the 1890s, and many Americans preferred it that way. A shared Anglo-Saxonism emerged, an Anglo-worldwide imagined community. The 'kinship rhetoric' of Anglo-Saxonism featured prominently in Britain.[10] It also rose in the American, where it combined with 'a growing recognition by its leaders and by the public—the Irish always excepted—of the political and cultural affinities between the two countries'.[11] In the 1880s, British historical texts declared the United States to be 'an integral part of the

Anglo-Saxon world',[12] and some even encouraged British emigration to America on the grounds that it would further strengthen the relationship and that America was not really foreign. 'English emigrants, in their own interest as well as that of their native land, should prefer British settlements, or else the United States, to any foreign countries.'[13] Some Americans reciprocated. In 1897, the *New York Times* proclaimed, on behalf of the United States: 'we are part, and a great part, of the Greater Britain which seems so plainly destined to dominate this planet'.[14]

The 'special relationship' between the terrible twins of the Anglo-world is normally dated to the twentieth century, when the two countries fought as allies in two world wars. It is true that there was some overflow of the really special relationship into the twentieth century. But the twentieth-century links were very different. 'By the beginning of the 20th century the trans-Atlantic relationship was no longer on a par with the formal imperial connection. What had once been a loyal and friendly offshoot of Britain was now increasingly viewed by imperialists with a measure of jealousy and suspicion.'[15] In 1917, the chief of the American navy helpfully declared: 'we would just as soon fight the British as the Germans'.[16] America did not enter the world wars as Britain's loyal junior ally, like the Dominions. It entered each after long hesitation, two or three years after hostilities had begun, and it did so as senior partner. Until the last stages of World War II, it charged Britain a high price for its economic help, stripping it of its American investments. After a defiant but disastrous display of autonomy in 1956, resulting in the Suez Crisis, Britain settled down to its new role as America's man in Europe. In the nineteenth century the boot was on the other foot.

The decoupling of America from Britain took place around 1900. American urbanization, industrialization, and general growth reached the point where it no longer needed supplementing by Britain. The United States could now provide its own capital and its own markets for food and raw materials. Indeed, American businesses began a reverse invasion of Britain. London–New York financial integration peaked around 1900 then declined. There was increased divergence in such things as technical-drawing styles, which had been similar to the 1880s. American sources of fine steel replaced Sheffield. Even the beef herds decolonized in a sense. Shorthorns and Herefords were both British breeds, but Old Britons preferred Shorthorns. Consequently, Shorthorns dominated in America too until the 1890s. But Americans themselves had a taste for Herefords, whose

numbers increased in the United States, but not Britain, as the Atlantic meat market declined from the 1900s.[17]

America did not need Anglo migrants any longer either, though this caused some Americans much anxiety.[18] Between the 1882 and 1921, America famously opened its immigration gates—not to Asians or fresh Africans, but to 14 million southern and eastern Europeans. This turn to non-traditional sources for migrants was a key marker of decolonization in the British dominions as well, though not until after World War II. The American 'melting pot' dates from 1890, not before. In 1880 there were only 20,000 Italians in New York City. By 1908, there were half a million. In 1899, there were fewer than half a million Jews in the United States; 1.5 million entered in the next fifteen years.[19] New York was a very different place without its Italian and Jewish dimensions. Large communities of American Poles, Hungarians, Croats, and others also emerged. On top of this, the separateness of older American ethnicities began to be asserted. Germans and Irish were less willing to be subsumed under Anglo labels. German Americanism took a heavy blow in 1917, and lowered its profile thereafter, but Irish American-ness continued to develop, and it was not friendly towards Britain. American blacks began their great migration from the South to the cities of the Northeast and Midwest. America's Anglo-ness was increasingly contested from the 1890s. It was in 1893 that the young Frederick Jackson Turner made America's declaration of cultural independence, replacing Anglo-Saxon virtues with those of America's own frontier.

Feeding New York

Throughout all its decades of re-colonial influence in the United States, Britain had one chief agent: New York City. New York's pre-eminence in the United States is sometimes dated to about 1790, when the city recovered from devastation in the War of American Independence, or to 1825, and the completion of the great Erie Canal. But, as Robert Albion pointed out long ago, its leadership in fact dates from 1815, when it began a century-long domination of America's overseas immigration, investment, and imports. Until 1815, Philadelphia was New York's equal in virtually every respect and its superior in some, such as the extent and fertility of its contiguous hinterland and its domination of the book trade.[20] Boston and

Baltimore were also growing fast, and America was multi-polar in terms of great cities and ports. Between 1815 and 1890, the country became increasingly uni-polar, culturally and economically centred on New York. The city became America's main interface with the world in general and Britain in particular. The rest of the urban Big Four grew fast, but New York grew faster still and began to dwarf its rivals. Statistics tell both tales. In 1790, New York handled 5.7% of America's international trade. By 1830 the figure was 37%, by 1870, 57%.[21] New York's domination was greater in imports than exports, and clearly dates to the boom of 1815–19. Between 1811 and 1825, New York's share of American imports grew from 23% to 51%, and reached 68% by 1860.[22] Most emigrants and most money also entered through New York. In 1800, Philadelphia was bigger than New York, county for county, with 81,000 people to 60,000.[23] By 1850, Philadelphia had grown very respectably, more than fourfold, to 340,000. But New York had rocketed twelvefold, to 700,000 people. In the late 1850s, New York crossed the million barrier, and by 1900 had reached 3.5 million people, fifty per cent bigger than the rest of the old Big Four combined and roughly three times the size of old rival Philadelphia. This understates the real discrepancy, because New York's satellite cities were also growing rapidly. Newark and Jersey City between them grew from 20,000 to 100,000 people between 1840 and 1860.[24]

This book argues that New York's dramatic rise is best explained in terms of its three hyper-colonial roles. First, it was itself a base for explosive colonization and the main inlet for British, Irish, and German inputs of people, money, goods, and technology. Second, it was a re-colonial outlet city, exporting food from its hinterland to Britain. In these two roles, New York fulfilled the same function for London as Chicago did for it. Third, and most important, New York was itself increasingly an empire City, the metropolitan heart of a great settling oldland, the American Northeast, matched only by London, and much more similar to that city in its growth than conventional understandings allow. It is not Philadelphia and Boston that are the appropriate comparisons for New York, but London. Furthermore, the key trigger of New York's growth seems to me to have been its special relationship with Britain, which made it the nexus of the huge surge in mass transfer after 1815. It remains true that New York entrepreneurs were clever and energetic in enhancing this. They improved their auction system in 1817 to make their market more attractive to British wholesalers, set up their own stock market the same year as the

chief American agent of Lombard Street, and established packet lines from 1818 providing frequent and regular shipping services to Liverpool and London.[25] But burgeoning New York soon encountered the same problem as London: feeding itself.

Until the 1820s, 'New York's immediate hinterlands provided ample food for its markets.'[26] As with London, though on a much smaller scale, this immediate hinterland became increasingly specialized. Nearby Orange County provided butter; more distant Oneida County provided cheese, which was less perishable.[27] As in London, urban farming supplemented supply. New York in the 1830s was described as 'one huge pigstye' and much of its milk was produced in urban dairies.[28] Steamboats connected New York to the likes of Long Island; there were twenty-two steam ferry services on the Hudson River by the 1820s.[29] But 'New York's immediate hinterland did not contain much fertile farmland', even when extended by steamboats. The Genesee Valley in western New York State was being settled rapidly, but it was 400 miles from New York City, as far as Scotland was from London, and 200 miles from river transport.[30] Population growth in New York City was great, even faster than London though from a much lower base, and New York consumers were as wealthy and demanding as London's and even more carnivorous. New York already had a hundred millionaires by the 1840s, and 1,368 by 1890. More importantly, below them was the great mass of the middle class; about one-quarter of New York families around 1850 had servants.[31] Below this again was a large skilled working class, increasingly hungry for prime meat, 'not innards'.[32] New York led America's love affair with beef, consumption of which overhauled pork in the course of the nineteenth century. 'American workers not only loved meat but revered beef most of all.' They 'worshipped at the shrine of fresh beef'. Beef was 'the food that managed to denote both high status and down to earth Americanism'.[33] New Yorkers also demanded prime wheat, not corn, and the best of everything else. So New York embarked on the London-style outsourcing through the recolonization of increasingly distant virtual hinterlands.

The Old Northwest, starting with Ohio, was the first of these new hinterlands. Cattle were driven from Ohio to New York from 1815, in herds of one or two hundred, with five drovers, using 'drove-stands', with inns and pastures, as in Britain. But the drive over the Appalachians took forty to sixty days, cattle lost up to 250 lbs during it, and numbers were small—a mere 1,500 in 1815 and still only 12,000 head in 1831,

about a week's supply for New York's urban carnivores. Local wheat was also increasingly inadequate. The wheat deficit of New York City's immediate region reached 3.8 million bushels a year by 1840.[34] Even before its completion in 1825, the Erie Canal helped here. Wheat from Upstate New York flowed down it. But feeder canals from the Great Lakes into the interior of the Old Northwest were not completed until the late 1830s, and as we saw in Chapter 7 it was not until about 1840 that western grain began to flow east in torrents. The Old Northwest's first major route to New York was that remarkable water-circle described in Chapter 7: down the Mississippi to New Orleans, then up the coast to New York. Once the feeder canals cut in, the Erie route solved the wheat problem, and supplied some other products as well. By 1849, New York City and the Old Northwest were fundamentally codependent. New York 'may call Ohio her kitchen garden, Michigan her pastures, and Indiana, Illinois and Iowa her harvest fields'.[35]

Canal transport was too slow for livestock and from around 1830 'the local supply of livestock became inadequate'. For a time even New York's demanding carnivores were forced to consume Cincinnati cured pork that came via New Orleans and the water circle. It was rail that saved the day here, around 1850, and increasingly huge numbers of Old Northwestern cattle and hogs were railed live to New York and butchered there. As early as 1853, 'a very large proportion of the cattle which are now used in New York, come from the ''far West'', Ohio and Illinois, and are mostly brought hither by steam'. By 1855, New York ate 26,000 animals a week, or 1.35 million a year. Railing livestock surged afresh after 1857. In 1859, New York consumed twice the number of western hogs as the rest of the Big Four combined. 'By 1864 over two million beasts were being butchered annually in New York.' Most came from the Midwest, with the centre of supply shifting from Cincinnati to Chicago, the leader of the meat pack. In 1866, stated the *New York Daily Times*, 'the cattle which are consumed in this city come from Illinois chiefly'.[36]

New York's outsourcing extended from food to raw materials, notably timber. New York was a large and well-wooded state, and outgrew its wood supply more slowly than its food supply. In 1839, it was America's leading timber producer, and imported an average of only 52,000 tons of timber a year between 1835 and 1840. Timber outsourcing really kicked off in the 1840s. By the early 1850s New York was importing 438,000 tons of timber a year, and over a million tons by the 1870s. Like the

wheat and meat, most of the timber came first from the Old Northwest, and then from the wider Midwestern states that had good lake access, such as Minnesota, and later from a variety of sources via sea and rail.[37] Outsourcing supplied not just New York, but the whole of the Northeast, especially the urban Northeast. In 1850, the northeast still produced 36 per cent of American wheat. By 1860, the figure had halved to 17.6 per cent. New England's hog output also halved, 1840–60.[38] Interestingly, the shift away from wheat and meat production did not necessarily imply an immediate decline in Northeastern farming generally, and the same was true of English farming. Instead, oldland farming increasingly specialized in other products, and restricted its own meat and wheat production to the most suitable farmland. Taking marginal acres out of wheat and meat production improved productivity in the oldlands too.

Urban consumers generated huge demand for products best grown locally: hay and oats for horse feed, which were too heavy to transport long distances; vegetables; fruit; milk; and other more perishable products. In 1838, the *New England Farmer* noted that 'if more fertile regions can supply our cities with grain at a cheaper rate than we can, let us not lament. We shall find full employment in furnishing what cannot be so well transported from a distance. Fresh meats, butter, hay and the small market vegetables.'[39] The output of New York and New Jersey market gardens increased eightfold, 1840–60. New York State's oat production climbed from 20 million bushels to 35 million between 1839 and 1859. Milk was first railed to New York from 1847. Distances needed to be short for this product, and farms that had once produced wheat turned first to dairying in general and then to fresh milk in particular. One farming historian sees the period 1850–70 as the heyday of New York State's agriculture.[40] But it was only one end of a system; its myriad specializations depended on outsourcing; and eventually outsources began to compete even in dairy products, fruit, and vegetables as well as wheat and meat. Wisconsin displaced New York State, first in cheese and then in butter. By 1919, Wisconsin produced 67 per cent of America's cheese and also led butter production, playing New Zealand to New York's London. By this time, as we have seen, New York's big apples came from the Pacific Northwest and we will soon see that its other fruit came from Southern California.

Meat remained central in the nationally integrating process of feeding the Northeast. After 1873, the scale of the Midwestern meat industry became almost incredible. Around this time, according to one estimate, the

meat-packing industry was worth $1.4 billion a year. Then 'the slaughter of hogs increased fivefold between 1872 and 1887', and pork was overhauled by beef. Pork made up 90 per cent of the pack in 1870 and 42 per cent in 1890. The total meat pack increased ninefold, 1871–93.[41] The supply area now stretched across the whole Midwest, and from the 1890s Chicago was joined by Kansas City, Omaha, and St Louis as major packing centres. By 1921, these four cities slaughtered 8.5 million cattle between them, while New York butchered only 300,000, mostly for the kosher trade. It was only Jewish immigration that 'allowed meat-packing in New York to survive'.[42] Yet in 1923 it was still possible to state accurately that: 'the beef trade is largely based on New York'.[43] New York did the eating, not the killing, and the solution to this little mystery is of course the rise of refrigerated beef. The pioneer refrigerated rail trip was from New York *to* Cincinnati, carrying chilled oysters and clams, in 1853.[44] But it was not until the 1870s that refrigerated meat became significant in the United States. The technical side of this, and the implications for Chicago, were discussed in Chapter 10. On the organizational side, a few companies—the 'Big Five', then the 'Big Four'—soon dominated the processing and distribution dimensions of the industry. At first, the rise of chilled meat was hampered by the desire of rail companies to keep their livestock freighting business, for which they had thousands of specialized railcars. But Gustavus Swift, the leading packer, was able to force them to come to the chilled-meat party by using the Canadian Grand Trunk Railway to carry his meat.[45] This is a late example of the 'Exit Option', provided by shared membership of the Anglo-world. Swift would have found it much harder to use Canada in this way if it had not been Anglophone and intimately connected to the United States.

Another obstacle to the rise of chilled meat was that, as in Britain, people at first hated the idea of eating long-dead meat from distant places. There was 'a prejudice in the eastern market against Texas beef' and against 'foul smelling and impure' chilled meat in general. Some butchers proudly announced: 'No impure Chicago beef sold here!' Four states actually banned chilled beef.[46] Resistance was particularly strong in New York City, which was used to getting what it considered to be the best. But dead meat could be railed at less than half the cost of livestock; the state bans were struck down by the Supreme Court in 1886; and the meat was still American. Like the refrigerated apples from the Pacific Northwest, it was marketed as *fresh*—not preserved—and it was marketed hard. Through a cultural as much as an economic shift, consumer resistance to chilled

beef was overcome, just as resistance to frozen lamb had been overcome in Britain.

The Midwestern beef industry was remarkably similar to the New Zealand sheep-meat industry, the archetype of re-colonial exporting. Each industry had a problematic prehistory of curing and canning, but flowered with refrigeration from around 1880. Each industry featured bio-recolonization—the replacement of longhorns by shorthorns and of merino by cross-bred sheep. Each had a dual-farming system, breeding animals on larger farms on poorer land and fattening them on smaller farms with richer land. The two were known as 'growers' and 'fatters' in the Midwest and 'high country' and 'fat lamb' farms in New Zealand. Each featured small-scale production on family farms, but increasing concentration in processing and distribution. Each set of farmers had early struggles against large landholders who used similar tactics to combat closer settlement and freeholding. Midwestern and New Zealand rural histories contain the same mantra about big ranchers and run-holders 'dummying' (getting nominees to acquire freeholds up to the legislated limit), and 'spotting' (freeholding water supplies). Each set had later struggles against the tendency to cartelism of their processors and transporters, and sometimes had the political leverage to do something about it. Both were prone to agrarian populism and spasms of radicalism. The two industries look rather like twins who had been adopted out to different parents. This was neither coincidence nor direct connection, but convergent evolution through recolonization.

From 1873, the Northeast in general and New York in particular recolonized the Far West as well as the Midwest. Wheat and meat came from the Far West too, but the leading edge of its export rescue was healthier: fruit and vegetables. The leading edge of this in turn was the orange, especially Southern Californian oranges railed to New York, where they added juice to the average breakfast as the Midwest had added beefsteak to dinner. Oranges had been grown in California since 1804 but, after the gold rush, could not even meet local demand until the 1870s. In that decade, experiments with new types of fruit began: the navel orange was introduced from Brazil in 1873; the Valencia orange from the Azores in 1877. Some fruit was sent East on a few fast trains, but it was not until the adoption of the refrigerated railcar, beginning in 1889, that long-range export became physically viable.[47] Other problems persisted well after that. Fruit was shipped green, in winter only, and spoilage was high. 'The early fruit shipments were unsatisfactory.' As late as 1905–7,

the Californian orange industry experienced a 'decay crisis'.[48] There was also the little matter of the absence of a mass market; for most Americans, oranges were still occasional treats. 'Extensive fruit production preceded a viable market.'[49] 'Hundreds of small growers found it impossible to market their fruit at a profit in the East. The season of 1892–3 was exceptionally bad from a marketing aspect.'[50] These problems were overcome in classic re-colonial fashion. A grand alliance was formed of state agencies, big business, and small farmer cooperatives. It was the US Department of Agriculture that brought in the navel oranges in 1873; a Californian State Board of Horticulture was established soon after, and these and other agencies combined with agricultural colleges and journals to nurture the fruit industry. The gigantic Southern Pacific Railroad Company, which by about 1900 had swallowed 160 rival companies, also took the industry under its wing, especially when it was desperate for freight after busts.[51] 'Small farmers' were not that small—the average of 96 acres was quite a large orchard—but they soon realized that they had to work together, and had formed a viable marketing cooperative by 1893, which matured into the California Fruit Growers Exchange in 1905.

With fruit, 'California developed an industry where there was relatively little proven demand', so it set about creating the demand.[52] From 1907, the Exchange and the Southern Pacific collaborated on mass-marketing campaigns in the East and Midwest, using brands such as 'Sunkist' that are still familiar. A pilot scheme was mounted in Iowa, which increased orange sales in that state by 50 per cent in a single year. State agencies, growers, and railroad collaborated on technical improvements. Citrus tree yields doubled between 1889 and 1919.[53] Rail transport speeded up, chilled down, and bulked out. The Southern Pacific's subsidiary, the Pacific Fruit Express, became America's leading ice producer. By 1923 its 33,000 specialized railcars carried 200,000 loads of citrus out a year. By the 1930s, 'at least six trains [of fifty cars each] loaded exclusively with citrus made their way out of California every single day, summer and winter'.[54] Long-range transport was crucial. By 1910, only 5–10 per cent of Californian oranges were eaten in California. 'The eastern markets were the key.'[55] By the 1930s, only 8 per cent of Californian oranges were marketed within a thousand miles of where they were grown. 'One of the most outstanding geographic facts about the citrus industry of California is its almost complete dependence on the consuming markets of eastern United States and Canada.'[56] In 1889, California supplied about a quarter of the

modest American commercial orange production of 4.4 million boxes. By 1899, it produced 5.9 million of 6.2 million. The trade surged after 1907 and 1913, and by 1919 California supplied 21.5 million of America's 38 million boxes. In 1899, US commercial output of citrus fruit was 250,000 tons. By 1939, it was 4 million tons—a sixteenfold increase in forty years.[57]

The orange was only the flagship of a whole fleet of Californian fruit. By the 1930s, the state led in the production of almonds, apricots, dates, figs, grapes, olives, peaches, pears, and plums, as well as oranges and lemons, leaving only apples to the Pacific Northwest. Californian farmers suddenly moved from wheat to fruit in the 1900s. Californian wheat acreage plummeted by 83 per cent in that decade.[58] Irrigation extended viable fruit lands, not only in Southern California but also in the central valleys, which now reoriented from San Francisco and wheat to Los Angeles and fruit. By 1920, canned and preserved fruit exports were worth $220 million a year to California—more than movies and second only to oil, and this excludes fresh fruit exports.[59] Growers of most fruits could tell a story similar to orange exporters. Raisin growers too overcame early problems, formed cooperatives and business and government alliances, and promoted their product back East. Raisins were a holiday treat until California made them year-round. 'By 1915, raisins ranked second in importance to the states prosperous fruit-growing economy.'[60] California exported 182,000 tons of raisins by 1919. New York's 'Californian Cornucopia' extended to vegetables too. Until the early 1920s, New Yorkers ate 'Boston' or butter lettuce, and that only in season. During that decade, Salinas County in California turned from sugar beet to the long-range export of iceberg lettuce, a tricky matter with so delicate a plant. But it managed it and by the late 1920s New Yorkers ate Salinas lettuce instead of Boston, and they ate it all year round, 'making iceberg lettuce the first seasonless fresh vegetable'.[61] American consumption of lettuce per capita increased from 4 to 14 lbs as a result. Californian iceberg became known as 'New York lettuce'. By 1935, California provided half of all American fresh fruit, and 70 per cent of its canned food.[62]

The fruit industry combined with oil and movies, new rail systems, and the new Panama Canal, to reintegrate California and the Northeast. It reshaped California, becoming 'the leading ''ideological sector'' in the agrarian economy, the sector most concerned with the construction of California's new economic identity'.[63] The Californian fruit industry too was similar to the contemporary rise of the export meat industry of New

Zealand. The latter did not invent lamb consumption in London, but it did invent the Sunday lamb roast on the average table. California did not invent orange consumption in New York, but it did invent the oranges in the average fruit bowl and the orange juice on the average breakfast table. It also invented the raisins in the average school lunchbox and the tasteless iceberg lettuce in the average salad. The New Zealand lamb industry and the Southern Californian orange industry may seem another odd couple, yet their kinship is structurally unmistakable. Each emerged from nothing as a result of desperate bust-phase ingenuity and technological good fortune, not of forward planning. Each created its mass market by emphasizing its 'freshness', despite age, and its American-ness and British-ness, despite distance. Each compressed space and eliminated seasons. Again, the counter-intuitive similarity of the two industries is a function of the fact that both were products of the same phenomenon: recolonization.

New York's America

The trains bearing meat and fruit and the ships and canal boats bearing wheat and timber aimed for the whole Northeast, but especially New York. The return flows included manufactured goods but, as in Britain, heavy industry was mainly delegated to auxiliary cities. In 1860, 9.4 per cent of New York workers worked in manufacturing, compared to 17.5 per cent in Philadelphia and 26.2 per cent in Newark.[64] From about 1900, the 'Northeast' manufacturing belt extended to Detroit, Michigan, courtesy of Henry Ford, and industry in Chicago and elsewhere grew too. But, until that time, New York remained very much the centre of the system—in finance, information, and culture. Again, it is important to stress that economic and technological webs did not *determine* cultural and ideological links, though the two often moved along the same wires; the relationship was more reciprocal. At least one American scholar, Michael Conzen, has noted how cultural and economic integration moved in parallel. 'It is tempting to suggest . . . that the steady growth of metropolitan integration of rural territory . . . did parallel the increasing influence that cities played in integrating and rationalizing national economic and cultural life.'[65]

New England and the South are sometimes emphasized as sources of Western settlement, but New York State was usually the leading contributor

of settlers, especially urban ones, from boom-time Cincinnati in the 1810s to booming Denver in the 1880s.[66] On this human base, New York spun a financial web that embraced most of the United States. 'By 1850, New York had, in fact, become the financial center of the country.' 'New York's dominance is unquestioned.'[67] Around this time the merchants of Alton, Illinois, negotiated 71 per cent of their bills with New York.[68] New York financed the Western railroads, using its own as well as recycled British money, and it financed the ships going to California. 'New York merchants find themselves interested in almost every village, town, and city of the United States.'[69] As early as 1834, a visitor had noted that 'along the whole Atlantic coast there is only one mart, New York'. In 1849, the journalist George Foster remarked that 'in civilization, every powerful nation must have one intellectual centre, as every individual must have a brain, whose motions and conceptions govern the entire system. In the United States, New York is that centre and that brain.'[70] By 1860, concludes historical geographer, D. W. Meinig, New York was 'in many ways the effective "capital" of the United States'.[71] New York's 'pre-eminent position in the economy of the United States' continued to develop after the Civil War, at least until the inauguration of the Federal Reserve system in 1913.[72]

New York's hegemony was not just a matter of food flowing in and money flowing out. Allan Pred has shown that it was also the centre of a growing information network, beginning as early as 1815. 'By 1817, New York had clearly outdistanced Philadelphia and all other competitors and had pronouncedly established her informational hegemony... Western newspapers were irked at the stranglehold exercised by the New York press over information of commercial significance.'[73] By 1860, New York published eighty-eight newspapers and fifty-four monthly journals.[74] What was true of newspapers was true of print in general. New York publishing surged in the 1820s, and by 1830 it had overtaken Philadelphia as leader in the book trade.[75] By 1850, New York State produced a staggering 53 per cent of American printed matter by value, with Pennsylvania contributing another 15 per cent and Massachusetts 13 per cent.[76] From that year, any book any American read was more likely than not to have been published in New York, and most of the rest were also produced in the Northeast. As we saw in Chapter 7, this increasing flood of metropolitan print successively overtook the rough, populist but flourishing book trades of booming Western frontiers. This happened to Cincinnati's region after 1837, and to Chicago's after 1857. 'In retrospect it would seem that the call

for a western literature was a failure. Western publishers after the civil War became increasingly subordinate to big firms in the East.'[77] Between 1849 and 1873, California went through just the same experience:

> Though linked by sea and overland routes to the East, California remained an isolated market for local publishers. Books, new, as well as used, were imported in large numbers from the East, but the shipping costs wiped out the price advantage that the eastern firms used to undercut local publishers, and until the advent of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, Californian publishers were able to hold their own against such firms as Harper & Brothers in New York.[78]

After transcontinental rail, it was a different story, and the Far West too became part of New York's America.

Clothes made the man, and increasingly clothes as well as books were made in New York. New York's ready-made clothing industry flourished from 1815, and it took over the distribution if not the production side of the textile industry from Boston as it had taken over the book trade from Philadelphia.[79] 'New York's emergence as the undisputed center of credit and distribution of domestic and imported cloths . . . made centralized, large-scale production of clothing possible.' As with books, this was not simply a matter of business history, but of culture and identity. 'A ''New York suit'' offered a distinct cachet, a practical opportunity to buy into metropolitan culture.' As Tocqueville had observed, 'The man you left in New York you find again in almost impenetrable solitudes: same clothes, same attitudes, same language, same habits, same pleasures.'[80]

Like the British settler colonies after their booms, the American West experienced cultural, as well as economic, recolonization. As noted in Chapter 7, some Westerners deeply resented this, and some resent its vestiges, such as the scholarly denigration of Western history, to the present. 'The American West has had a long tradition of protest against economic and cultural exploitation by the East.' In 1879, a Westerner wrote, 'the East now holds the West in her hands with a deadly grasp'.[81] In 1934, Bernard De Voto described the West as 'a plundered province'.[82] In 2002, in an important book, historian Edward Watts wrote that 'tasked with realizing national dreams, the Old Northwest is cheated of its own history'.[83] Others have expanded on this theme. 'As colonists looked to England and Europe for their culture, history, education, norms and rules, Minnesotans have long looked to the East Coast.'[84] 'All the Midwestern

states endured a colonial phase, in which they were dominated economically, socially, culturally and politically by outsiders. But in North Dakota this phase never ended.'[85] Yet North Dakota was more a victim of its own over-extension, as we saw in Chapter 13, than of New York's exploitation. Like the denizens of the dominions, Westerners usually parlayed their new provincialism into an identity that was not cringingly colonial. Westerners were Americans, but Better Americans, like the Better Britons of the Dominions. 'Only midwesterners are true Americans.'[86] Here too, bracing climates and rural virtue would rescue the metropolis from the vices of industrialization, and produce a 'superior race of people'—superior to Easterners, let alone anyone else.[87] Watts, I think, overstates the exploitative and deliberate elements of the admittedly interdependent East–West relationship. 'The East's squelching of the interests and culture of the West—and other divergent elements of the nation—demonstrates anything but a pattern of reciprocity.'[88] But he is right about Midwesterners' concept of themselves. 'What they worked towards was a vernacular self-conception, a form of decolonization which acknowledges both a necessary entanglement with the American empire and the rejection of inferior status in it.'[89] This statement works just as well for Britain and its Dominions, or rather the Dominions and their Britain, until about 1950.

Around 1890, something new began to happen in Chicago. In 1891, the University of Chicago was founded as an instant research institution. It immediately acquired a large library by buying the collection of a German book collector, and had a formidable reputation in research within a decade of its birth. At this time, 'Chicago annually sent twenty million pounds of periodical literature through the mails, more than Boston, Cincinnati, New Orleans, Buffalo and Baltimore combined.'[90] In 1893, Chicago hosted the Columbian Exhibition. There were 230,000 square feet of display space and sixty-one belly dancers, but Chicago itself was the main exhibit, and 27 million people saw it. During this decade, Chicago became the birthplace of modern architecture and 'the strongest influence on the whole American movement', a set of wider cultural developments.[91] 'At the turn of the nineteenth century Chicago experienced a literary explosion.'[92] It was in Chicago that Turner gave his famous paper in 1893, which not only declared America's cultural independence from Britain but also the American West's parity with the East. Here was an element of Western 'decolonization'—not separation or decoupling as with the

British Dominions, but a broad rise to parity. Here too an economic process paralleled the cultural.

Chicago's population passed the million mark about 1890. Sensing the threat, New York incorporated Brooklyn to make its own population seem larger.[93] But Chicago continued to close, reaching 2.2 million in 1910 and almost 5 million by 1940. It never quite caught up with New York, but from about 1900 it was clear that America now contained two mega-cities, not one. In finance, Chicago's ties with New York remained close, but it was ceasing to be an agent and becoming a partner. In 1876, 96 per cent of America's major banks had accounts with New York banks; few had accounts in Chicago. By 1910, while 83 per cent of major banks still had accounts in New York, 63.8 per cent had accounts in Chicago.[94] Industrially too, the Midwest, centred on Chicago, 'became increasingly its own master with time'.[95] The Midwest 'became, in effect, an equal partner with Chicago the counterpart of New York City'.[96] A comparable rise to parity with New York can be detected in Los Angeles from about 1940, when Greater LA's population hit 3 million. Until then, New York dominated California's markets, finance, and even Hollywood. 'New York retained a certain financial and promotional control of the southern-Californian film colony until World War II.'[97] From 1940, Hollywood cut loose, as did other aspects of Far Western culture. Helped by the Panama Canal, the aircraft industry, and World War II, Los Angeles contested New York's position as America's main interface with the world. New York's share of American trade dropped from 57 per cent in 1870 to 32 per cent in 1956.[98] Generally, regional specialization, which in extreme form required a single epicentre, declined in the United States in the twentieth century. 'Regional specialization in the United States rose substantially between 1860 and the turn of the twentieth century, flattened out during the interwar years, and then fell substantially and continuously since the 1930s . . . US regions are less specialized today than they were in 1860.'[99]

Here then is the story of America's double 'decolonization'. It decoupled from junior partnership with British culture and economy after 1890; and its Midwest and Far West rose to parity with its Eastern oldland, beginning about the same time. America in the eighteenth century was multi-polar in terms of urban centres—Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Baltimore were the Big Four. In the twentieth century, America was again multi-polar; New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles were the Big Three, with other cities bidding to join them as the century closed. But in the nineteenth

century, America was uni-polar; New York was the Big One. Its rise was driven by explosive colonization and recolonization and these factors should be given their due in the telling of American history.

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17
Beyond the Anglo-World

The English-speakers and their allies, of course, never had a monopoly of emigration or settlement. From the 1880s, they were joined by increasing numbers of Southern and Eastern Europeans, as well as Chinese and Indians. Around half of the continental Europeans went to the United States where, willingly or not, they reinforced the Anglo-world. But millions went to Latin America, especially Argentina and Brazil, and to Siberia and French Algeria. Most Indian and many Chinese migrants were sojourners in other people's countries, but 25 million Chinese went to Manchuria, 1891–1942, swamping earlier Chinese settlers and the indigenous people and producing a substantial 'neo-China'. What can these non-Anglo 'Wests' and the English-speaking ones tell us about each other? Was the hyper-colonial pattern reproduced outside the Anglo-world and, if so, to what extent? Such questions really require books in themselves, and expert authors, yet some attempt must be made to set the Anglo settler explosion in its comparative context and further test the possibility that it was due to Anglo cultural or institutional peculiarities. We look first, very briefly, at French and Chinese experiments in hyper-colonization then, in slightly more depth, at the two great non-Anglophone examples of the art: Siberia, in this chapter, and Argentina, in the next.

Algeria: A French West?

In 1830, taking umbrage at the fly-swatting of its consul by the Dey of Algiers, France invaded Algeria. It faced determined resistance, led by the remarkable Abd El-Kader, but by 1847 its 108,000 troops had taken over much of the country.[1] Thereafter, France made spasmodic but substantial attempts to reproduce itself in North Africa. It succeeded to the extent of

1 million European Algerians in the 1950s—the largest settler population in Africa north of the Transvaal, but still only half the size of Uruguay or New Zealand. The settlement process in Algeria does show some signs of the hyper-colonial pattern. European settlement, Spanish and Italian as well as French, appears incremental to 1848. Between 1842 and 1846, 198,000 Europeans arrived in Algeria, but 118,000 left, many died, and few were women. The settler population fell in some years and stood at 62,000 in 1847.[2] The short-lived Second Republic (1848–51) then mounted an emigration effort and something like a boom seems to have taken place, with the settler population doubling to 131,000 in four years. Banks entered the picture in 1852, but economic growth was modest in the later 1850s and 1860s.[3] Doubling in ten years or less in Algeria as a whole was never achieved again, but some regional booms may have occurred, perhaps prompting the fierce Algerian rebellion of 1871.[4] By 1886, the settler population of Algeria had reached 430,000, only half of them French.

French Algerian export rescue was as fortuitous as any. In the 1870s, as if defeat in the Franco-Prussian War was not misfortune enough, the vine disease phylloxera hit the French wine industry. Algeria quickly became the replacement source of *vin ordinaire*—a re-colonial substitution for domestic production of a 'staple' mass luxury. By about 1913, wine is said to have accounted for 80 per cent of Algerian exports, and for 88 per cent of France's *vin ordinaire* imports—a re-colonial concentration.[5] As in the British Empire, settler colonies were better for trade than subject colonies. 'Algeria [was] always France's largest colonial trading partner.'[6] Wine recolonization aside, France's settlement of Algeria was underpowered relative to others, with 1848–51 the only clear boom. Governments might want to create a neo-France, and Algeria as the French version of the American West did appear in rhetoric.[7] But private French money was reluctant to fling itself into the wilds Anglo-style. French '"grand capital" was not interested in Algeria',[8] and the same applied to people. Governments generally struggled to recruit emigrants in France. 'Nineteenth-century France was not a fertile ground for emigrants.'[9] There were exceptions—the immigration of 1848–51, political refugees, and folk from Alsace-Lorraine after those provinces were annexed by Germany in 1871—but the numbers were not large. Even convicts managed to return home quite quickly.[10] The French eventually turned to an American-like assimilation of Spanish, Italians, and Maltese into 'Algerian French'.[11] The settler transition was always partial, perhaps not helped by the absence of

settler self-government and the suspension of Algerian settler representation in the French parliament between 1851 and the late 1890s.[12]

Manchuria: A Chinese West?

Manchuria, homeland of the Qing or Manchu dynasty, was officially closed to Han Chinese settlement between 1750 and 1860, when the half-million square mile region had a population of 3.2 million.[13] Growth was modest to 1887, but intensified in the 1890s, when steamers began supplementing sailing junks on the coast and rivers. From 1898, Chinese migrants were joined first by Russian and then by Japanese money and technology, and a hybrid but genuine hyper-colonization appears to have taken place. On the available statistics, Manchuria's population rocketed from 7 to 17 million between 1898 and 1908. These numbers may be somewhat exaggerated, but the impression of a boom is supported by a quintupling of imports, 1900–5, while exports remained static.[14] One authority deprecates the dynamism of the Chinese migrants themselves, comparing them unfavourably to Russians and Japanese, and claiming that 'the economy of Manchuria did *not* grow or develop with particular speed'. Yet he himself quotes a contemporary observer who in 1904 was 'impressed by the vigour and prosperity of these Chinese colonists breaking through the forest'. He also cites evidence of eo-technic innovation in agriculture: the use of bigger plows and teams of six oxen instead of one—'presumably inspired by Russian example'—and of credit facilities.[15] It seems clear that the Manchurian socio-economy *did* grow with particular speed, from 7 million people in 1898 to 31 million in 1930, with wages substantially higher than in the rest of China. Several sources compare the growth of Manchuria in this period to that of the American West.[16] The 1900s boom ended about 1909 with a modest bust, followed by a spectacular export rescue based on soybean products. Exports of these were long-standing, and amounted to 350,000 tons in 1900. But they then grew re-colonially to 4 or 5 million tons (the sources differ) by 1930—60 per cent of world production—with Japan as the main market.[17]

As noted in Chapter 2, most of the 25 million Chinese who went to Manchuria between 1891 and 1942 were sojourners rather than settlers—about two-thirds returned home—and it was Japan, not China, which had the benefit of Manchurian export rescue. Japanese influence in

southern Manchuria grew after their defeat of Russia in 1905 and became pervasive in 1931 with the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo. We will see that both the sojourning and the foreign provision of money and markets were echoed in Argentina, with Britain playing Japan. The analogy may extend further. By the 1900s, like Britain a century before, Japan found that intensifying domestic agriculture could no longer support industrialization and population growth. Like Britain, it turned to the explosive colonization and recolonization of overseas dependencies as solution. The economies of Taiwan, acquired in 1895, and Korea, annexed in 1910, were transformed into sugar and rice producers for Japan just as Manchuria became the source of soy products. All became 'agricultural appendages of Japan'.[18] Japan used the coercive Irish model, rather than the cooperative Dominion model, and its own contribution of settlers was moderate—1.5 million to Manchuria by 1940.[19] But the principle of a small island achieving industrialization precociously by using recolonization to transcend its ecological limits was the same.

Siberia: A Russian West?

We saw in Chapter 1 that Russia was already a great settling society by 1762, and that the settlement of the southern steppes surged thereafter and continued well into the nineteenth century. Settlement was rapid but, it seems, not explosive. 'New Russia', the Lower Volga, and the Southern Urals regions all roughly doubled their populations between 1811 and 1857, whereas the American Old Northwest grew twenty-eightfold in this same period.[20] From the 1880s, however, Russia did engage in explosive colonization—in Siberia, the longest-range overland mass settlement in the world. At least 5 million Russians migrated to Siberia between that decade and 1914. The official figure is 3.8 million, but there was also a great deal of illegal migration.[21] The population of Siberia as a whole grew from 4.3 million in 1885 to 12.8 million in 1915, that of eastern Siberia more than tripled in 1900–15 alone.[22] This great surge in Siberian settlement is usually attributed to the building of the mighty Trans-Siberian Railway, but this may not have been the real trigger. Construction on the eastern, western, and central sections of the Trans-Siberian began in 1891, 1892, and 1893 respectively. Legal emigration to Siberia surged from 1888 at the latest, and illegal emigration may have climbed earlier.[23] Physical access

Map 8. Siberia, circa 1900.

to Siberia improved in the 1880s, more by water than by rail. A regular steamer service from Odessa to Vladivostok via the Suez Canal began in 1879.[24] Tyumen on the Ob River in western Siberia was connected by rail to European Russia in 1882, and a great canal was then built linking the Ob and Yenesei Rivers. Completed in 1892, it provided a rail–river–canal route from Moscow and St Petersburg all the way to Lake Baikal.[25] Steamers on Siberian rivers proliferated well before this—there were said to be seventy on the Amur River alone in 1887.[26]

As in the Anglo-world, Siberian explosive colonization began before rail, and though the accessible statistics are limited, it seems it too took the boom–bust pattern. The first boom began in the mid-1880s, possibly even earlier, and ended with a sharp bust in 1899–1900. At least fifty-five major companies went bankrupt, legal migration halved, and growth slowed for at least two years. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 and the failed Revolution of 1905 extended the slump, halving migration again, but a second boom began about 1906 and continued to 1914. One estimate of migration to Siberia, 1906–13, totals 3.44 million people, an impressive figure when compared to the host population of perhaps 6 million in 1905.[27] Western Siberia may have shared in Boom One, and parts of it shared in Boom Two, 1906–15—the city of Omsk almost quadrupled in population 1897–1914.[28] But it was in eastern Siberia and the Russian Far East that the most explosive growth took place. Primorsky Kray, the territory centred on Vladivostok, grew incrementally from its foundation in 1860 to 1880, then at least doubled in each of the 1880s, the 1890s, and the 1900s, and then doubled again in the five years 1910–15.[29] Cities mushroomed. Blagoveschensk more than tripled in population during 1885–97; Chita grew sixfold 1897–1910; Vladivostok tripled in both periods.[30] Russia began penetrating Chinese Manchuria from 1898, and built the 'Chinese Eastern Railway' from Harbin. It kept a grip on northern Manchuria despite defeat by Japan in 1905. Harbin also sprouted into an 'instant city', growing from next to nothing to 100,000 1898–1911, including 44,000 Russians and 33,000 Chinese.[31]

'Observers found it hard to resist drawing parallels between this new Siberia and the American West.'[32] One was Briton John Foster Fraser, who visited in 1901 after touring North America. 'Instead of a gaunt, lone land inhabited only by convicts, I saw a country that reminded me from the first day to the last of Canada, and the best parts of America.'[33] With its opera house, cathedrals, museum, thirty-four schools and electric lighting

juxtaposed with wooden shanties, Irkutsk was 'just like a mushroom city in Western America'. Blagoveshchensk was 'the New York of Siberia'. 'I tell you', said an American salesman of agricultural equipment to Fraser, 'Siberia is going to be another America.'[34] For the Russian observer Nikolay Barsagin, the American comparison extended from Siberia to Siberians.

> The common people seemed freer, more skilful, even better educated than our Russian peasants... They better understood the dignity of man, and valued their rights more highly. Later, I several times heard from persons who had visited the United States... that Siberians have many similarities with the Americans—in their manners, in their customs, and even in their way of life.[35]

As in the Anglo-booms, great futures were predicted, gambling was pervasive, and independence was feared or hoped for. The 1900s Russian premier Petr Stolypin saw booming Siberia as 'an enormous, rudely democratic country, which will soon throttle European Russia'.[36]

While it did not trigger the first Siberian boom, the Trans-Siberian Railway certainly supercharged it. 'The Trans-Siberian railway (over 8,000 kilometres in length, including 100 kilometres of tunnels and bridges, with two major and fourteen smaller, local, workshops, twenty-six depots, and hundreds of stations and sidings) increased the capital value of Siberian industrial output by around 20 times.'[37] It was the leading component of the Siberian 'progress industry', but it was not the only one, even in terms of rail-making. During Boom Two, the state built more lines; double-tracked the Trans-Siberian, and completed the last section around Lake Baikal. Prior to this, trains crossed the lake on a 4,000 ton three-engined icebreaking steamer. There was also a substantial amount of private rail-making, at least 1,800 miles of it to add to the 6,800 miles of state lines.[38] Siberia also had 60,000 miles of seasonally navigable rivers. Vast numbers of steamers, and wharf and repair facilities for them, were built. By 1917 there were 300 steamers on the Amur, 'the Russian Mississippi', alone, carrying 1.3 million tons of freight.[39] Initially much of the necessary iron was locally produced, as was all the 600 million cubic feet of timber used for fuel and in building and rebuilding—one fire destroyed 4,000 buildings in Irkutsk.[40] 'The forests were simply regarded as inexhaustible.'[41] There were 700,000 wage workers, some wandering in crews or 'artels', as well as a couple of million farmers, and boom-time farming and progress intersected as usual—for example in the provision of horses and their feed. Siberia had

eighty-five horses per hundred people, typical of booming newlands but over five times the ratio of European Russia.[42]

Money flowed in from abroad, especially from France. The state played a major role here, running up the world's largest foreign debt, but as with rail its dominance can be exaggerated.[43] There were 8,000 private merchants in Siberia in 1897; some like Mikhail Butin of Nerchinsk became rich, and spent their own time and money on boosting Siberia.[44] Private banks, which increased from 400 to 1,467 in all Russia between 1900 and 1914, were also active.[45] All major towns had at least two banks.[46] As in all settlement booms, goods flowed into Siberia far more than they flowed out. In 1910, Siberia accounted for 14 per cent of Russia's imports but only 4 per cent of its exports.[47] As in the Anglo-world, booming was associated with, but not led by, intensifying extractive industry. Apart from timber, the traditional pursuit of furs continued, producing 85,000 prime pelts a year in the 1880s but declining thereafter.[48] There was a curious prehistoric ivory trade in mammoth tusks, 80,000 of which were exported by 1900.[49] Silver had been found in Siberia as early as 1700, and gold in 1750. A new law opened the region for private prospecting in 1824, and 22,000 kilograms a year of gold were being produced by the 1850s.[50] But, as we saw in Chapter 9, gold *rushes* needed mass transfer as well as gold; booms tended to cause rushes, not the other away around. Once explosive settlement was under way, some Siberian gold rushes did take place. 'The roaring 1880s' produced the remarkable mining town of Zeltuga on the Amur River, which in 1885 possessed eighteen hotels and taverns, seven bath houses, 160 shops, and a circus. Other small rushes occurred in 1896 and 1906. Gold production exceeded 50,000 kilograms a year in the 1900s.[51]

The 3 million or so Siberians of the pre-boom mid-nineteenth century were perhaps half Russian. Of these, about half in turn were Cossacks who had come out as soldiers or fur traders, or their descendants. About 9 per cent of the whole population were convicts or political exiles. The new Siberians—about 1.5 million in Boom One, 1885–97 and about 3.5 million in Boom Two, 1906–15—were peasant migrants. In Boom One, they included 'large numbers' of Ukrainians, but most were Russian.[52] By 1897, Siberia's population was 66 per cent Slavic, including only 5 per cent convicts; by 1917 the Slavic proportion was 80 per cent.[53] Why did these 5 million Russian and Ukrainian peasants undertake the world's longest overland emigration? Answering this question may require revising our impressions of late Tsarist Russia, which are naturally dominated by its

death in 1917. Historians have long focused on signs of terminal decline in its last decades, such as famine in 1891–2, the defeat by Japan of 1904–5, and the revolutionary trial-run of 1905. The movement to Siberia was thought to be pushed by poverty, and comprehensively controlled by the autocratic state. A different picture of Russia in the 1890s and 1900s has emerged however—one of rapid industrialization, massive foreign and domestic investment, and rising living standards among the peasantry. The state was a crucial agent of explosive colonization in Siberia, and of subsequent recolonization, but it was not the only one. Another was a remarkable informal settler transition among European Russian peasants, who made their own decisions to migrate to the far end of Asia. Their decision stemmed from hope more than fear or poverty, and in this and other respects it was remarkably similar to the Anglophone informal settler transitions earlier in the century.

Siberia's image in the mid-nineteenth century, of course, could hardly have been worse—we have seen that comparison with Siberia was the kiss of death for settler destinations in North America. Like Australia, Siberia was a destination for convicts; at least 400,000 criminals and political exiles were sent out in the eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries, and Siberia's image was that of a hellish frozen prison. 'Siberia was called white hell.' 'A domain of eternal wind, storms, and snow . . . a dank and barren land, with gloomy penal mines.' In the words of an 1825 poem: 'No one will visit/This wretched country/This vast prison house for exiles.'[54] A formal settler transition in the minds of some of the Russian elite can be traced from mid-century. At first, it was anti-state. Exiled intellectuals talked of Siberia's capacity to regenerate Russia, or of its prospects of independence, rousing state fears and repression. From the 1880s, the state turned decisively in favour of Siberian development, and backed a boosting campaign, distributing 'hundreds of thousands of pamphlets'. 'Literature on Siberia poured forth', 'a host of books and articles'.[55] By 1900, Siberia had officially become 'the biggest, richest, and most important periphery of the Russian Empire'.[56]

State and elite boosting no doubt had some effect on peasant migrants. Peasant literacy was below 10 per cent to the 1860s, but rose thereafter, reaching 35 per cent among rural males in 1897.[57] As with the early nineteenth-century English lower classes, majority literacy was still well away, but now everyone had family, friend, or neighbour who could read and write. A mass-market press emerged in the 1880s—kopek news and

kopek novels.[58] Peasant communities sent forerunner parties to Siberia to scout locations, and migrants wrote home. They 'depicted the frontier as a place of Utopian freedom (*volia*) and abundance (*privol'e*), where peasants got away from the world of lords and scarcity and lived as they were supposed to'. Here too, giant vegetables appeared as symbols of abundance—wheat 'taller than a man's head'. 'Berries were so plentiful . . . that a bucket tied to the neck of a grazing cow would fill up on its own.' 'In this letter, I'll tell you plain and simple that you could die back where you are but over here in our new settlement you will be resurrected.' Migrants had a 'habit of underscoring abundance', rather than hard work.[59] 'Drink water like a goose, eat bread like a pig, but let the devil work, not me.'[60] As in England, there was a folk memory of better times in the past—a memory with a kernel of truth since serfdom did not emerge in Russia until the late fifteenth century and did not fully develop until the eighteenth.[61] As with the English, migration seemed to transform people instantly. Russian settlers in Siberia seemed 'different from European Russians; cannier, more self-reliant, less obedient to authority'.[62] Many noted 'the free and easy almost democratic life of the Siberians', who showed 'hardly any servility'.[63] 'The Siberians better understood the dignity of man, and valued their rights more highly.'[64] This shift in the image of Siberia and Russians in Siberia was the cultural equivalent of the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

Russia's Dominion

After the bust of 1900, Siberia continued to export gold and furs, and began exporting increasing quantities of meat and canned salmon. But its export rescue was mainly a matter of wheat and butter. Butter was a food product that was relatively low in volume and high in value, hence its attractiveness as a long-range export. The Siberian export dairy industry grew with remarkable speed—from a mere 6 tons of overseas exports in 1894 to 73,000 tons in 1912, with most of the growth after 1900. Dairy factories increased from 227 in 1900 to 4,000 in 1913. Half were farmer cooperatives; and 60 per cent of Siberian farmers were involved in supplying them. Siberia's share of Russia's overseas butter exports rocketed from 9 to 94 per cent, 1894–1907.[65] To its Canadian-like fur trade and its Australian-like convict system Siberia, the Russian dominion, now added a New Zealand-like dairy industry. Some wheat and butter went to Britain

and other foreign destinations, but most went to European Russia, notably the great and growing city of St Petersburg.

St Petersburg, founded in 1703 by the fiat of Peter the Great, was a city with no natural hinterland. It grew despite 'the inability of the adjacent countryside to satisfy even a small part of St Petersburg's needs'.[66] Helped by Napoleon's destructive visit to Moscow in 1812, St Petersburg outgrew its rival in the nineteenth century, reaching half a million by 1850. From the 1860s, Russian industrialization was heavily concentrated in the St Petersburg region, in sharp contrast to the situation after 1917. Particularly fast growth in the 1890s and 1900s took the city to 2.2 million people by 1914—the same size as New York thirty years earlier. 'Petersburg had the leading role in Russian economic life.'[67] It had 567 banks in 1914 compared to 153 in Moscow, and the former engaged in long-term investment lending whereas the latter did not.[68] Like London and New York, St Petersburg transcended the limitations of its immediate hinterland by reaching out to increasingly far-flung town supply districts. Livestock was driven great distances, then slaughtered and frozen with natural ice during the winter as early as 1818—a precocious frozen meat industry.[69] Canals linked the capital to the Volga River system in the early nineteenth century, and soon grain from the Southern Steppes was flowing slowly up the river system. New railways linked the Steppes with St Petersburg from 1872, when rail brought 2 million tons of goods from the interior.[70] From about 1900, Siberia became its newest town supply district.

While Siberia's international exports have received most attention, internal exports to European Russia were clearly more important. Siberia's imports from abroad exceeded its exports in value by 350 per cent as late as 1910. Two years later, Siberia was pumping 1.5 million tons of wheat, meat, and butter into European Russia, particularly its cities, and was one of the few regions linked directly by rail to St Petersburg, as well as through Moscow. The Trans-Siberian Railway's transition from inlet to outlet can be traced in amount of freight carried—from 700,000 tons in 1900 to 3 million tons in 1909. Like Western American farmers compared to Eastern, or Dominion farmers compared to Old Britons, Siberian farmers had more acres, more horses, more machines, and higher yields than those in Old Russia, and higher living standards too.[71] 'The Siberian farmer drank five times as much tea and bought three times as much cotton material as his Russian counterpart.'[72] By 1914, Siberia was 'intimately connected' to Old

Russia; 'Siberia became an integral part of Russia.'[73] Fears of, and hopes for, Siberian independence diminished, and there are signs of a shift to a re-colonial collective identity—Russian, but Better Russian. During booms, Siberian settlers had not seemed particularly nationalistic. After the bust of 1900, Siberians claimed to be 'Russians with all the latest improvements'.[74]

The hyper-colonial perspective suggests that the similarities between Siberia and the Anglo newlands are more remarkable than their differences. Both Anglos and Russians had massive constellations of newlands, and occupied them at much the same time. As we noted in Chapter 1, both were hybrid peoples, marginal to the European heartland yet good borrowers, and with previous colonizing experience. Ukrainians and Cossacks played Scots and Irish in the settlement of Siberia. Unfree labour, and resistance to it, complicated the settlement process in both Russia and the United States until the early 1860s, when serfdom and slavery were abolished. In Russia too, booms, busts, and export rescues explosively expanded settler newlands, and then reintegrated them with a metropolis. The informal or lower-class settler transitions were remarkably similar, and Siberians too proved their metropolitan-ness with blood in the world wars. We will see in the next section that Argentina had a more comprehensive experience of explosive colonization and recolonization than Russia. But Argentina was to some extent an informal part of the Anglo-world, which provided its money and markets, if not its migrants. The only non-Anglophone country to experience full hyper-colonization, home and away, was Russia. In Russia, both hyper-colonization and industrialization came much later than in the Anglo-world. But when it did come it came in much the same way, and its symbiotic relationship with industrialization seems to have been similar. These settler and industrial revolutions took place without benefit of Anglo-style institutions. No one has yet accused later Tsarist Russia of much in the way of Protestantism, individualism, common law, or representative politics.

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64. Bassin, 'Inventing Siberia', 776. Also see Forsyth, *Peoples of Siberia*, 115.
65. Mote, 'The Cheliabinsk grain tariff'; Goryushkin, 'Migration, settlement and the rural economy of Siberia', 148–9; and 'The economic development of Siberia'; Marks, *Road to Power*, 207–8.
66. James H. Bater, *St Petersburg: Industrialisation and Change*, Edward Arnold, 1976, 142; Marks, *Road to Power*, 50.
67. Alexander Shevyrev, 'The axis Petersburg–Moscow: Outward and inward Russian capitals', *Journal of Urban History*, 30 (2003) 70–84.
68. Spechler, 'Tsarist banking system'.
69. Parker, *Historical Geography of Russia*, 204.
70. Bater, *St Petersburg*, 142.
71. Baievsky, 'Siberia: Storehouse of the future'; Goryushkin, 'Migration, settlement and the rural economy of Siberia', 144–6.
72. Semyonov, *Siberia*, 367.
73. Goryushkin, 'Migration, settlement and the rural economy of Siberia', 149.
74. Fraser, *The Real Siberia*, 85.

18

Adopted Dominions?

The first chapter of this book challenged legends of an early Anglophone divergence in the European settlement of the Americas. Until about 1800, the white populations of Latin America were right up with Anglo-America in numbers and wealth, and well ahead in mining and urbanization. But the Great French Wars of 1793–1815, which stimulated the United States and British economies, had the opposite effect on the Iberian World. French armies entered Madrid and Lisbon 1806–7, severing metropolitan connections with Latin America, whose peoples took the opportunity to bid for independence. Spain resisted fiercely, especially after the homeland was cleared of the French in 1813, and spasmodic but bitter warfare continued in Spanish America into the 1820s. The successful revolutionaries then fell out among themselves, and the region remained politically volatile throughout the nineteenth century. This did not stop attempts at mass settlement and mass investment. In 1824–5, as we saw in Chapter 4, the newly independent states of Latin America attracted a surge of British money: £21 million in loans to governments and many millions more in 624 private companies—'a wild speculation spree'.[1] The bubble soon burst, and British capital was frightened away from Latin America for forty years.[2] In striking contrast to British relations with the United States, connections between Latin America and Iberia diminished after independence, and in any case Iberia lacked capital and, until the 1880s, willing migrants to send. Between the 1810s and the 1870s, Latin America's access to oldland migrants and money, of whatever nationality, was inferior to that of the Anglo newlands, and this goes a long way towards explaining its much slower growth. The 'problem' was less in the Iberian newlands than in the impoverished Iberian oldlands and in the links between them.

Yet parts of Latin America did experience hyper-colonization in the long nineteenth century: booms individually as explosive as anything

in the Anglo-world, busts as devastating, and export rescues as unpredictable. This of course constitutes a major argument against long-term institutional explanations of the overall Anglo settler divergence. But this nineteenth-century 'good news' for parts of Latin America was followed by twentieth-century 'bad news'—rapid demographic growth outpacing economic growth, and associated 'under-development'. As noted in the Introduction, the leap-frog pattern was sharp and clear. In 1800, Brazil (3.3 million) had a similar number of people to the United States (3.9 million), and Mexico had more (5.1 million). In 1900, the United States (76 million) had four times the population of Brazil (18 million) and five and a half times the population of Mexico (13.6 million). By 2000, demographically though not economically, Latin America had struck back, with Brazil and Mexico between them equalling the US population of about 300 million.[3]

Brazil

The leading sites of nineteenth century 'good news' in Latin America, apart from the sugar-rich Spanish colony of Cuba, were Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil, and we will focus initially on the last and largest pair. The vast territory of Brazil, re-peopled since the sixteenth century by the Portuguese and their African slaves, escaped Spanish America's debilitating wars of independence, though it had its share of rebellions and strife with neighbours. It separated peacefully from Portugal in 1822, with a Portuguese prince as emperor and a dominant elite of slave-owning planters. Its history of sporadic good fortune in staples exports continued. Coffee had been exported from Brazil since 1779, and exports experienced a surge from 1805 with the collapse of Haitian competition. From the 1830s to the 1870s, coffee provided 40 per cent to 50 per cent of Brazil's export revenues. In the 1880s, plant disease in the coffee plantations of Ceylon provided another boost. US and European demand continued to increase, and Brazilian production rocketed, tripling in the 1890s to a million tons. By 1900 Brazil supplied 77 per cent of the world's coffee.[4] From 1888 to 1912, the coffee trade was supplemented by a boom in rubber exports, powered by demand for automobile tires and ending when Malayan plantations stocked with stolen Brazilian trees began to out-produce the tapping of wild trees in the Amazon.[5]

The surge in Brazilian coffee production was heavily concentrated in time in the 1890s and 1900s and in space in the São Paulo region, and this is the time and place of Brazil's most promising candidate for explosive colonization.[6] A key prerequisite was the completion of a railway from São Paulo city to the port of Santos in 1868. Rail construction continued at a modest level in the 1870s, then climbed in the 1880s, but the take-off in São Paulo's growth did not take place until 1887–8. Until then, coffee planters had relied largely on slaves for labour, sucking in slaves first from the stagnant north-east and then from the rest of the south-east. Slave numbers in Brazil as a whole declined with the cessation of African imports in 1851 and with increasing manumission, but slave numbers on São Paulo coffee plantations grew. Then, in 1888, slavery was finally abolished and the planters turned to overseas immigrants for their labour. Brazil had long attracted a steady trickle of Portuguese immigrants, averaging about 5,000 a year. Now Portuguese immigrant numbers rose to over 20,000 a year, and they were joined by a newer and larger stream of north Italian migrants, recruited in families by planters and the government to work in coffee production. Immigration into Brazil had never exceeded 35,000 a year to 1886. It then suddenly jumped to 56,000 in 1887 and 133,000 in 1888, with another 65,000 in 1889, and a total of 1.2 million in the 1890s.[7]

São Paulo state in the 1890s had some of the hallmarks of explosive colonization. São Paulo city had been static in population between 1854 and 1874 at around 30,000 people. It grew to 65,000 in 1880 with the early development of rail and coffee, then rocketed to 240,000 in 1890—a mushroom city if ever there was one. Banks in the state increased from nine in 1888 to over thirty in 1892. The numbers were then pruned by a bust in the early 1890s, known as the *Encilhamento*.[8] Foreign investment and rail-building were substantial. But other hallmarks of full settlement booms were absent. Investment and rail construction were greater in the 1880s, yet population growth was much greater in the 1890s. Even then, it did not exceed 64 per cent in São Paulo state as a whole, well short of decennial doubling. As we have seen, this growth was emphatically staples-driven—Brazil is one case in which the staples thesis actually works. Even in the 1890s, even in São Paulo, Brazilian growth fell short of fully explosive colonization and growth in the rest of the country was slower still until well in to the twentieth century. A telling indicator is the absence of the big surplus of imports over exports, which characterized full settlement booms. Between 1865 and 1920, Brazil had import surpluses in only three

years, none of them in the 1890s. In Argentina, imports exceeded exports in twenty-eight years in the same period, often by a large margin, and with the excess years clearly concentrated in boom periods. This comparison extends to Chile, which had five years of import surplus in the period, as against Uruguay, which had twenty-two.[9] After a glut caused by their own increased production in the 1910s, Brazil's coffee planters did well in the 1920s, but virtually nobody else did.[10]

The Brazilian experience contrasted not only with most Anglo new-lands, but also with its neighbours to the south, Argentina and Uruguay. Brazilian gross domestic product per capita (in real US dollars) was $190 in 1901, compared to $780 in Argentina.[11] Why was this so? Argentina and Uruguay had some positives that Brazil lacked, and there were also Brazilian negatives. One, until 1888, was slavery. The peculiar institution not only delayed planter and government backing for immigration, but also put off immigrants, as it did in the American South in the 1850s. Slaves competed for jobs and also stamped those jobs as servile, discouraging a settler transition. Even a large expansion of staples production had a lesser and narrower effect than a full wild settler boom, as we can see in the delay between rail construction and population growth. The Brazilian government encouraged overseas rail investment by guaranteeing dividends, not by land grants which forced the rail companies into the colonization game elsewhere.[12] The *Encilhamento* bust, coupled with a devaluation in 1895 to protect coffee planters from falling prices, put government repayments on foreign debt at risk. Foreign debt was reorganized between 1898 and 1901, but on condition that Brazil commit itself to an 'austerity programme' which dampened growth in the 1900s.[13]

Tropical exports to the international market, such as coffee, were more vulnerable to fluctuation than were re-colonial substitute exports to a specific market, such as meat. The 1895 drop in Brazilian coffee prices, the glut of around 1910, and the collapse of rubber exports due to Malayan competition after 1912 are cases in point. Added to this, the overseas inputs into Brazil's semi-boom were more fragmented than in Argentina, as well as proportionately much smaller. Italy and Portugal provided Brazil's immigrants; the United States and continental Europe provided its markets; and these countries plus Britain provided its money.[14] The United States was the leading market for Brazilian exports from about 1870, and increasingly dominated consumption of Brazilian coffee in a somewhat re-colonial way.[15] By the 1920s, the coffee trade was dominated by New York, which

alone handled 50 per cent of world production and 60 per cent of Brazilian production.[16] But until World War I Britain provided Brazil with much more of its money and imports than did the United States. Brazil's money, migrants, and exports all flowed to or from different places, reducing the tendency of the flows to reinforce each other. Massive British investment in the Dominions and Argentina gave Britain an incentive to provide export rescue to salvage something from its investments after busts, and this was less true of Brazil. If newlands could not export profitably, they could not pay dividends and repay debt. British investment in Brazil was substantial, at around £220 million in 1913, but this was less than half that in Argentina, which had barely one-third of Brazil's population. That year, Argentina's exports to Britain were over four times those of Brazil.[17] Brazil's overseas inputs were not only much smaller than Argentina's, especially in proportion to population, but also less well aligned in terms of producing secure and profitable export markets.

Booming the Pampas

Settler Argentina was founded by Spain in 1580. As its very name implies it was essentially a support zone for the silver mines of Potosi until 1776, when its population of around 300,000 was concentrated in the north, adjacent to the mining region.[18] In 1776, it became a separate vice-regality and benefited somewhat from the Bourbon reforms. The fulcrum of settlement gradually shifted from the north to the littoral provinces of Corrientes, Entre Rios, Santa Fe and, above all, Buenos Aires. This region shared the great River Plate (Plata) delta with Uruguay. Argentina painfully achieved independence from Spain 1810–16, but the region under settler control remained very limited. 'By the 1820s the frontier of settlement had scarcely advanced beyond that of 1580.'[19] Patagonia in the south remained unsettled, and potentially the richest part of the centre, namely the Pampas, was largely controlled by Araucanian Indians. From the 1820s, like other Latin American regimes, Argentina's combative but talented elite attempted to expand settlement and develop the economy along the lines of the United States, while hampered by internecine strife and conflict with neighbours. Argentina lacked Brazil's gold and tropical staples, but it did have cattle hides. One of the first domestic commodities to run short in proto-industrializing and industrializing economies, along with wood, was

Map 9. Argentina, circa 1890.

leather. From the 1790s, Britain and the US Northeast therefore reached out to cattle-rich areas for hides. Britain's imports of hides rose tenfold between 1770 and 1815. Argentina's export of hides rose from 150,000 in 1776, to 874,000 in 1796, and to 2.3 million a year in the 1840s.[20] At first, the hides were taken from feral cattle, but in the nineteenth century a ranching system emerged in which large landowners employed the famous Argentine gauchos to manage their herds. Hides were supplemented by exports of tallow, horn, and salt meat—the last going to the slaves of Brazil and Cuba, while the rest went to Europe and the Northeastern United States.

From the 1840s, the hide trade was supplemented by wool exports, as Argentina and Uruguay joined Australasia in supplying Europe with wool.[21] The hide and wool trades may help explain the Plata's linkages with Britain, which were better than those of the rest of Latin America. But the superiority was not obvious until about 1870. Prior to this, Argentina's attempts to secure large infusions of money and migrants were no more successful than those of its neighbours, and as we have noted the disastrous speculative bubble of the mid-1820s cast a lengthy shadow.[22] In 1857, however, Argentina came to an arrangement with Baring Brothers over its 1820s debts. A little money trickled in the 1860s and rail-building began in 1863.[23] That decade also produced an improvement in communications with Europe with the mass advent of Atlantic steamships, and in internal Argentine communications—mail volumes in the province of Cordoba almost doubled between 1865 and 1870.[24] Argentina's tightly organized rancher elite renewed its attempts to attract migrants and money, some new newspapers and British banks were established, and 'a number of glowing descriptions of central Argentina' were published.[25] The expensive and embarrassing War of the Triple Alliance, in which Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina struggled to overcome little Paraguay, ended in 1870; an era of relative stability began; and British merchants located in Buenos Aires began backing plans for London investment.

This mix of combustibles succeeded in igniting arguably the first full non-English-speaking settlement boom in the world, apart from the French Algerian mini-boom of 1848–51. It sputtered in the late 1860s, flared fully to life in 1870, and was brought to a premature close by the international bust of 1873. 'Public borrowing abroad took wing for Argentina from 1870',[26] funding an intensive spasm of rail-building. The Argentine government set up twelve immigration agencies in Europe.[27] Between 1865 and 1873,

immigration increased from 12,000 to 48,000 and imports from 30 to 73 million gold pesos, worth a US dollar each, while exports remained static to 1872. Census dates do not correlate with the boom, making growth estimates difficult, but the Province of Buenos Aires more than doubled in population between 1864 and 1881 and it is a fair bet that growth was disproportionately concentrated in the late 1860s and early 1870s.[28] As in the Anglo newlands, booming white settlement provoked pan-tribal indigenous resistance. The Araucanians, originally from Chile, adopted the horse with alacrity like the Plains Indians of the United States, and with their lances and bolas became formidable light cavalry. They developed a system of raiding the ranches of the settled northern Pampas for cattle and horses, then selling the proceeds, estimated at 40,000 head a year, across the Andes in Chile—a kind of unofficial settler tribute. Under their great chief Calfucura, the Araucanians took the offensive in the 1850s. They defeated three Argentine armies, causing 2,500 casualties, and seized a million settler horses and cattle and 400 prisoners. 'The territory of Buenos Aires was reduced by some 25,000 square miles.' There was not much sign yet of the 'inevitable' triumph of Europe, 280 years after first settlement. But in 1870, settler pressure renewed and the Argentine government shifted troops south from the war against Paraguay. Its aims seem limited; to create a double frontier to better protect ranches, and to hamper communications between the Aruacanians and their kin and markets in Chile. But Calfucura sensed a decisive challenge, assembled an army of 3,000 warriors, and rode north to battle in 1872. As it happened, he was defeated, and died the next year, and although the Araucanians remained powerful and independent further south, boom-time settlement took over a fresh slice of the Pampas.[29]

The Argentine bust of 1873 was as sharp as any—much more clear-cut than the Brazilian *Encilhamento*. Imports halved and immigration fell two-thirds between 1873 and 1876. No less than 400 Argentine and Anglo-Argentine companies went bankrupt in 1873–7.[30] Here was a settler boom-and-bust in all its glory. Export rescue, involving some 'bio-recolonization' with Lincoln sheep, had wool exports doubling from 66,000 tons in 1875 to 128,000 tons in 1885.[31] Argentina's second boom began about 1878, and lasted throughout the 1880s, intensifying from 1885. This boom was anything but modest. £154 million of British money flowed into Argentina in the 1880s, compared to £59 million into much larger Brazil in the same decade. Imports exceeded exports in 1878, and in every year between 1882 and 1890, by margins of up to 40 per cent. £66 million

of Argentina's British money went to rail, which was three-quarters British owned, whereas French investors and the Brazilian government owned most Brazilian lines.[32] The cheap and regular steamship services, already prevalent across the north Atlantic, bridged the South Atlantic too at this time. Voyage duration between Europe and Buenos Aires dropped from sixty-one days in the 1860s to twenty-six days in the 1870s.[33] Italian and other shippers allied with Argentine boosters and chain migration to draw in 800,000 mainly Italian migrants in the 1880s—into a country with a population of only 1.8 million in 1869.[34] Though beef exports were not yet significant, and hide exports rose only modestly, cattle numbers in Buenos Aires Province almost doubled, presumably catering for the internal 'progress industry'.[35] The boom began with General Julio Roca's 'Conquest of the Desert', 1878–9, the climactic war that finally destroyed Araucanian independence, although low-level resistance continued to 1885. The war was financed partly by land sales and partly by loans and featured the latest technology in the form of Remington rifles.[36] The Araucanians, a people who had handled normal European settlement for three centuries with almost contemptuous ease, succumbed to explosive settlement within a decade.

Inland the Pampas, which lacked navigable rivers, were opened up by rail. Some 7,000 kilometres of railway were built, much of it in the wrong place. 'At the height of the boom, some twenty-one private companies and three state lines competed in chaotic fashion.' By 1890, 'after years of sacrifice, Argentina could claim a poorly-coordinated railway network containing three different gauges, with excessive construction in some areas and none in others'.[37] Attributions of this to Hispanic irrationality are laughable when one considers that Anglo rail booms had precisely the same characteristics and that most Argentine railways were British-built anyway. In Argentina, as in Anglo newlands, 'confidence bred confidence in an exponential fashion, and expectations bred expectations of endless profits to be made from land and investment of every kind'.[38] Some associated the 'orgy of speculation' with 'frenetic competition among European financiers for Argentine business'.[39] But Argentines too were bitten by the boom mentality, adopting the Protestant gambling ethic with enthusiasm, as Ricardo Salvatore makes clear.

> Critics agreed that gambling was everywhere [and feared the] rapid erosion of the distinction between work and play . . . [It] eroded the habits of work

> and the faith in the virtues of labor . . . Infected with the speculative fever people were selling and buying almost everything . . . on the expectation of making rapid and easy gains . . . In this context, immigrants were ridiculed for trying to make fortunes through work and thrift . . . [for creoles] falsification and fraud was their business.[40]

Buenos Aires seemed to be 'forever remaking and altering itself and everyone seems to live in a constant state of alert as if at war, stimulated by the preoccupation of enriching himself as quickly as possible'. 'The drive to make money swept the entire society.' Populations of 100 million were confidently predicted for the relatively near future.[41] Where have we heard this before?

Bust followed boom in 1890, and brought with it the typical revulsion towards the boom mentality. Intellectuals and others 'viewed the crisis of 1890 as the result of a process of moral degradation' and were relieved as the 'the economy turned from a ''feverish'' to a ''normal'' state'.[42] The bust almost brought down Barings, the great London merchant bank that was again specializing in Argentine loans, and it did bring down some 300 Argentine corporations and half of the banks in Buenos Aires and its province. As with Anglo-busts, there was a very sharp downturn in the importation of goods, money, and people. Net immigration of 220,000 in 1889 became net emigration of 30,000 in 1891. Imports fell from 165 million gold pesos in 1889 to 67 million in 1891.[43] Real wages remained below 1888 levels until 1908. The bust led to populist radicalism and industrial conflict. The price of land fell 75 per cent in 1891.[44] All this was strikingly similar to the situation in Australia at the same time. As in Australia, wheat was prominent in this export rescue. Argentine wheat exports rocketed from 179,000 tons in 1888 to 1.6 million tons in 1894—an almost unbelievable ninefold rise in seven years.[45] As in Australia, elements of export rescue do not seem planned. Though experiments with refrigeration began in the early 1880s, and cattle numbers increased massively, the cattle were not of the right kind for export to the world's only major beef market, Britain. It was not until 1892–6, after the bust, that imports of British stud bulls surged, increasing sixfold in those years.[46]

In eastern Australia, the great boom of the 1880s was the last of the series. In Argentina, there was one more huge growth spurt. After the bust of 1890, Argentina's public debt became crippling, but in contrast to the 1820s the Argentine government was quick and energetic in seeking an accommodation with its creditors. British interests now had millions

committed to Argentina, and with the help of these interests, the debt situation was managed. The usual boom indicators clicked into place. Mail handled in Argentina increased almost tenfold between 1895 and 1913, when it exceeded the level of Brazil, which was three times as populous.[47] Travel time between Europe and Argentina dropped further, from twenty-six to seventeen days. In the 1890s, Buenos Aires at last received a good artificial harbour, which allegedly cut unloading time by 90 per cent.[48] Banks multiplied to 143 in 1913. Bank assets in Buenos Aires City increased twentyfold, 1881–1910.[49] Newspapers, in both Spanish and English, flourished, and specialist newspapers for British investors in Argentina emerged.[50]

British money began to flow in again about 1898, and flooded in from 1904 to 1913, with a brief dip in 1907. Immigration and imports followed roughly the same pattern. Between 1896 and 1913 a staggering 4 million people, now featuring large numbers of Spanish as well as Italians, poured into Argentina, while total British investment reached £480 million—about 12 per cent of all Britain's overseas investments, and an increase of almost £300 million on 1895.[51] Seven thousand kilometres of railway were built in the 1890s and eleven thousand in the 1900s.[52] Vast tracts of the pampas were fenced for beef or ploughed for wheat, and there was urban and industrial development too. Manufacturing establishments doubled from 23,000 in 1895, to 49,000 in 1914.[53] Real wages were only 60 per cent of those in the United States, but well over twice those of Spain.[54] Buenos Aires, already a big city of 433,000 people in 1890, grew modestly to 664,000 in the 1890s, but then mushroomed anew to 1.57 million by 1914—five times the size of contemporary Los Angeles and four times the size of São Paulo. Like other settler gateway cities during booms, it was primarily inlet not outlet; three-quarters of Argentina's imports but only one-third of its exports flowed through it. Buenos Aires in 1914 was much richer than the mega-cities of twenty-first-century Latin America. Incomes in the city were well above the Argentine average and though wealth was unequally distributed, the upper part of the pyramid was quite broad; 21 per cent of Buenos Aires economically active inhabitants were middle class. The city had electric streetcars from 1898 and a good subway system was built in 1913, just six years after that of New York.[55] Argentina's Bust Three began in 1913, and was worsened by the diminution of international trade during World War I. Imports dropped sharply and net immigration disappeared. There was a 'devastating recession', 'a recession even worse

than that of the early 1930s'.[56] But export rescue did take place, with meat joining grain as a major staple. Exports of meat had not exceeded 25 million gold pesos up to 1908; the figure was 249 million in 1918, a tenfold increase in a decade.[57]

At first sight, these Argentine booms may seem somewhat less explosive than their North American and Australasian relatives. The censuses of 1869 and 1914 show a quadrupling of Argentina's population in the whole forty-five-year period, whereas Australia grew about eightfold during its two great booms, 1848–91. But the national censuses do not fully capture the temporal concentration of Argentine growth in the boom decades of the 1880s and 1900s, or the regional concentration of growth in the central provinces of Buenos Aires and Santa Fe. These two provinces, plus Buenos Aires City, increased over eightfold in population, 1869–1914, while the rest of the country merely doubled.[58] The colonization of the Argentine pampas in the later part of the long nineteenth century was just as explosive as its English-speaking counterparts. With the possible exception of neighbouring Uruguay, it was far more explosive than any other part of Latin America. The Argentine economy was 'much more dynamic that those of Chile, Mexico, Colombia or Brazil'.[59] To some contemporaries, Argentina's 'almost breakneck growth' meant that it 'no longer seemed part of Latin America'.[60]

The Argentine Divergence

From 1913, or 1930, or 1945—scholars differ—decline set in, and the twentieth century is seen by Argentines themselves as an era of economic failure. 'All agree that the country in some sense failed.'[61] Argentina's decline has been attributed to the absence of Anglo-style development-friendly institutions, or to the self-interestedness of its cattle-ranching elite, or to political instability, or to some fundamental cultural difference.[62] Even Spanish Americans sometimes contrast their anti-materialist 'romantic spirit' or 'warrior soul' to money grubbing but practical Anglos.[63] Yet none of these factors prevented the huge booms that increased the Argentine population from 1.8 million relatively poor people in 1869 to almost 8 million relatively rich people in 1914. We have two questions here: why did Argentina 'succeed' in terms of economic growth and development 1865–1914, in particular when compared to the rest of Latin America, and

why did it 'fail' thereafter, in particular when compared to the American West and the British Dominions?

There are some signs of Anglo-style institutional, political, and educational developments in Argentina that may have enhanced its booms. The Argentine government introduced business-friendly laws in the 1860s, whereas Brazil did not manage this until the 1880s.[64] Despite a tendency towards the concentration of land ownership in few hands, there was a very lively boom-time land market. Universal male suffrage (for citizens) was introduced in 1911, and there was a high turnout.[65] The years 1880–1930 were 'an extended period of constitutional legality and political stability'. Education is often used as a proxy for 'human capital', and in Argentina the state began expanding the education system in 1884. By 1910, 63 per cent of Argentines had experienced some schooling. 'The quality of primary education was acknowledged by all.'[66] But, as some of the dates suggest, these developments look more like consequences of explosive colonization than causes of it and some were quite limited in any case. Argentina's illiteracy rate was little more than half that of Brazil in 1914, at 36 per cent, but had been similar in 1869, at 77 per cent.[67] The expansion of primary schooling began well after Boom One, and really took off from 1895, at the beginning of Boom Three. The education system was much less strong at secondary and tertiary levels. 'Political stability' was relative. There were far fewer rebellions than before 1880 or after 1930, but there were still eight between 1870 and 1905—booms continued regardless.[68] Argentina is not fertile ground for the argument that growth-friendly Anglo-style institutions were the key cause of explosive colonization. Instead, a hyper-colonial perspective suggests that Argentina's relative success to the 1920s was attributable to three factors, apart from its rich natural endowment: a powerful but partial series of settler transitions; a particularly cohesive, influential, and well-connected elite; and links with Britain which were better than those of Latin America but worse than those of the Dominions. It so happens that these three factors also help explain Argentina's relative failure after the 1920s.

Argentina's first settler transition was the conceptual conversion of the Pampas from a 'desert' haunted by 'countless hordes' of lethal Indian lancers to potentially the world's richest large tract of fresh farmland.[69] This appears to have occurred in the minds of some Argentines from the 1860s, although one source claims that most of the Pampas, as well as Patagonia to the south, were 'considered of little value' to the 1870s.[70] Some sources suggest

that native-born Argentines were reluctant to move to the frontiers, but this was not true of the gauchos, and massive population increases in some provinces suggest that others must have moved too. Native-born seasonal workers outnumbered foreigners two to one in 1910 on the farms of Santa Fe Province, the fastest growing region.[71] But what explosive colonization really needed was oldland migrants. The Argentine government wanted North-west European settlers like those going to the United States, but was able to divert only a few. As we will soon see, until about 1900 there was considerable Argentine hostility towards the obvious source of migrants: Spain. The next best thing was considered to be northern Italians. They were thought to be superior human material to those in the south, partly because they were in fact a little more literate and less poverty-stricken, and partly for racist reasons. Migrant hunters from Buenos Aires to Wellington believed that ancient Ostrogoth and Lombard invasions had given northern Italy a touch of Teutonism that the south lacked. During Boom One, Argentine government migrant recruitment was concentrated in northern Italy. Between 1876 and 1914, about 2 million Italians, mostly from the north, poured into Argentina, where they were the largest migrant group—48 per cent of all immigrants, 1857–1924.[72] Wits came to define Argentines as 'Italians who speak Spanish and think they are British'.[73]

Why were northern Italians so Pampas-prone? Argentine government efforts must be part of the explanation, but official recruitment was ineffective in Spain, and Italians had their own reasons. A general Italian diaspora, eventually involving up to 8 million people, began about 1880, as Italian, particularly Genoese, shipping lines entered the migration business.[74] Chain migration played its part, but Italian migration was also clearly sensitive to conditions in destination regions, rising rapidly with local booms and declining even more rapidly with busts.[75] These people knew what was going on across the Atlantic; Italian migration to Argentina selected for literacy. Like Anglo migrants, Italian emigrants were hostile to domestic service and given to impertinence when they did undertake it. Argentine gentry too complained that 'today the European servant who attends us robs us, dresses better than we do, and reminds us of his status as a free man if one scarcely reprimands him'. 'Servants were less servile and deferential to their employers.'[76] Like the Spanish and the Anglos, Italians were also attracted by Argentina's reputation for abundance. Italian immigrants emphasized the 'abundance of comparatively cheap foodstuffs, particularly beef'. 'The country's carnivorous diet was a sign of its richness.'[77] Most

Italians are often said to have crossed the Atlantic annually as seasonal labourers, or *golondrinas*—swallows. But recent scholarship casts doubt on this, and an annual transatlantic fare would surely have been a severe drain on a labourer's wages.[78] The norm appears to have been a sojourn of several years, during which the Italian migrant rented a wheat farm or worked in his own small business. But it remains true that the rate of return among Italian migrants was high—55 per cent to 1914.[79] What we may have here is the 'straddling' strategy, mentioned in Chapter 4, of maintaining footholds both home and abroad. Italian migrants were keen on property ownership, and had quite high rates of it in Buenos Aires City. But a nest egg earned in high-wage, high-cost Argentina bought more property back home in low-wage, low-cost Italy. Northern Italians provided booming Argentina with an entrepreneurial and energetic lower middle-class, urban businessmen and tenant farmers, but they were less committed to their new homes than their Anglo equivalents.

Italian politicians sometimes spoke blithely of the informal Italian colonization of Argentina,[80] and Argentina was not keen on becoming a neo-Italy. This combined with other factors to encourage a shift towards more Spanish immigration from about 1900, and here, thanks to a superb recent study by José Moya, we can identify a settler transition quite clearly. Like the Anglos, but unlike most other migrants, Spanish emigrants had the option of going to countries in which their language was spoken. Like the Anglos, they tended to take it, but much later in the day. Spanish emigration rose from 1900, and between that year and 1913 only 2 per cent went to the United States. But Spanish-speaking destinations were not equal. In the years 1904–6, Argentina received 42 per cent of all Spanish migrants; in 1911–13 the figure was 66 per cent. The Spanish diaspora and the attractiveness of Argentina were closely linked.

Spaniards may seem the obvious reinforcement for a neo-Spain like Argentina. In fact there was a three-century gap between the two main Spanish settlements of Argentina, and the settlers came from different regions—Andalusia in the far south of Spain led in the late sixteenth century and Galicia in the far north in early twentieth. Galicians, and other Argentine-prone groups such as Basques and Catalans, were not native speakers of Spanish (Castilian), although most had some knowledge of it. Argentine attitudes to Spanish immigrants were surprisingly negative for much of the nineteenth century. They were known as *saracenos* (Saracens), *godos* (Goths), or at best *Gallegos*—a mildly derogatory term for Galicians

that was applied to all Spaniards. The Spanish were the enemy in the wars of independence in the 1810s, and continued to dabble in South America until mid-century, a fact which Argentines resented. This attitude merged with the belief of some elite modernizers that northern Europeans were the immigrants that were needed. Unlike the US's British legacy, Argentina's Spanish legacy was not buttressed by commercial links. 'When it came to commercial influence, the mother country remained a distant relative.' Moya states that Argentine government recruitment was ineffective—only 2 per cent of Spanish immigrants received free fares.[81] Spain in its turn was not keen on emigration. Of twenty-seven early twentieth century Spanish books on the subject, 'eighteen clearly condemned emigration' as a drain on the nation.

Argentine attitudes eased in the late nineteenth century and shifted decisively around 1900, and so did Spanish attitudes. Argentine 'Hispanophobia' diminished and Spanish immigrants came to seem 'a powerful reinforcement to preserve the national spirit in the face of the dissolving force of other foreign groups'. In Argentine minds, Spanish immigrants were, in the course of the later nineteenth century, converted 'from enemy to stranger to cousin'. In Spain, too, migration selected for literacy; letters back were 'the most powerful Argentine immigration agent'.[82] An informal settler transition occurred amongst Galicians while establishment attitudes were still antagonistic to emigration. The new Spanish migration was pulled by the promise of a better future, rather than pushed by poverty or other factors. Between 1890 and 1914, with a heavy concentration after 1900, 1.25 million Spanish flowed into Argentina, about half from Galicia which had only 11 per cent of the Spanish population.[83]

Here was another powerful combustible for Argentine explosive colonization. Yet, like the Italian, the Spanish settler transition was incomplete. Indeed, counter-intuitively, the Spanish 'actually assimilated to the new land more slowly and more reluctantly than did the "alien" Italians', who were not quick. The Spanish rate of return was lower than the Italian, but still high at 46 per cent by 1930, and in-marriage and voluntary segregation was high in both groups. Above all, both Spanish and Italian immigrants avoided Argentine citizenship like the plague. Fewer than 4 per cent of Spanish took citizenship, and the Italian rate was below 2 per cent.[84] Immigrants received most legal rights without citizenship, with the important exception of voting in national elections. Aliens were also not liable for military service. There was therefore 'no incentive to become a citizen',

and a considerable disincentive.[85] Nativist fears among the lower classes, and the fear of political competition among the elite, led Argentines to accept this situation. Immigrants dominated the Argentine lower middle classes. 'In 1895 over 80% of proprietors in manufacturing and nearly 75% of proprietors in trade were immigrants' and the figures were very similar in 1914.[86] The incomplete settler transition therefore meant that booming Argentina's middle class was much less committed to it, much less politically powerful, and much more prone to send or take its money home, than in the Anglo newlands. The power and novelty of Spanish and Italian settler transitions helps explain Argentina's relative success to the 1920s. But the incomplete nature of the settler transition also helps explain Argentina's relative failure from the 1920s.

The straddling or sojourning character of migration to Argentina, its dominance of the middle class, and its lack of political power left the field clear for the continued leadership of Argentina's home-grown elite to the early 1940s, when the populist Juan Peron took power. Recent scholarship convincingly debunks older notions that this elite was always a semi-feudal brake on progress, and suggests that it was often innovative and entrepreneurial.[87] This is also true of some other Latin American elites, such as the coffee planters of São Paulo. But the Argentine elite may have been more cohesive, more politically influential and, from the 1860s, better connected with a moneyed metropolis.[88] The Argentine elite was mainly comprised of cattle ranchers, though they also dabbled in sheep, wheat, and intellectual pursuits. In 1866, they formed the Argentine Rural Society, an influential organization indeed. While São Paulo coffee planters faced stiff competition from the older elites of the north-east and Rio de Janeiro, the Argentine ranchers dominated national politics, and provided twelve out of fourteen ministers of agriculture between 1910 and 1943.[89] They used their political power, their own resources, and their good British connections to enrich themselves and develop the country, two things they saw as synonymous. They helped attract money and migrants to Argentina's booms, but they also monopolized land, credit, and government help and largely prevented the emergence of the small-to-medium family farms that characterized agriculture in the Anglo newlands from about 1890. This is the classic explanation for Argentina's bad news. 'A population of enfranchised smallholders constituted a social environment in which science and technology could best be applied to overcome environment and climate.'[90] The Anglo-Wests had such an environment; Argentina did

not. The view has some substance, but this is yet another story that needs to be told in the round.

In the Anglo-Wests, as we have seen repeatedly, small farmers were important in supplying the boom market and doubling as workers in the progress industry. As 'sturdy yeomen', they had a more central place in Anglo ideologies of settlement than in Hispanic, and through a wider suffrage they also had more political leverage. They were therefore able to own their own land, whereas in Argentina small farmers tended to be tenants. Argentina did make considerable efforts to settle yeomen freeholders on the land, but had little success except in Santa Fe Province, which tellingly enough had the fastest boom-time growth rate of all.[91] But big ranchers featured large during booms in the Anglo-Wests as well as in Argentina. There too they amassed vast tracts of land and wielded hugely disproportionate power in boom times even in such countries as New Zealand, later the archetypal stronghold of the yeoman farmer. Like the Argentines, Anglo elites were good at circumventing early government attempts to encourage closer settlement. In boom times, Australasian sheep-lords and North American cattle barons were not so different from the great Argentine ranchers. It was during busts that their fates really began to diverge. In the Anglo-world, busts usually resulted, first, in a reshuffling of land into medium-size units for market reasons. It resulted, secondly, in a populist backlash that gave teeth to closer settlement schemes and other government help for small farmers, such as agricultural education and assistance with credit. It was the supply of credit to small farmers that was the big difference between the Canadian prairies and the Argentine pampas.[92] Many Anglo small farmers fell victim to the bust, but the survivors benefited from state help and were able to consolidate their position as the main producers of re-colonial staples. In Argentina, it was the rural elite, not the yeoman farmer, who 'enjoyed privileged protection from the state'.[93] They also faced a less politically effective populist backlash in favour of small farmers, who were mostly voteless immigrants. In 1914, 58 per cent of Pampas farms were held by tenants, of whom 78 per cent were foreigners.[94] Land prices fell in busts here too, and land was reshuffled, but usually from very large units to quite large ones, or even from small to large.[95] The *estancerios* therefore survived better than their Anglo equivalents, while small freehold farmers did not.[96]

This superior efficiency of small farms to large tends to be assumed rather than demonstrated. Family farming does have some intrinsic advantages.

The most underestimated of them is committed yet very cheap labour in the form of wives and children. Being mostly single males, Argentine tenant farmers lacked this advantage. Family farmers were also prone to mechanize if credit was available to them. It was available in Australasia after 1890, with government help in the form of 'advances to settlers', and on the Canadian Prairies through the amoeba-like proliferation of private banks. In Argentina, credit was monopolized by the elite and by non-rural sectors of the economy. This was not a huge problem during booms, when wages and prices were high, but it was a problem when the boom series ended, and unadulterated recolonization began—say 1914 in Argentina. At that time, Saskatchewan had six times the farm machinery per hectare as Buenos Aires Province.[97] Even so, it was not so much that large farming was intrinsically less efficient than small, but that it produced a more unequal distribution of wealth, favoured low wages, and produced less mass consumption and more political unrest.

Prosperous Argentina's rise, and perhaps its fall, was intimately bound up with its relationship with Britain, our third explanatory variable. The relationship began and ended violently, with the repulse of British attacks on the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires in 1806–7, and the repulse of Argentine attacks on the contested Falkland or Malvinas Islands in 1982. In between, however, the relationship was about as close as one could get without speaking English or being part of the British Empire. Historians have described Argentina as part of Britain's unofficial or informal empire, and also as an 'Honorary Dominion' or the 'Sixth Dominion'.[98] 'Argentina became a sort of British dominion, and more than a third of its output was exported to the UK up to the 1930s.'[99] The issue is still contested, and it does seem that the Argentine government could act independently when it wished to.[100] But it did not often wish to, if only because the government and the elite group that profited most from the British relationship intersected closely. As Donald Denoon has said of the Dominions, Argentina's dependence on Britain was real but unforced.[101]

As noted above, Britain's links with Argentina seem no stronger than those with some other Latin American countries until the 1860s, and the hide and wool trades may have contributed to their strengthening from that time. In 1850, 22 per cent of the shipping tonnage departing Buenos Aires was bound for Britain, a figure little higher than that bound for the United States and lower than that bound for Cuba and Brazil combined. In 1871, Buenos Aires tonnage was still only 39 per cent

British, but was always over 50 per cent thereafter.[102] In 1862, British investment in Argentina amounted to a mere £2.7 million, but rose in boom-time surges to £480 million in 1914.[103] Between 1900 and 1914, Britain supplied over 60 per cent of Argentina's foreign investment and 33 per cent of its imports.[104] With small but interesting exceptions, such as an experiment in Welsh settlement in Patagonia, Briton did not supply Argentina with many migrants. In 1914, there were only 27,000 Britons living in Argentina.[105] But these few were much more influential than mere numbers imply. They were primarily merchants, managers, and engineers and their families, and both their class make-up and their continuing attachment to Britain is shown by their responses to World War I. A remarkable 4,852 Anglo-Argentines volunteered to serve in the British army, of whom 1,704, or 35 per cent, were commissioned as officers.[106] Buenos Aires in 1914 had prominent British enclaves: fourteen English schools, fifteen English hotels, ten Protestant churches, eight newspapers, branches of Harrods and Tiffany and a replica of Big Ben in the *Plaza Britanica*.[107] This Anglo-Argentine filament, with which the Argentine elite was closely connected, may have given Argentina an advantage over the Latin American competition in links with Britain.

Why were links with Britain so important? US, German, French, and Belgian investors and businesses were also active in Latin America and between them contributed more to Brazil than did Britain. Even in Argentina, the big US meat-packing companies, led by Swift's, swooped down on the meat trade in 1907 and were the leading player by 1914.[108] Was US or German money not just as good as British? The answer, in this context, is no. Britain provided markets as well as money to a greater extent than others, and this was especially true of meat. Like Australia and New Zealand, Argentina began experimenting in refrigerated sheep-meat exports around 1880. By the late 1890s, annual shipments of mutton, mainly to Britain, were valued at over £1 million, and at over £2 million in the 1900s. In Britain, New Zealand sheep-meat was considered 'a far superior product to South American frozen lamb and mutton'.[109] Whether it was a matter of genuine superiority, or of a faster and more complete adaptation of the New Zealand product to the tastes of the new 'urban carnivores' of London and south-east England is unclear. Argentine sheep-meat sold well in Scotland and the provinces.[110] Live cattle joined dead sheep in trickling from Argentina to Britain in the 1890s, but were banned by Britain in 1900 due to a disease scare, and frozen beef took over.[111] Because beef took to

freezing less well than sheep-meat, this was another second-grade product, although exports did peak at 400,000 tons during World War I. Prospects were better in better-tasting and higher-priced *chilled* beef, which could last only thirty-five to forty days without decay—too short a time for it to be supplied to Britain from Australasia.

The United States dominated the export of chilled beef to Britain from the trade's inception in 1875 to the early 1900s. But from 1906 its exports plummeted as its domestic market grew large enough to absorb Western beef. The US export companies turned to Argentina for fresh supplies and wrested most of the trade from British firms. By 1913, Americans controlled 58 per cent of Argentine beef exports, Britons 30 per cent, and Argentines themselves only 12 per cent.[112] By the mid-1920s, Argentina was pumping out 400,000 tons a year of chilled beef, with frozen beef lagging increasingly far behind. But the *market* for Argentine chilled beef remained almost entirely British—the Americans were middlemen. In the mid-1930s, 98.6 per cent of Argentine chilled beef exports went to Britain, along with 77 per cent of its sheep-meat exports.[113] Argentine wheat, maize, wool, and linseed had more international markets, though Britain was important for these exports too. But the world had only one major meat importing market and that was Britain.[114] Unlike the US connection, the British connection supplied not only money, shipping, and business organization but also markets. This was helpful to Argentina's first and second export rescues, led by wool and wheat, and vital to the third, which was led by meat.[115] Much wool and grain went to continental Europe—even at peak in the early 1930s Britain took only 37 per cent of Argentina's exports. But this included all of the cream of Pampas products, namely chilled beef.

From about 1914, sending meat to Britain became the leading edge of the Argentine economy, dominating the shipping business for example.[116] Maize and wheat were as important in quantity, but were not as specialized or profitable, and wheat was in any case tied in with the beef industry. Alfalfa was the best pasture for prime beef; it took readily to the Pampas. Large landowners rented their land to tenant farmers who produced wheat for a few years, taking advantage of the soil's natural fertility. This prepared the ground for conversion to alfalfa and reversion to the owner, who stocked the rich pastures with cattle bred from British bulls. Other meat producers were lower down the socio-economic hierarchy than these 'chiller' ranchers, and had less political influence. The ranchers were

naturally hand-in-glove with the US and British companies who shipped their meat to Britain. Americans, Germans, and French might conceivably finance booms. But they could not provide 'export rescue', because they were much more self-sufficient in the key staples than was Britain. The relative strength of its British connection, the relative intimacy of its link to oldland markets, helps explain the relative success of the Argentine economy to the 1920s. It also helps explain its relative failure thereafter.

As an exporting economy, despite the paucity of small freehold farms, Argentina had advantages over the British dominions and even the American West, let alone the rest of Latin America. Its Pampas were 'exceptionally productive'.[117] It made great efforts to adapt its beef production to the British market, and its beef industry was 'the most competitive in the world'.[118] Pampas beef reached Buenos Aires at 60 per cent of the cost that Western American beef reached Chicago.[119] Its greater proximity to Britain gave it an advantage over Australasia in chilled beef, and its frozen meat industry in general also compared favourably. 'The general view among those engaged in the frozen meat trade was that the South American industry was organized and operated in a much more efficient manner than that of either Australia or New Zealand.'[120] Yet there was a certain British bias against Argentina that was partly a matter of cultural prejudice and partly of Greater British politics. The British chairman of the Central Argentine Railway once remarked: 'personally, I never trust the word of any South American'.[121] Argentine products were more easily seen as foreign than were Dominion or US products. This may have been a factor in the difficulties faced by Argentine sheep-meat, and probably contributed to the price premium Canadian and US beef enjoyed over the Argentine product. The cessation of Argentine wheat exports to Britain in 1917, which the British believed was influenced by Germany, made it seem a less reliable supplier than the Dominions. The Argentine advantage in chilled beef diminished from 1930, as technological developments allowed Australia to enter the trade.[122] British sentiment in favour of imperial preference counted against Argentina, and the Dominions did their best to enhance it. Their leverage in London increased steadily from about 1900, and especially after World War I. In the 1920s, a British meat-packing magnate declared: 'foreign trading in the food of her people must be eliminated in favour of [Greater] British trading'.[123] 'The problem for Argentina', concludes a leading expert, 'was that within the Empire the power lay with the Dominions.'[124] In 1932 and 1933,

the Ottawa Agreement, between Britain and the Dominions, and the Roca-Runciman Agreement, between Argentina and Britain, consolidated and amplified these pre-existing trajectories. Between 1930 and 1938, in a British market that was actually growing in volume because prices were falling, Argentine and Uruguayan meat exports dropped from 633,000 to 515,000 tons, while Australian and New Zealand exports grew from 268,000 to 503,000.

Argentina's share of Britain's wheat market also halved between 1929 and 1935 to 15%, compared to Canada and Australia's 64%.[125] In exports other than meat, Argentina's problem was that it was not *more* dependent on Britain.[126] In 1934, the British share of its total exports was 36.5% compared to 55% for Australia, 78% for South Africa, and 86% for New Zealand. Moreover, Argentina faced more pressure to reciprocate by taking more British imports. The British share of Argentine imports, which had declined after the booms ended in 1914, rose from 17.6% in 1929 to 24.7% in 1935.[127] 'Continued access to the British market would cost Argentinians more than it cost the Dominions.'[128] Finally, in the Dominions and the American West, newlanders demanded and received a broad cultural parity with their fellow Britons and Americans in the oldlands—in higher education and access to prime jobs for example. Because their migrant oldlands (Spain and Italy) differed from their money, market, and technology oldland (Britain), Argentines were less able to do this. The transfer of the cultural infrastructure of technology, as against technology itself, was far less great to Argentina than to the Dominions, who produced far more of their own engineers and scientists. 'In Argentina, foreign engineers—particularly British and American—played very large roles . . . in Australia, Canada, and the United States they did not.'[129] In the end, the Dominions beat Argentina on prejudice and politics, not price or quality. Argentina may have been an adopted Dominion between 1870 and 1930, but it was the Cinderella of the family, and in 1943 its Prince Charming turned out to be Juan Peron.

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119. Schwartz, 'Foreign creditors and the politics of development'.
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Conclusion: Thinking in the Rounds

This book has sought to provide a new explanation for the explosive growth of English-speaking societies in the long nineteenth century. In doing so, it has had to focus on the technological, economic, and cultural developments that powered the crucial changes. Political history has had to take a back seat, and social history has scarcely featured at all. Yet the book, perhaps, has substantial implications for these dimensions of history too. It argues that settler societies were configured not only by time and place but also by rhythm—the rhythm of boom, followed by bust, followed by export rescue. A student has already described this thesis as 'the rhythm method', though the effects of its booms at least were anything but contraceptive. As noted in the Introduction to Part II, the intention is not to force settler pasts into some procrustean template, history written to recipe. Booms and busts were not always master variables. But they were usually major variables. This book invites those who study settler pasts to add another colour to their palette. A booming settler society was very different from the same society in busts, or under re-colonization. The mood was different, the atmosphere was different, the popular culture was different. Social structure, crime levels, labour relations, and gender relations in an explosive colonial society all differed significantly from those in a re-colonial one.

For example, as discussed in Chapter 9, booming settler societies had three socio-economic sectors, not the normal two; crews as well as farmers and townsfolk. Crews increased crime and liquor consumption, among other things. In the mid-1880s, booming Queensland had two and a half times the liquor consumption per capita of long-busted Tasmania.[1]

This difference was less a function of place or time than of *timing*, the phase of the round. Crews were largely surplus males. They moved away after busts, or aged away unmarried and childless, or were tamed by the more orderly nature of recolonized societies. They had few children, but they did leave a legacy. Elements of crew culture made their way into mainstream male culture. They emphasized the comradeship of 'mates' or 'partners'. They valued ingenuity, unpretentiousness and physical strength, cherished sport and egalitarianism, and tolerated some kinds of violence. Their attitudes to women were either abstractly sentimental or ruthlessly instrumental. Their elders were selected for misogyny by the fact that no wife would have them. This comes quite close to summarizing the populist man-among-men subcultures of all the Anglophone settler nations. These white male 'national characters' were in fact transnational, and crew culture and Anglo male stereotypes are probably best studied in the round.

Working-class women in booming settler societies were always in the minority, worked staggeringly hard, often without the help of a resident male partner, yet were beset by semi-permanent pregnancy. But there was some better news too. Women were central in boom-phase farming. The best way for people without capital to develop a viable farm from a raw piece of cheap or free land was through a partnership, usually of two, during a boom. One, usually the wife, worked the farm itself. The other, usually the husband, either worked on clearing the farm or participated in the progress industry—as drover, timber-worker, contractor, or labourer. The surplus of potential husbands could be utilized by women to marry men who had good prospects of achieving economic independence with their help, namely ownership of a farm or small business. There were special incentives for women to seek such independencies. They provided some security against the desertion, death, or disability of the husband. Women's wages were typically around half those of male workers, but the products of farms and small businesses returned the same whether made by men or women. Family ownership of a farm or business therefore doubled the return on women's work. Of course, parents or husbands might co-opt this return, but at least it was there. In New Zealand and Canada during booms, small farms were often run by women; the same may have been true of Australia and the American West. 'During the first years it is really the woman that makes the living on a pioneer farm.'[2]

Booms produced the sturdy 'yeowoman', and busts also had their effects on gendered history. Busts were often accompanied by a collective sense of sin, a desire for moral reform, and a surge in movements such as temperance, which was somewhat ironic because the decline of crews cut liquor consumption in any case. Women were prominent in such movements. Roles as moral exemplars or 'God's police' had their downsides, as did the role of sturdy 'yeowomen', but all could also be used to women's advantage. It is no accident that early women's suffrage was a feature of busted newlands in both the American West and Australasia. Busts also often featured an upsurge in the populist politics of disappointment and in agrarian and industrial unrest.

Whether a settler society boomed or not made a difference that was much more than simply economic, much more than the speed at which the same result was achieved. An American historian, Dean May, has made a comparative study of three communities in Utah, Oregon, and Idaho in the later nineteenth century.[3] In our hyper-colonial terms, Utah was incremental, Idaho was explosive, and Oregon somewhere between the two, and May's findings seem to conform to this. He finds that Idaho farms in the 1880s were much more productive and commercial than those of Utah and Oregon, where farming tended more towards semi-subsistence. The Idaho farms produced three times the wheat of the Oregon farms and led by even more in oat production—a sign of the hungry horses of a boom-time market. On the other hand, the Idaho community was more atomized than the others, and suffered from a 'relative paucity of social life'. It lacked the voluntary organizations of the other two communities, and was much less 'churched'. In 1890, regular church-goers in the Idaho settlement were 16 per cent of the population, compared to 26 and 82 per cent in the Oregon and Utah communities. The high Utah figure is no surprise, given the Mormon background, but the discrepancy between Idaho and Oregon *is* surprising. The discrepancy in geographical mobility was even greater—high in Idaho, lower in Oregon, and much lower in Utah. May concludes that the Idaho settlement was more 'modern' than the other two communities, but it could be that his findings reflect the social and cultural differences between incremental and explosive settler societies, even when the source of settlers and the local environment is similar. Social historians of settler societies may need to think in the round—to think in terms of booms, busts, export rescues,

and their absence—as well as the usual variables of time, place, and source society.

* * *

The rhythmic reconceptualization of the economic and cultural contours of settler history, it is suggested, can usefully reframe other aspects of that history. The above comments are the merest tentative suggestions as to how this might work. One theme that this book has sporadically tried to pursue, however, is the decisive difference settlement booms made to indigenous peoples, and it is appropriate to close with an attempt to place this subject in its context.

The history of resistance to European expansion is still skewed by the unconsciously inherited legacy of a nineteenth-century myth of conquest, which exaggerates, backdates, and misunderstands the success of European conquest in conformity with the racial preconceptions of the day.[4] For example, indigenous military victories are often attributed to the exceptional errors of particular European leaders or to the influence of European renegades or technology, rather than to native skill, adaptability or innovation. The tendency survives to the present even in the case of the most studied 'colonial' battle of all time: 'Custer's Last Stand' at the Little Bighorn in 1876. Recent publications still credit this Indian victory to the poor performance of European troops or leaders, or to the Indian possession of a few modern rifles.[5] The political success of Sitting Bull in putting together an exceptionally large alliance, and the military success of Crazy Horse in managing to fight one battle while his enemies fought two, are more likely explanations of the Sioux victory.[6] In its nineteenth-century heyday the myth of conquest had a countervailing practical effect. Ironically enough, it served to protect indigenous autonomy by creating an illusion of European control where and when it did not exist. Vast tracts of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States, as well as of Siberia and Argentina, were still dominated by indigenous peoples until the 1880s, whatever the maps may tell you. On the other hand, when war did break out, the myth of conquest meant that Europeans were ideologically unable to accept defeat. It was un-European in general, and un-Anglo in particular, to be defeated by indigenous peoples. Roman and Chinese empires sometimes built walls when they encountered formidable resistance, conceding the

land beyond to indigenous tribes. This was not an option for explosive colonizers.

Contact history also suffers from another persistent skewing, one with a more recent and benign origin. It is the twentieth-century tendency, sometimes known as 'victim ideology', to portray the indigenous encounter with Europe as one long undifferentiated tragedy inflicted on innocent—and passive—victims. What was done to non-European peoples outranks what they did about it; their tragedy outranks their agency. The tendency is evident in the preference for high numbers: of pre-contact populations and of losses to disease and violence. The 'logic', it seems, is that because the Aztecs were a remarkable people there must have been 30 million of them. High counters are dismissed as 'politically correct'; low counters as anti-indigenous apologists for genocide, as though the evidence was not an issue. We are still often told that particular indigenous peoples lost 90 per cent of their population to a single disease, which is scarcely possible—even the Bubonic Plague in fourteenth century Europe killed 'only' one-third of the population. The impact of European pathogens on the epidemiological virgins of the Americas and Australasia was indeed massive and tragic, but it varied over time and space and was seldom fatal to whole peoples. You could not have more than one epidemic of the same disease in the same generation, and where good records are available a single epidemic seldom killed more than 25 per cent of a population. Immunities developed after about a century. The numerous, concentrated, and interactive populations of Hispaniola, Mexico, and Peru proved particularly vulnerable in the early sixteenth century, and some island and seaboard populations later shared their fate. But most tribal peoples encountered by European settlers lived in dispersed populations, some distance from European concentrations large enough to maintain endemic disease. For a disease to become endemic in the New Worlds, you needed an interacting settler population of at least 500,000, and incremental colonization took a long time to produce such numbers. Diseases were introduced direct from Europe, but not as often as one might think because sea voyages were so long that most sick people died or recovered during them.[7] Most tribal peoples bent but did not break under the weight of European disease.

There is an element of unholy alliance between anti-racialist victim ideology and the racialist myth of conquest. Both prefer high figures for indigenous losses in warfare, many of which are suspect. This opens the door to dubious revisionists, as with the Australian writers who argue that

'black armband' liberal scholarship has greatly exaggerated the mistreatment of Australian aborigines. It also obscures the success of indigenous resistance, and coexistence. In fact, there was a remarkable degree of successful indigenous adaptation to the early phases of settlement in many settler newlands. As we have seen, until about 1790, a crescent of powerful inland tribes contained American settlement to the Appalachians. In the 1790s and 1810s, after almost two centuries of successful interaction with Europeans, the Indian cordon was finally breached. The upward gearshift in the pace and mass of settlement was not the whole explanation for this, but it was surely an important part of it. Sauk and Seminoles resisted American Boom Two, in and around the 1830s, with great determination and, in the latter case, some success. The pattern was repeated in later booms, finally ending the long careers of great European-handlers such as the Sioux and Comanche. In Australia, incremental European settlement to 1828 could almost be ignored by Aboriginals, apart from pathogens and a few sheep. But the first Tasman boom first elicited and then overcame the heroic, well-organized, and pan-tribal resistance of the native Tasmanians. Whether Europeans killed 150 or 250 of them may be worth knowing, but it does not affect the overall picture. In South Africa, Xhosa independence survived numerous wars against incremental settlement, before succumbing to booms and a large British army in the 1850s, while the autonomy of Zulu, Sotho, Pedi, and Venda fell victim to later booms. In New Zealand, the balance of power between settlers and indigenes was roughly equal until the 1860s, but booms doubled the settler population in each of three successive decades, and by the 1880s Maori were swamped as much as defeated. In Siberia, peoples such as the Chukchi resisted and interacted with Russian settlement successfully, retaining their autonomy until the boom times of the 1890s and 1900s. The Auraucanian Indians dominated the pampas of Argentina until the booms of the 1870s and 1880s. Chukchi and Araucanians, like Metis and Comanche, survived centuries of interaction with European settlement, before succumbing to booms. This is a very different story from one of steady, inexorable, undifferentiated decline from the outset, melting 'like snow before the sunshine' in the face of European settlement.

Settler booms were often lethal to long-standing indigenous autonomy, and their sheer scale was obviously part of the explanation. Absolute decline of indigenous populations was dwarfed by relative decline. The Maori population equalled the European in New Zealand in 1858, but

was less than a tenth of it by 1890, despite only a modest absolute decline. Military defeat by superior numbers was coupled with sheer demographic swamping. But there were also other factors behind the lethality of booms. Explosive settler societies were actually not notable for military efficiency. Individuals might or might not be accustomed to guns and interpersonal violence, but they were unruly and focused on their core business: explosive growth. Serving in long-term military units was the last thing they wished to do during booms, and they were not the natural Indian fighters of legend. But they were able to call in oldland resources, notably regular troops. Federal troops were more prominent than settler militias in the conquest of the American West, and imperial troops were important in the British West. About half the 2,000 troops facing the Tasmanian aborigines in 1830 were supplied by London, as were two-thirds of the 18,000 facing the Maori in the mid-1860s, and three-quarters of the similar numbers attacking the Zulu and others in 1870s South Africa. From the 1870s, oldland technology and money tended to replace oldland troops in the British West. Steamships and steam trains gave Europeans transport advantages that indigenous peoples could not match, and factory-made breech-loading and repeating firearms replaced workshop-made muzzle loaders. The former were harder for indigenous peoples to acquire and maintain, as well as more effective. Oldland resources plus settler booms spelled doom for indigenous autonomy, but that doom came much later, and after a much longer and more successful coexistence with normal settlement, than we have been led to believe. Late and limited conquest meant more cultural survival into the twentieth century. The Settler Revolution thesis promotes some indigenous peoples from history's victims to riders of the whirlwind.

* * *

This book does not deny that stable legal and political institutions facilitate economic growth and development, or that rational choice is a fair default assumption about the decisions of individuals. The book neither confirms nor denies that English-speaking societies acquired an edge over others in growth-friendly institutions, in the freedom of markets, or in the mass of rational actions. What it contests is the notion that growth-friendly institutions, free markets, or rational-choice theory, or even industrialization itself, is the silver bullet in explaining the Anglo

explosion, from 12 million mostly poor people around 1780 to 200 million mostly rich people around 1930. Instead, this book has tried to explain the explosion historically, in terms of an interacting matrix of revolutions beginning in 1783. Essentially, these transformed the English-speaking societies into a transnational, transcontinental system that permitted a greater mass of transfer, and then a greater level of integration despite distance, than had ever occurred before. Between about 1815 and about 1880 theirs was the only such system in the world, and it remained the largest thereafter.

Before 1783, the British Empire was one of several leading powers, along with France, Russia, and China. Britain's edge in far-settlement and economic complexity was modest if it existed at all. In 1783, however, the American Revolution permanently transformed the Anglophones from a single polity into a far-flung culture-group, a sub-global but intercontinental 'world'. The second great revolutionary impetus behind the rise of the Anglo-world was the French Revolution of 1789, and the subsequent generation of warfare to 1815. These French Wars cost Britain a lot, in lives and money, but they also pressure-cooked industrialization in England and slowed it in Continental Europe. The Wars were a pressure-cooker for the United States too, spawning proto-industrialization, banks, and merchant ships. The peace of 1815 left the British Navy as the last man standing in naval geo-politics, and this combined with continued expansion of the US and British mercantile marine to make the sea-lanes Anglo-prone. The French Revolution also combined with the Enlightenment and the rise of science to reconfigure the possible, change attitudes to change itself, and begin the subversion of accepted certainties.

Our third revolution was industrial. Between 1800 and 1820, industrialization in Britain began to have a revolutionary effect, and massive demographic and economic growth took place in the first half of the nineteenth century. The problem was that Britain could not feed this growth, or supply it with raw materials. Industrialization in the North-eastern United States, which may have taken place as early as the 1820s, soon faced similar constraints. There was also a broader cul de sac. As we saw in the Introduction, an agro-industrial revolution, featuring such things as chemical fertilizers and sprays and electric- and petrol-powered transport and farm machinery, began around 1890. It was this that made industrialization and mega-cities generally possible. It is unlikely to have occurred without the earlier industrial revolution, which in turn could not

have been fed with existing technologies and acres. Into this breach stepped the fourth great revolution of our period; the forgotten Settler Revolution and its corollary, the rise of Anglo-prone outsourcing. Canada was reorganized to supply Britain with wood, and Ireland was reorganized to supply Britain with food. So began Britain's remarkable outsourcing career, which relied successively on Europe, the American West, the Dominions plus Argentina, and finally the Dominions alone. Outsourcing worked best in concert with the voluntary recolonization of substantial settler newlands, and it was explosive colonization that made newlands substantial quickly. Recolonization tailored newland supply and oldland consumption to suit each other. It made unfamiliar and dubious commodities such as long-dead frozen meat more acceptable to metropolitan folk because the producers seemed like them. It also enabled oldlands to comprehensively industrialize early, before the agro-industrial revolution made this generally possible. As we saw in Chapter 17, St Petersburg and Tokyo arguably followed London and New York in taking this route to industrialization.

One component of the Settler Revolution was the great nineteenth-century flowering of non-industrial technology. Sailing ships had their limits, but from 1815 they were reliably transferring unprecedented flows of timber across the Atlantic one way, and unprecedented flows of people and money the other. Inland, great canals such as the Erie put rivers where you wanted them, while Anglo newlands had up to ten times the horses of Old Britain in proportion to population. Flows of money, information, ideas, and written imagining also grew greatly at this time, particularly among the English-speakers. Industrial technology such as improved printing presses helped, but so did non-industrial shifts, such as improved literacy and mail services and changing attitudes to lending. The biggest change of all, and the second key component of the Settler Revolution, was in attitudes to moving. Emigration ceased to be an act of desperation and became an act of hope. It sloughed off centuries of stigma, and transformed itself into *settlement*, the long-range reproduction of metropolitan society rather than permanent exile from it. The reproductions were to be of metropolitan society without the mistakes, and without the real and alleged deprivations common folk had suffered in the oldlands. The newlands were to provide decent lives as well as decent livings. This settler ideology combined with mass transfer to bring people to the newlands, and once there transmuted itself into the settler boom mentality and settler populism. The latter at least is still with us in the newlands, and rears up in umbrage whenever

such cherished perquisites as majority house-ownership, access to the outdoors, or egalitarianism seem threatened. Crossing settlerism can still be dangerous.

In the long nineteenth century, 36 million Britons, Irish, Germans, and native-born Americans engaged in far-settlement. This Anglo diaspora comprehensively re-peopled Australasia and the bulk of North America. Though you might think it from some oldland histories, Anglo settlers did not disappear permanently over the oldland horizon like Vikings leaving Iceland for Greenland around 1000 AD. Instead, settlers retained strong links with their oldlands through the various vectors of the mass transfer of value and volume. Transfers of value (money, people, and information) fuelled explosive colonization. Transfers of volume rescued busted settler economies, and fuelled oldland growth, urbanization and industrialization. Industrial technology, especially steam transport, returned the favour by increasingly supercharging explosive settlement. Steam vessels made rivers two-way and later shrank oceans, while rail pierced mountains and spanned continents. Under explosive colonization, the colonizing crusade was led from the front. The task of the oldlands, as boom settlers saw it, was to keep pouring out migrants and money, leaving newlanders to control both. Time after time, we have seen inversions of the theoretical relationship between 'periphery' and metropolis. When frontiers were booming, the message they consistently sent back home was to stop carping and keep pouring. Of course, if a settlement boom ran up against formidable indigenous resistance, it was the obvious duty of the metropolis to supply the troops, or at least the money and technology, to crush it. Who were the puppets and puppet masters here, West or East, the Dominions or their Britain?

Under recolonization, the balance of power shifted back to the oldlands to some extent, especially to their mega-cities, London and New York. There was, for example, a shift from indirect portfolio investment, controlled in the newland, to direct investment, controlled from the oldland. But newland dependency was unforced. Indeed, it was eagerly embraced by chastened settlers to provide economic and psychological salvation from shattering busts. The mass transfer of volume now cut in, eventually providing multi-million-ton virtual bridges between New York and London and their various virtual hinterlands. This fuelled the growth of the oldland metropolises, and in return encouraged newlanders to see themselves as metropolitan too—Western Americans and Dominion

Britons. This replicated an older process whereby great cities create a nationally integrated economy to supply them and so engender both the motive and the means for national collective identity. The formation of Greater British collective identity was similar to the formation of British collective identity, integrating Canada and Australia into a zone of intensive interaction as Scotland and Wales had been integrated before. It was just that Greater America and Greater Britain were very big and mostly very new, and that the latter was spread across four continents.

In such a system, everywhere other than the mega-city is a province, whether it is Scotland or Australia, Massachusetts or Oregon. Even the most distant provinces were quite privileged in terms of such things as living standards and access to First-World technology, culture, and education. Accusing recolonized newlanders of supine subordinacy is unfair. But there was a blood price. In war, recolonized Western Americans and Dominion Britons fought hard for their oldlands on the basis of perceptions of shared identity as well as interests. From the point of view of the oldlands, recolonization thus brought two benefits during the military crises of the Civil War for the American Northeast and the two world wars for Britain. First, it supplied fresh armies of newlanders, ready and willing to fight like Northerners and Britons because they thought they were Northerners and Britons. Second, recolonized virtual hinterlands allowed oldlands themselves to be much bigger. Without reliable outsourcing, Old Britain could only have sustained half its actual population during World War I. In this and other respects, the Settler Revolution was crucial for oldlands too.

Settlers were not ogres. They were whining bundles of hopes and fears just like us. Indeed in many cases they were 'us', or at least our forebears. Each settler career began with the huge wrench and risk that was long-range permanent emigration. Settlers played migrant roulette with their own children in pursuit of dreams as well as realities, lives as well as livings. Though somewhat unmilitary, they were dangerous people, especially when in full-frothing boom frenzy. When they had the help of their trusty oldlands, as well as massive boom-time numbers and the fanatical ideology of the colonizing crusade, hardly anything could stop them. They destroyed, crippled, swamped, or marginalized most of the numerous societies they encountered. They also built new societies faster than anyone had ever done before. In settler history, it is the speed not the length that counts. Once reintegrated to their oldlands by recolonization,

they added muscle to those oldlands, sending armies back home to the rescue like the US cavalry in reverse. They also increased the muscle the oldlands could themselves sustain by providing home-like resources in unimagined quantities. This was not a sufficient condition for the long careers of Britain and the United States as industrialized superpowers, but it was a necessary one.

The exploding Anglo-world could be said to have its precedents: Greeks, Arabs, and Mongols. Each of these dynamic cultures had a moment of unity before fragmenting politically but continuing to expand. While the great long-lived, centralized empires of Rome and China were agents of continuity, these more meteoric cultures were agents of change. The era in which the Anglos wrought their changes, both destructive and creative, happens to be our own, and our understanding of the Anglo-world's past is entangled with its present. The day of the English-speakers may be passing but, for the moment, the world's leading superpower still speaks English, as has been the case for the last 200 years, and English is the language in which I have written this book. Successful peoples prefer to explain their achievements in terms of long-term, hard-wired, virtues or advantages rather than medium-term contingency, and the Anglos were no exception. One response is to deny the success; another is to explain it differently. This makes the history of the English-speakers more interesting, not less—by freeing it from the shackles of the normative.

Notes

1. Geoffrey Blainey, *Black Kettle and Full Moon: Daily life in a vanished Australia*, Camberwell, Victoria, 2003, 344.
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