THE HIRING OF JAMES MARK BALDWIN AND JAMES GIBSON HUME AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO IN 1889

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In 1889, George Paxton Young, the University of Toronto’s philosophy professor, passed away suddenly while in the midst of a public debate over the merits of hiring Canadians in preference to American and British applicants for faculty positions. As a result, the process of replacing Young turned into a continuation of that argument, becoming quite vociferous and involving the popular press and the Ontario government. This article examines the intellectual, political, and personal dynamics at work in the battle over Young’s replacement and its eventual resolution. The outcome would have an impact on both the Canadian intellectual scene and the development of experimental psychology in North America.

In 1889 the University of Toronto was looking to hire a new professor of philosophy. The normally straightforward process of making a university appointment, however, rapidly descended into an unseemly public battle involving not just university administrators, but also the highest levels of the Ontario government, the popular press, and the population of the city at large. The debate was not pitched solely, or even primarily, at the level of intellectual issues, but became intertwined with contentious popular questions of nationalism, religion, and the proper place of science in public education. The impact of the choice ultimately made would reverberate not only through the university and through Canada’s broader educational establishment for decades to come but, because it involved James Mark Baldwin—a man in the process of becoming one of the most prominent figures in the study of the mind—it also rippled through the nascent discipline of experimental psychology, just then gathering steam in the United States of America.

The events described here have been outlined before (see, e.g., Averill & Keith, 1999, pp. 184–186; Hoff, 1992, pp. 683–694; McKillop, 1994, pp. 281–288).
This article, however, examines them in greater detail and delves more fully into the intellectual and political dynamics that influenced the hiring decision. It is a kind of “microhistory” (see, e.g., Sokal, in press), reaching down to the level of specific individuals who influenced the final choice and how their personal histories and beliefs transformed a single academic appointment into a noisy public affair with ramifications that would be felt far into the future.

Toronto, Ontario, and Canada in the 1880s

In 1889 Toronto was a bustling port of 180,000 sitting on the northern shore of Lake Ontario. Its population had nearly doubled over the previous decade, making it about the size of Detroit or Milwaukee, but its residents did not consider themselves to be much like their American counterparts. The United States was widely viewed in Ontario as being crude and vulgar. America’s strong emphasis on individualism was seen as leading to, and even indulging, unseemly personal excesses. Toronto was strongly Protestant—mostly Methodist, Presbyterian, and Anglican—and its citizens prided themselves on their restraint and sobriety compared to what they believed to occur in American cities. There was talk of free trade or a “commercial union” between the two countries—especially in the federal Liberal party—but Canadians had always resisted, fearing that their “civilized” British traditions would be overwhelmed by what they perceived to be the “unsavory” customs of their enormous southern neighbor.

Toronto in 1889, as now, was the capital of Ontario, the largest province in Canada. Ontario was ruled by Oliver Mowat, a Liberal who had held the premier’s job for the previous 17 years. In the national capital of Ottawa, Conservative John A. Macdonald had been prime minister for 17 of the previous 22 years. Being a binational state—French Catholics and English Protestants—the major political controversies of the day often arose from linguistic and religious conflicts. The crisis over Louis Riel’s Northwest Rebellion and his subsequent execution were only 4 years in the past. The great issue of the day was the Jesuits’ Estates Act,

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2 The most extensive account can be found in Hoff’s (1980) master’s thesis, which, sadly, remains unpublished. Other extensive, but as yet unpublished, accounts include chapter 4 of Slater’s (in press) history of the University of Toronto Department of Philosophy and Wetmore’s (1981) master’s thesis.


4 The effort was led by Richard Cartwright and Erastus Wiman. Cartwright served as minister of finance in the Liberal government (1873–1878) of Alexander Mackenzie and later as minister of trade and commerce (1896–1911) in the Liberal government of Wilfred Laurier. Wiman was a prominent journalist and businessman who worked on both sides of the border.

5 The relatively small English Catholic population had little political influence.

6 Louis Riel was a Métis (mixed race aboriginal and French) leader who, in 1869, formed a provisional government in Red River (in what is now the province of Manitoba) just prior to the Canadian government’s assumption of control over the territory in order to negotiate more favorable terms of entry into Canada for his people. Having already routed a group of Canadians who had attacked their fort, later releasing them to Canadian authorities, Riel’s men captured a small force of men who were planning a second attack. One of these, Thomas Scott, was tried and executed by a court-martial of Riel’s associate, Ambroise Lépine. After Riel obtained guarantees of land and
a bill passed by Québec’s National Assembly,⁷ that paid the Catholic order $160,000 in compensation for lands that had been taken by the British government when the French territory had been conquered a century earlier (see Dalton, 1968). English Protestants were predictably outraged at what they viewed as “papist” interference in Canadian affairs.⁸ The opposition was led by a group of English–Canadian nationalists who had formed a political party in Ontario in the late 1860s called “Canada First.” Their core tenets were that Canada should regard itself as an equal of Britain and the United States and that Canadian institutions and individuals should be given preference in most things. This pride in and promotion of their own accomplishments and potential, however, was combined with an ugly disdain for segments of Canadian society that did not share their ethnic and religious background. From the start they fought against any concession to Canada’s French-speaking and Catholic minorities. Perhaps, ironically, the most extreme wing of the movement had been imported from the United States (see Watt, 1967). The Canada First political party had collapsed in the mid-1870s, but its remnants—“nativists,” as they were commonly known—were still able to exert influence over political matters in the 1880s. The movement continued to be especially dominant at the University of Toronto because fully half of the university senate was given over to members elected by the school’s alumni. In 1889, all 15 of these seats were held by nativists.

**Campus Politics at the University of Toronto**

The nativists did not limit their attention to issues of national scope. They scrutinized even the affairs of the university for implications they might hold for the nativist agenda. For instance, in January 1889 a controversy erupted over the appointment of William John Alexander to the chair of English literature. Although Alexander was a Canadian—indeed he had been born in Hamilton, Ontario, and had attended the University of Toronto for a year (Hoff, 1980, p. 62)—he had earned his degrees in Europe and the United States and then taken a position at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The opposition to his hiring, which set the stage for the battle over who would become the new professor of philosophy, was led by the nativists. They demanded not only that everyone hired at the university be Canadian, but also that they be educated in Canada. Some even went so far as to insist that only graduates of the University of Toronto were acceptable for new academic appointments.

The issue of Alexander’s appointment quickly became a matter of heated language rights for the Métis, the new province of Manitoba was admitted to Canada in 1870. Riel, however, was loudly decried as “Scott’s murderer” in Protestant Ontario, and there were calls to capture and try him as such. In 1884, Riel became involved with a second conflict between the Métis, aboriginals, and Canadian government—known as the Northwest Rebellion—in the district of Saskatchewan. In 1885, a provisional government was again formed to negotiate rights with the Canadian government. This time, however, Canada immediately sent in the army to suppress the rebellion. Riel’s government formed a militia and fought against Canadian forces throughout the spring. The uprising was ultimately crushed, and Riel was put on trial for high treason. Although his lawyers argued that he was delusional, Riel was convicted and executed on September 18, 1885.

⁷ The name given to the provincial parliament of Québec.

⁸ Québec Premier Honoré Mercier had asked Pope Leo XIII to arbitrate a subordinate dispute among Québec’s various Catholic orders about how the monies should be distributed.
public debate in the local press. The main object of nativist criticism was the president of the university, Sir Daniel Wilson⁹ (Figure 1). Beginning on February 9, Wilson was attacked in a series of anonymous letters to Toronto’s largest newspaper, the Daily Mail.

Friends and graduates of the University would like to know how it is that no man of Canadian education and especially no graduate of Toronto, need apply for vacant chairs. It certainly is very extraordinary. Our native scholars are good enough for better positions elsewhere. At Toronto University they have found closed doors and a malignant and steady opposition: from whom? From the head of University College [Daniel Wilson]. This is fact. This malignant opposition has from the first been uniformly exerted and has been almost as uniformly successful. It has lost to the University the services of some of her ablest graduates. (“Torontonensis,” 1889)¹⁰

Wilson was a Scotsman from Edinburgh, a respected scholar of history, literature, art, and British archaeology. He is said to have coined the term prehistory and to have taught the first course in anthropology anywhere (Friedland, 2002, p. 43). From the day he had joined the Toronto faculty more than 35 years before, Wilson had worked tirelessly to improve the university’s reputation. He had seen earlier administrations reject the applications of future luminaries such as physicist John Tyndall and naturalist Thomas Henry Huxley for reasons of patronage, and he was determined not to let similar errors occur on his watch, no matter what the political cost. James Mark Baldwin later said of him that “he had the suavest manners and the most persuasive of ways, except when he was crossed—then he became the stubborn and aggressive Scot” (Baldwin, 1926, p. 42).

Wilson (1889), who had indeed been crossed, shot back at his anonymous critic, Torontonensis:

It is to be regretted that this amiable gentleman withholds his name. Charges of malignant betrayal of so responsible a trust should surely be made over their

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⁹ For extensive treatments of Wilson’s life and career, see Ash and Hulse (1999) and Friedland (2002).

¹⁰ The letter was signed Torontoniensis, a slight misspelling of Torontonensis, a Latin term meaning “from Toronto.” In subsequent letters, the pseudonym was corrected. The identity of Torontonensis is still not known with certainty. Hoff (1980, p. 122) stated that it was Andrew Stevenson, a known nativist, a graduate of the university, and a former editor of the student newspaper, The Varsity. He did not recall the exact source for this information, but told me that “it was not something I deduced or figured out. It came from some secondary source in which the assertions of Torontonensis were discussed, and the statement was made that it was he” (T. L. Hoff, personal communication, July 13, 2002). Wilson had clashed with Stevenson in 1883 over the admission of women to the university. Wilson was not opposed to the admission of women, per se, but had wanted a separate women’s college built. Wilson relented when his long-time friend, philosophy professor George Paxton Young, brought the matter to a head by allowing one Eliza May Balmer to attend his class, leaving to Wilson the “onus of ordering her out” (cited in Friedland, 2002, pp. 90–91). Balmer graduated in 1886.
author’s own signature, so that we may be quite sure he is not modestly ascribing his own virtues to another. . . . I have always advised the selection of the very best man, wherever he may have been born or educated: and I shall certainly continue to do so.
The anonymous author of the letter attacking Wilson tried to bring Toronto’s venerable professor of philosophy, George Paxton Young (1818–1889), in on the side of the nativists. Young was best known outside of Toronto for his publications in mathematics and logic. In Toronto, he was among the most respected and beloved teachers at the university. He had been trained in the Scottish realist tradition at Edinburgh in the 1840s in part by the school’s acknowledged leader, Sir William Hamilton, and had then emigrated to Canada as a Presbyterian minister. In 1853 he took a position at Knox College, the Presbyterian seminary affiliated with the University of Toronto, where he stayed until 1864. By the mid-1860s, he had apparently abandoned his realist training and was being drawn toward the idealism that was then becoming popular in Britain and that would come to be typified by the works of Thomas Henry Green and Edward Caird.11 Young returned to Knox College in 1868 and was appointed to the philosophy chair at the University of Toronto in 1871, where he stayed for nearly a generation (see Slater, in press, chapter 3).

Attempting to invoke Young’s highly respected name and position against Wilson, a long-time colleague and friend, Torontonensis wrote,

> It is the same policy and the same opposition which at an earlier date almost lost to the University the services of the present professor of mental and moral science [George Paxton Young]—practically a Canadian—and a man whose praises I do not need to sound. It should be generally known that Professor Young at the time of his appointment barely escaped being sacrificed in favour of the claims of some Scotch nobody. This may be news to some of Professor Young’s students. What do they think of it? A more important question is, what does the public of the province think of the policy of the president of the Provincial University. (“Torontonensis,” 1889)

Torontonensis’s tactic was to no avail because Young himself publicly leapt to Wilson’s defense:

> 11 The conventional account has been that Young was converted to idealism by the time he wrote, in 1862, that he “reject[ed] the whole Hamiltonian system, root and branch” (Young 1862/1988, p. 164). Although Young wrote little on metaphysics after the 1860s, his student, James Gibson Hume, assured his readers that Young “gathered his new philosophical view-point from more extended and sympathetic study of Kant and was assisted by the writings of Dr. Edward Caird and by [Queen’s University] Professor John Watson’s first book on ‘Kant and his English Critics.’ As T. H. Green also based his views on the Kantian system of thought, it is not so strange that Young and Green came to very similar results in Ethics” (Hume, 1911, p. 6). This interpretation was essentially adopted by Irving (1950) and Armour and Trott (1981). Stephenson and Mathien (1988), however, contended that Young “may have been, for the great bulk of his career at least, a kind of direct (or presentational) realist.” Indeed, his interest in Kant and even idealism more generally would not have been particularly at odds with his Hamiltonian training, as Hamilton had been the very man to introduce Kantian thinking into the Scottish realist tradition (see Kuklick, 1977, chapter 1, for a summary of these various positions and their influence on North American thought). If correct, Stephenson and Mathien’s position would also cast in a new light the remarks made by University of Toronto physics professor William Loudon on the allegedly irreconcilable differences between the philosophy of Princeton’s James McCosh (Baldwin’s mentor) and Young. Although it is true that McCosh did not take up the Kantian aspects of the Hamiltonian form of realism (Arner, 1967), neither is it the case that their differences represented a wholly idealist outlook and a wholly realist one. They may have been, in fact, just different variations on a Scottish realist theme. For a somewhat different view, see Tolman (1996) and Kenwood (1999).
It was with pain that I read in this morning’s Mail, the letter of “Torontonensis” regarding the recent appointment to the chair of English Literature. . . . What “Torontonensis” says is fitted to convey the impression that Dr. Wilson was opposed to my appointment, and would have preferred a man from one of the British universities. So far as I am aware, the only foundation for this is that when I asked Dr. Wilson for a testimonial he gave me one, but frankly added that, on general principles, he was in favour of advertising the vacancy, and then selecting the best candidate who might offer himself. I was naturally pleased that Mr. John Sandfield MacDonald, then at the head of the Provincial Government, did not take that view; but the unbroken friendship of more than thirty years’ standing which has existed between Dr. Wilson and myself is the best proof that I felt that I had no cause for being offended at his position. . . . [I]f I were the Minister of Education, I should consider it my duty to select the best man I could get to fill a vacancy, giving, however, a preference to Canadians where other things were equal, or nearly so. (Young, 1889, p. 5)

Young’s (1889) intervention did not end the spat, however. Three days later the Mail published a second letter by Torontonensis as well as one by a Torontonensis No. 2. Wilson responded again the next day, but his participation seemed only to fan the flames—a half dozen other letters, most pseudonymously signed, appeared over the next few days until the editor of the Mail announced that he would publish no more correspondence on the topic. Even at that, the flurry of letters continued as various participants begged the editor to allow them to correct statements by others that they thought were false.

In the midst of the flap, on February 19, Young suffered a fatal stroke. He passed away a week later, on February 26. The public reaction to Young’s death was immediate and overwhelming. There were articles and editorials about it in every major paper. Hundreds lined the street for his funeral procession. A memorial fund dedicated to Young garnered more than $10,000 in public donations. The monies paid for a marble bust of Young, which now stands in the University of Toronto Philosophy Department, and for an annual scholarship, which continues to support philosophy students at the University of Toronto to this day. Even decades later, in the 1930s, Young’s name was engraved on a large memorial stone tablet in the Toronto Necropolis dedicated to 12 of the city’s leading 19th-century citizens buried there.12

Young’s sudden death in the midst of a public dispute concerning the sort of candidate appropriate for faculty positions at the University of Toronto led to immediate public speculation about whom Wilson might endorse as Young’s replacement. It seemed natural to many that Young should be replaced by one of his disciples in order that his teachings be carried forward at Toronto. This sentiment, of course, strengthened the hand of the nativists, who would have

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12 Among the most notable of these were (a) George Brown, founder of Toronto’s Globe newspaper, Reform and “Grit” member of parliament, advocate for responsible government, and “Father of Confederation”; (b) William Lyon Mackenzie, journalist, mayor of Toronto, and leader of the Rebellion of 1837 for responsible government; and (c) somewhat ironically, William Alexander Foster, founder of the Canada First party. Puzzlingly, the newspaper accounts of the day clearly described the funeral cortège wending its way up to Mount Pleasant Cemetery, north of the city. Young’s grave is found, however, in the Toronto Necropolis, in the southeastern part of the city. I have not been able to unravel this strange circumstance as yet.
demanded a Torontonian be appointed to replace Young in any case. The problem was, however, that none of Young’s recent students were suitable for the position. None had gone to graduate school and then on to become a professor elsewhere. Only one individual came even remotely close to filling this bill, and he was in the United States finishing his master’s degree.

The nativists immediately went on the offensive against Wilson anyway. An anonymous letter to the Mail and an editorial in the Toronto paper most sympathetic to nativism, the World, simultaneously suggested a secret plot on Wilson’s part: He would bring in Cornell University philosopher Jacob Gould Schurman to replace Young and then, on Wilson’s own impending retirement, he would place Schurman in the presidency of the university.

Schurman was Canadian, from Prince Edward Island, but, like Alexander, he had committed the unpardonable sin in the eyes of the nativists of having gone abroad for his advanced degrees. Wilson had tried to bring him to Toronto as professor of history in 1880, but Schurman had chosen to return to the maritime provinces, first teaching English at Acadia and then at Dalhousie, both in Nova Scotia, for 6 years before moving on to a philosophy position at Cornell in New York. The nativist critics were predictably brutal about the possibility of his coming to Toronto. The letter to the Mail warned of a conspiracy:

If [Dr. Schurman] were a man of exceptional genius or attainments there might be some excuse, but there are plenty of men among Toronto graduates head and shoulders above him. If he had even won his spurs in Canadian university work, something might be said, but his sole record in this field is his one and only year of examinership in metaphysics in Toronto University, and the significant fact that he was not reappointed. Sir Daniel may have made mistakes of policy in the past; we are not discussing that now, but the piece of work on which he is now engaged will be a masterpiece. If, through the apathy of public opinion, or by the aid of political intrigue, he bequeaths to Dr. Schurman . . . his own position at Toronto, the university will have received a blow from which it will probably never rally.

Nor is Sir Daniel conducting this campaign unaided. He and the Minister of Education are at one in the matter, and together they are planning this outrage on the province. With the Minister it is not a matter of personal friendship, but of votes. His game is a political one. The Minister wants the Baptist influence. Dr. Schurman is a Baptist. Here is the merchandise, there is the price. The negotiations have been going on for some time, and the Minister has gone so far in it as to make overtures, and to conduct personal enquiries among the faculty at Cornell, a quarter where Dr. Schurman would doubtless see to it that information of the proper kind was forthcoming. The minister’s opinion is favourable (as it is likely to be in view of the desired object), and he has come to the conclusion that Dr. Schurman “is no light weight.”

Whether the public will stand tamely by and suffer the interests of higher education to be thus trifled with remains to be seen. Is it possible that the presidency of the provincial university is to be made an object of negotiation by senile vanity, political exigency, and aggressive assumption? (“Argus,” 1889)

The simultaneous editorial in The World read,

The World will here candidly say that is does not think that Mr. Schurman is either the man or the scholar for the place and that what tells most against him is the
manner and methods he is employing to accomplish his aim. The scheme is to bring in Mr. Schurman as a successor to Professor Young in the chair of mental and moral philosophy, as it is now almost beyond doubt that that remarkable man will never lecture again, if indeed, he lives beyond the present day. Mr. Schurman is, we believe, professing a somewhat similar subject at Cornell, though, as a matter of fact, an attempt was made by Dr. Wilson to place Mr. Schurman in a chair of history in the University of Toronto not so very long ago, and we think we do this ambitious and scheming Maritimer no injustice if we say that he would be a candidate for the chair of mathematics or biology if either of these happen to become open if by that means he could gain a stepping stone to the president’s office. Mr. Schurman is, as we have said, an ambitious man and not one likely to stop at scruples. (“Presidency of University College,” 1889)

The Toronto tempest about Schurman continued and was even raised by the Conservative opposition leader in the Ontario Parliament. Minister of Education George William Ross insisted that he had not been in correspondence with Schurman.

The critics would prove to be drastically wrong about Schurman’s potential. He would soon become president of Cornell University and found the prestigious journal, *Philosophical Review*. He would hire E. B. Titchener to run the psychology laboratory left behind by Frank Angell. He would eventually work as a top American diplomat, finally serving as the U.S. ambassador to Germany between the two world wars. It is not known whether Schurman wanted the Toronto position, or whether he was affected by the public protest over the mere rumor of his hiring, but he never formally applied for the job.

As winter turned to spring, the press battles over Young’s replacement began to wane. In part, they were overtaken by a new controversy concerning the publication of some critical remarks about Toronto’s admission standards made by Principal George Monro Grant of Queen’s University, a private Presbyterian school located about 150 miles east of Toronto (see, e.g., “Principal Grant on Matriculation,” 1889; Robertson, 1889). More important, however, public criticism of Wilson could only have so much effect on the process because the actual power to hire professors lay not with him, but with the premier, Oliver Mowat. Mowat was generally a moderate and a pragmatist, but when the Canada First political party collapsed, many of its former members—the nativists—found shelter in Mowat’s Liberal party. Mowat knew that they would have to be appeased if he were to stay in power, and he was facing an election in just over a year’s time.

Two of the six men in Mowat’s cabinet were known to have strong nativist sympathies. One was the provincial secretary, Colonel John Morison Gibson. Gibson had only been raised from the backbenches a few months before, but brought with him popular renown as a soldier. The other nativist member of the

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13 Gibson fought at the Battle of Ridgeway (in what is now Ontario) on June 2, 1866, the first engagement of the Fenians Raids on Canada. The raids were launched by Irish soldiers, mostly veterans of the U.S. Civil War who believed that they could force Britain to grant Irish independence by taking Canada. They were the first to refer to themselves as the “Irish Republican Army.” Another attack was launched against Québec by the Fenians on June 7, 1866. An earlier attack against New Brunswick had been preemptively thwarted on April 10, 1866. The raids were one factor in bringing four of the British North American provinces together in a united Canada in 1867.
cabinet was the government’s point man when it came to university hiring: Minister of Education George William Ross. 14

Ross and Gibson were not the only tools the nativists had at their disposal. In addition, there was the politically powerful, yet sometimes erratic, university chancellor, Edward Blake (see Livermore, 1975). Blake had briefly served as premier of Ontario in the early 1870s, as federal justice minister in the government of Alexander Mackenzie in the late 1870s, and as leader of the federal Liberals throughout most of the 1880s. 15 Despite these successes, his relationship with his party was often rocky: He threatened to jump to the Canada First party in 1874, only to quickly backtrack. He frequently broke ranks with his party publicly, even while in government. Many of his colleagues did not trust him, but the nativists often claimed him as their own. In addition to Blake, several of the leading members of the university senate were vocal nativists as well. In short, with support in the provincial cabinet room, in the chancellor’s office, and in the university senate chamber, things looked promising for the nativists this time around.

The Search for Young’s Replacement Begins

It was not until the middle of June that Ross finally advertised the Toronto philosophy position. In addition to advertisements in some Canadian papers, he purchased small spaces in the Athenaeum, an English magazine catering to an educated readership, and in its American counterpart, the Nation. Neither advertisement included a wealth of information about the position. The American version did not even include an address to which applications could be submitted. If the small, uninformative ads were a tactic on Ross’s part to discourage foreign applications, it did not work. Of the more than 20 inquiries and applications received, at least 5 were from Great Britain and 8 were from the United States.

The most prominent inquiry came from the British philosopher James Sully, author of a popular textbook on psychology (Sully, 1884). Sully’s query was never followed up by a formal application, however. The most prominent American applicant was said by many at the time to be the Reverend Edward John Hamilton, a professor from Hamilton College in upstate New York. Hamilton was a follower of the Scottish intuitionist school of thought, like many older American philosophers of the day. He had written a textbook, The Human Mind (Hamilton, 1883). Education Minister Ross, however, ruled out the hiring of a clergyman at

Fenians are widely thought to have been behind the assassination of Thomas D’Arcy McGee (Member of Parliament and a “father” of Canadian Confederation) in 1868. The Fenians were driven back into the United States in 1870, where their leaders were arrested. As provincial secretary, Gibson would earn his place in history as the impetus behind the Gibson Act for the prevention of cruelty to children in 1893. He went on to become attorney general in 1899, and he served as lieutenant governor of Ontario between 1908 and 1914. He was knighted in 1914.

14 Ross would later rise to the office of premier, serving in that capacity from 1899 to 1905. He was appointed to the federal Senate in 1907.

15 Blake remains the only federal Liberal leader in Canadian history not to have become prime minister.
the beginning of the process,\textsuperscript{16} and many viewed Hamilton, who was 55 years of age, as being too old for the position.

Another potentially promising American applicant was George Holmes Howison, professor of philosophy at the University of California. Howison was a long-time acquaintance of William James, who wrote Howison a letter of reference.\textsuperscript{17} Howison was not a clergyman, but at 55 years of age, he, like Hamilton, may also have been regarded as being too old for the job.

From within Canada came an application from James Seth, a Scotsman who had filled the position at Dalhousie University when Jacob Gould Schurman had left for Cornell University. Seth’s older brother, Andrew, well known in philosophical circles, and the younger Seth had just published an article in the prestigious British journal \textit{Mind} (Seth, 1889). Although Seth was well regarded by some on the informal hiring committee, his Scottish origins ultimately seem to have relegated his application to the sidelines.

In the end, it was two men who completed their applications just at the deadline of August 15 who would become the main contenders for Young’s chair: James Gibson Hume (Figure 2) and James Mark Baldwin (Figure 3). Hume\textsuperscript{18} was a graduate of Toronto, where he had claimed the Gold Medal in mental science and classics. He was a protégé of George Paxton Young. Young had written to a professor of mathematics he knew at Johns Hopkins University, Thomas Craig, asking him to introduce Hume to G. Stanley Hall.\textsuperscript{19} Hume was admitted to Johns Hopkins and did well under Hall’s supervision, earning a fellowship for the following year. He was not able to take advantage of the award, however, because Hall was just then moving to take up the presidency of Clark University, leaving both the philosophy department and the psychology laboratory at Johns Hopkins closed behind him.

Rather than traveling with Hall to Clark University, Hume enrolled at Harvard University to complete his master’s degree. Although he took courses with the luminaries of the department—Francis Bowen, William James, and Josiah Royce—he formed his strongest attachment with a theologian named Francis Greenwood Peabody, an advocate of the social gospel and a fervent prohibitionist (Billings, Elliot, Farnam, Greene, & Peabody, 1905; Peabody, 1900). Hume had been an active temperance advocate since his teens, and he wrote a paper on the topic for one of Peabody’s courses. He also wrote a paper on the so-called “Indian problem,” claiming that relations with the aboriginal peoples were better in Canada because the government there had never broken a treaty with the first nations. Apparently Peabody approved, giving the paper an A+.\textsuperscript{20}

Hume was finishing his master’s degree and was about to embark on doctoral studies when word came of Young’s death. He would later claim that Young had promised him a position at Toronto after he had acquired some training in

\textsuperscript{16} See the letter from James Loudon to Ross dated March 5, 1889. Ontario Archives, Sub-series RG2-29-1, ms 2631, file 110.

\textsuperscript{17} Letter from James to George Ross. Ontario Archives, Sub-series RG2-29-2, ms 2633, file 166.

\textsuperscript{18} For more on Hume’s life and work, see Green, 2002; Slater, in press, chapter 6.

\textsuperscript{19} Letter from Young to Craig dated September 26, 1887. Ontario Provincial Archives, RG2-29-2, ms 2638.

\textsuperscript{20} Both papers are in the Hume papers at the University of Toronto Archives.
experimental psychology. Ironically, he seems to have done no laboratory work at either Johns Hopkins or Harvard. This apparent shortcoming, however, did not prevent Toronto nativists from quickly seizing upon Hume as the ideal replacement for Young, in the absence of a more suitable candidate meeting their
extrascholarly requirements. Nor, apparently, did the fact that Hume had not yet even begun work on his PhD, nor that he did not yet have a single publication to his name.

Nevertheless, Hume’s application had impressive support. It contained testimonials from important figures such as then-Clark University President G. Stanley Hall, Johns Hopkins University President Daniel Coit Gilman, and Harvard philosophers Josiah Royce and William James. All were very complimentary. James, however, found himself in the difficult position of having to write testimonials for both Hume and University of California professor George Howison. Forced to make a choice, he favored Howison because of his extensive experience. Of the younger man he wrote, “Mr. Hume is, of course, more of an unknown quantity. He is one of the three most promising students of philosophy whom I
have had 15 years experience at Harvard College, and I hope and expect a brilliant future for him." 21

Perhaps trying to play up his relationship with James, Hume wrote in his application that the Harvard professor had asked to publish in his forthcoming textbook a paper Hume had written on sensation.22 The book was, of course, James’s (1890) monumental *Principles of Psychology*, but Hume’s paper never appeared in it. James included instead the work of another one of his students—Edmund Burke Delabarre—who would soon go on to found the psychology laboratory at Brown University (see James, 1890, Volume 2, pp. 13–27, especially the footnote on p. 13).

James Mark Baldwin was the other major contender for the post. He would, of course, go on to become one of the most influential psychologists around the turn of the century.23 In 1889, however, that was still years away. Baldwin was born in South Carolina during the Civil War and was raised during Reconstruction. Thanks to a family connection, he traveled north to receive the bulk of his education in New Jersey. He graduated from the College of New Jersey (as Princeton University was then called), a student of the famed Scottish Realist, James McCosh. McCosh, who was the university’s president, arranged for Baldwin to study in Germany for a year after he completed his bachelor’s degree. Baldwin attended lectures in several cities, spending some of his time in Leipzig working in Wilhelm Wundt’s experimental psychology laboratory. On returning to Princeton, Baldwin began work on his PhD. He had wanted to write his dissertation on Spinoza, but McCosh insisted that Baldwin devote it to a refutation of materialism instead. He did so, but also published an article on Spinoza (Baldwin, 1889a). In addition, he produced a number of publications pertaining to science and psychology (Baldwin 1886, 1887, 1889b; Ribot, 1886).

Before completing his doctorate, Baldwin took up a position at Lake Forest College, a small Presbyterian school near Chicago with strong connections to Princeton University. While there, he finished his dissertation, published the first

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21 Letter from James to George Ross. Ontario Archives, Sub-series RG2-29-2, ms 2633, file 166.

22 This claim is found in Hume’s printed application for the position, which can be found in the Hume papers at the University of Toronto Archives.

23 According to a survey of psychologists conducted by James McKeen Cattell in 1903, Baldwin was ranked by his colleagues as the fifth most important psychologist in America (Cattell, 1947), behind only William James, Cattell himself, Hugo Münsterberg, and G. Stanley Hall. He founded two major experimental psychology laboratories (University of Toronto and Princeton University) and reopened a third (Johns Hopkins University). He was one of the first to conduct systematic research on childhood development (e.g., Baldwin, 1890a, 1890b, 1891b, 1892a, 1892b, 1893a, 1893b, 1895a, 1906–1911, 1915), and his conclusions would have a profound impact on the thought of Jean Piaget (see, e.g., Cahan, 1984; Cairns & Ornstein, 1979, p. 473). Baldwin’s 1895–1896 debate with Titchener (Baldwin, 1895b, 1896a; Titchener, 1895a, 1895b, 1896) set the stage for the development of American Functionalism. His theory of how learned behaviors might become part of the genetic inheritance of future generations without violating Darwinian strictures—the so-called “Baldwin effect” (Baldwin, 1894, 1895c, 1896c, 1897, 1902)—continues to generate debate even today (see, e.g., Weber & Depew, 2003). He was among the first to attempt to develop mental tests (Baldwin, Cattell, & Jastrow, 1898). He is also recognized for his textbooks (Baldwin, 1899b, 1891a, 1893c, 1898) and the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (Baldwin, 1901–1906). For more on Baldwin, see Richards (1987, especially chapter 10) and Wozniak (2001).
volume of his first textbook on psychology (Baldwin, 1889b), and married the
daughter of the head of the Princeton Theological Seminary, William Henry
Green. Lake Forest was too parochial a place for a man of Baldwin’s ambition; he was open to new opportunities elsewhere. When Young’s position became open, a network of individuals at Toronto and Princeton worked together to help Baldwin secure the job. The most important of these connections may have been Francis Landey Patton, the man who had just succeeded McCosh as president of Princeton. In the 1860s, Patton had attended the Presbyterian seminary affiliated with the University of Toronto, Knox College. It will be recalled that Young had taught at Knox prior to his moving to the university. Patton was reputed to have been one of his best students there. In addition, one of the most promising protégés of Baldwin’s powerful new father-in-law had recently taken up a position at Toronto in oriental languages. His name was James Frederick McCurdy. McCurdy was Canadian, from New Brunswick, who had gone to Princeton to study with Green in 1868. After graduating in 1871, he stayed for another 11 years as Green’s assistant, being awarded a PhD in 1878. In an invited address at Johns Hopkins University in 1882, it is said that McCurdy “took for granted the hypothesis of evolution” ("Founder of Oriental Studies in the University of Toronto," 1935, p. 12), thereby upsetting some faculty members at his home school of Princeton. Rather than fighting it out, McCurdy decided to leave Princeton, first studying in Göttingen and Leipzig for 3 years, then returning to Canada in 1885 with an appointment at Toronto.

Between McCurdy, Green, and Patton, Baldwin was made aware of the opening at the University of Toronto, which was made aware of Baldwin, even before the job was advertised. Green himself assembled the requisite “testimonials,” as letters of reference were then called. In addition to letters from a number of Princeton professors, Baldwin’s application included a testimonial from famed Yale philosopher and psychologist George Trumbull Ladd.

Because Baldwin was an American, however, all of the testimonials, degrees, and publications would likely not have been enough in the face of Toronto’s nativism if there had not been local support for him as well. In addition to McCurdy, Baldwin was favored early in the process by the principal of Knox College, William Caven, and by James P. Sheraton, the principal of Wycliffe College, the low-Anglican seminary affiliated with the University of Toronto. This was somewhat surprising because Hume was by far the more orthodox of the two contenders. Baldwin had been dabbling in experimental psychology, evolutionary theory, and other matters that might have been expected to cause uneasiness among traditional religious leaders. McCosh’s and Green’s approval, however, seems to have allayed any doubts that Caven or Sheraton might have harbored. Baldwin was also favored by President Daniel Wilson, who could see that he was easily the better qualified of the two main candidates. Despite such formidable support, however, the nativists still controlled the university senate and sat at the Ontario cabinet table. Everyone could sense that a fight was brewing.

The Deliberations

Although many of the principal decision makers were away from Toronto in the summer of 1889, debate over the applications—both public and private—
began almost immediately after the August 15 deadline had past. The opening salvo came on August 22 in the form of a petition addressed to Minister of Education Ross signed by no less than 70 graduates of the University of Toronto demanding that Hume be hired. The wording of the petition was intentionally equivocal, but advancing the cause of nativism was clearly their first objective.

Two days later Principal Sheraton of Wycliffe College sent his initial impressions of the applicants to Minister Ross from his retreat in Pictou, Nova Scotia. Having discussed the matters with Principal Caven of Knox, then in England, Sheraton wrote,

I think we were agreed that the best name yet discussed was that of Professor Baldwin. . . .There is only one other applicant who can, I think, be considered his equal, that is, Professor Seth of Dalhousie College, Halifax. These are, in my judgment, by far the two strongest men applying.24

Having apparently heard about the swell of local support for Hume, Sheraton went on to warn that

his testimonials do not, to my mind, compare at all with those of Professors Seth and Baldwin. He is still a man of promise (it may be) not of performance; and I would fear lest in the Professor’s Chair he would merely give forth a weakened echo of Dr. Young’s teaching.25

We do not know Ross’s exact reply, but he seems to have convinced Sheraton that Seth was a nonstarter, for little more than a week later, on September 2, Sheraton wrote Ross again saying, “I still continue to be favorably impressed by all I know of Prof. Seth; but perhaps I am not in a position to judge correctly of his qualifications.” He reiterated his support for Baldwin, however, writing, “I am very strongly impressed in favor of Professor Baldwin and would be well satisfied if he were appointed. I have learned a good deal about him and all I can learn is very favorable with [respect] to his scholarship, his metaphysical acumen, his powers as a teacher & his personal character.”26 Sheraton also announced that he would be returning to Toronto in 12 days ready for further discussions.

Within days of Sheraton’s return to Toronto, on September 14, he and Caven met with Minister Ross to make a formal case for Baldwin. A written report summarizing their presentation soon followed.

We are decidedly of opinion that among all the applicants Professor Baldwin, according to the evidence before us, most completely possesses the qualifications indispensable to a teacher of Mental Science in our University. He is a man of wide and accurate scholarship. His career as a student was brilliant and successful. . . . He has an intimate acquaintance with British and American philosophy, together with very special attainments in the study of modern French & German philosophy, the foundations of which were laid during his residence in the Universities of

24 Letter from Sheraton to Ross dated August 24, 1889, Archives of Ontario, Sub-series RG2-29-1, ms 2634, file 191.
26 Letter from Sheraton to Ross dated September 2, 1889, Archives of Ontario, Sub-series RG2-29-1, ms 2634, file 191.
Germany. He is, so far as we are aware, the only applicant who had made a thorough practical & experimental study of physiological psychology, a department of philosophical enquiry which is regarded by progressive students as one of the most important and fruitful. Professor Baldwin pursued this study in the laboratories of Wundt, the great investigator in this specialty, and he has since followed it up in a laboratory which he himself erected. The excellence of his work & the extent of his attainments appear clearly in his numerous contributions to philosophical journals & his recently published text-book of Psychology. He is evidently an original thinker, in fullest sympathy with scientific research & progressive philosophy.

That same week, on September 19, Premier Mowat called a meeting at which all sides of the question would be aired. The invitees included Minister Ross, Chancellor Blake, Principals Sheraton and Caven, presumably President Wilson, and others as well. One of these “others” was the university’s physics professor James Loudon. Loudon had little interest in philosophy, but as the first member of the University of Toronto faculty to have been born in Canada, he had a strong interest in nativism. Wilson sometimes referred to him as “the mole” in his private journals. As expected, Loudon presented a brief strongly supporting Hume’s claims and denigrating Baldwin’s education and attainments.

Hume will continue the teaching of Young [‘s philosophy] with the additional advantage of possessing a good knowledge . . . of psychology. . . . Young’s matured views were in harmony with those of the ablest Philosophers living in England, Scotland, Germany, and France and [are] the best basis for reconciling the conflicts of Religion and Science. . . . With regard to Baldwin’s philosophical standpoint. . . . The written evidence points to his being of the school of McCosh. . . . This school is held in extremely low estimation here . . . and would drive men away to other universities.

It is something of a puzzle that Loudon, a vocal advocate of laboratory science in the university and an early convert to evolutionary theory, would have supported Hume, a purely speculative philosopher who was suspicious of the claims of science and resistant to evolutionary theory, rather than supporting Baldwin, a man keen to extend the scientific approach to psychology and who had adopted a generally favorable view of evolutionary theory from the start. It seems that Loudon’s interest in hiring a Canadian, specifically a Torontonian, outweighed even his interest in hiring an accomplished scholar over an untested graduate student.

Principals Caven and Sheraton presented, at the same meeting, a response to Loudon’s rhapsodic defense of Hume, rebutting his points one by one: (a) Baldwin’s testimonials were from scholars just as distinguished as those of Hume; (b) he had studied in Europe with some of the leading German professors, though Hume had not; (c) he had several publications including a textbook and Hume had none; and (d) he had taught at both Princeton University and Lake Forest College.

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27 Sheraton and Caven appear to be mistaken on this point. I have been unable to find any evidence of there having been a psychological laboratory, per se, at either Princeton or Lake Forest.
28 Letter from Sheraton and Caven to Ross (no date), Archives of Ontario, Sub-series RG2-29-2, ms 2637.
29 Notes for Loudon’s brief. Archives of Ontario, Sub-series RG2-29-2, ms 2638.
but Hume had not taught at the college level at all. On Baldwin’s philosophical
standpoint, with a liberality uncommon for the time and place, they wrote,

The statement that Baldwin is of the school of McCosh is absolutely baseless. His
published writings are marked by independence of thought & show that he is in
many important points akin to Lotze. He is thoroughly conversant with the
philosophical systems of the Continent & his mind open to truth from all quarters.
Like the late professor Young he is idealistic and opposed to the school of Herbert
Spencer. He gives full value to the recent investigations in physiological psychol-
ogy. In Prof. Loudon’s reference to the agreement of Prof. Young’s views with
those of the ablest philosophers of Europe, he seems to forget that there is no one
system accepted. There is no such consensus in philosophy as he implies, but the
utmost diversity. It is preposterous to assume that the continuation of any partic-
ular type of philosophy is essential to the welfare of philosophical studies in
Toronto. In the German Universities the most diverse systems are taught side by
side.30

Within days, rumors began to spread that the cabinet was on the verge of
hiring the American Baldwin over the homegrown Hume. As they had the
previous winter, several of the city’s newspapers erupted in nativist outcry.

Less than a week after Mowat’s meeting, a deputation of 37 graduates of the
university, including several professors, marched to the premier’s office demand-
ing a meeting of their own. Mowat and three members of his cabinet, including
Ross and Gibson, listened politely to their demands that Hume be hired. Mowat
diffused the situation temporarily by announcing that their views “would receive
careful consideration” and that the government would have what he called “a
strong leaning” toward hiring a University of Toronto graduate (“Large Deputa-
tion of Toronto University Graduates Wait on the Government in Favour of Mr.
J. G. Hume,” 1889, p. 5).

Recognizing that the situation had the potential to become politically
uncomfortable for his government, just two days later Mowat met privately
with Wilson, advising him to find a compromise. Wilson bristled at the
suggestion (Langton, 1929, p. 166), but ultimately recognized necessity and
opened negotiations with the strongest nativist in cabinet, Provincial Secretary
John Morison Gibson.

There was little common ground between the two men, and their discus-
sions may well have come to nothing had not a hitherto unrecognized solution
been inadvertently revealed by schemes at another university. George Grant,
principal of University of Toronto’s main rival, Queen’s University (and a
leading nativist in his own right), moved to strengthen his own school by
hiring a second professor of philosophy, a Hegelian named Samuel Walters
Dyde, to work alongside Queen’s established philosopher, the prominent
idealist John Watson. Rather than exacerbating the crisis at the University of
Toronto, however, Grant’s move seems to have made immediately obvious to
Wilson and Gibson the outline of a compromise. Within two weeks, they had
agreed that both Baldwin and Hume should be hired—Baldwin to the chair in

30 Notes for Caven and Sheraton’s brief to the Ontario Executive Council. Archives of Ontario,
Sub-series RG2-29-2, ms 2637.
logic and metaphysics and Hume to a new position in ethics and the history of philosophy. Hume would also be given 2 years to complete his PhD, along with a fellowship to support himself, before having to take up his duties. Mowat was, no doubt, convinced to agree to this rather expensive solution by the argument that the Provincial University must not be seen to fall behind its private, denominational competitors, such as Queen’s. Mowat had a price of his own, however. Wilson was required to write letters to local newspapers praising the wisdom and generosity of Mowat and his government in their handling of the situation. Wilson grudgingly complied and the deal was done. In his private journal, Wilson’s entry for the day began, “The agony is over” (Langton, 1929, p. 168).

Aftermath

The nativist protest continued on and off in the newspapers for months afterward, but to no avail. Baldwin quit Lake Forest College in the middle of term and arrived in Toronto in November 1889 to take up his new duties. Just three months later, however, the university’s main building, University College, suffered a devastating fire. Baldwin turned the disaster into an opportunity, however, by ensuring that the rebuilt structure included a permanent psychology laboratory—just the 12th in North America and the 1st in the British Empire.

Baldwin repeatedly requested a laboratory demonstrator to allow him time for research, but Wilson just as repeatedly replied that the university could not afford one. Nevertheless, during his short tenure in Canada, Baldwin published the second volume of his textbook (Baldwin, 1891a), as well as a one-volume condensation of the full two-volume work (Baldwin, 1893c), started his developmental research (Baldwin, 1890a, 1890b, 1891b, 1892a, 1892b, 1893a, 1893b), and began work on the book for which he is now best known, Mental Development in the Child and Race (Baldwin, 1895a). Wilson died in the summer of 1892 and was replaced as president of the university by Baldwin’s chief opponent, Loudon. In 1893, just as he had finally been permitted to hire an assistant out of Wundt’s Leipzig laboratory, August Kirschmann, Baldwin was called to a position at Princeton. Baldwin would become a significant figure in functionalist psychology and evolutionary thought, as well as a truly pivotal one in developmental psychology. He was also an important contributor to the creation of the American Psychological Association, and he would found and edit Psychological Review (with Cattell) and Psychological Bulletin.

Hume briefly returned to Harvard, but then traveled to Freiburg, Germany, to complete his PhD. He spent some time in Hugo Münsterberg’s psychology laboratory, but wrote his dissertation on political economy and ethics under the

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31 Hume can be seen in a photograph of Münsterberg’s Freiburg laboratory that appears in Münsterberg (1922), opposite p. 26.
supervision of philosopher Alois Riehl (Hume, 1892a). Hume eventually took up his teaching duties at the University of Toronto in 1891.

With Baldwin’s departure in 1893, Hume became the sole professor of philosophy at the university, but his impact on his field was practically nil. He published little, and most of what he did publish appeared only locally. His writings consisted mainly of idealist critiques of psychology and evolutionary theory, as well as semipopular defenses of Protestantism and prohibition (Hume, 1891, 1892b, 1894, 1897a, 1897b, 1900, 1900–1901, 1901, 1908, 1916a, 1922). During World War I, he wrote a number of newspaper pieces attacking the character of Germans, in general, and that of his former teacher Hugo Münsterberg, in particular (Hume, 1915, 1916b, 1916c). Hume was twice the object of investigations prompted by student complaints about his teaching (see Green, 2002; Slater, in press, section 6.8). He was effectively forcibly retired in 1926 after having headed the department for more than 30 years. When he applied for an extension to his retirement date when he reached the age of 65, he was refused, although 11 of the 12 others who applied for a similar extension that year were approved (Green, 2002; Slater, in press, chapter 6).

From a distance, it is easy to see the fight over Young’s replacement at the University of Toronto as an intellectual one about the relative merits of idealism, materialism, evolution, and laboratory science. Although these topics were in the mix, the decision ultimately seems to have turned more decisively on parochial and even personal interests—Canadian nativism, in general, and possibly Loudon’s sense of isolation as the only Canadian on faculty, in particular. If Baldwin could have been induced to stay at Toronto, it would likely have become one of the leading universities on the continent, with respect to philosophy and especially psychology. Once he left, however, leaving Hume at the helm for decades, Toronto became a philosophical backwater. The psychology laboratory continued to be moderately productive under Kirschmann’s leadership until he returned to Germany in 1908, but it then became moribund. In 1919, administrative control over psychology was taken away from philosophy, and from Hume, and was given over to psychiatrist and eugenicist Charles Kirk Clarke. When Clarke retired 2 years later, the department was turned over to philosopher George Sidney Brett until 1927. At this time, psychology was made a department of its own and placed under the direction of Edward Alexander Bott. Bott’s main interest, however, was not in experimentation but in “mental hygiene.” Psychology at the University of Toronto would not be pursued as an experimental science again until after Bott retired in 1956.

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