Dueling In Canada

Duels did not just take place in the wild west of America but also happened in Canada. In our readings we learn all about duels that took place in Canada. We learn the time period they took place. We learn about the backgrounds of the tradition and the rules you must follow. We also understand some of the reasoning of these duels. We see who and how the offenders of dueling were judged in court. Dueling in Canada was a special part in their society.

Dueling was a common practice through out Canada prior to confederation. Dueling was when two men had a dispute. If they could not resolve their issues they would duel and shoot at one another using deadly pistols. Dueling originates from European traditions, duels use to be fought with swords but eventually was fought with pistols.[[1]](#footnote-1) Duellists were aware that they might not survive the encounter.[[2]](#footnote-2) There was a list of twenty-six rules for the duel to be governed by.[[3]](#footnote-3) These rules were called the, “The Clonmel Code.”[[4]](#footnote-4) There were many reasons a duel took place, some of the main reasons were preservation of female honour, familial, social, and professional reputations.[[5]](#footnote-5) Males of the household were in charge of keeping their family’s honour.[[6]](#footnote-6) John Wilson and Robert Lyon took place in a duel in Perth Canada, which resulted in the death of Robert. Wilson was then put on trial for murder however he was acquitted. [[7]](#footnote-7) Duels that resulted in death would go to trail and would often be acquitted. Eventually the practice had fallen out of fashion because of modern enlightened societies.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Canada had a fair many of duels take place before confederation. The Europeans brought the tradition of duels to Canada. The duels also had a set of rules that had to be followed to ensure a fair fight. We see who and how the offenders of dueling were judged in court. Dueling in Canada was a special part in their society. Duels defended reputations with a public display of physical courage. The offender of killing someone in a duel was usually acquitted. I wonder what it would have kept the traditions of duels in today’s society?

1. Cecilia Morgan, ‘In Search of the Phantom Misnamed Honour’: Dueling in Upper Canada, *The Canadian Historical Review,* 76, 4 (1995) pg. 534 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid, pg. 547 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid, pg. 535 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid, pg. 542 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid, pg. 533 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid, pg. 538-539 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid, pg530 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)