

Title:	Broadside reporting the Fenian Invasion of Canada, June 2, 1866		
Creator:	Smith & Co. Publishers, St. Johns [Ontario, Canada]		
Dates of Material:	June 2, 1866	Record Group Number:	RG 500
Summary of Contents:	<p>One broadside reporting the Fenian invasion of Canada, dated June 2, 1866. This “news extra” states that “the Old Fort Erie [is]in their possession...Active preparations to drive back the freebooters”. The report further states that “volunteers responded to the call of turnout with hearty goodwill. They expressed the hope that the ‘Bloody Finnegans’ would come and be prepared to fight and not keep cowardly threatening and doing nothing”.</p> <p>The article also describes the arrival of the Royal Artillery, the Volunteers, and the Rifle Brigade, all recently arrived from Montreal. The “news from St. Albans” includes the arrival of 300 Fenians, described as a “resolute looking lot of men, evidently bent on mischief of some sort”. More Fenians were expected to arrive from New Haven, CT and Boston. It is also reported that 1500 Fenians crossed the border from the United States into Canada, and it is believed that they are headed towards Chippewa from Fort Erie. The Reeve of Bertie, Dr. Kempson, was shot while reading the riot act. Further reports indicate that the Fenians were in possession of Taylor’s Heights, just below Fort Erie, and that they have opened a recruiting office at Fort Erie. Subsequent reports state that the Fenians are “retreating on Chippewa...they are drunk and disorderly”. Meanwhile, about 1000 Fenians were reported to be in Malone, N.Y., and thought to be heading towards Montreal. A list of Companies of Lower Canada that have been called out in response is included. The last section reports on an engagement with the Fenians at Port Colborne. Few details were known, but it is reported that the British Forces were able to fend off the attack.</p>		
Physical Description / Condition:	1 broadside, 47 x 20 cm.		
Other Notes:	<p>The Fenians were a group intent on securing Irish independence from England. The movement had its origins in Ireland in 1857, under the leadership of James Stephens, with the assistance of John O’Mahony, an American who had raised funds for the cause. The American branch of this movement was especially successful, having raised \$500 000 and enlisting about 10 000 American Civil War veterans. The group split into two separate factions, one desiring an invasion of Canada and the other preferring an uprising in Ireland. It soon became apparent that an uprising in Ireland was not imminent, and a decision was made to invade Canada. In April, 1866, a</p>		

	<p>raid was launched against New Brunswick. It proved unsuccessful, and another raid was attempted on June 1, 1866, this time in Ridgeway, near Fort Erie, Ontario. The Canadian militiamen were defeated, but the Fenians subsequently withdrew. A third incident occurred on June 7, this time at Missisquoi Bay in Quebec, when the Fenians crossed the border, remained there for 2 days, and withdrew. A failed uprising in Ireland in 1867 signaled the demise of the movement. The Fenian threat helped to promote a sense of union among Canadians and provided an incentive for Confederation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Source: The Canadian Encyclopedia online http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/fenians retrieved: 2014/02/26</p>		
Location:	Brock University Archives		
Source Information:	Acquired from PBA Galleries in November 2013.		
Described by:	Chantal Cameron	Date:	February 2014