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**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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The Working Class Family Economy:
Montréal, 1861-1881

Bettina Bradbury

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

September 1984

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ABSTRACT

The Working Class Family Economy: Montreal, 1861-1881.

Bettina Bradbury
Concordia University, 1984

The family economy of the working class in the period of early industrial capitalism is examined in this thesis. Changes in the involvement of family members in wage labour, in education, in non-wage and domestic labour at home as well as in patterns of marriage, childbearing and residential arrangements are assessed. Analysis is based on data collected from the manuscript censuses for two working class Montreal wards, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques between 1861 and 1881. This is complemented by information from other contemporary quantitative and descriptive sources. The roles of fathers, children and mothers are examined in separate chapters for age and gender combined with class position to determine people's roles in the family and in the wider economy. Within the working class, the level and regularity of men's wages set the contours of the family economy conditioning the need for and the nature of other survival strategies. Differences of around 25 cents a day translated over a year into the possibility of divergent standards of living, roughly dividing the working class into separate, identifiable fractions. Each favoured particular survival strategies and exhibited different patterns of family labour commitment, marriage, reproduction and residence. Over this period the contours of working

class youth were reshaped. Growing numbers of children aged six to twelve attended school. An increasing proportion of older children were drawn into wage labour. Boys were more likely to work for wages than girls. Girls worked in a narrower range of jobs and for a shorter span of their lives. On marriage most ceased wage earning. With whatever money others earned, they tried to ensure that the family's wage labourers faced each day sufficiently fed, clothed and rested to work. And, in abysmal living conditions they produced and socialized the next generation of workers. Occasionally seeking wage labour themselves, raising animals or gardens, or sharing their homes helped some women to come closer to balancing family budgets. Working class women remained, however, both economically and legally dependent on their husbands. This dependence was highlighted in the problems that widows faced when they tried to feed and raise a fatherless family.

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To Anna and Emily whose births and early years punctuated the writing of this thesis go credit for any lapses of logic that can unambiguously be attributed to lack of sleep. Any other faults are mine. To John, many thanks for consistently shouldering the burden of extra domestic labour, for moral support and for much proofreading. The thesis is dedicated to all my families, the Priors, Bradburies and Ejimas.

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Chapter One

The Family Economy and Industrial Capitalism

An Introduction to the Methods, Setting and Issues.

Politics has its time. It is sometimes as important as social questions, but usually, and for the most of humanity, "What shall we eat? What will we drink? How shall we be clothed?" are the questions that take precedence over "how and by whom are we governed?".¹

It was no historical accident that Médéric Lanctôt, spokesman for Montreal's working class, should stress the importance of such basic survival issues in the 1870's. At that time the transformations that accompanied the transition of Montreal from a commercial to an industrial city were in the process of reshaping the bases of survival of the city's expanding proletariat. In such a period of transition the family, childhood, gender definitions, even motherhood, were potentially subject to change. Such institutions are not immutable. They, like politics have their histories.² They are shaped and reshaped by historical processes. "They form and are transformed by their economic

¹ Médéric Lanctôt, President de L'Association des Ouvriers du Canada, Association du Capital et du Travail (Montreal, John Wilson, 1872), p.1, citing M. Greely, New York Tribune, 22 January 1872.

² Joy Parr ed., Childhood and Family in Canadian History; (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p. 8 (Hereafter, Childhood and Family); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Placing Women's History in History", New Left Review, 133 (May-June 1982), pp. 7, 15; Elizabeth Badinter, Mother Love: Myth and Reality. Motherhood in Modern History (New York, MacMillan, 1981) (Paris, Flammarion, 1980) (Hereafter, Mother Love).

and cultural context".³ And like political history, they can be studied by the historian.

To understand how people survived, to grasp the answers to such apparently simple questions as "What shall we eat...drink and wear?" requires making the family the centre of analysis. It has been within families that consumption has traditionally taken place and that the labour necessary to ensure survival has been apportioned. In families dependent on wage labour, the determination of which members would work for wages, which perform domestic labour or go to school was not inevitable. Nor were alternate or supplementary strategies. All depended on past tradition, the economic and legal constraints of the period and individual or family preferences, ingenuity and flexibility. Examination of these questions can reveal not only the workings of the family economy, but also the importance of class, age and gender in shaping people's work roles and life histories.

This thesis examines how working class families in Montreal between 1861 and 1888 organized to survive by focussing upon what Louise Tilly and Joan Scott have termed the "family wage economy".⁴ It attempts to determine how the transformations that were occurring in the workplace of the city effected the survival strategies of families and how these altered over the period. In turn, the effects that the particular

³ Joy Parr, Childhood and Family, p.8.

⁴ Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work and Family (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), p.61.

strategies utilized had on the wider economy and society are assessed. It will argue that the changes accompanying the expansion of industrial capitalism in Montreal, even during this relatively short period, were sufficiently dramatic to engender major modifications in the way working class families ensured their survival, and hence in the life experiences of men, women and children.

Dependence on wages for some if not all subsistence needs distinguished a growing proportion of Montreal's population from those running businesses, professional concerns and those earning a fixed salary. It is the families headed by people who worked for wages that are the focus here. The need for wage labour, the jobs people held and the regularity and size of the wage earned, set the parameters for the living standards of the working class. How many and which family members would work, the conditions of domestic labour, even the age people married and the children they bore were related in some way to the family head's wage.

By focussing on the family wage economy, this thesis integrates the history of men, women and children. It brings together the history of family and work - spheres that were geographically isolated with the spread of wage labour. Production and reproduction are thus linked. By examining the roles of fathers, mothers and sons and daughters within the family economy in this short but important period of transition, changes affecting the family as a unit, women and their work and children's life courses can be grasped.

Changes in the involvement of family members in wage labour, in education, in non-wage and domestic labour at home as well as in patterns of marriage and childbearing are assessed by recreating the experiences of residents of two Montreal wards, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques, between 1861 and 1888. The respective roles of husbands and wives, sons and daughters are reflected in their contours, if not their substance, in the patterns and transitions that analysis of census returns can reveal. I have attempted to reconstruct aspects of their lives from the manuscript censuses, other nominal records and the contemporary descriptions. The sources and methodology used in any historical research frame the questions asked, the answers found and hence the analysis of the past that emerges. This is especially true in studies based on such quantitative sources. Only too often the data overwhelm the researcher diverting attention away from questions that may be more important but less apparent than ones that are readily amenable to quantitative analysis. Methodology thus becomes not simply a tool but the ultimate determinant of the end product. This thesis shares some of the limitations of work based on analysis of census data. I have tried, however, to go beyond the simple analysis of family and household structure that characterized early research in family history. I have attempted to avoid the mere presentation of quantitative data and to build the thesis around questions about the importance of class position, age and gender in the family economy. It cannot shed light on the personal and intimate lives of working class men and women. Their sexual relationships or their feelings about their children or spouse remain largely hidden. The thesis does chart the outline of the family economy within which ideas and sentiments existed. It describes the

material constraints and realities within which other aspects of family life operated. And in assessing when people began work, who worked for wages and when they married and had children it examines the results of complex processes of personal and familial decision making.

The economic and social milieu of Montreal between the 1860's and 1880's framed the context within which families struggled to survive. The methodology and historiography frame the context within which that struggle is interpreted. The rest of this first chapter therefore serves to situate the work in its historical, historiographical and methodological context.

Methodology

The historian who attempts to write the history of ordinary people in the past must seek evidence of a different nature from those who study the elites. Few working class males had the time or the literary skills to leave detailed records of their daily lives or family experiences. Middle class women could pay for servants to do their housework, leaving them free to write letters and diaries. The working class wife or daughter, in contrast, seldom had any spare time. She was often illiterate. In Europe, even America, a few careful middle class observers and some government investigations produced such detailed studies of the work and living conditions of the poor that the evidence, if not the conclusions, provides a wealth of material for the historian looking back. Montrealer, Herbert Ames, a shoe manufacturer and reformer, made a detailed study of living conditions in part of

Ste. Anne ward in 1896. Yet he left little descriptive evidence. The material published is all presented in aggregate statistics.⁵ His work thus provides a poor counterpart to the rich descriptive material collected by Mayhew, Booth, Rowntree and Engels in England.⁶ Only the evidence of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital, collected in Montreal in 1888, comes close to British government investigations in the wealth of detail that it offers on the history of ordinary people.⁷ Hence the closing of this present study in that year. In the absence of sufficient qualitative descriptions I turned, like other historians seeking to understand the past of Canadian families, to the records that people generated unwittingly, perhaps at times unwillingly, as members of an organized nation state.

This thesis shares, with other investigations of the Canadian family in the past, a methodology relying on computer analysis of the manuscript censuses.⁸ It is based on a random sample of households in

⁵ Herbert Brown Ames, The City Below the Hill. (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1972).

⁶ Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor. The Classical Study of the Culture of Poverty and the Criminal classes in the 19th-Century, 4 vols (London, Griffin, Bohn and Co, 1861-1862) (New York, Dover Publications, 1968) (Hereafter, London Labour). Charles Booth, Life and Labour of the People of London; B. Seebham Rowntree, Poverty: A Study of Town Life, (London, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1902) (Hereafter, Poverty); Frederick Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844 (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1892).

⁷ Canada, Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in Canada, Vol. III, Quebec Evidence, (Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1889) (Hereafter RCRLC). All subsequent references are to Vol. III unless otherwise specified.

⁸ Michael B. Katz, The People of Hamilton, Canada West, Family and Class in a mid-Nineteenth Century City, (Cambridge, Harvard

the Montreal wards of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques in 1861, 1871 and 1881. Historians have traditionally been rather wary of sampling techniques. Carefully used, however, a sample, and particularly a random sample, offers the only way to analyze large bodies of data.⁹ In this period Montreal was Canada's largest city. Its population increased from 70,323 in 1861 to 140,247 in 1881. The only other Canadian city in which manuscript censuses have been a major source is Hamilton, Ontario.¹⁰ Between 1851 and 1871, the period covered by Michael Katz and his colleagues in their two books, Hamilton grew from around 14,000 to 26,000 residents.¹¹ They were able to study the total population because

University Press, 1975), pp.35,25, (Hereafter, The People of Hamilton); David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers Families, Land and Social Change in Mid Victorian Peel County, Canada West, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp.61-64 (Hereafter, Hopeful Travellers); Gerard Bouchard and Yolande Lavoie, "Le projet d'histoire sociale de la population du Saguenay - l'appareil methodologique", Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Francaise, 32 (juin 1978).

⁹ For justification of sampling and the advantage of random sampling as a technique for historians see R.S. Schofield, "Sampling in Historical Research", in E.A. Wrigley, ed., Nineteenth Century Society. Essays in Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data, (Cambridge, University Press, 1972). Similar ten per cent samples were used by Michael Anderson, Family Structure, in Nineteenth Century Lancashire, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1971) (Hereafter, Family Structure); John Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution; Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns, (London, Methuen, 1974) (Hereafter, Class Struggle); Lynn H. Lees, Exiles of Erin; and Theodor Hershberg ed., Philadelphia, Work, Space, Family and Group Experience in the 19th Century (New York, Oxford University Press, 1981). Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London (New York, Cornell University Press, 1979) (Hereafter, Exiles of Erin).

¹⁰ Michael B. Katz, The People of Hamilton.

¹¹ Michael B. Katz, Michael J. Doucet and Mark J. Stern, The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism (Cambridge, Massachussetts, 1982) (Hereafter, The Social Organization).

it was relatively small and they had a large team of workers and access to vast funds. Small populations in the rural areas recreated by Gerard Bouchard, David Gagan, Chad Gaffield other Quebec and Canadian historians made it logical for them to study the whole population. Had historians waited for sufficient money to examine all the citizens of a large city like Montreal, however, the family economy in urban areas would have remained unstudied. Results would not have painted a reality that differed from that shown by a random sample. Resources, time and faith in the representivity of sampling dictated an approach for this thesis that would focus on specific areas of the city and use sampling techniques to make even these smaller areas manageable.

This local and focussed approach is not without advantages. It allows for an easier grasp of the diversity of the city and of the peculiarities and features of areas within it. With smaller numbers a single researcher can move more easily between the cold and inhumane variables and factors spewed out by the computer and the sources themselves. In writing I have sought constantly to come and go between the original data - the actual families listed by the census enumerators - and the patterns and analyses made possible by the computer. On the other hand, at times the sample proved too small to determine statistically whether patterns observed were due to chance. In examining certain factors which were of interest, but not widespread,

all families were studied. Sections, dealing with the occupations of wives and widows and the keeping of stock and gardens fall into this category.

Two predominantly working class wards were chosen which, I believed, would both contrast and complement each other. Ste. Anne ward, in western Montreal was the centre of the early industry that grew up along the banks of the Lachine Canal. There, in the 1840's and 50's, the Irish immigrants had settled, constituting what Pentland has argued was Canada's earliest industrial proletariat.¹² There too, were Irish and Scottish immigrants and their families and a growing number of French Canadians. St. Jacques, in contrast, was overwhelmingly French Canadian. It had little industry within its boundaries. Residents had to journey daily to work, eastward to Ste. Marie and westward to the central city (See Map 1). Together analysis of the citizens of these two wards offered both the chance to examine working class families of French Canadian and Irish origins, and to analyze family economies in parts of town where different sectors predominated.

Ste. Anne and St. Jacques were only in the very loosest sense of the word communities.¹³ In fact, they were geographical sections of the

¹² H. Clare Pentland, "The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market in Canada", Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science, XXV (November 1959) (Hereafter, "The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market").

¹³ Alan Macfarlane, Reconstructing Historical Communities. (Cambridge, University Press, 1977), pp.2-9.

city, separated for political reasons into discrete areas. Wards were separate only in the aggregate statistics published for them. Neighbours on opposite sides of streets sometimes lived in different wards. Relations, too, might fall in separate wards, even though they lived a block apart. Shops were chosen by proximity, price or the availability of credit. Work was found wherever it was available or where a relative or friend could locate it. Only when they voted did people identify themselves as residents of St. Jacques, Ste. Anne, or any of the city's other wards. It is thus largely in looking back, through the census reports, through city records and thus through the eyes of the bureaucrats who collected and ordered what data remains, that the lines harden and the boundaries seem important. For the people then, they meant little. For historians, however, they facilitate both information gathering and comparisons of areas with known total populations. Sample data could be easily compared with the published aggregate returns and with information published by the city on the separate wards.

A ten per cent random sample was taken of the households enumerated by the census takers in these two wards in 1861, 1871 and 1881. This resulted in a total sample of 10,967 people over the three decades. They resided in 1,851 households and 2,278 families.¹⁴ It is the collective biographies of these families that constitute the core material of the thesis. These samples comprise the quantitative core of the work. I have attempted to interpret the patterns found and provide

¹⁴ For further details on the methodology see Appendix A.

a wider context by drawing on qualitative material from civic records, government investigations, newspapers, and archival material. A careful reading of such qualitative sources tells much about working class family life. Yet there is seldom any way of knowing what is representative. The temptation is to take the spectacular - the worst examples of housing, of crime, of poor sanitation - as typical. In the newspapers we learn of the casualties - the drunken wives and husbands, or the unwanted child, carefully drowned by its parents. The problem of representivity remains. Combined with the quantitative sources a more careful and representative assessment of past reality can be made.

The Historical Context - Montreal 1861-1888 The Workshop of Canada.

Until recently historians examining changes in the family have neglected only too often to analyze the economic transformations that were assumed to be causing change. Broad, non-analytical terms like modernization, industrialization or urbanization were assumed to explain changes in a tautological fashion.¹⁵ Little account was taken of ongoing research in economic, labour and working class history that might have

¹⁵ See especially, Neil J. Smelser, Social Change in the Industrial Revolution. An application of Theory to the Lancashire Cotton Industry 1770-1840, (London, Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1959) (Hereafter, Social Changes in the Industrial Revolution); William J. Goode, World Revolution and Family Patterns, (New York, Glencoe, 1963); Edward Shorter, The Making of the Modern Family, (New York, Basic Books, 1975); Lawrence Stone, Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800 (London, Harper and Row, 1977); E.A. Wrigley, "The Process of Modernization and the Industrial Revolution in England", Journal of Interdisciplinary History, III, (Autumn 1972).

shed light on some of the mechanisms of change. Work and home, work and family were treated as separate and unrelated entities. More recent work has shown how important it is to grasp the particular nature of production, and the structure of the local economy if the contours of family organisation and demographic behaviour are to be understood.¹⁶

This section examines the major features of industrial development and population growth in Montreal between 1861 and 1888. Together, in their contrasts and similarities changes in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards capture crucial elements of the transition underway. Equally, these wards portray the social segmentation of the city by geographical area that characterized the emergent industrial order.

Montreal, once a centre of fur trade, long a major port for the

¹⁶ See, for instance, Tamara K. Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, the Relationship Between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.5 (Hereafter, Family Time and Industrial Time); Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work and Family; Mary P. Ryan, The Cradle of the Middle Class - The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865 (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1981). (Hereafter, The Cradle of the Middle Class).; Hans Medick, "The Proto-Industrial Family Economy: The Structural Function of Household and Family during the Transition from Peasant Society to Industrial Capitalism", Social History, 3 (October 1976); (Hereafter, "The Proto-Industrial Family Economy").; David Levine, Family Formation in an Age of Nascent Capitalism, (New York, Academic Press, 1977) (Hereafter, Family Formation); Rudolph Braun, "Early Industrialization and Demographic Change in the Canton of Zurich" in Charles Tilly ed., Historical Studies in Changing Fertility, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978); Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, Women, Work and Family; Louise Tilly, "Individual Lives and Family Strategies in the French Proletariat", Journal of Family History, 4 (Summer 1979), (Hereafter, "Individual Lives").

imports and exports of the colonies, was transformed in the second half of the nineteenth century into the major manufacturing city of British North America, the "workshop of Canada".¹⁷ The emergence of industry occurred within a mercantile city. "Wholesale stores thronged with manufactured articles imported from England" demonstrated to visitors of the 1840's and 1850's the "commercial character of the place".¹⁸ Slowly and unevenly over the early decades of the nineteenth century some artisans had been accumulating sufficient capital to re-organize production, to take on extra workers and to produce goods for stock rather than on demand. In other cases capitalists arrived, using money earned elsewhere to set up manufactories and workshops. In its broad contours industry developed in Montreal along the lines which Marx delineated so carefully in England. Small manufactories in which workers were limited to one task replaced workshops where skilled journeymen and apprentices had made a product from beginning to end. Or, workmen with different skills were brought together into separate departments of one large building, practising their craft as always, but working as one of a growing number of employees.¹⁹ By the 1860's

¹⁷ The Montreal Post, 19 June 1882, cited in S. Cross, "The Irish in Montreal", (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1969), p.239. On this period of transition see especially Jean-Claude Robert, "Montréal 1821 - 1871. Aspects de l'urbanisation", (Thèse de 3^e cycle, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 1977); Gerald J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons. Montreal Businessmen and the Growth of Industry and Transportation, 1837-1853, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1977) (Hereafter, The River Barons); Yves Martel, "Les industries à Montréal en 1871", (Thèse de Maitresse, Université de Québec à Montréal, 1979)

¹⁸ William Chambers, Things as they are in America (London and Edinburgh, Wm. and Robert Chambers, 1854), p.65.

¹⁹ Karl Marx, Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production, Vol.I, (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1954), pp.318-331. (Hereafter,

factories employing over 100 workers and using complex steam and water driven machinery were not uncommon. Between 1861 and 1891 they became widespread.

Workshops, manufactories and factories continued to co-exist in Montreal. Overall the average size of workplaces increased. The use of steam and water power to drive complex machinery became more prevalent. The process of work was revolutionized in some parts of the production process while the demand for hand labour in others intensified. Increasing proportions of the city's expanding population were drawn into wage labour under the sway of industrial capital. Some were highly skilled craftsmen, but growing numbers were unskilled workers. The published census returns for 1861 listed around 150 manufacturing

Capital); The question of when industrial development began in Quebec, indeed anywhere in Canada was long obscured by the simple equation of factory production with industrialization and by concern with identifying a period of "take-off". See Gordon W. Bertman, "Economic Growth in Canadian Industry, 1870-1915: The Staple Model and the Take-off Hypothesis", Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science, XXIX, (May 1963); René Durocher, and Paul-André Linteau, Le Retard économique du Québec et l'infériorité économique des Canadiens Français, (Trois Rivières, Boreál Express, 1971). More recently historians have developed a clearer conception of the length and unevenness of the transition to industrial capitalism. See especially Joanne Burgess, "L'industrie de la chaussure à Montréal, 1977); Joanne Burgess, "L'industrie de la chaussure à Montréal : 1840-1870: De l'artisanat à la fabrique", (M. A. Thesis, Université de Québec à Montréal: 1840-1870 - Le passage de l'artisanat à la fabrique", RHAF, 31 (September 1977); Paul André Linteau, Maisonneuve ou comment les promoteurs fabriquent une ville: 1883-1918 (Montreal, Boreál Express, 1981); John McCallum, Unequal Beginnings - Agriculture and Economic Development in Quebec and Ontario Until 1870 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1980); Ian McKay, "Capital and Labour in the Halifax Baking and Confectionery Industry During the Last Half of the Nineteenth Century", Labour/Le Travailleur 3, 1978).

establishments and about 6,500 workers. This was an underestimate, for many of the returns appeared to have been excluded from the published figures. In 1871 a total of around 21,000 employees were reported and in 1881 over 32,000 people worked in more than 1,200 manufacturing establishments around the city.²⁰ These ranged in 1871 from an average size of two workers in blacksmith's shops through over 200 workers in the city's two India Rubber factories to the 1,210 workers in the diverse shops and operations of the Grand Trunk Railway.²¹ By 1891 over 1,600 manufacturing establishments, large and small were enumerated in Montreal. They employed a total of nearly 36,000 workers.²²

Whereas in eighteenth and nineteenth century England the industrial revolution had been a complex drawn out process involving the accumulation of capital and the invention and application of machinery over a long period, in colonies like Canada, the industrial revolution was, in a sense, imported ready made. Machinery already in existence had the potential to revolutionize production. Men with capital and skills could and did come from elsewhere to build workshops and factories. Local entrepreneurs and newcomers together shaped the nature of Montreal's industrial development.²³

²⁰ Canada, 1861 Census of Canada, III, Table 14; 1871 Census of Canada, III, Tables 28-54; 1881 Census of Canada, III, Tables 29-54.

²¹ Manuscript Census, Industrial Schedules, Ste. Anne ward, 1871.

²² Canada, Census of Canada 1891, Vol. III, Table II.

²³ Much work remains to be done on how Montreal artisans and manufacturers accumulated capital, re-organized production and ran their workshops and factories. The research of Joanne Burgess on shoemakers and of the Montreal Business History group should shed more light on these issues. Gerald Tulchinsky analyzes early

Montreal at mid-century offered many advantages to enterprising industrialists. The Board of Trade had ensured that the port was accessible by dredging the channel in Lake St. Peter to ease the passage upstream from Quebec city. The quays and docks were solid structures, impressing even Charles Dickens when he visited in the 1840's. More importantly in the late 1840's the Lachine Canal had been redeveloped so that waterpower could be used in industries - thus "making possible, a rapid acceleration and diversification of industry there".²⁴ And in 1860 the Grand Trunk Railway Co. had opened the impressive new Victoria Bridge that linked Montreal to the South Shore and hence to the railways of the United States giving the city a winter port. The Grand Trunk line stretched east to Rivière du Loup and westward to Toronto. Montreal thus occupied a crucial position at the hub of a rail and water transportation network that could provide manufacturers with raw materials, imported machinery and with immigrants seeking work.

Ever since the conquest the ships arriving in Montreal during the spring and summer months had brought some immigrants from England, Scotland and Ireland. Many stayed a few days in the city then moved on seeking land or work elsewhere in the colonies; many were lured on by the opportunities believed to predominate south of the border. Some

manufacturers in his work, The River Barons, pp.203-231. His emphasis on the fact that the majority of large manufacturers came from elsewhere hides the fact that they had long lived and accumulated capital in the city, while his focus on the largest works masks the presence of hundreds of smaller indigenous producers.

²⁴ Gerald J. J. Tulchinsky, The River Barons, pp.211-2.

remained, carving futures for themselves in the trade and commerce of Montreal. It was the massive influx of Irish in the decade following the famine that began the reshaping of Montreal's social, class, and ethnic structure that would continue over subsequent decades. While thousands of Irish simply passed through Montreal, many stayed. The majority of these settled only a short distance from where they had disembarked. For Griffintown, in the heart of Ste. Anne ward just to the west of the docks had long housed the largest concentration of Montreal Irish. Tenant farmers and rural labourers joined their more wealthy fellow ex-patriates. They formed a body of workers that could be drawn on for large construction works, casual labour around the port and early industry. They constituted, according to H. Clare Pentland, Canada's earliest proletariat.²⁵ They and their children are the Irish families captured in the censuses of Ste. Anne in 1861, 1871 and 1881. Within the city as a whole the Irish swelled the working class component of the population and became the largest non-french speaking group. In 1861 16 per cent of all the citizens had been born in Ireland. A decade later when people were asked about their origins as well as their birthplace, fully one quarter of the population was of Irish origin. One third of the city's Irish lived in Ste. Anne ward, forming the "teeming Irish centre". There, on a Saturday night, in the 1860's:

the old market was alive with an active crowd laying in the week's supply of greens and the meat for Sunday's dinner. And up and down both sides of the street were the gas lit shops all hives of trade,

²⁵ H. Clare Pentland, "The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market".

and at every corner on the west side stood in groups the men of Griffintown, all after their week's work, now clean, and dressed in their good clothes, but, withal, not to be trusted to keep the peace if a red-coat or a sailor brushed against them. . . .²⁶

Their "week's work" continued to be found throughout these years in the unskilled jobs that abounded on the wharves, around the port, with the Grand Trunk Railway and in the factories of the area. Over 40 per cent of the Irish workers of Ste. Anne were labourers or in other unskilled jobs in 1861, 1871 and 1881. This concentration was unmatched by other ethnic groups. (See Table 1.1) The Irish, in Montreal had indeed, as Pentland has argued for the 1840's, "made the unskilled urban employment of Lower Canada pretty much their private reserve".²⁷ They continued to do so over subsequent decades.

The poverty of the Irish, stuck in the poorest paying, least regular, least skilled jobs of the city, was obvious to even casual visitors. Looking down from the heights of Mount Royal, the favourite visiting spot of Montreal tourists, a Baron Hulot contrasted the fashionable area of St. Antoine stretching below with the blot of the Irish village by the port - there, the Irish seemed to him, disinherited. In an elegant city, he concluded, this little corner, threw a note of discordance.²⁸ This observer and Pentland too, failed to

²⁶ Golden Jubilee Number, Redemptorist Fathers At St. Ann's (Montreal, 1934), p.18.

²⁷ H. C. Pentland, "The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market", p.456.

²⁸ Baron Etienne Hulot, De l'Atlantique au Pacifique à Travers le Canada et le Nord des Etats Unis (Paris, Plon, 1888), p.158.

Table 1.1

Ethnic Origins and Class Position*

<u>St. Jacques</u>	French Canadian			Irish			English and Scottish			%
	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Non Working Class	27	31	29	57	71	50	48	67	55	
Skilled Trades	28	25	24	5	9	17	26	21	17	
Injured Trades	22	26	24	23	0	12	22	-	14	
Semi-skilled	11	4	4	2	9	-	4	5	-	
Unskilled	<u>12</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>14</u>	
	100%	100%	100%	101%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Total Listing a Job	297	475	876	44	35	24	23	42	29	

<u>Ste. Anne</u>	French Canadian			Irish			English and Scottish		
	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Non-Working Class	24	11	20	21	26	19	36	30	33
Skilled Trades	31	45	30	17	16	20	47	37	39
Injured Trades	23	18	16	10	10	7	5	9	6
Semi Skilled	9	5	12	9	6	13	7	6	3
Unskilled	<u>13</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total Listing a Job	119	173	195	230	288	312	73	161	153

Source: All individuals males and females of these ethnic backgrounds listing an occupation, 10 per cent random samples, 1861-1881.

*The relationship between class and ethnicity was significant at the .001 level of confidence in all years in each ward.

notice the large numbers of French Canadians in that part of town. They neglected too, the poverty of the predominantly working class French Canadians who were migrating in growing numbers into areas like

St. Jacques and St. Marie in the eastern city.²⁹ Some remained permanently in Montreal. Others moved on to the the United States. Many remained there for a short time then returned. In the years of Great Depression the Montreal immigration agent reported around three thousand people returning annually "almost solely French Canadians, married with families"³⁰ Some French Canadians from rural areas had always chosen to migrate to Montreal rather than the United States. This movement picked up dramatically in the 1850's and 1860's. By 1865 the city that had previously been predominantly anglophone, was in number, though not in economic power, predominantly French Canadian.³¹ From the plain of Montreal and surrounding counties people came seeking the survival that the land and rural life no longer seemed to offer. In the city they clustered in the eastern wards - in Ste. Marie and St. Jacques where rows of housing were rapidly thrown up by small scale speculators and contractors with little regard for city building codes or basic sanitary measures. These wards, along with Ste. Anne became vast labour reserves. Geographer Raoul Blanchard has described them as agglomerations of proletarians, bursting with children and subject to

²⁹ Yolande Lavoie, "Les mouvements migratoires des Canadiens" entre leurs pays et les Etats-unis au XIX^e et au XX^e siècle; Etude Quantitative", in Hubert Charbonneau ed., La Population du Québec: Etudes Retrospectives (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1973), p.78

³⁰ "Report of the Montreal Immigration Agent", Canada, Sessional Papers, 1876, Paper No.8 p.11; IBID 1877; IBID, 9, 1878.

³¹ Jean-Claude Robert estimates that 83% of the total growth of Montreal between 1852 and 1861 resulted from the increase in the number of French Canadians. "Urbanisation et population. Le cas de Montréal en 1861", RHAF, 35, (March 1982), p.527.

the vicissitudes of epidemics, fires and floods.³²

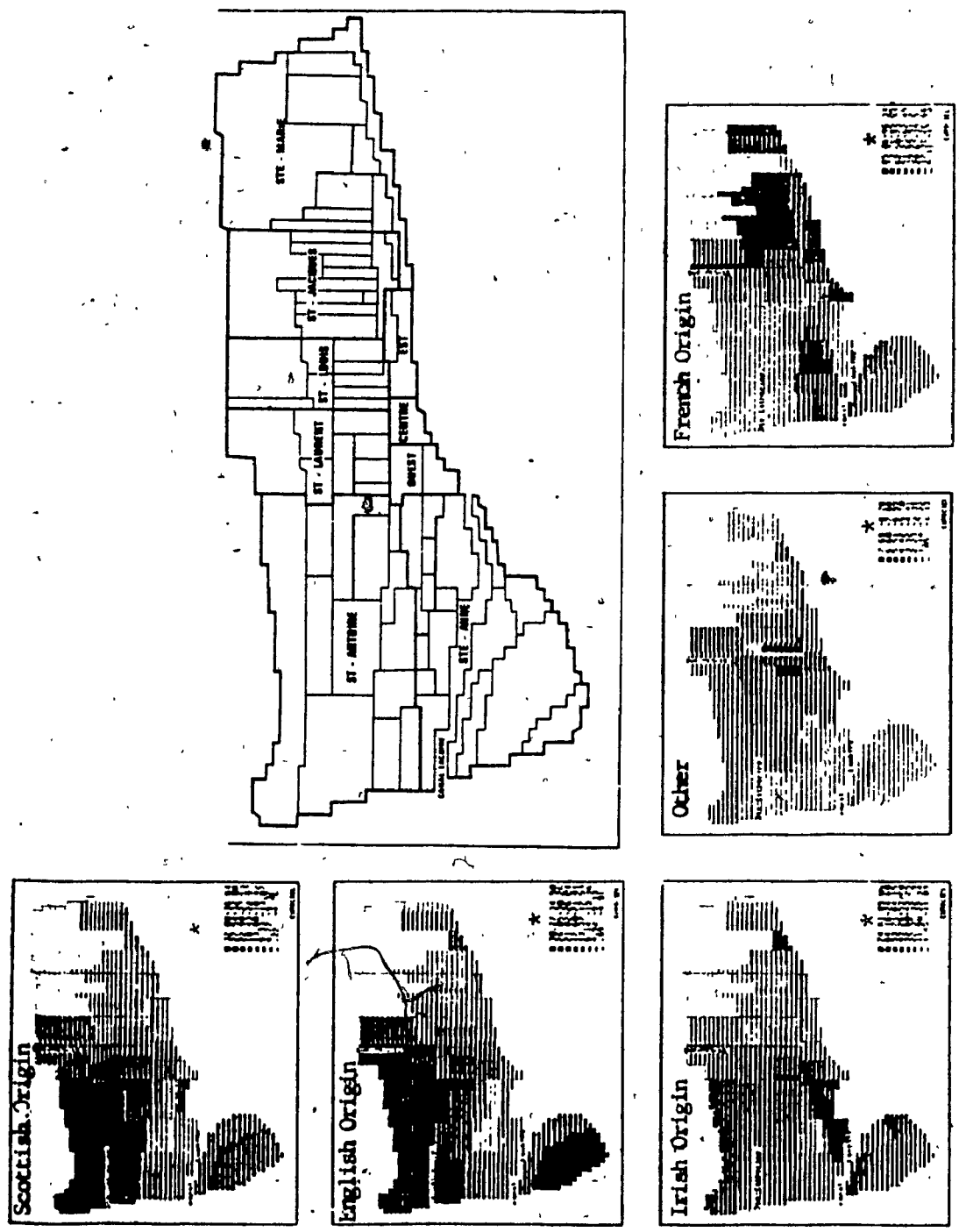
French Canadians also penetrated the once Irish dominated area of Ste. Anne, forming pockets on certain streets in Pointe St. Charles around the canal and in the northern section of the ward.³³ (See Map 1.2) H. C. Pentland has suggested that until the 1870's, French Canadians "showed little interest in wage employment" except under the most desperate conditions.³⁴ The rapid influx of French Canadians with little but their labour power to sell, combined with the occupations they reported in 1861 and 1871 suggest his argument is not correct for Montreal. In both Ste. Anne and St. Jacques, and surely in the city as a whole, French Canadians were clearly involved in wage labour in the 1860's. They worked predominantly in traditional woodworking crafts and in the highly seasonal construction trades not as independent artisans, but as wage labourers. And they found jobs in industries like shoemaking and cigarmaking and clothing, in which the re-organization of production and use of machinery was opening up employment to vast numbers of largely unskilled workers. (See Table 1.1) In the social division of labour that was shaped and reshaped as industrial capital came to dominate production, the Irish and French made up the majority of Montreal's working class, clustering in different jobs and sectors

³² Raoul Blanchard, L'Ouest du Canada Français (1953), pp.263-4.

³³ Marcel Bellevance and Jean-Daniel Gronoff, "Les structures de l'espace Montréalais à l'époque de la confédération", Cahiers de Géographie du Québec, 24, (December 1980), Figure 2.

³⁴ H. Clare Pentland, Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860 (Toronto, James Lorimer Co., Toronto, 1981) p.119; and "The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market", p.456.

Map 1.2
The Ethnic Distribution of the Population of Montreal, 1871



* The scale is specific to each map

Source: Marcel Bellevance and Jean-Daniel Gronoff, "Les Structures de l'Espace Montréalaise à l'époque de la Confédération", Cahiers de Géographie du Québec, 24 (December 1980), p.367.

and apparently offering different qualities to employers. They came seeking work for wages. Those who found work and remained increased not only the city's population but that proportion of it that was dependent on wages. By 1871 working class occupations accounted for over half the job titles listed in the census for Montreal. To understand how their family economies operated is to grasp elements of the experience of the majority of the population.

In-migrants, immigrants and natural increase boosted the city's population by 280 per cent between 1851 and 1891 from 57,715 to 219,616. The most dramatic increase - 56 per cent - occurred between 1851 and 1861, when the population grew from 57,715 to 90,323. (See Table 1.2) In the latter year Montrealers were proud to report that they lived in the tenth largest city in North America.³⁵ Such rapid growth was not repeated in subsequent decades. The recession of the late 1850's put a brake on expansion. The city's population increased by 19 per cent between 1861 and 1871 and by about 30 per cent in each of the following decades.

A perennial, permanent housing crisis accompanied the population growth. Housing starts seldom kept up with population growth. Nor did the housing constructed necessarily correspond to the type most needed

³⁵ William J. Patterson, Secretary of the Board of Trade and Corn Exchange, Statistical Contributions Relating to the Trade and Navigation of the Dominion of Canada: including annual report of the trade and commerce of the City of Montreal. (Hereafter Patterson Report), 1863, p.3.

Table 1.2

a) Population Growth, 1861-1891

	1861	% increase	1871	% increase	1881	% increase	1891	% increase	% increase 1861-1891
	No.		No.		No.		No.		
Montreal City	90,323	56%	107,225	19%	140,247	31%	182,695	30%	102%
Ste. Anne Ward	16,200	N/A	18,639	15%	20,443	10%	23,003	13%	42%
St. Jacques	13,104	N/A	17,680	35%	25,398	44%	32,393	28%	147%

b) Reported Origins of the People

	Montreal			Ste. Anne			St. Jacques		
	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881
French	% 48%	53%	56%	21%	26%	28%	68%	82%	87%
	No. 43,509	56,856	78,684	3,323	4,944	5,849	8,914	-	22,365
Irish*	% 16%	24%	21%	30%	50%	48%	10%	8%	6%
	No. 14,179	25,376	28,995	4,891	9,283	9,753	1,323	-	1,403
English*/ Scottish*	% 8%	21%	21%	11%	22%	22%	5%	8%	5%
	No. 7,489	22,780	28,938	1,762	4,169	4,486	661	-	1,257
Other- Canadian born*	% 25%	-	-	35%	-	-	15%	-	-
	No. 22,226	-	-	5,733	-	-	1,957	-	-
Other	% 3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	-	2%	-	-

* In 1861 these figures refer to birthplace. After 1871 they refer to people's reported origins.

c) Reported Birthplaces

	Montreal			Ste. Anne			St. Jacques		
	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881
Quebec	% 73%	77%	80%	56%	65%	69%	83%	92%	98%
Ontario	-	2%	3%	-	2%	2%	-	1%	1%
	No. 65,735	82,772	116,617	9,056	12,528	14,711	10,871	16,266	23,928
Ireland	% 16%	10%	7%	30%	20%	16%	10%	4%	2%
	No. 14,179	10,590	9,789	4,891	3,791	3,300	1,323	645	450
England/ Scotland/ Wales	% 8%	8%	6%	11%	10%	8%	5%	3%	1%
	No. 7,489	8,133	8,695	1,762	1,786	1,714	661	445	331
Other	% 3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	-	3%

Source: Canada, Census of 1861; Census of 1871; Census of 1881. My calculations.

by the people.³⁶ Speculators built dwellings, hoping for high rentals. The pressure on the lowest rental housing increased, forcing people to share homes, huddle together or rent space subdivided by opportunist landlords.³⁷ Patterns of housing construction and property development thus combined with population growth to determine the material surroundings of family life. For some families the shortage of suitable housing at affordable prices offered a chance to sublet space or rent rooms - a strategy that could increase their meager incomes. This pressure on housing was relieved somewhat as population increase slowed down within the city. Villages that had once been at the perimeter of the town, were transformed into new working class suburbs.³⁸ The beginnings of this expansion were evident in 1869 when, according to local chronicler Alfred Sandham, it was already "difficult to mark the distinction between the city and the villages of the outlying municipalities". The opening of a street railway in 1861 linked these villages to the city leading to the "expansion of the population

³⁶ David Hanna and Sherry Olson, "Métier, Loyer et bouts de rue: L'Armature de la société Montréalaise, 1881-1901", Cahiers de Géographie du Québec, 27 (September 1983).

³⁷ Gordon Darroch and Michael Ornstein attack this interpretation in their article on "Family Co-residence in Canada in 1871: Family life Cycles, Occupations and Networks of Mutual Aid", Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers, 1983, p.37. (Hereafter, "Family Co-residence"). Until the nature layout and size of houses apparently being shared has been studied in more detail the issue remains open. My evidence suggests, however, that in these wards co-residence was highest among those families most likely to be poor.

³⁸ For the most detailed research on such an area see Paul-Andre Linteau, Maisonneuve; Jean-Louis Lalonde, "Structure professionnelle à Saint-Jean-Baptiste", Unpublished paper, UQAM, 1982.

towards and even beyond the city limits".³⁹

This growth and the reshuffling of the city's people, its class and ethnic structure and geography is reflected in the different population characteristics of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards. Population changes in St. Jacques mirrored those of the eastern city. Between 1861 and 1871 its population increased at nearly double the rate of the city as a whole. In the next decade it grew by 44 per cent compared to 31 per cent for the whole city. Only in the 1880's did its growth rate slow down temporarily. (See Table 1.2) Between 1861 and 1871 the population of St. Jacques grew from 13,104 to 32,393. Its population density became the highest in the city - rising from 150 people per acre in 1877 to 168 in 1884. Houses were crammed as close together as possible. Buildings were rapidly and carelessly constructed. The reports of the city's building inspector show that regulations aimed at preventing fire hazards were avoided more frequently in St. Jacques than in any other ward. People crowded together stretching housing and inadequate sanitary systems beyond what they could bear. Crowding and death went hand in hand. Throughout this period St. Jacques and Ste. Marie consistently had the highest death rates in the city. Municipal records placed St. Jacques' rate at between 35 and 39 per 1,000 in the 1870's and around 30 in the 1880's. "In certain unhealthy and overcrowded courts mortality rose to 40, 50, 60 and 70 per 1,000". In a swampy area in the south eastern corner of St. Jacques which stretched east into

³⁹ Alfred Sandham, Ville Marie, or, Sketches of Montreal Past and Present. (Montreal, George Bishop Co., 1870), p.190.

Ste. Marie were the largest proportions of deaths in the city.⁴⁰ St. Jacques' population like that of eastern Montreal grew largely as a result of the influx of migrants from elsewhere in Quebec. As it became more French, the Irish, English and Scots who in 1861 had composed 30 per cent of its residents left or died and were not replaced. By 1881 fully 87 per cent of the people were of French origin, only 6 per cent were of Irish origin and 5 per cent English or Scottish. (See Table 1.2) This small minority group was concentrated in business and the professions (Table 1.1).

In Ste. Anne, in contrast, the residential population grew slowly from 16,200 people in 1861 to 23,003 in 1891, always increasing at a rate well below that of the city as a whole. There the empty spaces were filled not by houses, but by large industrial establishments, some filling up whole city blocks. (See Photo 1.1) Its population was the most mixed of any city ward in this period. The numbers of Irish origin nearly doubled between 1861 and 1871, but hardly increased after that. The pattern amongst the English and the Scots was similar. Amongst the non-French Canadian groups the majority were, by 1871, of at least the second generation. In 1881 only sixteen per cent were Irish born, compared to 48 per cent of Irish origin. Similarly eight per cent of the population were born in England or Scotland, while 22 per cent were

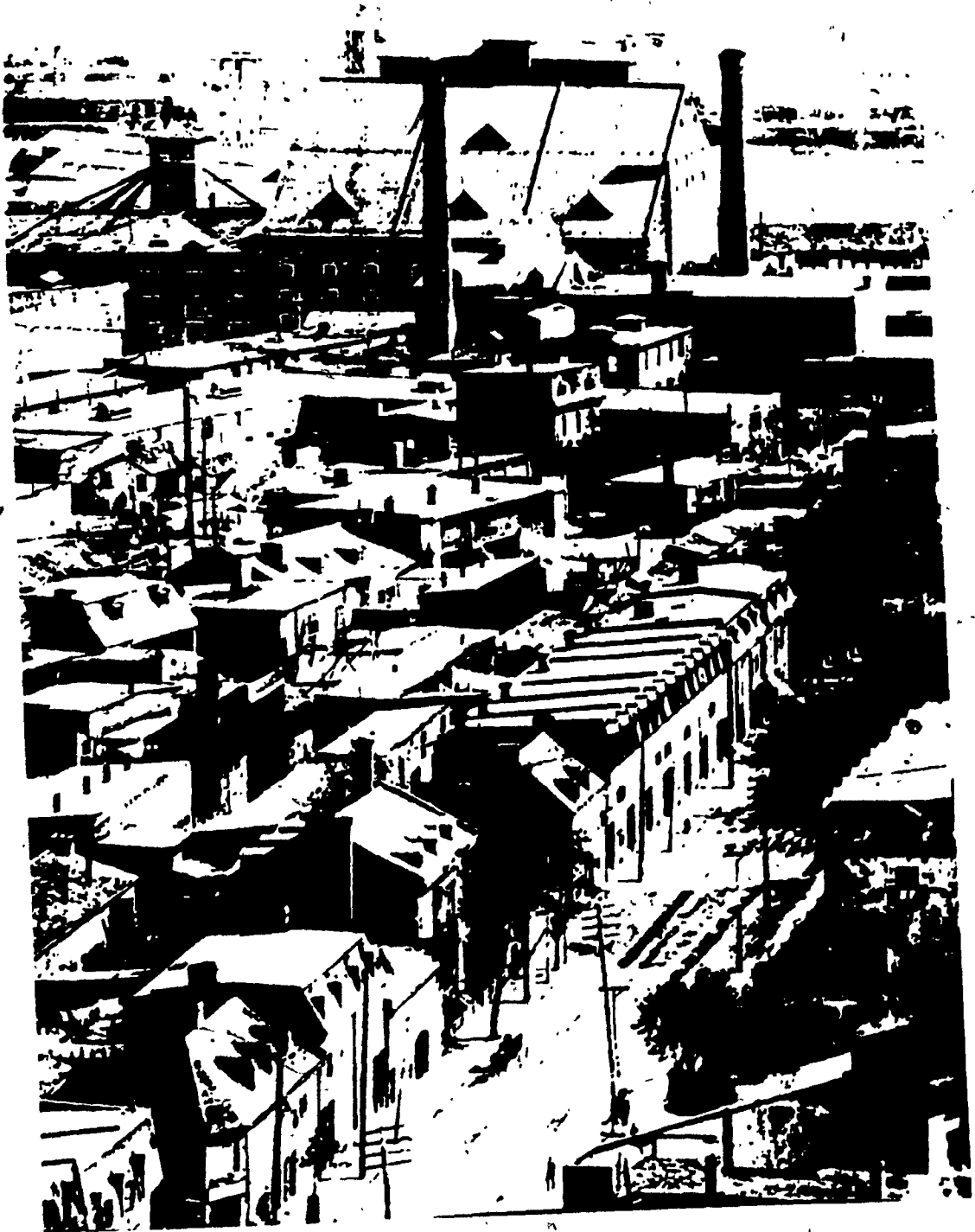
⁴⁰ "Annual Report of the Building Inspector", Report on the Accounts of the Corporation of the City of Montreal, 1866-1882 (Hereafter MAR); "Report of the Medical Health Officer", MAR, 1876; Jacques Bernier, "La Condition des Travailleurs, 1851-1896", in Noel Bélanger et al., Les Travailleurs Québécois, 1851-1896, (Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1975), p.47 (Hereafter, "La Condition des Travailleurs").

Photo 1.1

Factories and Housing, Ste. Anne ward, 1896

Note the proximity of housing and industry in this photograph of South Eastern Ste. Anne ward taken in 1896. It shows part of Griffintown the traditionally Irish section of Ste. Anne. The large building on the Canal housed the Montreal Warehousing Company and was built at mid-century. The electric power poles would not have been installed in the period covered in this thesis.

Source: Notman Photographic Archives, Mc Cord Museum, Montreal.



of English or Scottish origin. French Canadians in the ward increased from 3,323 in 1861 to 5,849 in 1881 when they comprised 28 per cent of the population.

The contrasting ethnic backgrounds of the people of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques and the significant differences in the jobs held by each group hide similarities in their class structures. Both were largely working class wards. The vast majority of families needed wages to survive. At least one family member had to find work. The work they could find was conditioned by the particular opportunities of the areas in which they lived, the distance they could afford to travel, their own skills and the general economic conjuncture. Contrasts between the industries of the wards did not derive from their Anglo-Irish or French Canadian populations. They did reflect the spatial unevenness of development and the different positions that French Canadians and Irish filled in the social division of labour. Examination of the nature of industrial development in the two wards serves to highlight the major aspects of Montreal's industrialization over those years and to introduce the elements of transition that would effect the city's working class families.

Between 1861 and 1881 three sectors consistently employed the majority of Montreal workers. In 1861 about 1,600 people, or 27 per cent of all industrial workers were involved in some form of metalworking or transportation related production. Leather work and boot and shoemaking employed at least 1,500 people, around 24 per cent of workers in production, while the clothing trades involved

approximately 9 per cent. Over the next two decades Montreal's importance as a centre of metal processing and heavy manufacture decreased proportionately. The labour intensive shoemaking and clothing trades became dominant. By 1881, metal work and transport related production involved only 15 per cent of workers, while leather, boots and shoes involved at least 6,000 workers and the clothing trades over 7,000. In 1881, these two sectors alone employed nearly 43 per cent of all reported industrial workers.⁴¹

Foundries, engine and machine works and steamship and railway related manufacture were concentrated in Ste. Anne ward. "Modern industry in Canada was born on the banks of the Lachine Canal".⁴² Its water power had been utilized by local boat builder Augustin Cantin, axe and toolmaker Mr. R. Scott, nailmaker Mr. T. D. Bigelow and various foundries and engine works soon after the canal was opened to industry in 1846.⁴³ By 1861 nail manufacturers Thomas Bigelow, Thomas Peck and Company and Hersey and Holland each employed 40 to 65 men. Bartley and

⁴¹ The figures and percentages used here are my calculations based on the numbers of employees reported in the published censuses of 1861, 1871 and 1881. In 1861 many owners neglected to return details on the number of their workers. Nor did the people responsible for counting returns present all the information available on the manuscript returns in the published tables. 1861 figures are therefore unreliable and certainly an underestimate. I have added some of the employees found in the manuscript census of 1861 that were clearly not included in the published totals.

⁴² William Kilbourn, The Elements Combined. A History of the Steel Company of Canada (Toronto, Clark, Irwin and Co., 1960), p.9.

⁴³ Montreal General Railroad Celebration Committee, Montreal in 1856 (Montreal, John Lovell, 1856) pp.39-44.

Gilbert's St. Lawrence Engine works on the south side of the Canal had 190 men building and repairing steam engines for ships and making machinery for diverse mills as well as doing sundry casting work. Augustin Cantin's marine works had spread over several acres and employed 62 men on an average day. He used waterpower from the Lachine Canal in his sawmill and engineering shop. In his other workshops steam power was the motorforce.⁴⁴ A visitor to Montreal in the mid 1860's, S. P. Day expressed surprise at the variety of the city's manufacturing resources:

"For miles along the banks of the Lachine Canal could be observed factories clustered together from which the hum of industry constantly went forth, passing over altogether the busy marts and temples of commerce within the city itself...Within the past five or six years, or ever a briefer period, a variety of manufacturing resource have been developed.⁴⁵

Factories using steam power did not need to locate beside the Canal. From the 1860's on, foundries and workshops spread out into the residential parts of Ste. Anne and onto the streets leading to the Canal and the Port. In the 1860's William Rodden's foundry on William Street covered about an acre of land. It produced a diverse array of miscellaneous machines, stoves and iron furniture and was described as the city's largest and most complete foundry. The premises were divided

⁴⁴ Manuscript Census, Ste. Anne 1861, folio number 3196; fo.2288; fo.3198; fo.3201; fo.4158. (Hereafter, Mss. Census).

⁴⁵ S. P. Day, English America or Pictures of Canadian Places and People (London, T.Cantley Newby, 1864), p.179.

into numerous separate departments, one for moulding and casting, another for producing stoves, yet another for painting, bronzing and varnishing and others for finishing and displaying goods.⁴⁶ It was these foundries and the other establishments using extensive machinery and steam or waterpower that captured the imagination of visitor and residents alike. In 1864, a reporter for the Montreal Gazette described with some awe the appearance and organization of many of the city's early foundries. The Canada Eagle works, on St. Joseph St., in Ste. Anne ward, for instance, were described as:

"substantial brick structures, two hundred and fifty feet in length by about sixty in width, and...divided into a number of shops, each... devoted to a particular branch of business. Adjoining the office, in which several skilled draftsmen are constantly engaged in preparing plans for work to be executed is the machine shop, filled with lathes, drilling machines, planes, etc. One of these lathes is some thirty feet long, and its weight enormous. There are several smaller lathes used for "finishing", and six planing machines. All the machines are driven by steam power, and it is exceedingly interesting to witness their operation...Leaving the machine shop the visitor enters a large room in which half a dozen fires are constantly in full blast. This is the forge. In this department are several objects of interest including the well known Coudie steam hammer...This machine combines in itself a hammer and a steam engine, and its force can be increased or diminished to any degree required. The boiler shop is fitted with every description of machinery necessary...including a punch of six tons weight, and an enormous pair of shears weighing some five tons...

Here are captured the workprocesses of an early factory. There was no

⁴⁶ Mss. Census, 1861, Ste. Anne; Montreal Gazette, 19 July 1864, p.4.

⁴⁷ The Montreal Gazette, 15 July 1864, p.4.

Photo 1:2

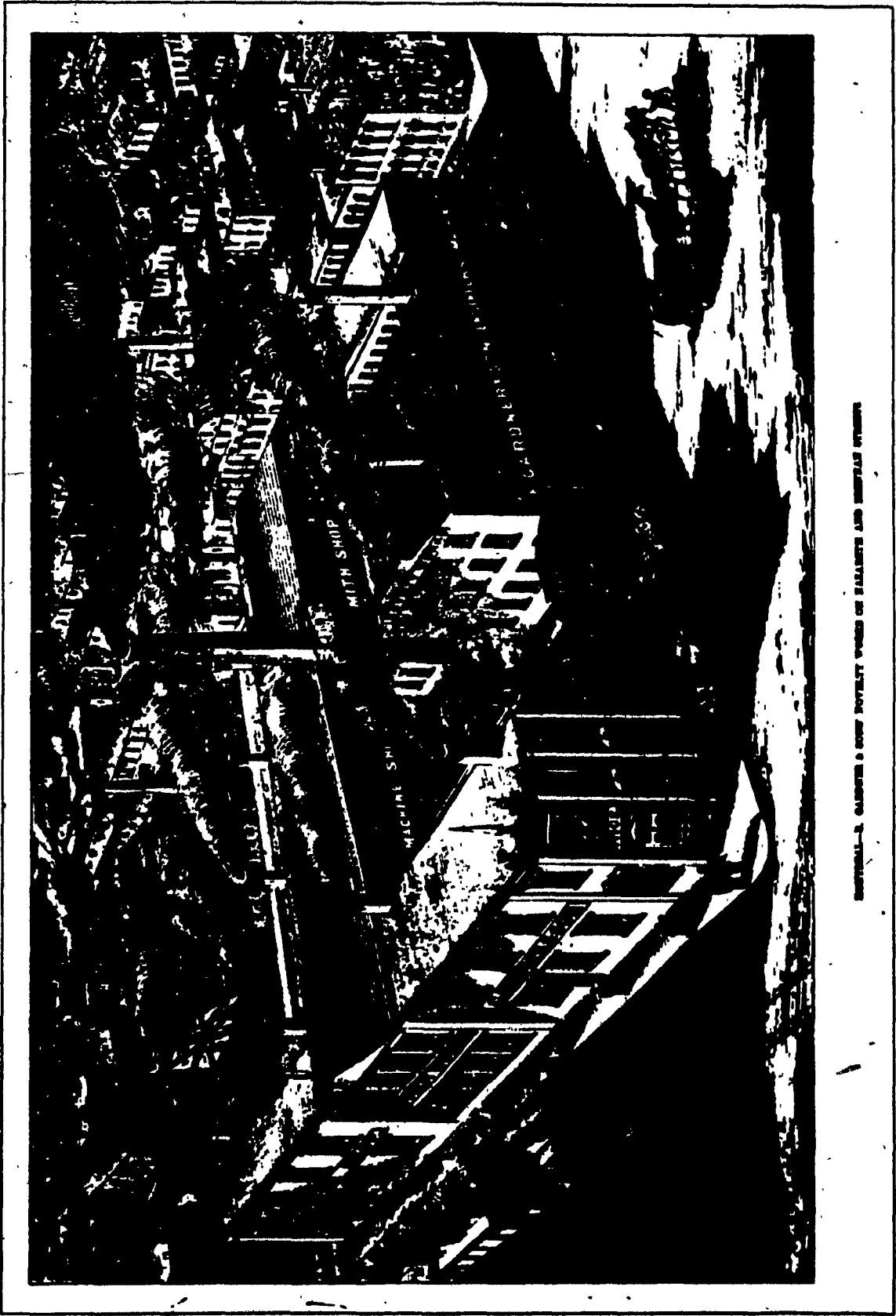
A Ste. Anne Factory,
1874

Robert Gardner and Sons' Foundry was typical of the large metal working establishments of Ste. Anne ward. In 1871 Robert Gardiner reported to the census enumerators that he employed 30 men and two boys under the age of sixteen. He had \$36,000 worth of fixed capital and \$12,000 floating capital. He paid out \$12,000 annually in wages and kept the factory open throughout the year producing "General Machinery".¹ Advertisements of the period suggest that lathes, shafting, fine tools, hangers and pulleys, engines and boilers were among the commodities manufactured.² Note the housing around the factory. It appears stylized in this 1874 engraving, unlike the rather less elegant working class housing that housed Ste. Anne's families.

1 Mss. Census, Ste. Anne, 1871, a3, p.6, Industrial Schedule.

2 F.W. Arril, A Chronology of Montreal and of Canada from AD 1752 to 1893,

Source: Canadian Illustrated News, 5 December 1874, engraved by E. Harberer, reproduced in Charles P. de Volpi and P.S. Winkworth, Montréal. Recueil Iconographique (Montreal, Dev-Sco Publications, 1963), p.230.



GENERAL S. GARDNER'S NEW NOVELTY WORKS OF BALLASTS AND MESSAGE SYSTEMS

continuous production line; that was a feature of a later period. Rather production was divided up into different departments, each performing a specific function. Some workers tended the new machinery that so impressed the observer. Other skilled workers would have plied their crafts much as they had always done.

By 1871 six Ste. Anne establishments employed more than one hundred workers, eleven employed more than fifty. The majority of these large workplaces continued to be in the metalworking and transportation related sector. The dominance of heavy industry meant that relatively few jobs for women and children were available within the Ste. Anne ward. Whereas females constituted 34 per cent of Montreal's "industrial" workforce in 1871, in Ste. Anne they comprised only 20 per cent in 1861 and a meagre 13 per cent a decade later. In St. Jacques, in contrast, women and children made up 33 per cent of the workers in the establishments located within the ward. (See Table 1.3) There, smaller workplaces, the importance of homework, and in 1871 the presence of a large tobacco factory, meant that more jobs were available for women and children than in Ste. Anne. This basic difference in employment opportunities would influence the nature and extent of wage work undertaken by married women and daughters in both wards, as we shall see in chapters three and four.

In St. Jacques no workplace reported over fifty workers in 1861, only three did so in 1871. (See Table 1.4) None of these were in metalworking or transport related production in 1871. William MacDonald's tobacco factory dominated local employment opportunities

with 550 workers, the majority of them women and girls. By 1888 the factory had moved to Hochelaga. MacDonald then employed between ten and eleven hundred workers.⁴⁸ The only other major employers located within the ward in 1871 were the tanneries of Camirant and Blondin and Donovan and Moran with 83 and 53 men, women and children respectively.⁴⁹ Metal working in St. Jacques took place only in numerous small blacksmiths shops employing one to five people, or in a few tinmiths workshops where tin boxes and roofing were made.

The water power of the Lachine Canal and proximity to the port and railroad had made Ste. Anne the centre of heavy manufacturing and the location of the majority of the city's large factories. Yet even there, the new factories co-existed with small artisanal workshops. Some coopers and blacksmiths continued to run their own small workshops despite the fact that most large foundries and factories had coopering and blacksmithing departments. Indeed, the presence of a few, large, heavily capitalized and mechanized flour and sugar processing plants seems to have spurred the opening of small baking and confectionery establishments in the neighbourhood.

In St. Jacques, most production within the ward's boundaries remained artisanal until 1871, the last date it can be determined from the manuscript censuses. In 1871 fully two thirds of its productive

⁴⁸ Mss. Census, Industrial Schedule, 1871, St. Jacques subdistrict b-1; RCRLC., Evidence of William McDonald, pp.529-33; La Presse, 18 June 1984, "100 ans de vie Montréalaise", p.9 reported that William MacDonald moved the factory eastwards in 1875.

⁴⁹ Mss. Census, Industrial Schedule, 1871, Subdistricts b-6 and b-10.

Table 1.3

Age, and Gender in the Workforce
Reported by Montreal Manufacturers
1871-1891

a) <u>Montreal</u>	1871		1881		1891	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Men	12,393	58%	18,127	57%	23,942	67%
Boys under 16	1,601	8%	1,926	6%	1,469	4%
Women	6,047	28%	10,660	34%	9,551	27%
Girls under 16	1,262	6%	1,021	3%	784	2%
Males all ages		66%		63%		71%
Females all ages		34%		37%		29%
Total Reported Workforce	21,303		32,132		35,746	

Source: 1871 Census of Canada, 111, Tables XXVIII-LIV, my calculations and totals of published figures; 1881 Census of Canada, 111, Tables XXIX-LIV, my calculations and totals of published figures; 1891 Census of Canada, 111, Table 11. The overall totals for all years are the published figures. I recounted the numbers of workers of each sex and age.

b) Ste. Anne and St. Jacques Wards, 1861-1871

	Ste. Anne				St. Jacques			
	1861		1871		1861		1871	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Men	2,406	81%	4,060	77%	162	71%	753	55%
Boys under 16			528	10%			169	12%
Women	571	19%	606	12%	67	29%	278	20%
Girls under 16			48	1%			177	13%
Males all Ages		81%		87%		71%		67%
Females all Ages		19%		13%		29%		33%

Source: Manuscript Census Returns, Industrial Schedules, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques Wards, 1861, 1871

establishments employed under five workers. (See Table 1.4). Only the largest workplaces used steam power. A small workshop, with between one and four employees - often the craftsman, an apprentice and members of the family remained the most common enterprise. The crafts that predominated were woodworking ones - especially carpentry and joiners' shops, food processing, including bakers and butchers with small stalls at the local markets, and shoemaking and dressmaking.

While in terms of the structure of local industry St. Jacques existed as an almost pre-industrial enclave, the majority of its workers

Table 1.4

Workshops and FactoriesThe Number of Workers and Sources of Power in theWorkplaces of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques1861-1871

No. of Workers	<u>Ste. Anne</u>					<u>1861</u>		<u>St. Jacques</u>				
	No. of Est.	% of Est.	No. of Workers	% of Workers		Both Water	Steam	No. of Est.	% of Est.	No. of Workers	% of Workers	Power Steam
1-4	28	27	75	3		5	1	20	57	49	21	1
5-9	25	24	161	6		3	4	7	20	38	17	
		15	210	7		3	5	7	20	112	49	
21-49	17	17	487	16		3	1 7	1	3	30	13	
50-99	11	11	692	23		3	2 6					
100	6	6	1352	45		2	1 1					
Unknown (2)												
Total	102	100	2977	100%		19	4 24	35	100%	229	100%	1
Percentage Reporting Steam or Water Power							46					37
Average Size:			29 workers							7 workers		

1871

No. of Workers	<u>Ste. Anne</u>					<u>Both</u>		<u>St. Jacques</u>				
	No. of Est.	% of Est.	No. of Workers	% of Workers		Water	Steam	No. of Est.	% of Est.	No. of Workers	% of Workers	Power Steam
1-4	66	35	143	3		11	11	87	65	200	15	11
5-9	37	20	240	5		2	4	23	17	173	13	1
10-20	34	18	273	9		5	11	14	11	160	12	1
21-49	25	13	787	15		9	13	5	4	139	10	2
50-99	12	6	765	15		3	5	2	2	137	10	2
100	13	7	2778	53		5	6	1	1	550	41	1
Total	187	99	5186	100%		24	39	132	100%	1359	100%	6
Percentage Reporting Steam or Water Power.							34%					4.5%
Average Size:			28 workers							10 workers		

* Note: The 1861 Census is of dubious quality, the number of establishments and workers is probably underestimated.

Source: Manuscript Census Returns, Industrial Schedules, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards, 1861, 1871.

were solidly entrenched as part of the city's growing proletariat. They were concentrated not in the general labouring and metalworking or transportation related production that together involved over 40 per cent of all Ste. Anne workers, but in the construction trades and in clothing and shoemaking. (See Table 1.5). The waterpower of the Lachine Canal had been crucial in determining the industrial structure of Ste. Anne. In St. Jacques it was the people migrating in from the country side who constituted the major attraction to manufacturers.

Shoemaking and clothing - by 1881 Montreal's two leading sectors - employed over 20 per cent of the St. Jacques individuals reporting an occupation between 1861 and 1881. The construction trades which were subject to both seasonal and cyclical fluctuations employed between 13 and 16 per cent of St. Jacques workers - more than did general labouring in all years until 1881. The concentration of St. Jacques workers in these labour intensive sectors that were undergoing rapid re-organization and in the trades most sensitive to economic and seasonal unemployment would shape their family economies - demanding strategies that at times differed from those of the labourers concentrated in Ste. Anne. The extent to which family economies varied between the two wards would reflect their concentration in different sectors of the economy more than their contrasting ethnic backgrounds.

Shoemaking and the clothing trades shared more than their position as the leading sectors of employment in 1861 and 1881. In both, the use of sewing machines and other technology had revolutionized parts of the production process, while hand labour remained crucial in other parts.

Table 1.5

Leading Sectors of Employment Reported by
Individuals in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques, 1861 - 1881

<u>St. Jacques, 1861</u>		<u>St. Jacques, 1871</u>		<u>St. Jacques, 1881</u>	
Sector	Percentage	Sector	Percentage	Sector	Percentage
Construction	14%	Construction	16%	Clothing	16%
Clothing	13	Clothing	15	Gen. Labour	13
Gen. Labour	11	Shoemaking	12	Clerical	12
Domestic Service	8	Gen. Labour	12	Construction	11
Shoemaking	7	Commerce-clerical	10	Shoemaking	8
% in Those Sectors	53%		65%		60%
Total Reporting Jobs in Identifiable Sectors	388		579		915
 <u>Ste. Anne, 1861</u>		 <u>Ste. Anne, 1871</u>		 <u>Ste. Anne, 1881</u>	
Sector	Percentage	Sector	Percentage	Sector	Percentage
Gen. Labour	24%	Gen. Labour	23%	Gen. Labour	26%
Metal and Products	12	Metal and Products	12	Metal and Products	14
Construction	10	Construction	9	Transportation	12
Transportation	8	Clothing	8	Clerical	9
Clothing	8	Transportation	8	Clothing	7
% in Those Sectors	62%		60%		68%
Total Reporting Jobs in Identifiable Sectors	516		645		680

Source: Manuscript Census Returns, 1861-1881, Random samples. All individuals reporting an occupation.

In both trades, men, women and children working at home constituted an important but unknown proportion of the workforce. "Putting out", "sweating" or "homework" saved on overhead rental or property costs, on machinery and above all on labour costs. It appears to have become more rather than less important from the 1860's on. In 1864 the sewing of the sole to the shoe - "bottoming" - occurred outside at least three of Montreal's shoe manufactories and employed some 750 people - between double and three times the number of inside workers.⁵⁰ Despite the introduction of a sole-sewing machine in the mid 1860's, homework continued. In 1888 "lots of men and women" were reported to "repair to the factories, with a small van, and take a load of boots and shoes, all cut," home to finish in "private houses" in rooms where eight, ten or more hands might work.⁵¹ Home-work was not only hand work. Women brought sewing machines and bottonhole machines using them at home to do sewing. The name "shoemaker" in this period could denote a spectrum of occupations. Within St. Jacques ward in 1871 the census returns indicate that there were at least fourteen shoemakers' workshops. The majority of these involved single artisans working alone or with one or two assistants making all kinds of shoes and usually doing repairs. Here were skilled craftsmen working pretty much as they had always done. The largest shoe manufactory in St. Jacques had only 48 workers. Another with 11 workers in the shop reported giving "work to be done

⁵⁰ Joanne Burgess, "L'Industrie de la Chaussure", p.205. Burgess suggests that the introduction of a sole-sewing machine in the mid 1860's would end homework. Evidence in 1888 suggests it did not.

⁵¹ RCRLC., Evidence of a leather cutter, pp.242-3.

outside the establishment".⁵² Altogether establishments in the ward reported a total of only 110 workers, whereas between 600 and 700 residents were shoemakers.⁵³ The majority of the ward's shoemakers must have worked either at home or in factories elsewhere in Montreal. By the 1880's, some such factories were employing over three hundred hands inside, perhaps more outside.⁵⁴ Over this period inside and outside work increased as the process of making shoes was further divided up and successive tasks mechanized. In 1888, shoemaker Oliver Benoit confirmed that "in the factories very few boot and shoemen...can make a boot or shoes", adding "they are so few, indeed, that they can hardly be found at present".

As a general rule, all the men working in factories, especially the large factories, are able to do only one kind of work, as to set a heel, or sew a sole, or set the uppers, because to-day perfected machinery has replaced handwork.⁵⁵

The result for shoemakers was a lowering of wages over the period and "considerable feeling of depression" as their skills were rendered obsolete.⁵⁶ The effects would be felt not just by the shoemakers

⁵² Mss. Census, 1871, "Industrial Schedules, St. Jacques, J. L. Pelletier subdistrict 1b; Leon Julien, subdistrict 1b.

⁵³ 66 people in the 1881 10 per cent sample were shoemakers

⁵⁴ RCRLC., Evidence of Z. Lapierie, M. C. Mullarkey and James McCready, boot and shoe manufacturers, pp.437-9; 445-7; 491-3.

⁵⁵ IBID, p.364.

⁵⁶ IBID, Evidence of Elie Ricard, shoemaker, p.369.

themselves, but would penetrate the family economy as we shall see in the following chapters.

In St. Jacques, as in the city as a whole, the clothing trades by 1881 were the leading sector of employment, employing 16 per cent of the ward's reported workers. "Seamstress" was one of the ward's leading occupations, ranking consistently above even general labouring throughout the period.⁵⁷ The clothing trade relied even more heavily on homework than did shoemaking. Employers claimed to know little of what went on outside their factory. "We don't know how many hands work at it," explained one Montreal clothier who had 70 to 100 people inside his factory preparing the work to go out. "We only know one woman, but we don't know how many she employs." He believed that in 1874 he probably employed a total of 700 to 1,000 people including the 100 or so "inside".⁵⁸

Mr. Muir, a Montreal clothier, explained the relationship between factory work and home-work in his industry. In 1874 his factory had:

a 15-horse-power engine running three machines having 50 needles each, and a knife which cuts cloth by steam, so that four cutters will do the work of from twelve to fifteen.

⁵⁷ Some of the workers reporting themselves as "couturieres" probably sewed for the shoemaking trade, thus inflating the numbers apparently employed in clothing at the expense of shoemaking.

⁵⁸ Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Journal, 1874, "Report of the Select Committee on the Manufacturing Interests of the Dominion", p.23. (Hereafter, Canada, Journals, 1874, "Report on the Manufacturing Interests").

In homes around Montreal and as far away as St. Jerome, St. Hyacinthe or Ste. Rose the next stage was carried out.⁶⁰ "We employ a large number of women who live in their own homes. These women sit down when their breakfast, dinner and supper is over and make a garment..."⁶¹

Sewing was women's work. Employers were able to take advantage of the large numbers of families desperately needing work for additional members. Virtually all those involved were French Canadian. "Your labour supply is chiefly French?" clothier, Mr. Muir was asked by the committee. He replied:

It is almost exclusively French.

- You have a surplus population in Montreal which enables you to get cheap labour? - Yes. In fact it makes my heart ache to have the women come crying for work.

- Then your labour is very cheap? - Yes; too cheap.

- I fancy that from the surplus in Montreal you get labour cheaper than you could in any other part of the country? - We think so; and that will explain why some state different prices for their labour. Those in Canada West, for instance, where they employ men who speak the English language. You know that Irish women for instance, if they come to this country and do not get the wages they want, will emigrate. The French women do not emigrate, and therefore we have that class of labour in the Province of Quebec.⁶²

⁵⁹ IBID, p.36.

⁶⁰ IBID, 1889, pp.8,22.

⁶¹ Canada, Journals, 1874, "Report on the Manufacturing Interests", p.36.

⁶² IBID, p.38.

Montreal's location at the centre of a vast hinterland in which years of overworking the land and of high birth rates had released a large local labour force that was not available in the towns of Upper Canada or even the eastern United States where the frontier still offered opportunities for farmers, was crucial. In 1856 The Montreal General Railroad Celebration Committee stressed just this factor, underlining the advantages "found in the density of the population of the surrounding district". Nowhere, they suggested to interested manufacturers, were people more "intelligent, docile and giving less trouble to their employers than in Lower Canada". There "the manufacturing population can be drawn from the immediate vicinity of the city...and hands can be obtained to work in the factories at more reasonable rates".⁶³

The presence of this local labour supply, apparently more willing to work for lower wages than the people of Ontario or the United States, was important in shoemaking and clothing as well as cotton processing, other textile trades, tobacco work and cigar production - all major Montreal industries. Hochelaga Cotton manufacturer, Mr. Nye, specifically stated in 1876 that one of the reasons he had helped to start a company in Canada rather than the United States was because labour was "cheaper by from 25 to 30 per cent".⁶⁴ An American

⁶³ Montreal General Railroad Celebration Committee (Montreal, 1856), p.37.

⁶⁴ Canada, Parliament House of Commons, Journals, 1876, Appendix 3, "Report of the Select Committee on the Causes of the Present Depression of the Manufacturing, Mining, Commercial, Shipping, Lumber and Fishing Interests", p.133. (Hereafter, "Report on the Causes of Depression").

manufacturer believed wages in Quebec were "nearly 60 per cent less" and stressed the advantages of having local people to draw on.⁶⁵ Shoe manufacturer Mr. Boivin confirmed that in his sector too, labour in 1876 was cheaper in Quebec than in Montreal, "and in Upper Canada it is dearer". Montreal wages, he believed, were \$1.00 a day less than in the United States.⁶⁶ A decade later shoe manufacturer, Mr. M. C. Mullarkey, when testifying to the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital, attributed the success of Quebec and Montreal shoemakers over those in other provinces to the "cheap labour" they could draw on.⁶⁷

For such industries the ready supply of workers willing to accept low wages rather than migrate was crucial to their success. Nor were they all unskilled workers new to industrial work, for a steady flow of French Canadians returned, as we have seen, to their homeland, especially in times of economic downswing. In the factories and mills of the United States they had, in the words of one employer, "learned the business, they had come back to Canada ready for work, so that you lose nothing by having to teach them".⁶⁸ The birthplace of children in families like that of butcher Napoleon Forest offer some evidence of their parents' migration history. He and his 29 year old wife spent

⁶⁵ IBID, p.135.

⁶⁶ House of Commons, Journals, 1876, "Report on the Causes of Depression", p.38.

⁶⁷ RCRLC., p.446.

⁶⁸ House of Commons, Journals, 1876, "Report on the Causes of the Present Depression", p.135.

some time in the United States. Their oldest son, seven year old Arthur had been born there. Sometime shortly after the depression hit they returned to Québec, where five year old Edward was born.⁶⁹

Cheap labour for the manufacturers meant low wages for the worker. In 1888 shoe-cutter John O'Rourke voiced a common complaint when he testified that Montreal shoe-cutters received anything from \$3.00 to \$5.00 a week less than Toronto workers and over \$1.50 a day less than their equivalents in New York.⁷⁰ The impact of the particularly low wages that accompanied most jobs in the clothing, shoemaking and tobacco working sectors in Montreal was clearly crucial. For low and irregular wages were the major challenges to family economies based on wage labour. Montreal wage rates appear to have remained below those of Toronto and the United States well into the twentieth century.⁷¹ Were people in Montreal so desperate for work that they were willing to accept a lower standard of living than elsewhere? Were large numbers of French Canadians willing to accept jobs at any pay rate in Québec rather than join friends and relatives in the foreign language and culture of the United States? Did families compensate for low wages in other ways - by producing their own food or sending additional family members out to work? Or, were, perhaps, the majority of workers in

⁶⁹ Mss. Census, St. Jacques ward, 1881, 14:154-248.

⁷⁰ House of Commons, Journals, 1876, "Report on the Causes of the Present Depression", pp.245-5.

⁷¹ Terry Copp. The Anatomy of Poverty. The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1974), pp.140-3. (Hereafter, The Anatomy of Poverty).

these sectors not family heads, but secondary workers - sons and daughters supplementing a father's wage? The growing importance of children as a component of the workforce suggests one important reason why employers could continue to pay such low wages in some sectors. Answers to these questions must be sought within the family economy of the working class. For only when families rather than individuals are made the unit of analysis can the link between the wider economy and family survival strategies, between production and reproduction, and work and home be grasped. It is to the literature relating to the family economy and its functioning that the final section of this introduction now turns.

Historiography and Theory.

Within this changing city what adjustments and reactions could be expected in the families of the working class? How can a historian begin to uncover and explain them? What historiography or methodologies might help approach such a topic? The central concern was to analyze how working class families survived and to discern changes in the strategies utilized, in this period of transition. Analysis of the family and of the economy, of families and work, of production and reproduction had to be brought together. The family had to be the focus, rather than individuals, but within the family, differences of gender and age had to be examined.

The concept of the family economy incorporates analysis of people's work, and their patterns of consumption and reproduction within the family. Unlike the rather abstract patterns of household and family structure or of demographic changes outlined by some family historians, focus on the family economy leads one to the heart of the daily toil and struggle for survival of people in the past. The studies of early investigators of the family economy provide valuable sources. Those of recent historians offer useful models. Study of the family economy began with examination of the incomes, work patterns and living standards of specific, individual families. The approach was pioneered by Frederick Le Play, the conservative French sociologist, and reformer, who studied the budgets of hundreds of families in France and elsewhere between the mid- and late nineteenth century. Investigations of how families lived, worked and ate continued in England in the work of such social scientists and reformers as Henry Mayhew, Charles Booth and B. Seebham Rowntree.⁷² Subsequently, the tradition of estimating and analyzing the food requirements of the poor was picked up by the State as attempts were made to define poverty and determine just what was required to adequately sustain a workingman and his family.⁷³ Such studies have

⁷² Frédéric Le Play, Les Ouvriers Européens. Etude sur les Travaux, la Vie Domestique et la Condition Morale des Populations Ouvrières de l'Europe (Paris, Imprimerie Imperiale, 1885); Charles Booth, Life and Labour of the People of London; Henry Mayhew, London Labour; B. Seebham Rowntree, Poverty.

⁷³ See especially Carrol Wright's investigations in Massachusetts beginning with the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labour, Sixth Annual Report, Public Document No.31 (Boston, 1875); In Canada see the budgets reviewed in Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty, pp.31-34, Appendix A.

provided contemporary British and American historians with invaluable data on costs of living, working class budgets and conditions of life.

In Canada the only nineteenth century studies in this tradition are Gaudrée-Boileau's examination of one family in rural St. Irénée parish, Lower Canada in 1861 and Herbert Ames's study of part of Ste. Anne ward in 1897.⁷⁴ Ames's investigation provides a useful indication at the aggregate level of the number of workers in urban families, the size and rental of their houses, their wages and the sanitary conditions in the decade following those studied in this thesis.⁷⁵ His aggregation of all data, however, limits the usefulness of the work even for comparative purposes. Gaudree-Boileau's rural study, in combination with later work by Léon Gerin, Horace Miner, Everett Hughes, Philippe Garigue and more recently Gérard Bouchard and Normand Séguin provide sufficient evidence of diversity between rural families to caution against any simplistic assumptions about the "traditional" French Canadian family.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Charles-Henri Philippe Gaudrée-Boileau, "Paysan de Saint Irénée de Charlevoix en 1861 et 1862", in Pierre Savard ed., Paysans et Ouvriers d'autrefois, (Québec, Presse de l'Université Laval, 1968); Herbert Brown Ames, The City Below the Hill, (Montreal, 1897) (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1972).

⁷⁵ Herbert Brown Ames, The City Below the Hill.

⁷⁶ Charles-Henri Philippe Gaudrée-Boileau, "Paysan de Saint Irénée de Charlevoix en 1861 et 1862", in Pierre Savard ed., Paysans et Ouvriers d'autrefois, (Québec 1968); Herbert Brown Ames, The City Below the Hill, (Montreal, 1897) (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1972). Léon Gerin, Le Type Economique et Sociale des Canadiens. Milieux Agricoles de traditions française, (Montreal, Fides, 1938); Horace Miner, St. Denis - A French Canadian Parish (Chicago, Phoenix, 1939); Everett Hughes, French Canada in Transition (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1943, 1964); Philippe Garigue, La Vie Familiale des Canadiens Française precedee d'une critique de La Vie Familiale des Canadiens Française (Montreal, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1970); Gérard

The study of the family economy by academic historians began in 1921 with Frances Collier's examination of the family economy of the working classes in the cotton industry of early industrial capitalism in England.⁷⁷ It then lay in abeyance until the late 1960's when historians began to turn to the computer to analyze patterns discernable in the manuscript censuses. In different ways and with diverse theoretical approaches both Michael Anderson and John Foster were able to use the manuscript censuses to analyze aspects of the family economy, of how English families lived, worked and struggled to survive in the past.⁷⁸ At the same time, women's historians became impatient with the type of family history that focussed simply on structure ignoring women's place, and critical of analyses of illegitimacy, that seemed to ignore continuities within the family economy.⁷⁹ Olwen Hufton's study of the

Bouchard, "Family Structures and Geographic Mobility at Laterrière, 1851-1935", Journal of Family History, 2 (Winter 1977) (Hereafter, "Family Structures and Geographic Mobility"); Gerard Bouchard and Patrick Brard, "Le Programme de reconstitution automatique des familles saguenayennes: Données de base et résultats provisoires", Histoire Sociale/Social History, XII (May 1979); Normand Séguin, La Conquête du sol au XIX^e siècle, (Québec, Boréal Express, 1977). See also the debates in Marcel Rioux and Yves Martin eds., French Canadian Society, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1964).

⁷⁷ Frances Collier, The Family Economy of the Working Classes in the Cotton Industry, 1784-1833 (Manchester, Chetham Society, 1921), (Manchester University Press, 1964).

⁷⁸ Michael Anderson, Family Structure; John O. Foster, Class Struggle.

⁷⁹ Rayna Rapp, Ellen Ross and Renate Bridenthal, "Examining Family History" Feminist Studies, 5 (March 1979). See especially Louise Tilly, Joan W. Scott and Miriam Cohen, "Women's Work and European Fertility Patterns", Journal of Social History, 6 (Winter 1976) which attacks the work of Edward Shorter, especially "Illegitimacy, Sexual Revolution and Social Change in Modern Europe", Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 2 (Autumn 1971).

family economy in eighteenth century France and Joan Scott and Louise Tilly's examination of women's work and the family in France and England demonstrated that women's work roles and patterns of reproduction are best understood within the framework of the family economy.⁸⁰

In their Women, Work and Family, Joan Scott and Louise Tilly offer a "conceptualization and methodology" that is "applicable to the history of women... in other countries". They caution, however, that "the level and character of industrial development determine the demand for women as workers, as reproducers, as child rearers".⁸¹ They have posited the existence of three major forms of family economy over time. In the first, the family economy of the pre-industrial era, all members worked at productive tasks on farms or in workshops. Women combined productive and domestic labour, although tasks were differentiated by sex. The spread of wage labour led to the emergence of the "family wage economy". As home and work became separate, married women found it more difficult to balance productive and unproductive tasks - their wage labour was episodic and irregular as a result. The third structure - the "family consumer economy" emerged later when male wages increased and fertility dropped. Women's main role became that of consumer, and subsequently of additional wage-earner.⁸² This typology is useful in indicating broad

⁸⁰ Olwen Hufton, "Women and the Family Economy in Eighteenth Century France", French Historical Studies, 9 (Spring, 1975); Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, "Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth Century Europe", in Charles E. Rosenberg, ed., The Family in History, (Pennsylvania, University Press, 1975).

⁸¹ Louise A. Tilly, Women, Work and Family, p.2.

⁸² IBID, pp.227-229.

trends within the family economy. It should not be viewed as an evolutionary model. Clearly, as Scott and Tilly admit, the particular mode of production in any specific area made a dramatic difference to the actual composition of any of these family economies.

The people of the Montreal wards of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques were predominantly members of urban family economies based on wages - the "family wage economy" of Scott and Tilly. It is their dependence on wages that distinguishes the families of this thesis from most of the rural Canadian ones studied by David Gagan, Gérard Bouchard, Chad Gaffield and Joy Parr.⁸³ Clearly some rural families were entirely dependent on wages, and others could not survive without some wage labour. Generally, however, the logic of the family economy was different for farm families and the urban working class. The people of Hamilton, Canada West, studied by Michael Katz were largely dependent on wage labour. This was not a factor that Katz pursued initially in his analysis of either individual experience or inequality. In none of his early measures of class and inequality was the division between wage earners and the owners of capital crucial. And, while his various scales, of wealth and occupation enabled him to dramatically portray the fixed structures of inequality in Hamilton between 1851 and 1861, they

⁸³ David Gagan, Hopeful Travellets; Gérard Bouchard, "Family Structures and Geographic Mobility"; Chad Gaffield, "Canadian Families in Cultural Context: Hypotheses from the mid Nineteenth Century, C.H.A., Historical Papers, 1979; Joy Parr, Labouring Children - British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924 (Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 1980) (Hereafter, Labouring Children).

were not so useful in determining the contours of the family economy. As a result individuals and groups, but not the family remained the focus of his first book.⁸⁴ In his most recent work he and his colleagues have acknowledged the importance of wages by arguing, rather simplistically that "two great classes based on capital and labour" existed and "reproduced themselves with startling regularity from one generation to another".⁸⁵ Moreover by focussing on the family economy in part of the book they were able to show significant class differences in the patterns of labour deployment in the family - differences that emerged and broadened as the city industrialized. And, by making the family, as opposed to individuals the focus of analysis, they demonstrated that the wage labour of daughters was only important in those families that did not have sons of working age at home.⁸⁶ They have not pursued this topic much further, assuming on the basis of the Hamilton and Buffalo data that "by and large industrial capitalism did not require the labour of women and children, and the division of responsibilities between the sexes and between the home and work served" the family's interests well.⁸⁷ The presence of both heavy industry and

⁸⁴ Michael Katz, The People of Hamilton, In subsequent work Katz has acknowledged the importance of wage labour within cities. He suggests that the vague idea of a "commercial city" type as set out in The People of Hamilton be replaced by one in which mercantile capitalism and the wage labour system are viewed as the precursor to industrial capitalism. Michael B. Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment", History of Education Quarterly, (Winter 1977).

⁸⁵ Michael Katz; Michael J. Doucet and Mark Stern, The Social Organization, p.18,3.

⁸⁶ IBID, pp.318,335.

⁸⁷ IBID, p.395.

the clothing and shoemaking trades in Montreal allows a more complex analysis of the relationship between family economy, gender and industrial structure.

The advantage of a focus on the family wage economy is that it draws together the analysis of work and the family - of production and reproduction - the two spheres apparently separated with the spread of wage labour and the growth of industrial capitalism.⁸⁸ As long as the contribution of all family members to survival is studied, such a focus prevents neglect of the paid and unpaid work of women and the life course of children. Furthermore, families can be viewed not as "dependent variables", reacting passively and automatically to economic and social change, but as active participants in their own histories, devising strategies to try to ensure their better survival and in the process modifying population growth and the labour market.⁸⁹ How family strategies coped with and reflected the circumstances of proletarianization is, as Louise Tilly has argued, a crucial question.⁹⁰

Some of the strategies that families drew on to enhance their

⁸⁸ Mary P. Ryan, The Cradle of the Middle Class, pp.199,239-240; Susan Strasser, Never Done - A History of American Housework, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1982), pp.5, 180-185 (Hereafter, Never Done).

⁸⁹ Tamara K. Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time. The Relationship Between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982),pp.4-5 (Hereafter, Family Time and Industrial Time).

⁹⁰ Louise A. Tilly, "Individual Lives and Family Strategies in the French Proletariat", Journal of Family History, 4 (Summer 1979),p.139 (Hereafter, "Individual Lives") p.139.

survival can be determined from responses to the census takers. The patterns of work of different family members, the age children left home, and the ages of marriage and patterns of reproduction are recreated in this thesis; as are the practices of households sharing and taking in boarders. The Canadian manuscript censuses of 1861 and 1871 allow the historian to examine other strategies, largely ignored to date by historians of the family economy. Home production, the keeping of stock and to a limited extent production from home gardens can be partially reconstructed, revealing some of "cash producing activities" that married women undertook as their contribution to the family economy.⁹¹

A focus on the strategies utilized by families is, as Louise Tilly has argued, a powerful and important way "to conceptualize and examine the links between individual lives and collective behaviour".⁹² "How individuals and families were guided by the dictates of their cultural preferences on timing, how they revised and modified their transitions to meet new conditions" is an important method of identifying changes in historical experience.⁹³ Such family strategies operated, however, within severe constraints - constraints imposed by the exigencies of wage labour and varying dramatically with changes in the economic conjuncture. That families had some control and could shape their lives

⁹¹ Louise A. Tilly and Joan Scott, Women, Work and Family, p.228.

⁹² Louise A. Tilly, "Individual Lives", p.138.

⁹³ Tamara K. Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, p.8.

to a certain extent "does not imply that the family was in full control of its destiny, nor does it mean that workers and their families were successful in changing the structure of industrial capitalism." "The crucial question", Tamara Hareven has correctly argued, is "under what historical conditions was" the family :

"able to control the environment and under what conditions did its control diminish? How did the family re-order its priorities to respond to new conditions, and how did this re-organization effect internal relations?"⁹⁴

She has successfully demonstrated the fluctuating degree of control that families exercised within the mill town of Manchester, New Hampshire. In studying a complex city like Montreal the strategies that can be identified operated at a broader level than the complex kin dynamics captured by Hareven within the Amoskeag Mills. Nevertheless the response of families to the transformation of work in certain trades, to fluctuations in the economy and the overall expansion of wage labour can be ascertained. To do so involves bridging the gap between home and work, between workers and dependants. The link lies in the wages brought from the workplace to the home.

In a period before the state assumed much responsibility for welfare the need for wages and the level and regularity of the wage set the parameters of a family's standard of living. Wage differentials between workers in the market place - a product of skill differences and workers' struggles - constituted the basis of important differences

⁹⁴ Tamara K. Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time. p.4.

within the working class in the likelihood of wives working, of child-labour, of alternative subsistence arrangements and household structure. Access to wage earning was "a powerful organising principle of family life" as Louise Tilly has suggested.⁹⁵ Wages were the dominating factor, the major source of survival for a class, by definition, without ownership of productive units. Within the working class, however, the level and regularity of wages varied dramatically. The implications of such differences have been assumed rather than examined by historians studying the family economy.

Working class and labour historians in Canada, as elsewhere, have demonstrated the importance of struggles by skilled workers to retain control of the work process throughout this period. What they fail to tell us often is how such struggles related to the wage taken home - to the basic bread and butter issues that impinged most dramatically on family survival. Gregory Kealey, Bryan Palmer, Ian McKay, Joanne Burgess and others have shown dramatic differences in the success of different skilled workers in their fights to retain control over the work process on the workshop floor.⁹⁶ Their findings suggest that we

⁹⁵ Louise A. Tilly, "The Family Wage Economy of a French Textile City: Roubaix, 1872-1906", Journal of Family History, 4 (Winter 1979), p.381, (Hereafter, "The Family Wage Economy").

⁹⁶ Gregory S. Kealey, Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1980) (Hereafter, Toronto Workers Respond); Bryan Palmer, A Culture in Conflict, Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton Ontario, 1860-1914, (Montreal, McGill-Queens Press, 1979); Ian McKay, "Capital and Labour"; Joanne Burgess, "L'industrie de la chaussure à Montréal".

might expect to find important differences, not only between the standard of living of skilled and unskilled workers, but also between those skilled workers who remained in control of work processes and could dictate a good wage, and those whose skills were being diluted, "injured" or deskilled by the restructuring of production.⁹⁷ If changes in the nature of production had an impact on the family economy, we would expect to find important and changing differences between these three groups over this period. I have therefore distinguished throughout the work between three fractions of the working class - the skilled workers whose jobs remained relatively unchanged, those in trades that were undergoing dramatic transformation - the "injured trades"⁹⁸ and finally the semi and unskilled. This differentiation of fractions within the working class distinguishes this work from most other studies of the family, making a contribution which, I believe, stretches beyond the confines of Canadian history. John Holley has shown how in two Scottish communities the family economies of the skilled and unskilled were very different.⁹⁹ I have gone beyond his distinction by attempting to incorporate some recognition of the change occurring to certain jobs over this period. The precision of my

⁹⁷ Clyde Griffin, "Occupational Mobility in Nineteenth Century America, Problems and Possibilities," Journal of Social History, 5 (Spring 1972) (Hereafter, "Occupational Mobility"); Harry Braverman, Labour and Monopoly Capital. The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1974).

⁹⁸ I have borrowed this terminology from Clyde Griffin's article "Occupational Mobility".

⁹⁹ John C. Holley, "The Two Family Economies of Industrialism: Factory Workers in Victorian Scotland", Journal of Family History, 6 (Spring 1981) (Hereafter, "The Two Family Economies").

categories is hindered by the amount of research I could draw on to assess just which occupations were, indeed, injured. The attempt is crucial, its refinement desirable.

It is the working class family economy that is the focus of this work, hence the choice of Ste Anne and St. Jacques which were predominantly proletarian wards. I have defined the working class as all those who worked for wages in production or transportation. This excludes white collar workers - those working for wages or salaries in the sphere of commerce or in public or private service. Within the working class I have, as already explained, distinguished between those in skilled trades the semi- and unskilled and those in trades undergoing such dramatic transformation and skill dilution that they could be identified as injured. In recent historical studies, there has been some questioning of the validity of distinctions made between the skilled and the semi and unskilled in the nineteenth century. Bruce Laurie, Theodore Hershberg and George Alter found that in Philadelphia in 1880 the line between skilled and unskilled blurred when firm size and industrial type were considered. Workers in the larger firms received better wages than in smaller ones. Variations were so massive within the skilled job category and between the skilled and unskilled that they question the use of most ranking systems used by historians studying social mobility.¹⁰⁰ I have retained the distinctions, adding

¹⁰⁰ Bruce Laurie, Theodore Hershberg and George Alter, "Immigrants and Industry: The Philadelphia Experience, 1850-1880", Journal of Social History, 9 (December 1975), reprinted with some revisions in Theodore Hershberg ed., Philadelphia, pp.41,95.

the injured trades category, partly because no reliable data exist for Montreal in this period to make other divisions. Furthermore analyses of patterns in the family economy confirm that these distinctions were reflected in important differences in the way families organized to survive. Ambiguities in the findings for those families whose heads were categorized as "semi-skilled", however, add support to their cautioning. I have retained the category, but left it out of most discussion because it seems to reflect too great a diversity of experiences. Many of the carters who documented this group may not, in fact have earned wages, although I did eliminate those who were clearly master carters.

Not all residents belonged to the working class. These wards and St. Jacques in particular, contained a small component of clerical workers, service workers, proprietors and professionals. I have consistently attempted to distinguish proprietors of workshops and businesses from workers and employees.¹⁰¹ (For further discussion of these distinctions and the classifications see Appendix B.) For most purposes throughout the work the non-working class categories have been combined simply to provide a contrast to the working class experience, the focus of the study. Because these wards contained few industrial capitalists, or important merchants the results should not be seen as

¹⁰¹ It is interesting to note that Katz et al., belatedly recognized the importance of this distinction, and discovered only "after most work has been done", "how to identify masters through business directories and industrial census". The Social Organization, p.12. Considering that for 1861 the industrial schedules were part of the personal returns their late discovery is rather surprising.

representative of Montreal's "bourgeoisie". Most were small proprietors, distinguished from their working class neighbours by how they made their living, rather than their wealth.

Theoretically, such a scheme produces a neat series of categories into which individuals, especially individual males can be slotted. In practise, especially in the nineteenth century, people moved between jobs, crossed class boundaries and climbed and fell the social mobility ladder in a manner that confounds the best thought-out ranking schemes of historians.¹⁰² In this period, as we have seen, artisanal production remained important but was being overshadowed and reshaped by capitalist industry. Small shops abounded on city streets and neighbourhood corners, run by families dependent on the patronage and payment of their working class neighbours. Artisan and shopkeeper alike led an existence that was often as precarious as that of their poorer neighbours. In terms of wealth the only distinction was that one family possessed its own shop, workshop or small business, another did not. Yet this distinction was vital for it to set the scene for a different family economy with a diverse set of family labour requirements and a contrasting modus operandi. Families possessing no capital and no business could survive only by finding wage labour, seeking charity or finding assistance from wealthier kin. The more members who could find wage labour, the better were their chances of comfort. Other families might subsidise a small shop or trade with wage labour, but they

¹⁰² See for instance the work history of Wilson Benson reported by Michael Katz, The People of Hamilton, pp.94-111.

worked for themselves and could call on family members to help. Home and work were less likely to be geographically separate. The thesis catches families frozen into the occupations they held when the census was taken. It does not examine the social mobility of individuals or families to determine whether or not they remained in the same situation.

Women and childrens' jobs fit uncomfortably into most schemes of classification. Theodore Hershberg placed them in a completely separate category - relegating them to the fringes of society and history. Michael Katz allocated the most usual women's occupations - including dressmaker, midwife, teacher and servant in an unclassifiable category along with lunatics and the deceased.¹⁰³ I have assumed, for the purposes of this thesis, that married women and children shared their father or husband's class position. To classify them as in different classes is illogical. In most of the analyses, the family is the unit of analysis and its class position has been determined by the occupation of the head at that date, with notice taken of whether that head was male or female.

This thesis constitutes the first detailed examination into the nature of the nineteenth century working class family economy in Canada. As such it adds a Canadian study to the growing literature throughout

¹⁰³ Theodore Hershberg and Robert Dockhorn, "Occupational Classification", Historical Methods Newsletter, 9 (March-June 1976);

the world on the family in industrial capitalist cities.¹⁰⁴ Within Canada it enriches our knowledge about women, childhood and the family in the past.¹⁰⁵ At the same time it furthers our understanding of the history of the working class and of Canadian cities. Michael Piva and Terry Copp have described working and living conditions in Toronto and Montreal in the early twentieth century. While both dealt with working women and child labour, their analyses of the standard of living of workers were limited because they focussed predominantly on the wage of the male worker. Little systematic attention was paid to the contribution of children and wives either as 'secondary wage earners' or as domestic labourers.¹⁰⁶ The availability of the manuscript censuses for the period between 1861 and 1881 made it possible for me to determine with much greater accuracy just how many workers there were in families, who they were and how this varied within the working class.

The works of Jean-Claude Robert, Jean de Bonville and Jacques Bernier

¹⁰⁴ Michael Anderson, Family Structure; John Foster, Class Struggle; Tamara K. Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time; Theodore Hershberg ed., Philadelphia; Lynn H. Lees, Exiles of Erin; Yves Lequin, Les Ouvriers de la region lyonnaise (1848-1914). La Formation de la classe ouvriere regionale, (Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1977); Richard Sennett, Families Against the City: Middle Class Homes of Industrial Chicago, 1872-1890, (New York, Vintage Books, 1970); Laura S. Struminger, Women and the Making of the Working Class: Lyon 1830-1870, (Vermont, Eden Press, Women's Publications, 1979); Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, Family and Community: Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880-1930, (Ithica, Cornell University Press, 1977).

¹⁰⁵ Joy Parr ed., Childhood and Family; Patricia Rooke and R.L. Schnell, Studies in Childhood History. A Canadian Perspective, (Calgary, Alberta, Detselig Enterprises, 1983).

¹⁰⁶ Michael J. Piva, The Condition of the Working Class in Toronto, 1900-1921, (Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 1979); Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty. Tom Traves makes this point in his review of Piva, Canadian Historical Review, 61 (September 1980); p.385.

tell much about the conditions of life in Montreal from the 1850's to the 1890's.¹⁰⁷ They offer important background information for this study which builds on their descriptions and analyses. The focus here, on the working class family adds to their discussion of such topics as wages, living conditions and child and female labour. For women's participation in the workforce, their schooling, and their daily life were largely conditioned by their role in the family. This was the one dimension that Suzanne Cross was not able to deal with systematically in her pioneering study of Montreal's "neglected majority" - the women.¹⁰⁸ As a result she implies that more married women worked than was the case, and does not deal with the very different patterns of male and female labour force participation at one time or over their life cycles.

Three recent works in Quebec have made aspects of the history of girls' education, women's patterns of labour and their involvement in certain unions and feminist groups better known than in most other Canadian provinces.¹⁰⁹ This thesis adds to the history of Quebec working

¹⁰⁷ Jean-Claude Robert, "Montréal 1821-1871"; Jean de Bonville, Jean Baptiste Gagnepetite: les travailleurs montréalais à la fin du XIX^e siècle, (Montréal, L'Aurore, 1975); Jacques Bernier, "La Condition des travailleurs, 1851-1891",

¹⁰⁸ Suzanne Cross, "The Neglected Majority : The Changing Role of Women in 19th Century Montreal", in Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice eds., The Neglected Majority : Essays in Canadian Women's History (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1977) (Hereafter, "The Neglected Majority").

¹⁰⁹ Le Collectif Clio, L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec depuis Quatre Siècles, (Montréal, Quinze, 1982); Marie Lavigne and Yolande Pinard, Travailleuses et Féministes. Les Femmes dans la Société Québécoise, (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1983); Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Micheline Dumont, Maitresses de Maison, Maitresses d'École. Femmes, Famille et Education dans l'Histoire du Québec, (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1983).

class women in particular by examining both their wage labour and their domestic labour and by tying the two together within the context of the family economy. For, as Marie Lavigne and Yolande Pinard stress in citing French historian Michelle Perrot: "The history of women's work is inseparable from that of the family, from relations between sexes and their social roles". Here, women are viewed from within the family and as part of the family. The history of men and women is thus brought together.¹¹⁰ Only by analyzing their position in the family can the work of most wives, daughters and single women be fully understood. The majority of women lived in families. Most families in these wards were made up of a couple with or without children.¹¹¹ In the two wards combined this "normal" family structure represented between 65 and 77 per cent of all enumerated "family" groupings. Another 2 to 3 per cent of families were headed by widowers. In both wards between 84 and 92 per cent of all families were headed by men. (See Table 1.6) Women, largely widowed, headed a further 8 to 17 per cent. The proportion was always higher in St. Jacques ward and consistently lower in both wards in 1871. The family economy of these women was so different from that of male headed units that it has to be treated separately. The bulk of this thesis examines the family economy of two parent families. The particular problems of widows are addressed in the final chapter.

¹¹⁰ Marie Lavigne and Yolande Pinard, Travailleuses et Feministes, p.23, citing Michelle Perrot, "De la nourrice a l'employée... travaux de femmes dans 'la France' du XIX^e siècle", Mouvement Social, 105 (Oct - Nov. 1978).

¹¹¹ Family as used here refers to those units defined by the census enumerator as a separate family. (See Appendix C).

Table 1.6

Family Structures

Ste. Anne and St. Jacques Wards

1861-1881

<u>Ste. Anne</u>	1861		1871		1881	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Solitary	1%	12%	2%	19%	3%	26%
No Family	2	10	*	8	3	3
Simple Family	83	64	85	65	87	70
Extended Family	14	14	13	8	7	1
Number	295	42	348	37	377	70
% Headed by Male or Female	88%	12%	90%	10%	84%	16%

<u>St. Jacques</u>	1861		1871		1881	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Solitary	1%	5%	1%	21%	1%	22%
No Family	1	20	1	10	1	8
Simple Family	75	70	87	52	87	65
Extended Family	24	5	11	17	11	5
Number	202	40	319	29	465	77
% Headed by Male or Female	83%	17%	92%	8%	86%	14%

* Under .5%.

Source: Random Samples, All family heads.

In those families headed by a working husband with a wife it was the nature of the man's job, and especially the regularity and size of his wage that largely determined other aspects of the family economy. The nature of work and the adequacy of the wages earned by men in the most common occupations of these wards are assessed in the following chapter as are changes in their patterns of marriage family formation. Recent research in demography and demographic history is making clear how changes in economic circumstances were reflected in modifications of patterns of marriage and family formation. Detailed knowledge of local

economies has been necessary to show such changes. The divorce of people from ownership of their own productive units seems to have engendered the most dramatic changes in marriage and reproductive strategies, not industrialization or urbanisation as had traditionally been argued.¹¹² Historians examining the era of industrial capitalism are beginning to show how class position, ethnic background and the particular local economy interacted to influence patterns of marriage and reproduction in nineteenth century cities.¹¹³ On whether class or ethnicity are the crucial factors, they are divided.

¹¹² David Levine, Family Formation Rudolph Braun, "Early Industrialization and Demographic Change in the Canto of Zurich"; Charles Tilly ed., Historical Studies in Changing Fertility, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978); Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, Women, Work and Family; Louise Tilly, "Individual Lives". This coincides with the more general argument put forward by Lise Vogel in "The Contested Domain: A Note of the Family in Transition to Capitalism", Marxist Perspectives, 1,1 (Spring 1978). This coincides with the more general argument put forward by Lise Vogel in "The Contested Domain: A Note on the Family in the Transition to Capitalism", Marxist Perspectives, 1,1 (Spring 1978).

¹¹³ Bengt Ankarloo, "Marriage and Family Formation" in Tamara K. Hareven ed., Transitions - The Family and Life Course in Historical Perspective, (New York, Academic Press, 1978) (Hereafter Transitions); Tamara K. Hareven and Maris A. Vinovskis, "Marital Fertility, Ethnicity and Occupation in Urban Families: An Analysis of South Boston and the South End in 1880", Journal of Family History 6 (Spring 1981) (Hereafter "Marriage, Migration"). 8 (1975); Tamara K. Hareven and Maris A. Vinovskis, "Patterns of Childbearing in Late Nineteenth Century America: The Determinants of Marital Fertility in Five Massachusetts Towns in 1880", in their Family and Population in Nineteenth Century America, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978); Michael Katz, The People of Hamilton, pp.32, 278-9; Jerry Wilcox and Hilda H. Golden, "Prolific Immigrants and Dwindling Natives? - Fertility Patterns in Western Massachusetts, 1850 and 1880", Journal of Family History 7 (Fall 1982) (Hereafter, "Prolific Immigrants"); Leslie Page Moch, "Marriage, Migration and Urban Demographic Structure: A Case From France in the Belle Epoque", IBID, 6 (Spring 1981) (Hereafter "Marriage, Migration").

Clearly decisions about the timing of marriage and reproduction draw heavily on cultural tradition - itself a product of past historical circumstances. Yet the age at marriage, especially, is subject both to long term trends and to major short term changes. The work of Lynn Lees on the Irish in London, of Lees and John Modell on the Irish in Philadelphia, or of Tamara Hareven, Jenny Wilcox and Hilda Golden, Bengt Ankarloo and others on immigrants in American cities all show how immigrants to American and British cities modified their patterns of marriage and reproduction. Most show both class and ethnic differences.¹¹⁴ I have drawn upon this demographic approach in part of the following chapter to begin to assess the meaning of the changes that occurred in men's marriage ages in the two Montreal wards in the light of class position and ethnic traditions. Women's marriage and birth rates are considered separately in chapter four. The mid-nineteenth century was an important period in Quebec's demographic history. Both the birth rate and the marriage rate dropped more rapidly than previously, particularly after 1850. The average age at marriage apparently rose.¹¹⁵ Examination of the marriage and fertility of families in Montreal allows assessment of whether changes occurred initially in this major urban area as the theory of demographic

¹¹⁴ Lynn Lees, Exiles of Erin, pp.140-163; Lynn H. Lees and John Modell, "The Irish Countryman Urbanized: A Comparative Perspective on the Famine Migration", in Theodore Hershberg ed., Philadelphia

¹¹⁵ Jacques Henripin and Yves Perron, "La Transition Demographique de la Province de Québec", in Hubert Charbonneau ed., La Population du Québec: Etudes Retrospectives, (Montreal, Boreal Express, 1973), pp.35-38 (Hereafter, "La Transition Demographique").

transition would predict.¹¹⁶ Historians elsewhere have found that the working class was much slower than the middle class in controlling family size. Montreal's pattern needs to be ascertained.

Early industrial capitalism has traditionally been viewed as drawing men and women and boys and girls indiscriminately into wage labour.¹¹⁷ Studies that have focussed on milltowns where female labour opportunities predominated have perpetuated this tendency by stressing the widespread involvement of both girls and married women.¹¹⁸ Historians and sociologists refusing to treat gender as a category of analysis have exacerbated the tendency.¹¹⁹ In cities and towns with more diverse industries a growing body of literature is making it clear that distinctions of age and gender were reinforced rather than eliminated with the consolidation of industrial capitalist production.¹²⁰ Both over

¹¹⁶ John Hajjnal, "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective", in D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley eds., Population in History. Essays in Historical Demography, (Chicago, Aldine, 1965); Leslie Moch, "Marriage, Migration", p.85.

¹¹⁷ See especially Karl Marx, Capital, p.372.

¹¹⁸ Neil Smelser, Social Change in the Industrial Revolution. An Application of Theory to the Lancashire Cotton Industry, 1770-1840, (London; Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1959); Michael Anderson, Family Structure; Tamara K. Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time.

¹¹⁹ Michael Anderson, Family Structure, p.75 discusses children working without differentiating girls and boys and gives figures for sons working, but not daughters.

¹²⁰ See for instance the male-female differential in per centages employed in the mill town of Lawrence, Massachusetts, compared with the more diverse towns of Lynn and Salem, when "housework" is discounted as an occupation, Carl G. Kaestle and Maris A. Vinovskis, "From Fireside to Factory: School Entry and School Leaving in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts" in Tamara Hareven, ed., Transitions, pp.144-45 (Hereafter, "From Fireside to Factory"); Claudia Goldin, "Family Strategies and the Family Economy in the

their own life cycles and in their function for capitalists men and women have played divergent roles.

Chapter three examines the importance of gender and age as well as class position in determining the pattern of children's schooling, wage labour and domestic work. Historians are now examining the relative importance of class gender and ethnic background in determining the time spent at school and entry to the workforce. Claudia Goldin has been able to demonstrate that the higher a father's wage "the lower the probability of a child's participation in the labour force."¹²¹ Similarly Karen Mason, Maris Vinovskis and Tamara Hareven have found in Essex County Massachusetts that the "higher the socio economic status of the father, the lower the proportion of daughters employed". Likewise "the more money that male family members brought into the household (relative to what the family needed to survive), the fewer the daughters who went out to work".¹²² Goldin's detailed analysis confirmed that in

late Nineteenth Century: The Role of the Secondary Worker", in Theodore Hersberg ed., Philadelphia, pp.282-85 (Hereafter, "Family Strategies"); Micheal B. Katz and Ian E. Davey, "Youth and Early Industrialization in a Canadian City", in John Demos and Sarane Spence Boccock eds., Turning Points Historical and Sociological. Essays on the Family, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, Supplement to the American Journal of Sociology, 84 (1978)), pp.594-8; E. A. Hämmel, Sheila R. Johansson and Caren A. Ginsberg, "The Value of Childhood During Industrialization: Sex Ratios in Childhood in Nineteenth Century America", Journal of Family History, 8 (Winter, 1983).

121 Claudia Goldin, "Family Strategies", p.290.

122 "Women's Work and the Life Course in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1880", in Tamara K. Hareven ed., Transitions, p.205 (Hereafter, "Women's Work").

Philadelphia boys and girls played different roles within the family economy. "Male children were extremely affected by their father's unemployment... daughters... somewhat less". "Daughters but not sons", were less likely to work outside the home if the family had other relatives contributing wages or board.¹²³

Such findings suggest a caution, a caveat to the study of survival strategies. That families could and did devise survival strategies does not signify that all individuals within families necessarily agreed on all strategies. Nor were chosen actions necessarily equally beneficial to all members, or arrived at without considerable tension and conflict.¹²⁴ The focus on strategies must not be allowed to hide either the tensions or the factors contributing to women's unequal position within the family and its perpetuation in society.¹²⁵

It is this swallowing up, submerging or burying of gender differences and tensions within the family that has made feminist historians critical of most family history. Family historians have been

¹²³ Claudia Goldin, "Family Strategies", p.291.

¹²⁴ Louise A. Tilly's analysis suggests that mothers and children bore the brunt of family strategies based on high fertility and multiple wage-earners. As family size dropped "the sacrifice of children was attenuated ... at the cost of their mothers". "Individual Lives", p.150.

¹²⁵ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese alerts us to the problem implicit in a focus on strategies. Because all members co-operated, symmetry may be perceived within the family hiding differences of gender and age. "Placing Women's History in History", New Left Review, 133 (May-June 1982), p.18. Clearly too strong a focus on family strategies also accords individual working class families more control than was possible leading to a romanticization of the working class family.

criticized for "making assumptions which obscure rather than uncover the actual historical experience of women as well as the forces determining the limits of their lives".¹²⁶ Even feminist historians have, until recently, dealt with women outside rather than within the family. Successful career women, philanthropists and the wage labour of women have been examined while their domestic labour in the home was largely ignored.

It is only by comparing the experiences of boys and girls within the family and the economy that definitions of gender and their implications can be grasped. Studies focussing on one sex - whether it be boys as in John Gillis' examination of Youth and History, or Louise Tilly and Joan Scott's concentration on Women, Work and Family, fail to grasp the totality of the experience.¹²⁷ Which family members would earn wages, which go to school and which do the housework was not inevitable. Nor in working class families did any "cult of true womanhood" keep girls and women "in the home and out of the world of work".¹²⁸ More pragmatic concerns were at work here. Families sent sons out to work in preference to daughters because sons could earn more. Gender based wage differentials in the marketplace reinforced old divisions of labour based on sex, making youth an apprenticeship for the role of man and wife. Girls combined domestic labour with intermittent wage labour in

¹²⁶ Rayna Rapp et al, "Examining Family History", p.182.

¹²⁷ John R. Gillis, Youth and History - Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770 - Present (New York, Academic Press, 1981).

¹²⁸ Michael B. Katz, The People of Hamilton, p.55

response to family needs, as daughters within the family economy and later in life as wife or widow.

Survival in late nineteenth century Montreal required more than the earning of a wage. The domestic labour of women, their shopping, cooking and housekeeping skills, and their care of the young and old alike were crucial in transforming the wage into meals, clothing and shelter. The working class standard of living depended on the level of wage in relationship to the cost of living. For each family the standard of living depended on the administration or management of that wage and this was the concern of the wife. Herein lay the potential for major but immeasurable differences in family standard of living.¹²⁹

Since the early 1970's marxists and feminists outside history have hotly debated the theoretical issues surrounding the role of domestic labour, and of women's work in the home in a capitalist society.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Jane Humphreys, "The Working Class Family, Women's Liberation and Class Struggle: The Case of Nineteenth Century British History", The Review of Radical Political Economics, 9 (Fall 1977), p.256 (Hereafter, "The Working Class Family").

¹³⁰ Peggy Morton, "Women's Work is Never Done", in Women Unite ed., (Toronto, The Women's Press, 1972); Wally Seccombe "The Housewife and Her Labour Under Capitalism", New Left Review 83 (Jan-Feb 1974), and for overviews of the literature and further development of the "domestic labour debate" see Bonnie Fox ed., Hidden in the Household. Woman's Domestic Labour Under Capitalism, (Toronto, The Women's Press, 1980) (Hereafter, Hidden in the Household) and Veronica Beechy, "Women and Production in a Critical Analysis of some Sociological Theories of Women's Work", in Annette Kuhn and AnnMarie Wolpe ed., Feminism and Materialism. Women and Modes of Production, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp.182-187. Roberta Hamilton makes a cogent critique of the limitations of the domestic labour debate in her review of Hidden in the Household, Atlantis 7 (Fall, 1981), pp.114-126. For an example of how some of

Historians and sociologists, however, have only recently turned their attention to the conditions and nature of domestic labour. Susan Strasser in the United States, Ann Oakley in England and Meg Luxton, Pat and Hugh Armstrong and Veronica Strong-Boag in Canada have now begun to analyze the work that the majority of the women did - housework.¹³¹ Their definitions of what domestic labour involves make clear the connection between the workers' wage and the work of the women at home. Their identification and analysis of the task involved provides a context for the examination of married women's work in chapters four and five.

Meg Luxton identified four work processes in her study of women's domestic labour in Flin Flon Manitoba. The first involves:

...looking after herself, her husband and other adult members of the household... The dominant requirement is that the labour power of the wage earner be reproduced on a daily basis... the second component of domestic labour is childbearing and childrearing... The third... is housework... all

the issues raised by the domestic labour debate can be used to describe and analyze a specific historical community see Meg Luxton's clever use of oral history in More than a Labour of Love. Three generations of women's work in the home. (Toronto, The Women's Press, 1980). (Hereafter More than a Labour of Love).

¹³¹ Susan Strasser, Never Done; Ann Oakley, Woman's Work. The Housewife Past and Present, (New York, Vintage Books, 1976); Veronica Strong Boag, "Keeping House in God's Country: Canadian Women at Work in the Home", Unpublished Paper, Simon Fraser, 1983 (Hereafter, "Keeping House"); Meg Luxton, More than a Labour of Love, Historians like Mary Ryan, Joan Scott and Louise Tilly analyze women's position in the family and society and the changing links between the two by tying together demographic, structural and ideological change. Mary P. Ryan, The Cradle of the Middle Class; Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work and Family.

those activities... that are necessary for maintaining the house and servicing household members. The final component of domestic labour involves the transformation of wages into goods and services for the household's use. This process of "making ends meet" involves money management and shopping. Sometimes it also requires that women take on additional work to bring more money into the household.¹³²

Pat and Hugh Armstrong, in contrast, argue in The Double Ghetto, for four more simple categories — "housework, childcare, tension management and sexual 'relationships'".¹³³ Veronica Strong-Boag similarly posits housework, reproduction and care of dependent children and working adults, and added "care of dependent adults" as well as paid work in the home".¹³⁴ These categorizations are useful as reminders of the major components of a woman's daily work. Yet in practise many of the categories overlap so that it is difficult to treat them as distinct when writing about them. This is especially true of Meg Luxton's categories. Thus while "reproducing labour power on a daily basis" may be seen analytically as separate from "housework", in fact the latter is a necessary part of the former. Even amongst Veronica Strong-Boag's more discrete tasks, the "care of working adults" — the "object being to maintain effective productive members of society" overlaps with housework — "the transformation of wage income into goods and

¹³² Meg Luxton, More than a Labour of Love, pp.18-19.

¹³³ Pat and Hugh Armstrong, The Double Ghetto (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1978), p.55.

¹³⁴ Veronica Strong-Boag, "Keeping House" pp.5-6.

services".¹³⁵

In the examination of married women's labour in chapter four, I have opted for broader rather than narrower categories of analysis. The initial focus is on women's entry into marriage, childbirth and childrearing, their transformation of wages into goods and services for the household use", or in Meg Luxton's terms "making ends meet",¹³⁶ as well as the physical and sanitary conditions of domestic labour are then examined.

The men and children who left home daily to work or seek work returned with a wage that seemed to belong to them, to reward them for their labour. The work that had gone into feeding them, clothing them or even bearing children was not obvious, nor directly rewarded. The growing equation of work with wages thus downplayed the importance of non-wage domestic labour. Women who could earn cash, even a wage at times, could ensure for themselves some measure of the importance that accompanied the contribution of money to the family wage economy. A final section of chapter four examines that minority of married women who did work for wages. The fifth chapter turns to other ways in which women could earn money or avoid paying out cash. It examines the keeping of pigs, cows and gardens, household sharing and the taking in of boarders. The importance of money made from producing cloth, butter and other commodities to women in rural America has been made clear by

¹³⁵ IBID.

¹³⁶ Meg Luxton, More than a Labour of Love, p.19.

Joan Jensen. She suggests that boarders served a similar purpose for urban housewives.¹³⁷ Home production, even animal raising was not, however, limited to rural families. Up until the 1850's, urban families in America continued to keep animals as a counter to poverty. In so doing, Richard Bushman has argued, they were replicating rural practise in urban areas.¹³⁸ Yet keeping pigs or cows was not simply a rural tradition. Urban families had long done so. What needs to be considered is whether it was a specifically working class or more general practise. For some strategies that have been assumed by historians to have been specific to the working class or the poor, are proving to have been more general. Research now suggests that taking in boarders was not a strategy utilized predominantly by the wives of the poorest workers. Rather it was wealthier families, those more likely to have extra space, that were most likely to take in lodgers.¹³⁹ This then raises the possibility that housesharing may have been a working class strategy and boarding not. Clearly there were:

important differences between the experiences of residing temporarily with kin or with others as a

¹³⁷ Joan M. Jensen, "Cloth, butter and boarders: Women's Household Production for the Market", Review of Political Economics, 12 (Summer 1980) (Hereafter, "Cloth, Butter and Boarders").

¹³⁸ Richard L. Bushman, "Family Security in the Transition From Farm to city, 1750-1850", Journal of Family History 6 (Fall 1981) (Hereafter, "Family Security").

¹³⁹ Michael Haines, "Poverty, Economic Stress and the Family in a Late Nineteenth Century America City. Whites in Philadelphia, 1880", in Theodore Hershberg, ed., Philadelphia. Work, Space, Family and Group Experience in the Nineteenth Century, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1981), p.244; Michael B. Katz and Ian Davey, "Youth and Early Industrialization", p.591.

young unmarried boarder, and drawing your spouse and children into the close circle of an other family.

The "boarding of single individuals" was quite different from the phenomenon of "lodging" families.¹⁴⁰ In their study of a sample of families across Canada, Gordon Darroch and Michael Ornstein initially suggested that household sharing was somewhat more common among the semi and unskilled than any other group. After careful analysis they concluded, however, that "co-residence was not commonly an association formed as a result of... urban destitution." Rather household sharing might have been an aspect of a wider system of cooperation and sharing that retained its vitality throughout the period of early capitalism.¹⁴¹ The issue remains unresolved. Certainly amongst the families sampled in St. Anne and St. Jacques wards it was the least skilled workers who were most likely to share. This difference requires explanation.

Within working class families the wages of working individuals, the wage management of the wife and other cash producing or saving activities ensured some level of support to earners and dependents alike. This division of labour at one and the same time ensured the continuence of women's subordination in the home and the better survival of the family. Yet not all families had a head who was a male wage earner. Even those men reporting an occupation to the census taker did

¹⁴⁰ Gordon Darroch and Michael Ornstein, "Family Co-residence in Canada in 1871" pp.31-33.

¹⁴¹ IBID, p.37,55.

not necessarily have a job at the time. "Certain establishments", explained the writer of the 1871 census monograph:

do not employ workmen or labourers during the whole year, nor in a regular manner... men following certain occupations are successively engaged in the course of the year in various employments.¹⁴²

Unemployment, sickness and death threatened the shaky equilibrium of the working class family economy. When the family head was involved the major means of support - his wages - were cut off. Wage dependence clearly aggravated such "critical life situations".¹⁴³ While today such crises occur only rather rarely for each individual family, in the nineteenth century, in contrast, they were "more frequent" and "uncushioned by bureaucratized means of assistance".¹⁴⁴ One of the major findings of historians studying the family has been the importance of extended kin networks in providing support in just such a crisis situation.

The sources used in this study make it difficult to ascertain clearly what the role of kin in Montreal was in this period. In the absence of the kinds of qualitative evidence available to Anderson and

¹⁴² Canada, 1871 Census of Canada, Vol.III, p.5.

¹⁴³ Michael Anderson, Family Structure, p.136; Barbara Humphreys, "The Working Class Family", p.248.

¹⁴⁴ Michael Anderson, Family Structure, p.137.

the oral histories collected by Hareven, the assessment of the role of kin must be more tentative. We can show who lived near or with whom. This hints at, but cannot confirm, that assistance took place. Families' use of institutions run by the church can be assessed. And the residential and income generating strategies of those most affected by a death - women losing their husbands - can be determined.

The final chapter is an examination of what occurred when families faced such crises, and the family economy threatened to break down. This represents an important counter to the earlier chapters which, in a sense, present the family economy as a smoothly running institution within which the division of labour by age and sex served to ensure both family survival and the needs of capital. Such was clearly not always the case. The potential for conflict and tension was always present. How much of the wages earned a wife should receive, the quality of meals and other services received in return and other more mundane irritations of daily life must have led to conflict in most families at some time. The desire of wage earning children to leave home in a situation where it was "in the interest of the parents to keep" them "at home as long as possible", constituted another potential source of tension.¹⁴⁵ More fundamental were the challenges that Montreal's high incidence of disease and death presented. Few working class individuals survived from marriage to the departure of their children without losing several

¹⁴⁵ Paul Spagnoli, "Industrialization, Proletarianization and Marriage: A Reconsideration", Journal of Family History, 8 (Fall 1978), p.238.

children and often a spouse. Chapter six, therefore, examines the role of kin, church and class-based institutions in providing support in these times of sickness, unemployment and death.

Like Michael Katz's study of Hamilton, indeed as in most works based on similar sources, this thesis involves a combination of hard data and "plausible", though hopefully not "rash", explanation. All historians reconstruct past experience and events to present a reasonable explanation of what occurred. The leap from "structures" to "attitudes and behaviour" involved in such a study as this is more obvious perhaps, simply because written contemporary statements to support the explanations are so often lacking. The alternative to extrapolation from the patterns found is arid description without interpretation, or presentation of the data in the hope that the facts will speak for themselves. They will not, for their meaning arises only in the analysis and interpretation. The significance of the patterns is clear only in the light of broader questions about the family and the transition to industrial capitalism. I have determined that the samples are sufficiently representative of the two wards to describe family economies therein. With more rashness, I have gone beyond that and argued as if the patterns of experience that emerge out of a combination of families in these wards were representative of most Montreal working class families. Together the chapters of the thesis illustrate changes in the workings of the family economy as well as the importance of age

Michael Katz, The People of Hamilton, p.72.

and gender within the family. Each raises as many questions as it answers. In so doing I hope that further research on such topics will be inspired.

Chapter Two

The Workingman and His Family

When asked whether wages in 1888 were sufficient to "enable a man to live honorably, properly and to bring up his children", a Montreal joiner's reply was a simple "No sir".¹ His answer was corroborated by other workers giving evidence at the hearings of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital.² A dry goods merchant and reformer testifying to the same commission argued that "a man with a family who is lazy and drunken, and will not support his family should be flogged every morning".³ Commissioners, reformer and worker alike clearly believed that a man should be able to support a family on his wages. Indeed, by law a husband was required to provide shelter, protection and the necessities of life according to his means.⁴ Lack of detailed

¹ Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital, Quebec Evidence, Evidence of Stanislaus Paquette, p.652.

² IBID,. Evidence of James Doolan, fireman, p.697; Evidence of James Connolly, printer, p.333.

³ IBID, Evidence of Samuel Carsley, p.18.

⁴ Le Collectif Clio, L'Histoire des femmes au Québec depuis quatre siècles, pp.152-153; Micheline Dumont-Johnson, "History of the Status of Women in the of Quebec", in Cultural Tradition and Political History of the Status of Women in Canada", No.8, Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (Ottawa, Information Canada, 1971), p.45 (Hereafter, "History of the Status of Women"); P.A. Linteau, R. Durocher and J.C. Robert, Histoire du Québec contemporain; De la confédération à la crise, (Montreal, Boreal Express, 1979), pp.219-21 (Hereafter, Histoire du Québec contemporain).

reliable and consistent data make it difficult to estimate with precision what wages were in different occupations or what the cost of living was and how it changed over this period in Montreal. Careful estimates, however, suggest that many a working class father who was neither drunken nor lazy would have found it impossible to feed, clothe and shelter an average family adequately on his wages alone between 1861 and 1891. Within the working class different wage rates and work regularity set the parameters for divergent standards of living. We know from the work of labour historians that certain craftsmen were more successful than others in resisting the transformation of their jobs and the degradation of their skills. The work re-organization, new technology, advanced division of labour and increased use of steam power that generally characterised the transition to industrial capitalism occurred unevenly between and even within different trades. Where new technology, changed demand for the product, or lack of effective resistance led to the widespread use of unskilled labour and of women and children, loss of status was most rapid.

Such changes in the workplace permeated beyond the factory or shop modifying, shaping and reshaping the contours of the family economy. Wages were more than "a powerful organizing principal" in the lives of proletarian families.⁵ They were the major source of survival for a class by definition, without ownership of the means of production. The size and regularity of that wage framed the possibilities of adequate existence. In Montreal as elsewhere there were major differences in

⁵ Louise Tilly, "The Family Wage Economy", p.381.

wages earned within trades, between wage rates of those in small shops and those in factories, and even between one factory and another.⁶ Yet broadly speaking differences of occupation - of skill level and work regularity - did translate into wage differentials. Those whose trades were subject to most rapid transformation received either lower wages or no increase over time.⁷ Their insecurity increased as they faced growing competition for jobs from the unskilled, from low paid "apprentices" and from boys and girls.

For their daily labour workers received a wage. Theoretically this left them free to arrange their own "means of subsistence" - how they would live, eat and spend their spare time. But such arrangements were made "within real limits".⁸ These limits were dictated by the hours and availability of work, the wage received, the prices of available housing, food and clothing and the possible alternatives or complements to wage earning. For the men heading the working class families of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards their wage was the link between work and home, spheres that the need for wage labour had geographically separated. That wage dictated how well their family would eat, where they could afford to live and how their children would spend their time.

⁶ Bruce Laurie, Theodore Hershberg and George Alter, "Immigrants and Industry", p.115.

⁷ F. Harvey, Revolutions Industrielle et Travailleurs. Une Enquête sur les Rapports Entre Le Capitale et le Travail à la Fin du 19^e Siècle. (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1978), p.114.

⁸ Wally Secombe, "Domestic Labour and the Working Class Household", p.38.

The influence of their occupation and the wage they would receive spread beyond such obvious factors. In ways that were sometimes subtle and complex and sometimes dramatic, the age men would marry, the survival of their infants, their childrens' schooling and work patterns and their wife's domestic labour were all related to their wage, and to their position within the working class.

Most families in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards reported a male head in the years between 1861 and 1881. Some men may have been absent for periods seeking employment or working elsewhere,⁹ but the de jure method of census taking largely hides this practice.¹⁰ Men were reported to head between 84 and 92 per cent of all families. The women heading the other families almost all listed themselves as widows, though some may well have called themselves this out of social nicety, hiding a de facto separation. Qualitative evidence does show that desertions and separations occurred, although their frequency cannot be ascertained. One over zealous respondent in 1861, for example, explained why twenty eight year old Louis Lacroix was living not with his wife, but with his widowed mother and two sisters. Catherine his wife had "been gone for four years" and was living elsewhere in the city. The couple had neither family nor children.¹¹ A random glance at the register of Montreal's Catholic Reform School shows that some of the boys committed

⁹ Isabelle St. Martin, "Family Separation: The Case of the Women Left Behind", M.A., Department of History, Concordia University, 1980.

¹⁰ "Instructions to Officers", 1871, p.127.

¹¹ Mss. Census, St. Jacques, 1861, fo. 722. My translation.

there, like 18th year old Nicholas Powers, came from homes in which the husband had simply abandoned the family.¹²

Families headed by women faced difficulties of a different order than those headed by men. Their situation will be analyzed in depth in the final chapter. This chapter examines the majority of families - those headed by a man. Workingmen's wages, the costs of living and their patterns of marriage and family formation are investigated. An initial section outlines the major occupations held by the family heads of these wards. The adequacy of a man's wages to support families of various sizes over the family life cycle is then assessed by estimating the cost of living in Montreal in 1882. Knowledge of men's position in the workforce is crucial to understanding the patterns of marriage and family size and structure examined in the final section.

Work and Wages

Wages were the major source of survival for between two thirds and three quarters of the families of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques. In Ste. Anne under one quarter of male heads throughout this period made their living either running small stores, grocery shops, workshops or even factories, or as clerks, professionals and other white collar or service workers. (See Table 2.1) These men came from all backgrounds, although

¹² "Livre de Renseignements", Ecole de Réforme, 346 (1863), at the Ecole des Métiers de Montréal.

TABLE 2.1

THE CLASS POSITION OF MALE FAMILY HEADS

STE. ANNE AND ST. JACQUES

1861 - 1861

	1861*		1871*		1881*	
	Ste. Anne	St. Jacques	Ste. Anne	St. Jacques	Ste. Anne	St. Jacques
Non Working Class	19%	26%	22%	34%	21%	34%
Skilled	32%	32%	31%	30%	28%	32%
Injured	7%	8%	7%	13%	5%	12%
Semi-skilled	8%	17%	8%	6%	11%	6%
Unskilled	35%	17%	32%	17%	35%	16%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Number of Male Family Heads

- Reporting an occupation	291	190	338	304	360	435
- Number reporting no occupation	4	13	9	6	13	21
	295	203	347	310	373	456

* The difference between the distribution of classes in the two wards is significant at p .001.
 Source: Male family heads, 10 per cent random samples.

they were always more likely to be English or Scottish than Irish or French Canadian. (See Table 2.2) St. Jacques had a larger middle class and petit-bourgeois component that was predominantly French Canadian. Also included were the majority of those English, Scots and Protestant Irish who remained as an English speaking enclave in this increasingly French-Canadian district. Merchants and clerks were consistently amongst the seven leading occupations of family heads in St. Jacques. (See Table 2.3) Professionals and owners of small workshops or the odd factory made up the rest of this group. These men supported their families on salaries or profits. Salaries might, as in the case of clerks, be low, but they were not usually as irregular as wages, nor was the work as uncertain. Profits, too, might prove precarious, but they demanded a different kind of family commitment, a different family economy than did wage earning, the focus here.

Wage earning family heads fell into three major groups within the working class - the skilled, those in injured trades and the semi and unskilled. The following section examines the leading jobs in each group in these wards. It establishes roughly what wages men could earn, and their chances of supporting a family on that wage. Those with a skill that was usually in demand and reasonably well paid, consistently made up just under a third of the family heads in each ward. In both wards French Canadians and the English and Scots were significantly more likely to be skilled workers than the Irish.¹³ Within this skilled

¹³ Compare with the findings of Gordon Darroch and Michael D. Ornstein at a national level, "Ethnicity and Occupational Structure in Canada in 1871: The Vertical Mosaic in Historical Perspective", Canadian

TABLE 2.2

THE CLASS POSITION OF MALE FAMILY HEADS OF DIFFERENT ORIGINS

	<u>Ste. Anne</u>			<u>St. Jacques</u>		
	French	Irish	English/ Scottish	French	Irish	English/ Scottish
	<u>1861</u>					
Non Working Class	21%	12%	27%	23%	44%	35%
Skilled	39%	19%	54%	34%	13%	27%
Injured	10%	4%	3%	8%	6%	9%
Semi-skilled	11%	7%	8%	19%	6%	9%
Unskilled	18%	58%	8%	16%	31%	0
	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total No. of Male Family Heads	71	137	37	154	16	11
	<u>1871*</u>					
	French	Irish	English/ Scottish	French	Irish	English/ Scottish
Non Working Class	13%	24%	29%	29%	77%	54%
Skilled	43%	14%	42%	31%	6%	29%
Injured	16%	4%	2%	16%	-	-
Semi-skilled	7%	9%	9%	6%	12%	7%
Unskilled	21%	49%	19%	18%	6%	11%
	100%	100%	101%	100%	101%	101%
Total No. of Male Family Heads	108	136	94	259	17	28
	<u>1881</u>					
	French	Irish	English/ Scottish	French	Irish	English/ Scottish
Non Working Class	19%	18%	27%	32%	56%	67%
Skilled	33%	17%	39%	33%	19%	17%
Injured	7%	4%	4%	13%	-	-
Semi-skilled	14%	14%	4%	7%	-	-
Unskilled	27%	46%	25%	16%	25%	17%
	100%	99%	99%	101%	100%	101%
Total No. of Male Family Heads	109	159	92	401	16	18

* Significant difference at p. > .001

Source: Male family heads reporting an occupation, 10 per cent random samples.

category a division should be made between traditional crafts largely associated with woodworking and construction and the skilled jobs that had emerged as part of the industrial revolution. French Canadian heads predominated in the former crafts - most noticeably as carpenters and joiners - trades which were especially vulnerable to seasonal and cyclical fluctuations. The English and Scots predominated in the newer skills, ones that were generally in greater demand, more secure and better paid. Blacksmiths, engineers, machinists and mechanics of all kinds found work in the foundries and factories of Ste. Anne ward and in the workshops of the Grand Trunk Railway. These skilled occupations were held by around 9 per cent of the family heads of Ste. Anne. Engineers and blacksmiths were consistently amongst the ten leading occupations there. (See Table 2.3) Only 2 per cent of St. Jacques family heads, in contrast, reported these skilled jobs for fewer such work opportunities prevailed there. Some blacksmiths may have performed their craft as their forefathers had - shoeing horses for the carters of their area, perhaps mending metal goods for artisans and families. Most of the men in these trades, however, worked in the growing number of foundries and factories that epitomized Montreal's industrial revolution and work in Ste. Anne ward. Engineers comprised between 2 and 4 per cent of Ste. Anne's family heads. Engineers had been amongst the first skilled workers to form unions in Montreal. In 1853 they had amalgamated with the British Society of Engineers, giving themselves

Historical Review, LXI (September 1980). They argue that at the national level there were no clear ethnic occupational rankings. These they suggested "are generated within the context of local political economies", p.330.

TABLE 2.3

THE TEN LEADING OCCUPATIONS OF MALE FAMILY HEADS

1861 - 1881

Ste. Anne

1861		1871		1881	
Occupation	%	Occupation	%	Occupation	%
1 Labourer	33%	Labourer	29%	Labourer	31%
2 Carpenter	9%	Carter	5%	Carter	8%
3 Carter	6%	Carpenter	5%	Carpenter	4%
4 Blacksmith	3%	Engineer	4%	No Reported Job	3%
5 Shoemaker	3%	Dealer/Trader	4%	Blacksmith	3%
6 Moulder	2%	Shoemaker	3%	Engineer	3%
7 Dealer/Trader	2%	Blacksmith	3%	Storeman	2%
8 Engineer	2%	No Reported Job	2%	Machinist	2%
9 Clerk	2%	Grocer	2%	Clerk	2%
10 Tailor	2%	Butcher	2%	Shoemaker	2%
% In Leading Occupations	64%		59%		60%
Total No. of Male Family Heads	295		354		380

St. Jacques

1861		1871		1881	
Occupation	%	Occupation	%	Occupation	%
1 Labourer	16%	Labourer	16%	Labourer	14%
2 Carter	15%	Carpenter	11%	Shoemaker	10%
3 Carpenter	10%	Shoemaker	10%	Carpenter	9%
4 Merchant	8%	Merchant	6%	Clerk	6%
5 Shoemaker	7%	Carter	5%	Carter	5%
6 No Reported Job	5%	Clerk	5%	No Reported Job	4%
7 Clerk	3%	Dealer/Trader	3%	Merchant	4%
8 Bricklayer	3%	Painter	3%	Baker	3%
9 Stonemason	2%	Legal Profession	2%	Painter	3%
10 Butcher	2%	Bookkeeper	2%	Tailor	2%
		Roofer	2%		
		No Reported Job	2%		
% In Leading Occupations	71%		67%		60%
Total No. of Male Family Heads	203		321		472

both power and protection in the workplace.¹⁴

Although all men in these skilled trades faced continued changes in the size of their workplaces, and some in the kinds of machines they were making or using, most faced no major loss of their control over the work process in this period. They constituted a core of well paid workers. Their particular skills were usually in demand. Organized and often affiliated to international unions, they could dictate to some extent the pace and timing of their work.¹⁵ What data exist on the wages of such men confirms their position near the top of the skill and pay hierarchy. American mechanics imported to Montreal specifically to work for a sewing machine manufacturer were reported to earn \$5.00 to \$7.00 per day in 1874,¹⁶ compared to the \$1.00 a day a labourer could earn. Two years later workers in a type foundry averaged \$11.00 to \$12.00 a week - about \$2.00 a day, making \$450 a year.¹⁷ In a Montreal brass foundry the men - all older men with families and children to support - had successfully gone on strike in the 1870's raising wages there to \$10.00 to \$15.00 a week, apparently similar to the American wage for

¹⁴ Eugene Forsey, The Canadian Labour Movement, 1812-1902, CHA Booklet No.27, p.4; Steve Langdon, The Emergence of the Canadian Working Class Movement, (Toronto, New Hogtown Press, 1975).

¹⁵ See for instance, RCFLC., evidence of H.R. Ives, iron founder and hardware manufacturer, p.254.

¹⁶ Canada, Journals, 1874, "Report on the Manufacturing Interests of the Dominion", p.51.

¹⁷ Canada, Journals, 1876, "Report on the Causes of Depression", p.84.

equivalent plumbers and gas and steam fitters.¹⁸ Between 1878 and 1884 the average wages in several Montréal foundries (reported by the owners) had apparently increased from under \$380.00 annually to about \$407.00.¹⁹ In 1882, when the first consistent, comparative data on Montreal wage rates were made available by the immigration agent, blacksmiths, the most traditional and precarious of such trades, were reported to earn between \$1.50 and \$2.00 a day.²⁰ Engineers and machinists would have earned more. For men in most of these skilled trades work was regular and winter slowdowns or closures much less common than in many other trades.²¹

Amongst skilled workers in the construction trades, in contrast, winter always brought insecurity and a slowdown in the amount of work available. Carpenters and joiners formed the majority of skilled family heads in both wards constituting about 28 per cent of the skilled workers of St. Jacques and 16 per cent of those of Ste. Anne. They ranked consistently among the three leading occupations. (See Table 2.3). We know little in detail about their craft, about where they worked or how it was changing.²² Some found jobs with contractors, working on

¹⁸ IBID, pp.148-149.

¹⁹ Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers, 1885, Paper No. 37, "Report on the State of the Manufacturing Industries of Ontario and Quebec", p.20.

²⁰ Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers, 1882, Paper No. 4, Appendix 3, Annual Report of the Montreal Immigration Agent", pp.110-111. (Hereafter, "Annual Report of the Immigration Agent".)

²¹ RCRLC., Evidence of H.R. Ives, p.254.

²² Research needs to be done on the work conditions of carpenters and joiners. For a very brief discussion, based on the evidence given

housing construction in the city. In this case they had to provide their own set of tools. One joiner estimated in 1888 that an average tool chest could cost \$100.00 to \$125.00 and that a further \$10.00 to \$15.00 was required annually for maintenance.²³ Such outside work could lead to wage problems. Contractors were known to disappear once the job was done, leaving the workers without their pay and unable to trace them or take legal steps to retrieve it. Others had to wait several days until the master builder turned up with their wages.²⁴

Contracting builders were increasingly likely to have their own workshops, even small factories where men were paid to work with the circular saws and moulding machines that were transforming the processing of wood. Such workshops used both skilled and unskilled labour. Few real apprentices were taken on, and some contractors were reported to engage single men from the country at the peak of the season, discharging "fathers of families" to save on wages.²⁵ The title carpenter or joiner thus masked a spectrum of different jobs performed in a variety of places. Yet carpenters and joiners felt they had enough in common in the 1860's and the 1880's to form their own unions; precisely to improve their work conditions and resist job changes. At

to the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital, See F. Harvey, Révolution Industrielle et Travailleurs, pp.110-111.

²³ RCRLC., Evidence of Stanislaus Paquette, joiner, pp.651-652.

²⁴ IBID, Evidence of Stanislaus Paquette, p.652.

²⁵ IBID, Evidence of Douglas Rutherford, builder, pp.536-537; Evidence of Felix Casey, builder and contractor, p.541; Evidence of Stanislaus Paquette, p.649.

least six locals of carpenters belonged to the Knights of Labour in the late 1880's.²⁶ All shared seasonal insecurity. Winter meant the end of work for most men in the construction trades. City lumber yards closed in November. Skilled workers counted themselves lucky if they found labouring jobs.

There is reasonable evidence of carpenters' wages in the 1880's. In 1882 they could earn between \$1.50 and \$2.00 daily. In some good years the maximum rose to \$2.50.²⁷ Within the construction trades, carpenters and joiners were the least well paid workers. One contractor reported paying bricklayers from \$3.00 to \$3.50 in 1888, whereas his carpenters received only \$1.80.²⁸ At the maximum of \$2.00 a day, a carpenter could earn \$480.00 a year if he worked six days a week for forty weeks. At \$1.50, in contrast, he could earn only \$360.00. At the latter rate men needed to find work for as many months as possible to compensate for their low wages. Carpenters who were fathers of families were reported to be leaving Montreal because wages there were much lower than elsewhere.²⁹ Those carpenters and joiners who gave evidence in 1888 reported on a wide variety of working conditions and wages received. All agreed their wages were lower than elsewhere. Joiner, Stanislaus

²⁶ Jacques Rouillard, "Répertoire des Syndicats au Québec", in Noel Belanger et al., Les Travailleurs Québécois p.204.

²⁷ Jacques Bernier, "La Condition des travailleurs, 1851-1896", in N. Belanger et al., Les Travailleurs Québécois, 1851-1896 p.40.

²⁸ RCRLC, Evidence of Ludger Consineau, p.581.

²⁹ IBID, Evidence of S. Paquette, joiner, p.650; Evidence of Douglas Rutherford, builder, pp.534,542; anonymous evidence, pp.641-2.

Paquette reported that carpenters generally lived "in the lanes or at the back of a yard ... because they do not earn enough".³⁰

More precarious still in their work and living conditions were those men and women whose trades were undergoing dramatic reorganization. Most important among these were the shoemakers who predominated in the injured trades in these wards. Shoemakers consistently ranked in the three leading occupations of the family heads of St. Jacques. Only labourers and carpenters exceeded them in 1861 and 1871. By 1881 they constituted the second most important job, involving 10 per cent of the family heads of that ward. In Ste. Anne, in contrast, shoemakers became less and less important as the trade moved eastward in the city and became increasingly French Canadian. From the fifth most prevalent occupation in 1861 shoemakers dropped to the tenth two decades later. (See Table 2.3)

Shoemakers' wages dropped between the 1860's and 1880's as their trade was dramatically divided up into separate branches. Some men and women worked for wages in factories; some on piece-work in factories and an indeterminable number of men and their families sewed shoes at home. Shoemakers appearing before the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in 1888 argued that their wages had fallen by "about 15 to 20 per cent in certain branches".³¹ Insecurity that derived from

³⁰ IBID, p.651.

³¹ Jacques Bernier, "La Condition des Travailleurs", pp.541-542; RCRLC., Evidence of Elie Ricard, shoemaker, p.369. On the shoemaking trade between 1840 and 1870 and their fight against its

the abrupt changes in their trade marked the testimony of these men and appears to have permeated their daily lives.³² Wage rates published by the Minister of Agriculture in the 1880's support the shoemakers' claim. Daily pay fell from between \$1.25 and \$2.00 in 1882 to between \$1.00 and \$1.50 by the end of the decade.³³ At \$1.25 a shoemaker working six days a week for forty weeks could have earned only \$300.00 annually. Estimates derived from employers' figures in 1885 suggest that many did not make even this amount, for the average salary of workers in the boot and shoe industry was a meagre \$275.00 a year.³⁴ In the 1860's shoemakers had actively organized and attempted to prevent the re-organization of their trade and the introduction of machinery. In 1869 Montreal shoemakers joined the Knights of St. Crispin. They fought not only against new machinery, but for higher wages and to protect themselves against those masters who did not give them sufficient for both themselves and their families to live upon.

re-organization see Joanne Burgess, "L'Industrie de la chaussure" and Gregory S. Kealey, "Artisans respond to Industrialism: Shoemakers, Shoe-factories and the Knights of St. Crispin in Toronto", Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers, 1973; Gregory Kealey, Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892, ch.3.

³² RCRLC., Evidence of Olivier Benoit, boot and shoemaker, pp.369,364.

³³ "Annual Report of the Immigration Agent", 1882, pp.110-111. Montreal", p.16.

³⁴ Calculated from figures in Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers, 1885, Paper No.37, "Report on the State of the Manufacturing Industries of Ontario and Quebec". But note this average would include the wages of women and children. Males could have averaged \$300.00 or more.

In 1869 shoemakers went on strike, explaining that their wages had fallen so much annually that they were receiving two thirds of what they had earned four to five years earlier.³⁵ By the 1880's most of the tasks that had once required years of learning were performed by machinery and by unskilled workers. "Outside of ... lasters", a shoe manufacturer explained in 1888, "in our business, skilled workers are not required ... most of our work that skilled men would be desired for is done by machinery." Lasters in that year earned a healthy \$12.00 a week, compared to the \$7.00 to \$9.00 other shoeworkers could earn on wages in his factory.³⁶ Those on piece work within shoe factories could raise their weekly wage when there was sufficient work to do. Yet in slack times they received no pay, and had to wait around the factory until work was available.³⁷ In these two wards French Canadians became more and more dominant in shoemaking and other injured trades as the process of work transformation accelerated. In 1861 in St. Jacques roughly equal proportions of French, Irish, English and Scottish family heads had worked in these trades. By a decade later French Canadian family heads alone held such jobs in that ward. They were more heavily involved in Ste. Anne as well (Table 2.2).

Semi and unskilled workers constituted the least well paid, most

³⁵ Joanne Burgess, "L'industrie de la chaussure à Montréal"; Mandements, Lettres Pastorales, Circulaires et Autres Documents, Publié dans le diocèse de Montréal depuis son erection, Vol. V, pp.458-459; La Minerve, 10 Septembre 1869.

³⁶ RCRLC., Evidence of Z. Lapiere, Shoemanufacturer, p.437.

³⁷ Evidence of Olivier Benoit, p.364; Evidence of a leather cutter, p.238.

vulnerable fraction of the working class. In these wards carters were the major group within what historians have categorized as a semi-skilled group.³⁸ Carters constituted the second most important occupation of male family heads in Ste. Anne in 1871 and 1881. There the Lachine Canal, the nearby port, the Railway terminus and factories and markets offered the possibility of steady trade. In St. Jacques carters became less and less important, falling from 15 per cent of family heads in 1861 to 5 per cent two decades later. A carter's income was apparently dependent on the number of rides he gave, or goods he transported in any day. With the port's closure in winter and the accompanying slowdown of trade their takings diminished. Their trade, like shoemaking was undergoing changes, not in the workprocess, but in the structure of ownership. A few major owners and master carters were rapidly displacing the small, independent owners of a horse and a cart. Margaret Heap has estimated that by 1861 24 to 30 per cent of carters were proletarianized, no longer possessing either cart or horse of their own. By 1871 this process had clearly increased dramatically. Consolidation of ownership and control in a few hands left 60 per cent of the carters of Ste. Anne without either cart or horse.³⁹

³⁸ Bruce Laurie, Theodore Hershberg and George Alter quite rightly argue that "the category of "semiskilled" workers has rested on too little knowledge of work content to make it analytically useful". "Immigrants and Industry", p.95. I have retained it with some qualms, hoping for others to do further work on this hodge podge of occupations.

³⁹ Margaret Heap, "La Grève des Charretiers à Montréal, 1864", Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française, 31, (December 1977), p.375. 1871 information is based on matching personal and property schedules of the manuscript census for those Carters in my sample.

Least secure but most prevalent of all workers were those who had no skill required in the market place, either because they had never acquired one or because the skill they had was not needed. General labourers constituted between 29 and 33 per cent of all family heads in Ste. Anne over these decades and 14 to 16 per cent of those of St. Jacques. (See Table 2.3) Most labourers had to seek work from day to day or job to job. In good times major public works might offer steady employment, even higher wages for a season. Thus, in the summer of 1882, construction of the CPR, the enlarging of the Lachine Canal and other public works around Montreal increased the demand for unskilled labour so much that the "demand for navvies and common labourers generally could not be satisfied".⁴⁰ Then labourers could command the top price, perhaps even \$1.50 a day for a few months. Winter and economic down-swings quickly punctured such periods of plenty. As available work contracted, general labourers competed not only amongst themselves, but with jobless skilled workers for whatever employment was available.

While French Canadians predominated in trades undergoing transformation and requiring less and less skill, the Irish dominated general labouring. In Ste. Anne nearly half the Irish family heads were unskilled labourers in every decade, compared to about one quarter of those of other origins. (See Table 2.1) Irish family heads in Ste. Anne had entered semi or unskilled trades following migration and

⁴⁰ Canada, Sessional Papers, No.14, 1883, "Annual Report of the Montreal Immigration Agent", p.105.

remained there over these decades. Their children were somewhat less likely than they to enter such jobs, but semi and unskilled occupations continued to employ from 33 to 44 per cent of those of Irish origin born in Canada or elsewhere outside Ireland throughout this period.

The scanty evidence available on labourers' wages suggests that they increased only slightly over this period. In 1861 a few labourers mistakenly reported their own monthly wages on their census schedule. They ranged between \$18.00 and \$21.66 - or \$4.50 to \$5.50 weekly.⁴¹ These wages of around a dollar a day for labourers would remain typical for at least two decades depending on the economic conjuncture. In the 1880's Montreal labourers earned slightly more - between \$1.00 and \$1.25 a day. In 1888 it took a labourer nearly two hours to earn sufficient to buy a six pound loaf of bread.⁴²

Labourers working on the Canal and other public works of Ste. Anne ward did not simply accept low wages and poor work conditions. Like the Irishmen employed elsewhere in Canada on such works they fought for better wages. Irish labourers working in the Lachine Canal had struck in 1843, they and their French Canadian associates came together to do so again in 1877 and 1878.⁴³ In the 1880's labourers throughout Montreal

⁴¹ Mss Census, Ste. Anne, 1861 fo. 1226; St. Jacques, 1861 fo. 7920.

⁴² RCRLC., Evidence of Edmond Chaput, baker workman, p.566. A six pound loaf of bread cost 16 cents in 1888.

⁴³ Jean Hamelin et. al., Répertoire des Grèves dans la Province de Québec au XIXe siècle, (Montreal, Les Presses de l'École des hautes études commerciales, 1970); Jacques Rouillard and Judith Burt, "Les Grèves", in Noel Bélanger et al., Les Travailleurs Québécois,

were attracted to the ranks of the Knights of Labour, though many withdrew when the church denounced such organizations.⁴⁴

Wage differentials of what appear today to have been a miniscule twenty-five cents a day separated the skilled worker from the less skilled, the man in an injured trade from a day labourer. When the Minister of Agriculture published Montreal daily wage rates for 1882 a labourer was cited as earning \$1.00 to \$1.25, a shoemaker \$1.25 to \$2.00, a blacksmith \$1.50 to \$2.00 and a carpenter \$1.50 to \$2.25. A bricklayer or saddlers wage might go as high as \$2.50.⁴⁵ Wages and the cost of living fluctuated in response to conjunctural changes in the economy and structural transformations in production. Judging from the meagre evidence available, wages do not seem to have increased much over the period under study. Male labourers and unskilled factory workers' wages remained, as we have seen, at between \$1.00 and \$1.25 a day depending on the season, conjuncture and demand for labour. Workers giving evidence to the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in 1888 generally agreed that wages had changed little over the previous decades while costs, especially rentals, had risen. Workers in some trades were able to resist re-organization of work and

1851-1896, pp.113-150,201.

⁴⁴ On the Knights of Labour in Montreal see Fernand Harvey, "Les Chevaliers du Travail, les états-unis et la société québécoise, 1882-1902", in Fernand Harvey, ed., Aspects Historiques du mouvement ouvrier au Québec, (Montréal Boréal Express, 1973) and Jacques Martin, "Les chevaliers du travail et le syndicalisme internationale à Montréal", Thèse de Maîtrise, Université de Montréal, 1965.

⁴⁵ "Annual Report of the Immigration Agent", 1882, pp.110-111.

mechanisation, to maintain control in the workplace and with it some say about wage rates. Others like the shoemakers failed, and saw their wages plummet as a result.

Men's Wages and the Cost of Living

The existence of the 1882 indication of wages along with prices for Montreal makes it possible to assess, in an abstract way, how the wage rates already outlined for the skilled, injured and unskilled worker translated into different standards of living. The daily wage combined with the regularity of work to determine how much money a man could hand over to his wife to feed and clothe the family and run the household. Clearly, how a worker and his family survived, even in good times, depended not only on the wage he could command but also on the age and number of children he had and on the ability of his wife as household and wage manager. The latter aspect of a wife's role in the family economy will be examined in chapters Four and Five. The following section assesses the adequacy of wages for families of different sizes on the assumption that the entire wage was made available for food, clothing, rent and fuel. It will determine how the differences of 25 cents a day just outlined might translate into divergent standards of living.

The standard of living expected by people is historically,

culturally and class specific. Moving beyond the calorific requirements necessary to sustain life to determining just how much money or food people needed at a specific time involves both normative and quantitative problems. Determining the amount necessary to escape poverty, itself a relative concept, is even more difficult. All such attempts, no matter how scientific their end results may appear, reflect a great deal of normative judgement about what constitutes an "adequate standard of living".⁴⁶ Yet the attempt is worth making. Examination of the changing standard of living of workers over time is a crucial component in understanding the impact of industrial capitalism and in influencing the context of workers' organization. Knowledge of the cost of living is fundamental to any examination of the functioning of the family wage economy.

The historian seeking an assessment of the basic necessities of life and their costs in Canada in this period faces meagre success. Not until 1921 did the Canadian Department of Labour first set out to estimate a basic budget for the working class. While poverty remained a

⁴⁶ Michael R. Haines, "Poverty, Economic Stress and the Family in a Late Nineteenth Century American City: Whites in Philadelphia, 1880", In Theodore Heshberg ed., Philadelphia. For other attempts to criticize and to assess the standard of living historically see Steven Dubnoff, "A Method for Estimating the Economic Welfare of American Families of Any Composition: 1860-1909", Historical Methods Newsletter, 13 (1980); John Foster, Class Struggle, esp. Appendix I; Michael Anderson, Family Structure, pp.29-32; Lynn H. Lees, Exiles of Erin, p.100-106; Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty, pp.30-43; Michael J. Piva, The Condition of the Working Class in Toronto, 1900-1921, pp.36-39.

fact of life in the twentieth century,⁴⁷ the standard of living expected by Canadian workers had changed so much by then, that were the 1921 budget applied to the 1870's or 1880's all but a few of the best paid and smallest of working class families would have fallen well below the poverty line. Clearly such a standard was too high to use for Montreal in the 1860's, 1870's and 1880's. An alternative basis for estimating what was necessary to survive had to be sought. The standard most widely used by British historians has been the basic diet and other costs that B. Seebohm Rowntree determined were necessary to keep a man in reasonable working condition in 1902. When Rowntree set out to study the living conditions, incomes and poverty of the people of York at the turn of the century he carefully examined all the contemporary writing on diets. The standard diet that he finally chose and applied was slightly less generous than that provided for able bodied paupers in English workhouses. Men in the workhouse had to perform demanding physical labour. Officials therefore strove to keep them well enough fed to work well, but minimize costs.⁴⁸

Rowntree's standard has several advantages. First of all it is simple to apply, requiring knowledge of the prices of a small range of foodstuffs. Secondly he provided assessments of the varied needs of different family members on the basis of age and sex. This enables a

⁴⁷ Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty; Michael Piva, The Condition of the Working Class in Toronto.

⁴⁸ B. Seebohm Rowntree, Poverty: A Study of Town Life, (London, Thos. Nelson and Sons, 1902); John Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, pp.255-269.

much more exact determination of each family's needs to be made than do budgets based, for instance, on an average family of five.⁴⁹ Thirdly results could be compared with the assessment of poverty levels made on the same basis by Lynn Lees for the Irish of London in the 1850's and 1860's, and John Foster for the workers of North Hampton, South Shields and Oldham in the same period.⁵⁰ The disadvantages of Rowntree's scale lie in the period of its creation and the fact that it represents an English rather than North American standard. Would a diet developed at the turn of the century represent too high a standard for workers of the 1870's or 1880's? The diet is so spartan that this criticism can safely be laid aside. Furthermore, the fact that British historians have used the standard for the same period as this work offers additional support. Would it have been better to apply an American Standard of living than a British one, using perhaps the budgets set out by the Massachusetts department of labour in 1875 or the U.S. Commissioner of Labour in the 1880s?⁵¹ Available evidence on wages suggests that most American workers were much better paid than Canadian men and women and that American prices were lower.⁵² Canadian workers in turn were probably better off than their English counterparts, although this whole question requires

⁴⁹ See for instance the typical weekly expenditures estimated by the Department of Labour for a family of five in 1921, cited in Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty, pp.150-151.

⁵⁰ Lynn Lees, Exiles of Erin; John Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution.

⁵¹ Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labour, Sixth Annual Report, 1875; U.S. Commissioner of Labour, Fourth Annual Report, 1888; Sixth Annual Report, 1890; Seventh Annual Report, 1891.

⁵² J. G. Snell, "The Cost of Living in Canada in 1870" Histoire Sociale/Social History 12 (May 1979) p.187; RCRUC., p.50.

detailed study. Certainly the American "scale of living or standard of life" was commonly held to be higher than that of British workers.⁵³ By using Rowntree's diet, which represents the sparsest available assessment of food necessary to survive there is no question of over-emphasising the difficulties of survival.

Food, rents, fuel and clothing constituted the major components of a family's expenses except in times of severe illness when medical attention and medicine were required. Such costs clearly fluctuated not only with changes in the economic conjuncture, but also with family size and the ages of children. Not only was more food required as children grew older, but more space was needed, usually involving higher rental costs. There can, as a result, be no one adequate family budget. Estimates have to take family size, children's ages and space requirements into account. Herein lies the advantage of Rowntree's scale. The section that follows assesses the amount of money that would have been required to feed, clothe and shelter Montreal families of different sizes and stages at 1882 prices and wages.

Rowntree's weekly diet for a grown male comprised 118 ounces of bread, 48 ounces of oatmeal, 4 1/2 pints of milk, 1 1/2 pounds of cheese, 34 ounces of potatoes and 9 ounces of bacon, as well as "a

⁵³ W.O. Atwater, Investigations on the Chemistry and Economy of Food, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Bulletin No. 21, p.211, cited in B.S. Rowntree, Poverty, 1902.

little" tea, coffee, sugar, treacle or margarine.⁵⁴ As Irish, English and French-Canadian workers apparently ate meat in preference to cheese I have, following Foster, replaced one pound of cheese with the equivalent amount of cheap meat.⁵⁵ This diet was allowed for all males over eighteen. The food intake of all other family members was weighted according to estimates of their requirements. Boys aged 14 and over for example received 85 per cent of a male diet, children under five 33 per cent and others in between. A wife, and any women over 16 were allowed 80 per cent of the male diet with no allowance for extra intake when pregnant or breast-feeding - a weighting that from all available evidence reflects working class practice.⁵⁶ At 1882 Montreal prices this diet would have cost approximately 91 cents for grown males weekly, 73 cents for adult females 77 cents for boys over fourteen and 50 cents for children aged five to thirteen.

Most families passed through a series of identifiable stages over their life cycle, each involving different kinds of economic and

⁵⁴ B. Seeborn Rowntree, Poverty, Canadian Prison Diets were Apparently similar though with more bread and potatoes and perhaps fewer extras. S. P. Day reported in 1864 that prisoners received 1 pint of oatmeal gruel and 8oz of bread for breakfast, 1 pint of soy, 8oz of bread and 6oz of meat twice a week, with bread and potatoes or gruel on other days for dinner and supper the same as breakfast. S. P. Day, English America, p.124.

⁵⁵ John Foster, Class Struggle, pp.255-6. For some indications of Montreal worker's eating habits see the testimony of Thomas Gratorex, labourer, RCRHC., Quebec Evidence, p.86; Walter H. Smith Collection, McGill University, Rare Book Room, "Cash Book". For further development of the question of diet see Chapter Four.

⁵⁶ The weightings were developed by A. Bowley, Livelihood and Poverty, Class Struggle, (London, 1915) cited in and used by John Foster, p.256. For further details see Appendix D.

personal adjustments. A young couple without children could live quite well on one wage. If the wife also earned some money they could afford to set up their household and perhaps save for the future. The birth of one child did not increase food cost very much. Once more children were born and they began to grow older, eating more like adults, food costs increased dramatically. Figure 2.1 illustrates the estimated costs of the Rowntree diet and of clothing, food and fuel for Montreal families at different life cycle stages. In this figure Stage I represents a couple with only a baby. The hypothetical family represented in Stage II includes three children aged one, two and four. At 1882 prices they would have spent around \$132.00 annually on food. As children grew older (Stages III and IV), or if there were more children, expenses rose dramatically. The hypothetical family represented by Stage IV in the figure, had two boys aged eighteen and thirteen and a girl of seventeen. Their food alone would have cost around \$195.00 on the Rowntree diet. For families with five children of similar ages (represented as Stage V) food costs alone would have reached over \$250.00 - more than a labourer's estimated annual wage. A couple who had five teenage children still living with them (represented as Stage VI) would have needed at least \$297.96 for food alone. Clearly more than one worker was require in such families.⁵⁷

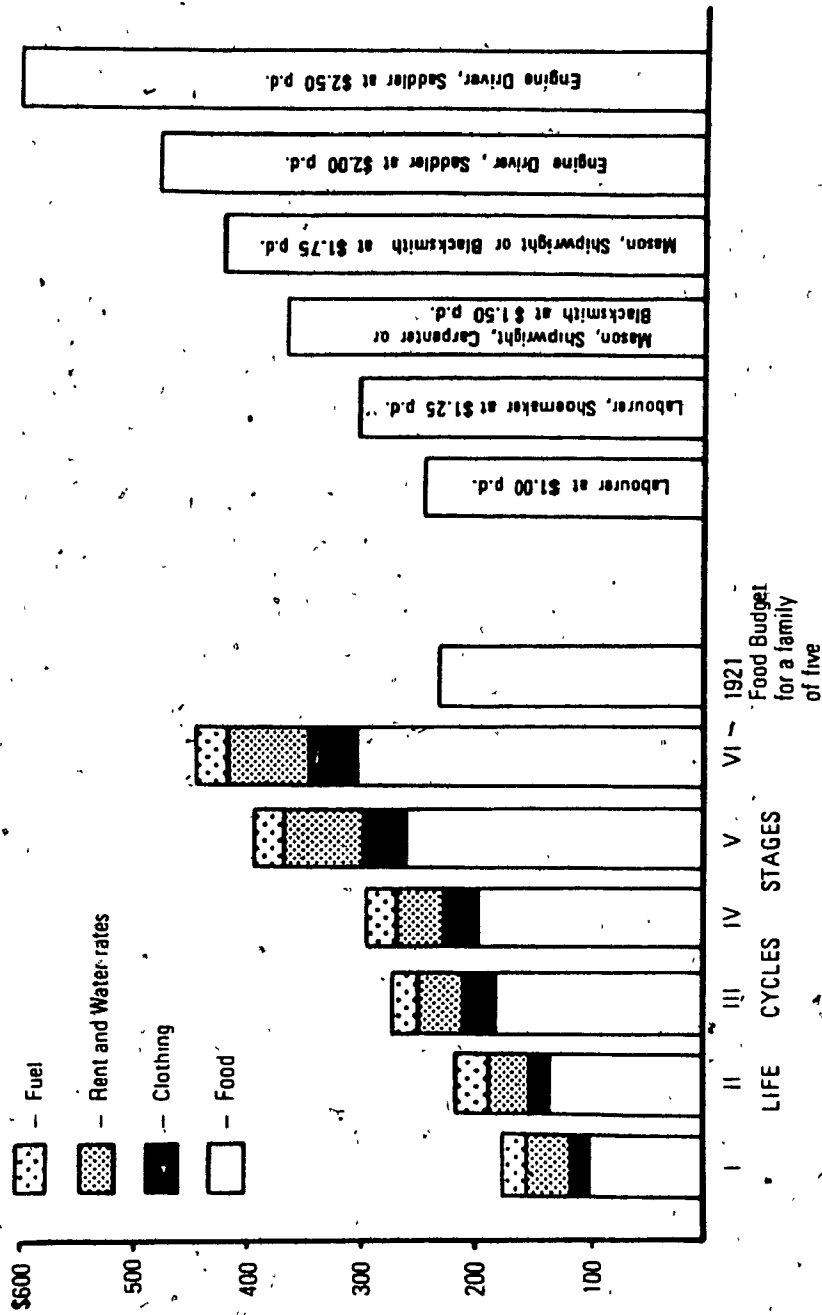
The estimates are not only minimal but, in the long run

⁵⁷ Compare these minimum estimates to \$4.00 to \$5.00 weekly that shoemakers estimated they spent on food for a family with two to three children in 1888. RCRLC, Evidence of Eli Massy, Cigarmaker, RCRLC, pp.250-1.

Fig. 2.1 : Estimated minimum costs of living for families at different life cycle stages compared to
Estimated incomes in various occupations

1882 prices & wages*

A) Minimum Estimated Annual Costs for Food, Clothing, Rent and Fuel only, 1882 Prices. B) Estimated Annual Incomes for Selected Occupations, at 6 Days per Week and 40 weeks per Year



FOR THE BASIS AND SOURCES OF THESE CALCULATIONS SEE APPENDIX D.

unrealistic. No allowance has been made for any other purchases - for furniture, utensils, cleaning or lighting expenses, medicine or schooling. Nor have even small purchases of tobacco or alcohol been allowed. The diet is unhealthy. No fruits or vegetables that would give needed vitamins and minerals were included. Figure 2.1 therefore underestimates the minimum costs necessary to survive. Despite this, the inadequacy of the wages of the unskilled is clear.⁵⁸

Table 2.4 sets out the percentage of a man's income that would have gone toward food in families with one, three or five children at the life cycle stages used for figure 2.1. By the time a man reached forty the average family comprised somewhat more than the three children allowed in the estimate at stages II to IV. The importance of differences of as little as twenty-five cents a day is clear in both Figure 2.1 and Table 2.4. Labourers, as we have seen, headed around one third of Ste. Anne's families and one sixth of those in St. Jacques. Working forty weeks a year and six days a week at \$1.00 a day these men would have had to allow over 75 per cent of their income for food to maintain a wife and three children only one of whom was over 15. Once rent was paid 10 per cent would have remained for clothing, fuel and all other expenses. A blacksmith or machinist, in contrast, would have

⁵⁸ It might be argued, on the other hand, that the wage estimates are too low because of the number of days work allowed. In the absence of any data, other than casual testimony given as evidence in 1888, on the number of days worked, it is impossible to ascertain what an average for different trades would have been. Given the generalized slowdown during Montreal's winter and the reports of workers losing two to three months a year, the estimated 40 weeks at a full six days a week does not seem unreasonable.

TABLE 2.4
THE PERCENTAGE OF ESTIMATED INCOME THAT WOULD BE
BE REQUIRED SIMPLY TO FEED FAMILIES ON THE ROWNTREE
DIET AT DIFFERENT LIFE CYCLE STAGES

<u>Occupations</u>		<u>Labour- er</u>	<u>Shoe- maker</u>	<u>Carp- enter</u>	<u>Black- smith</u>	<u>Saddler</u>
Annual wage for forty week's work		\$240	\$300	\$360	\$420	\$480
Daily Rate		\$1.00 a day	\$1.25 a day	\$1.50 a day	\$1.75 day	\$2.00 a day
<u>Family Size and Children's Ages</u>	<u>Estimated Food Costs</u>					
I Parents and 1 child under 1	\$100.88	42	34	28	24	21
II Parents and boys 4,1 and girl 2	\$132.08	55	44	37	31	28
III Parents and boy 16 girls 14 and 8	\$182.52	76	60	50	43	38
IV Parents and boys 18,13 and girl 17	\$194.48	80	65	54	46	40
V Parents and boys 19,15, girls 16,11,9	\$258.44	107	86	72	61	54
VI Parents and boys 21, 19,17,16, girl 16	\$297.96	124	99	83	71	61
* Median Rentals for that Occupation		\$33	\$38	\$40	\$55	n/a
* Mean Rental for that occupation		\$39	\$45	\$48	\$73	n/a

*David Hanna and Sherry Olsen, "Metier, Loyers et bouts de rues", Table I.

Source: For food calculations see Appendix D.

spent only 43 per cent of his annual wages to feed the same sized family. Clearly a labourer's family could not afford even the minimal Rowntree diet once one or two children reached their early teens. Only before children passed age eleven or so would a labourer's wages have covered the family's most basic requirements - and then they sufficed only if he could indeed find steady work, did not get sick, did not spend much on alcohol or tobacco, and had a reasonably competent wife who could stretch his wage.

Take, for instance, labourer Charles Thomas. In 1888 he had a wife and one eight year old child.⁵⁹ If he earned \$1.25 a day for eight months or \$1.00 a day for ten months he could earn the \$240.00 annually set out in Table 2.4 and Figure 2.1. If, however, he could only find work at \$1.00 a day for eight months his earnings would have dropped to under \$200.00 a year. Even the minimal Rowntree diet would have cost about \$109 annually. The absolute minimum rent he could expect to pay in 1881-1882 would have been \$3.00 a month, with an extra \$4.00 in water rates. Yet only fifteen families on his street, Centre Street, were assessed at a rental of below \$30.00 annually. The majority (91 families) paid between \$31.00 and \$60.00.⁶⁰ Fuel probably cost around \$24.00. After these expenses and with only one young child to support he would have had only \$27.00 left annually for clothing, lighting, medical expenses and everything else. He needed either ten months steady work at \$1.00 a day or eight months at \$1.25 to even scrape by. He would have had to turn more than half of his income over to his wife simply to buy food.

For Charles McKenna whose family was at a later life cycle stage, survival on his labourer's wages was more precarious. Forty year old Charles and Mary McKenna had five children, three girls aged ten, three and one and two boys aged thirteen and five. On the Rowntree diet they would have paid \$203.47 or 85 per cent of his annual income in 1882 for

⁵⁹ Mss. Census, Ste. Anne, 1881, 4:286-305.

⁶⁰ Raw data collected by Sherry Olsen, David Hannah and team, from the evaluation roles, Ste. Anne, 1881.

food alone. Rent at the labourer's average of \$39.00 annually and \$24.00 worth of fuel would have cost \$266.47 total taking them above the \$240.00 he could have earned with forty weeks of work annually. No allowance has been made for clothing, school fees for the children or for basic cleaning necessities like soap, kitchen utensils or bedding. Either the family ate less than the meagre amount allowed, subsidised his wage in some way that is not apparent in the 1881 census, or went into debt at the local store. Such tight budgets could not be followed indefinitely. Illness and unemployment typified the experience of the working class. Clothing and shoes were continually required for growing children, especially in a climate where bare feet were an impossibility in winter time and where warm clothing made the difference between comfort and freezing.

Alternate strategies had to be sought to make survival ~~less~~ precarious. The importance of secondary earners, specifically children will be analyzed in the following chapter. Here it is important to stress that many families simply had no additional workers to turn to. Even when children reached thirteen or fourteen they often could not earn sufficient to raise the family income above the poverty line. Most labourers, shoemakers and unskilled workers with three or more children too young or unable to find work, faced protracted periods of poverty as the family passed through its life cycle. By matching estimated living costs in 1882 to actual families in the 1881 census, some assessment of the extent of poverty can be made. Let us assume that the labourers and shoemakers of St. Jacques and Ste. Anne earned the estimated \$240.00 annually. Where non-adult children reported an occupation we can assume

they made at least half that again. If this were the case nearly 20 per cent of all labourers' and shoemakers' families would have failed to meet these most minimal of expenses in 1882. (See Table 2.5) Had the head earned more - perhaps \$300.00, 7 per cent would still have faced dire poverty.

At the most crucial stage of the family life cycle, when half the children were still under fifteen, no labourer or shoemaker's family with three or more children and without an additional earner could have managed on \$240.00 a year. Sixty per cent, in fact, drew on additional workers. Despite extra workers, at least 45 percent of the labourers' and shoemakers' families at this life cycle stage must have fallen into poverty. Even had the head earned \$300 annually, over one quarter would have failed to make ends meet. Both estimates assume food, clothing, rent and fuel were the only expenditures. The wage labour of growing children made the later years of the life cycle less difficult. Once the majority of children reached fifteen or more, the percentage of such families failing to meet basic expenses would have dropped to around 10 percent.

Carpenters, joiners and others in the seasonal building trades averaged higher daily wages than these labourers or shoemakers but were equally likely to be unemployed in winter. Wages, as we saw, varied from \$1.50 to \$2.00 daily or \$360.00 to \$480.00 annually. On the lower wage a carpenter might just support a family of five including two children over fifteen. He could not support a family of seven. When asked whether working carpenters made any savings, joiner Stanislaus

Table 2.5

An Assessment of the Percentage of Labourers and Shoemakers Families that Fell below the Poverty Line, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques Wards, 1881.

Life Cycle Stage	Number of Workers				Total	Minimum Estimated Percentage Falling Below the Poverty Line at:			
	\$240 p. a.		\$300 p. a.			\$240 p. a.		\$300 p. a.	
	No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%
Child Under 1	12	-	-	-	12	0	-	-	-
All Children Under 11	67	8	2	-	77	12	14%	-	-
Half Under 15	13	14	2	4	33	15	45%	9	27%
Half 15 & Over	1	3	7	7	18	3	17%	1	5%
All Over 15	4	7	5	5	21	2	10%	1	5%
	97	42	16	16	161	32	20%	11	7%

This table is based on analysis of the life cycle stage, numbers of workers and numbers of children in the labourer and shoemaker headed families of the 1881 samples. It uses the costs set out in Appendix D, Table D.3 and the weightings in D.1. For more specific information on the size and composition of families failing to meet expenses see Appendix D.

Paquette, reported in 1888 that most made more debts than savings. We do not know the size of his family, however he had ended the previous winter over \$35.00 in debt.⁶¹

Those skilled workers in trades that had not been drastically re-organized, with skills that were in steady demand or belonging to strong unions were able to negotiate higher wage rates, bringing greater flexibility to their budgets. A skilled worker earning \$1.75 a day or \$420.00 annually might feed and clothe a larger family, unless the children were all in their late teens, eating like adults and not working. Catherine and Thomas Pike, for instance, had three children aged three to thirteen. Thomas worked as a blacksmith. Food for this family based on the Rowntree diet would have cost \$195.00 annually. If

⁶¹ RCRLC., p.651.

they ate better, at the standard of the 1921 labour department diet it would have cost \$280.00. They lived in a house on Congregation Street in Pointe St. Charles, near to the Grand Trunk where he probably worked. Rent would have about \$60.00 to \$70.00 annually. Had they spent \$24.00 on heating and the same amount on clothes, \$32.00 would have remained for other expenses even on the better diet. One hundred and seventeen dollars would have remained on the meagre Rowntree diet. In fact this family housed two boarders. The boarders would have cost them an extra \$80.00 a year in food and presumably more in bedding and furniture. Only one boarder, a relative, listed an occupation. Had he paid them the \$3.00 a week board, apparently normal among the working class at that time, an extra \$156.00 a year would have been added to the family income. The Pikes clearly had the means to live much better than could a labourer's family like the McKennas.⁶²

The dramatic difference between the annual wages of a labourer or shoemaker and a highly skilled worker, like an engine driver who earned \$2.50 a day, was crucial in setting the parameters of a potentially different life style. The hypothetical spendings of the families discussed above and portrayed in Figure 2.1 gave some idea of the possible standard of living of working class families, skilled and unskilled. How these reflected the actual eating, spending and living habits of Montreal workers is more difficult to determine. Three fragments of evidence confirm the distinctions within the working class,

⁶² Mss. Census, Ste. Anne, 1881, 2:66-73; Evaluation Role, Ste. Anne 1881, from Olsen raw data.

suggesting too that the allowances made are too meagre. Jules Helbronner, the liberal journalist who consistently championed the cause of Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit throughout the 1880's⁶³ published details from the credit book of one Hochelaga worker in La Presse in 1887. Like the labourers of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques this millhand earned \$6.00 a week - a dollar a day. In August 1887 he purchased \$13.12 worth of food at his grocer. There were no excessive purchases, no alcohol. If the family wanted milk, fresh meat or vegetables, they would have had to be bought elsewhere. Even without such additional purchases the worker was paying 54 per cent of his monthly salary on food. Interestingly this matches the estimate made for families with three young children in Table 2.4. An extra 75 cents for tobacco and 30 cents for soap took up 3 to 4 per cent more of his monthly salary. The impact of such small purchases on the family budget demonstrates as Helbronner pointed out, how expenses had to be pared down to the basic necessities of life.⁶⁴

When Eli Massy, a cigarmaker, appeared before the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in 1888 he gave a considered report of average wages and costs of living in his trade. After much deliberation he and his colleagues had decided that they averaged \$7.00 a week "for the whole year" - or \$364.00 - rather more than the \$300.00 estimated in Table 2.4. In a family with two to three children this was spent as follows. Schooling costs were .50c weekly, .80c were estimated

⁶³ Jean de Bonville, Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit.

⁶⁴ La Presse, 13 August, 1887, Cited in Jean de Bonville, Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit, p.106.

for fuel, \$1.50 for rent and \$4.00 to \$5.00 for food. At \$4.00 for food or 57 per cent of the income, the family retained .20c a week for clothing or other expenses. At \$5.00, or 71 per cent, they overspent by .80c a week or \$41.60 a year. Massy affirmed that unless there was no illness in the family, he could not live on the \$7.00 weekly with two children without running into debt. "When health gives way, we must, necessarily, contract debts".⁶⁵

How do the estimates of this cigarmaker compare with those allowed in this chapter? Massy's first cost, schooling, which for three children reached \$25.00 annually, was not allowed for at all in the estimated budgets. Furthermore whereas the estimated budget allowed only \$39.00 annual rental for families with children under eleven, and \$45.00 for older families, Massy reported a \$78.00 average amongst cigarmakers in 1888. Rising rentals in Montreal between 1881 and 1888 would account for some of the difference; my rental allowance was, however, clearly conservative. So too was the fuel allowance - \$24.00 compared to the \$41.60 reported by Massy. The food allowance of \$100.88 for a family with three children aged 5 to 10 was only half the \$208.00 annually or \$4.00 a week that Massy reported, though it represented a similar proportion of the income (57 per cent compared to 60 per cent). Clearly then the allowances based on the Rowntree diet were absolutely minimal, reflecting only the experience of the worst fed, most poorly paid families. That even such low amounts overran the budgets of labourers and shoemakers, once several children reached their early

⁶⁵ RCRLC., Evidence of Eli Massy, cigarmaker, pp.250-1.

teens, testifies to the inadequacy of a single wage for the majority of working class families.

The survival of a Montreal printer's wife's shopping record allows examination of how one skilled workers' family actually ate. The record is for 1879. Walter Smith had arrived from England in 1874, full of trepidation and excitement about his future as an emigrant. He had immediately found work in one Montreal printing house, then moved to the Daily Witness printing establishment. Within three years he was the foreman in the mailing department. Around this time he married. He was, by then, earning well above the \$9.00 a week he had averaged in his early months as a printer. On his arrival in Canada he had purchased sufficient clothes to last him several years - \$40.00 worth of winter clothes and another \$26.00 worth of spring and summer ones clearly more than most married workers could afford. Prior to his marriage he purchased a bedstead, a chest of drawers, miscellaneous furniture and a "second stove" for \$66.00 total.⁶⁶

Walter Smith thus already possessed many of the basic household necessities when the twenty five year old married in 1877 or '78. He and his new wife moved into a house on Vallee St, St. Laurent ward that

⁶⁶ Walter H. Smith Collection, Rare Books, McGill University, "Box"; "Diary". Walter Smith's working class credentials are not very strong. He did not remain long in the working class, but moved from printing to journalism, journalism to publishing and finally became a Professor at McGill University: In later life he became involved in the Astro-Meteorological Association in Montreal and wrote the manuscript of a science fiction novel, "The World of Mars".

had previously been rented by a labourer. Mary, perhaps at the suggestion of her rather finicky husband, began to keep a detailed record of her daily purchases. These averaged \$2.55 weekly over the ten weeks between April and July 1879 that she kept the record. This is well above the \$1.64 that a couple would have spent eating at the Rowntree standard. Annually their food, and the small amounts of coal oil, lampwicks, soap, starch, tape, lye and other odd sundries included in her shopping records, would have totalled \$133.00, probably well under a third of his annual wage. With no children or other dependents, this young couple appear to have been able to live and eat well, though not extravagantly.⁶⁷

Mary Smith shopped daily except on Sundays. She bought meat only twice or three times a week, purchasing cheap cuts such as calves heads, lamb stew, neck veal or gravy beef on weekdays. On the weekend she could afford to splurge in a way a labourer's wife could not. For Sunday dinner she bought a leg of lamb, or some beef or veal, spending up to 20 or even 30 per cent of the week's food total on that piece of meat alone. The meat may have been eaten cold over the next few days. With the exception of this apparent indulgence her purchases were thrifty and somewhat varied. Bread, lard, butter, oatmeal, sugar, eggs, tea and milk were the major items. Once or twice a week she added the fruit and vegetables so obviously absent from the Rowntree diet.⁶⁸ Had a labourer's wife with four children under fifteen attempted to feed her

⁶⁷ Walter H. Smith Collection, "Cash Book".

⁶⁸ IBID,

family a similar diet it would have cost nearly \$250.00 a year - more than their total income.

The second major and the least flexible component of working class budgets was shelter. The evaluation roles for Montreal give a reasonable indication of the rents people payed over these years. David Hanna and Sherry Olson's analysis of these roles for 1861 and 1881 shows major variations between the amounts paid by household heads of different occupations, confirming the geographical and class divisions of nineteenth century Montreal as well as the inequalities within the working class. The mean and median rentals for family heads reflected the wage differences discussed above. In 1881 labourers averaged \$39.00 annually in rents, the median rental which Olson and Hanna believe is a better measure, was \$33.00. They have grouped rents to correspond to specific types of Montreal housing. The lowest rental group was that falling below \$30.00. In Ste. Anne in 1881 nearly one third of the labourers reported in the evaluation roles rented at this rate, nearly two-thirds fell into the next category of between \$31 and \$60 annually. In St. Jacques ward were to be found some of the lowest rentals in the city. These were concentrated in the newly constructed northern sections and stretched eastward from around Aucherst Street into Ste. Marie ward.⁶⁹ Generally the streets of Montreal were fairly homogeneous, with at least three quarters of housing on any street falling into the same rental range. Housing at the lowest rentals was

⁶⁹ Raw tally sheets, Olson and Hanna data: and discussion with David Hanna.

an exception. Those labourers' paying under \$30.00, along with the few carpenters and shoemakers falling into the same category, were scattered around, sheltered in the rear houses that could be reached only through isolated small courtyards or huddled in small apartments divided up within larger buildings.⁷⁰ Others paying similar, even lower rents sublet space or boarded as families within small dwellings escaping the notice of the city officials who were "not always informed how many families are under one roof".⁷¹ Photo 2.1 illustrates the housing that cost around \$40.00 annually in 1881 - approximately the mean for labourers. On this section of Montcalm Street, in St. Jacques ward shoemakers and carters predominated both in the duplexes and in the triplexes further north in the street which rented for \$30.00 annually.

In the estimation of annual costs portrayed in Figure 2.1 the average of \$39.00 for labourers' rental was utilized for all families up to stage III of the life cycle. Once some children passed fifteen, more space would have been required. Forty-five dollars, the mean for shoemakers, was therefore allowed. Such estimates again are extremely conservative, given that two thirds of labourers and three quarters of shoemakers listed in the evaluation roles of Ste. Anne fell into a higher rental category. A labourer paid out approximately 14 per cent of his estimated salary in rent, a shoemaker 13 per cent and a carpenter

⁷⁰ David Hanna and Sherry Olson, "Métiers, Loyers et bouts de rues; L'Armature de la société Montréalaises 1881 à 1901", Cahiers de Géographie, 1983, p.12,14.

⁷¹ RCRLC., Evidence of Charles Lapierre, Montreal Assessor, p.266.

Photo 2.1

Working Class Housing from the 1870's and 1880's



This photograph of housing on Montcalm Street between Ontario and Sherbrooke streets in St. Jacques ward shows typical working class housing of the 1870's and 1880's. In 1881 the duplexes in this photograph were estimated by city assessors to rent for \$40.00 annually. The triplexes in the northern section of the street rented for \$30.00 an apartment. In houses like the one third from the left with a mansard roof, the lower floor was estimated at \$30.00 annual rent, while the two top floors comprised a single apartment estimated at \$50.00 annually. Carters and shoemakers predominated amongst the residents of this particular block in 1881.

Source: David Hanna, personal photograph collection.

or blacksmith earning \$1.50 a day, 11 per cent.

For their rents labourers received apartments with two to three rooms; better paid mechanics rented "two to four, sometimes as high as five rooms". When Herbert Ames studied the homes of Ste. Anne in 1896 he found that houses averaged 4.5 rooms. In old Griffintown, the Irish area, the average was 4.3. Across the Canal around the workshops of the Grand Trunk there were 4.2 rooms per house. And in the poorest section, bordered by Wellington and Princess Streets, 14 per cent of dwellings had only two rooms, 31 per cent only three.⁷² (See Map 2.1) The houses were poorly built, sanitation was inadequate and facilities negligible. "Many of the houses" of Montreal workers were reported to be "scarcely fit for human beings to live in, and their whole surroundings ... equally deplorable".⁷³ The conditions under which women had to work to transform wages into sustenance were, as will be shown in a following chapter, inimical to their health and that of their children. Building inspectors and sanitary inspectors alike found enforcing those by-laws that did exist extremely difficult; and faced strong pressure from landlords to avoid doing so. "The City", the overworked building inspector argued, "is too big for my eyes".⁷⁴

Rentals were a fixed monthly expense, although wages could

⁷² Herbert Ames, The City Below the Hill, p.47. (See MAP). RCRLC., Evidence of Dr Douglas McGregor Decrow, p.606.

⁷³ IBID, Evidence of Wm. T. Costigan, p.732.

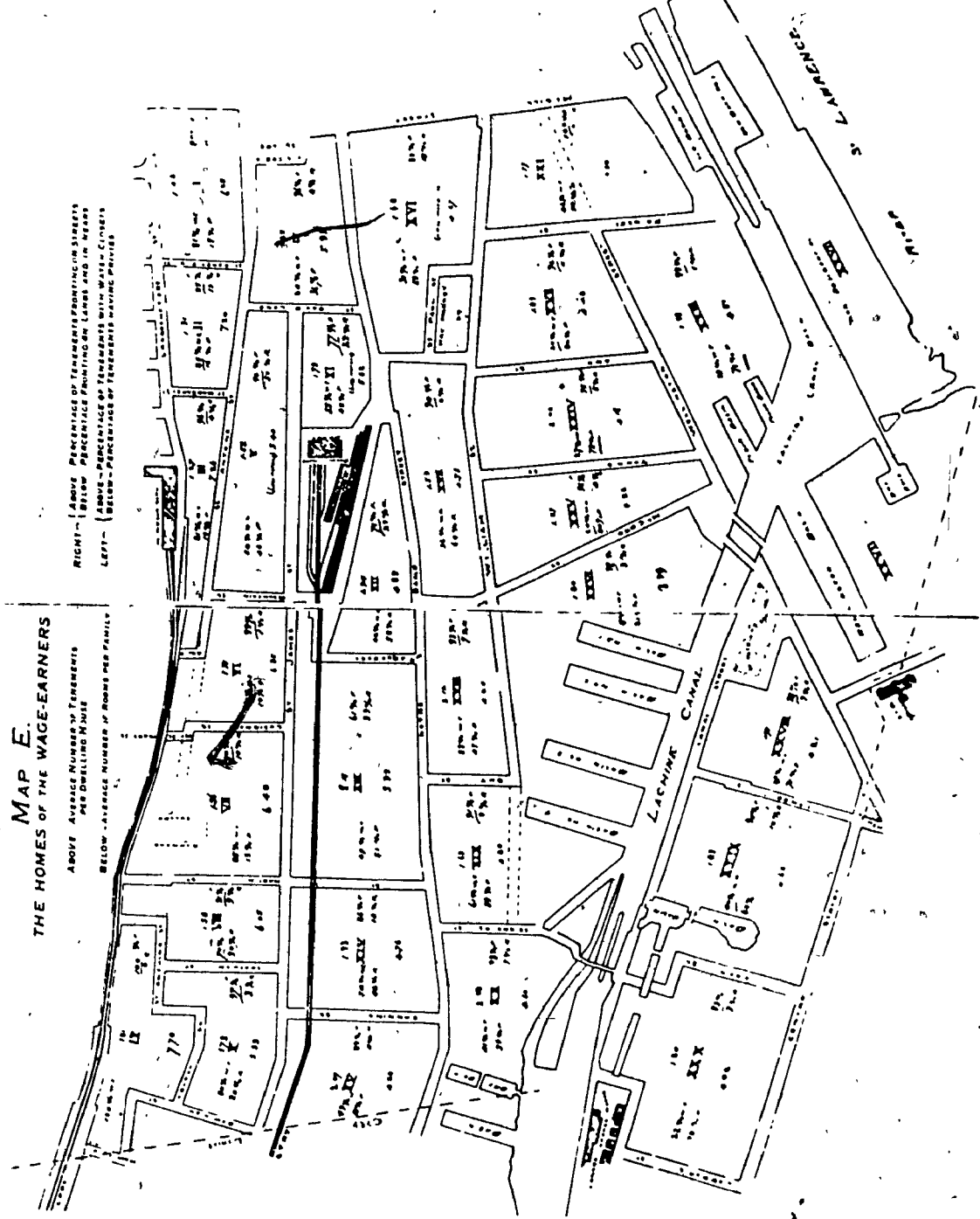
⁷⁴ IBID, Evidence of Pierre Lacroix, p.707.

Map 2.1

Herbert Ames's Map of the Homes of Wage Earners in part of
St. Anne Ward, 1896

Source: Herbert Ames, The City Below the Hill, p.47.

Map 2.1: Herbert Ames's Map of the Homes of Wage Earners in part of Ste. Anne Ward, 1896.



Source: Herbert Ames, The City Below the Hill, p. 47.

fluctuate dramatically. If wages dropped or no work was found the rent still had to be paid. Elsewhere working class families cut back on food rather than risk eviction for not paying the rent⁷⁵ - a practice probably carried out in Montreal also. Most leases were for a year, some more. Tenants were obliged to pay on the first of each month.⁷⁶ If they did not, the landlord could evict the family and also proceed to recover "a sum for damages he sustained by his house being left idle". Those unable to pay the amount due could find that a writ of possession had been taken out and all but their most basic possessions been sold. Furthermore, if any debt were not repayed, 50 per cent of wages could be seized. Several lawyers testifying before the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in 1888 believed that wage seizure should be abolished, especially for amounts under \$25.00 and for workingmen earning only \$7.00 a week.⁷⁷ Advocate Charles Doherty explained how the law worked in practice. "If a workingman earning \$7.00 a week" had a \$7.00 debt, the costs of obtaining judgement were around \$5.25. The cost of seizure was \$4.55. Therefore after the seizure had been carried out the employee would have lost half his wages and increased his debt and costs by \$1.05. This process could be repeated until all debts were cancelled.⁷⁸ A Thomas Gratorex of Montreal testified that he had been ejected for non payment of three months'

⁷⁵ Maude Pember Reeves, Round About A Pound A Week, p.199

⁷⁶ RCRLC., Evidence of Thomas Gratorex, p.86

⁷⁷ RCRLC., Evidence of Charles Doherty, advocate, p.215; IBID, Evidence of Christopher B. Carter, advocate, p.718.

⁷⁸ RCRLC., Evidence of Charles J. Doherty, p.210.

rent, worth \$22.50. His furniture, which he believed was worth \$165.00, was sold and he considered his debt and costs covered. Six years later a judgement was made against his wages, for the same debt, until eventually he paid back \$48.00.⁷⁹

Wage seizure wreaked havoc on budgets that were already too tight. A description written by Jules Helbronner was taken up and cited in the first report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital. It described the tragic case of a large family owing \$11.00 on food purchased on credit. They repaid \$7.00, then illness hit. The wife requested a delay on the repayment of the rest, but was refused. Judgement was made against them for the \$4.00. With legal costs their debt increased to \$15.00. The husband's salary, which in itself was insufficient to feed the children, was seized. The father, unable to bear the sight of his sick wife and hungry children and equally unable to pay his debt or feed the family, gave up hope and committed suicide.⁸⁰

That rentals constituted a major problem for the workingman and his family is reflected in the patterns of doubling up, or household sharing, which will be considered in chapter five. Once rented, Montreal houses had to be kept warm through the long cold winter. The prices of firewood and coal fluctuated dramatically throughout the

⁷⁹ IBID, Evidence of Thomas Gratorex, labourer, p.88.

⁸⁰ Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital, First Report, cited in Jean de Bonville, Jean Baptiste Gagnepetit, p.109.

season and from year to year. In some years when supply was low and prices astronomical, the Montreal City Council arranged for the Grand Trunk to transport firewood into the city at an agreed cost.⁸¹ Few workingmen's families had extra money to buy wood or coal in the summer when it was cheaper. In the autumn any spare cash had to go toward paying the water tax.⁸² So it was throughout the winter, when wages dropped and fuel prices rose, that most families would have purchased their fuel, probably in small uneconomical amounts. In 1888 coal was reported to have cost \$6.00 a ton. One worker argued that an average house could be heated for the winter with four tons if great care was taken.⁸³ Twenty four dollars constituted one tenth of the estimated annual wage of a labourer. The shoemakers estimated that they paid nearly double that amount for fuel.⁸⁴ Poorer families avoided purchasing coal by scrounging the streets and alleyways for scrap wood and sifting through the ashes of wealthier households for remaining lumps of coal. "As a rule", a Dr Decrow believed, "most houses were kept warm".⁸⁵ Warmth in winter was a necessity, not a luxury for the citizens of Montreal. No fuel meant discomfort, then death.

Incoming wages and costs fluctuated with the seasons, with economic cycles and with a family's life cycle. Figure 2.1 illustrated the

⁸¹ "Mayors Inaugural Address", MAR, 1871.

⁸² "Mayor's Inaugural Address", MAR, 1886, p.8.

⁸³ RCRLC., Evidence of Thomas Gratorex, p.87.

⁸⁴ IBID, Evidence of Eli Massy, Shoemaker, p.250.

⁸⁵ IBID, Evidence of Dr Douglas Decrow, p.607.

steady increase in minimum basic costs over the family life cycle and demonstrated how these rapidly outstripped the wages of labourers, shoemakers and others earning under \$1.50 a day. What it fails to capture are the uncertainties that accompanied unemployment, the sudden increases in the price of fuel, food or rent, or the havoc that illness wreaked on working class budgets. Every winter brought unemployment, lower wages and higher costs. The port, which provided work directly for thousands of labourers, carters, longshoremen and stevedores closed for four to five months. With its closure, the rhythm of business and employment for the whole city slowed down. Labourers and carters found themselves seeking alternative winter employment, although there was very little work available. City lumber yards closed down between November and May. Even shoemakers and moulders expected to lose two or three months during the winter. Competition for jobs became tough. Winter wages in most jobs dropped. "When they don't find work at anything else", explained a moulder in the 1880's, "they walk the streets and wait till work commences, and when the bosses see they are hard up for work, they try to reduce wages and put them as low as possible".⁸⁶

The generalized slowdown in production over the winter months thus released large numbers of men and women, flooding the labour market. For those capitalists operating throughout the winter the "superabundance of labour" offered an admirable opportunity to save on

⁸⁶ IBID, pp.213,49,86.

production costs. In 1888, Mr W.M. MacDonald, the tobacco manufacturer, remarked that he had reduced wages in the winter for thirty years. Labour, he explained "is a remarkable commodity".⁸⁷ The proprietor of a Montreal Printing Office explained that whereas in the summer he payed \$10.00 weekly, in the winter he could hire the best man for \$7.00 a week. He could take on as many as he wanted at that price because they "were suffering from hunger. They had no work".⁸⁸ Reducing winter wages was allegedly "a general habit in this part of the country".⁸⁹

When questioned about the hardship lower wages would produce for families whose costs of living rose in the winter, W.M. MacDonald suggested that "when they have good wages they should save for a short period".⁹⁰ While a skilled printer who earned \$10.00 weekly, in the summer and had only one or two small children might have saved a little, the conservative estimates of the costs of living made above suggest that most workers clearly could not. The evidence in the estimated budgets is corroborated by the workers who testified to the Royal Commission on Labour and Capital in 1888. Asked how much "a good job man, a married man, with a family of three living economically ... could ... save at the end of the year" from his wages, the foreman of the Gazette's book and job department replied, "he could not save ten

⁸⁷ RCRLC., Evidence of W.M. MacDonald, pp.530-531.

⁸⁸ IBID, Evidence of E. Globensky, p.455.

⁸⁹ IBID, Evidence of W.M. MacDonald, pp.530-531.

⁹⁰ IBID,

cents".⁹¹ Fireman, James Doolan, reported that he and his workmates could not live on \$500.00 a year "and pay his honest debts, because I and others are in debt".⁹² Cigarmaker Eli Massy likewise reported that only if there was no illness could a small, young family survive on \$364.00 a year.⁹³ Credit at the local shops must have seen many a family through the Montreal winter. In working class areas like St. Jacques so few people had jobs or savings they could draw on that in the winter months cash was reported to be quite rare.⁹⁴

Seasonal unemployment was relatively predictable. Workers and their wives knew that when spring came work would resume. They could arrange short term credit with their grocer and other merchants to see them through the expensive winter months. Cyclical unemployment was more devastating. The workers of Montreal experienced repeated periods of major crisis and unemployment between the 1860's and 1890's as Quebec's economy responded to changes in England and the United States.⁹⁵ In the late 1850's there was a general slowdown in commerce and industry. It continued until the American Civil War lifted the northern colonies out of depression, boosting the economies of Canada

⁹¹ IBID, p.697.

⁹² IBID, p.697.

⁹³ IBID, p.251.

⁹⁴ "Notes pour les chroniques de l'Asile St. Vincent", Handwritten Chronicles, Archives of the Sisters of Providence, Montreal, (Hereafter ASP), p.21.

⁹⁵ This section is based largely on the cycles outlined by Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby in their Histoire Economique du Québec 1851-1896 (Montréal, Fides, 1971) pp.77-95 (Hereafter, Histoire Economique).

East and West and increasing job opportunities in Montreal. The 1861 census, taken in January, came too early to capture this improvement. Tobacco factories, the clothing trades and commerce in general expanded over the next decade with only temporary slowdowns between 1864 and 1865 and again between 1867 and 1869. The census of 1871 was taken in the middle of a period of expansion, one that was followed by the world crisis that hit Quebec in 1874. Not until 1879 did the world economy begin to pick up. The legacy of depression was still evident when the 1881 census was taken.

Shorter and shorter cycles of expansion and contraction would characterize the 1880's, indeed the rest of the century. Entrepreneurs could safeguard their capital by increasing their use of machinery, concentrating ownership and production and lowering wages.⁹⁶ Workers were vulnerable to every downswing - facing either reduced wages, or lay offs. These protracted periods of job scarcity produced by the cycles that characterised the world economy, combined with seasonal unemployment to present constant challenges to all working class families over the period. In good years, like 1871, winters remained difficult, but spring usually brought work for more family members. In the depths of depressions, in contrast, all work contracted, fewer family members could find jobs and wages earned dropped. Each downswing saw hundreds, even thousands of workers in industry and commerce laid off. Housing construction slowed down, throwing those in related trades

⁹⁶ Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, Histoire Economique, pp.92,76.

out of work. Hamelin and Roby suggest that after 1874 even those who retained their jobs experienced wage cuts of anything between 25 and 60 per cent.⁹⁷ The Montreal immigration agent reported that year that in many trades work was available for two or three days a week.⁹⁸ Labourers found themselves with occasional jobs, then no job at all. Skilled workers, thrown out of their own trades, were reported to seek work as labourers, "while the labouring classes" had "insufficient for themselves".⁹⁹

This period of Montreal's industrialization then was characterized by these cyclical depressions, by seasonal unemployment as well as by the expansion and transformation of such industries as clothing, shoemaking and metalworking. Government figures published in 1894 suggested that the cost of living had dropped between 1860 and 1890. (See Table 2.6). Similarly, the Board of Inquiry into the Cost of Living set up in 1915 found that wages had risen 17 per cent between 1875 and 1895 while retail prices had fallen.¹⁰⁰ Yet neither study took account of rental costs. Workers discussing the cost of living in 1888 suggested a different picture. All those questioned agreed that rents had risen throughout the 1880s.¹⁰¹ Estimates of the amount of the

⁹⁷ IBID, p.90.

⁹⁸ Cited in Jacques Bernier, "La Condition Ouvrière à Montréal", p.31.

⁹⁹ Mayor's Inaugural Address, MAR., 1875, p.6.

¹⁰⁰ Year Book of Canada, 1894, p.208; Board of Inquiry into the Cost of Living, 1915, Vol.III, p.441.

¹⁰¹ RCRLC., Evidence of Lewis Z. Boudreau, Printer, p.423; Evidence of Thomas Gratorex, labourer, pp.85-87; Evidence of William Keys, machinist, p.517.

TABLE 2.6

GOVERNMENT FIGURES ON PRICES, WAGES AND PURCHASING POWER IN CANADA*

FROM 1860 TO 1890.

(1860:100)

	<u>1860</u>	<u>1865</u>	<u>1870</u>	<u>1875</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>1885</u>	<u>1890</u>
Meat	100	107.0	174.3	140.4	103.6	107.6	99.6
Other food stuffs	100	207.2	146.3	135.0	116.9	97.2	103.5
Clothing	100	299.2	139.4	120.1	104.5	84.8	82.4
Heat and lighting	100	237.8	196.5	156.5	100.2	89.6	92.5
Agricultural imple- ments, metals	100	191.4	127.8	117.5	96.3	77.4	73.2
Wood, construction material	100	182.1	148.3	143.7	130.9	129.6	123.7
Drugs and medicines	100	271.6	149.6	144.2	113.1	86.9	87.9
Furniture	100	181.1	121.6	95.0	85.2	70.1	69.5
Diverse	100	202.9	148.7	122.9	109.8	97.5	89.7
Average of Prices	100	216.8	142.3	127.6	106.9	93.0	92.3
Average of Wages	100	143.1	162.2	158.4	141.5	150.7	158.9
Purchasing Power	100	66.0	114.1	124.1	132.3	162.0	172.1

* De Bonville points out that the statistics cited in the year book of 1894 were not established following Canadian investigations. It is a table whose facts were derived from other industrialized countries, which, according to statistician, seemed applicable to Canada. The pertinence of that affirmation, suggests De Bonville, is far from demonstrated.

Source: Year Book of Canada, 1894, p. 203; cited in Jean De Bonville, Jean Baptiste Gagnepetit, pp. 100-101.

increase varied from 12 to 25 per cent. Their evidence is supported by the research of David Hanna and Sherry Olson whose work based on the city evaluation roles suggests rises of as much as 20 to 50 per cent in the median rentals paid by workers in most occupational groups between 1881 and 1891.¹⁰² Yet, government estimates do not include this major component of a family's cost of living. Food prices other than meat are shown in the government figures to have decreased from the 1860's on.¹⁰³ (See Table 2.6). Retail prices cited by Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby in contrast, show increases of between 17 and 114 per cent in the retail price of flour, potatoes, peas and eggs between 1878 and 1884.¹⁰⁴ (See Table 2.7) Provision merchant, Charles Langlois reported in 1888 that there had been little change in the price of eggs, butter and cheese over the previous seven years. Meat and Fish merchants made similar observations. Grocer Charles Lacaille reported that the prices of sugar, rice, molasses and tea ~~had~~ dropped.¹⁰⁵

The data are ambiguous. Food prices clearly fluctuated, but seem to have remained stable or to have decreased somewhat over the period. Rents definitely increased significantly. Major changes in prices occur

¹⁰² David Hanna and Sherry Olson, "Métiers, Loyers et Bouts de Rues", p.15.

¹⁰³ For a cogent critique of the government figures see "Jean de Borville, Jean Baptiste Gagnepetit, pp.100-108.

¹⁰⁴ Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, Histoire Economique, Appendix 18.

¹⁰⁵ RCRLC., Evidence of Charles Langlois, p.719; Evidence of Ernest Dore, butcher, p.716; Evidence of Adolphe Raymond, fish merchant, p.723; IBID, p.710.

TABLE 2.7
FLUCTUATIONS IN RETAIL PRICES
MONTREAL, 1860-1889

<u>Year</u>	<u>Oats</u> Minot	<u>Flour</u> Quintal	<u>Buckwheat</u> Minot	<u>Potatoes</u> Minot	<u>Peas</u> Minot	<u>Eggs</u> Douzen	<u>Butter</u> Pound	<u>Beef</u> 100 Pounds
1860	.42½	3.18		.70½	.75½	.16	.24	8.00
1861	.39	2.81		.65	.75	.16	.26	7.85
1862	.45	2.80		.86	.74	.18 2/3	.22	6.83 1/3
1863	.48 1/3	2.67		.59 1/3	.75	.12½	.26½	6.85
1864	.46 2/3	2.68		.64	.83	.16	.28	7.20
1865	.43 1/3	3.18		.61	.98½	.20	.27	9.45
1866	.43 1/3	3.95		.74½	1.02	.20	.30	9.35
1867	.48	4.16		1.00	1.05 1/3	.18 1/3	.26	7.67
1868	.58 1/3	3.66		.80	1.19	.21½	.30	
1869	.55	2.62		.63	1.07	.21	.28	
1870	.46 2/3	2.73		.84	.87 1/3	.21	.29	7.00
1871	.53 1/3	3.11		.55	.97 1/3	.21	.23	6.00
1872	.44	3.19		.50	.85 5/6	.22 2/3	.28	6.96
1873	.47½	3.20		.72	.85	.21½	.31	6.33
1874	.58 1/3	3.10		.79	.92 2/3	.24	.35	7.15
1875	.56 3/4	2.73		.60	1.04½	.26½	.33	7.80
1876	.46	2.73	.73	.58	1.07	.20 1/3	.30	6.84
1877	.45	2.89	.81	.88	1.00	.21 2/3	.32	6.60
1878	.37	2.70	.55	.40	.90	.14	.30	5.41
1879	.40½	2.20	.79	.76 1/3	.90	.18	.26	6.50
1880	.40	2.15	1.00	.54½	.90	.18	.28	7.54
1881	.47 3/4	2.51	1.29	.62½	.92	.24 1/6	.30	7.41
1882		3.91		1.15	.93	.25	.32	
1883				1.40	1.18	.31½	.29	
1884		3.17		.70	1.10	.30	.27	
1885		2.50		.64	1.06	.28	.35	
1886				.62½	.80	.23 1/3	.31	
1887				.91	.82	.23	.29½	
1888				.75	.85	.27½	.35	
1889				.51½	.99	.20½	.25	

Source: Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, Historic Economique, Appendix 20.

in those commodities that were being produced in growing numbers in the factories and workshops of Montreal. The price of furniture decreased by between 25 and 40 per cent between the late 1870s and 1888. Boots and shoes decreased by about 25 per cent. Clothing, especially menswear, had clearly fallen. Books too had become cheaper, so that some English-speaking working class families were able to purchase the works by Thackeray, Dickens and Sir Walter Scott, which they apparently sought. Paper and schoolbooks were reported to be 25 to 30 per cent cheaper in 1888 than in the late 1870s. Mechanics tools as well as cutlery had decreased in price by 10 to 35 per cent, an important saving for those skilled workers providing their own tools.¹⁰⁶

The reorganization of production and the growing concentration of capital in the industries producing such commodities made dramatic changes in workers' lives. On the one hand their workplace was transformed. Skilled men in some trades were losing much of the control they once had over the work process. More and more workers found themselves part of huge, impersonal bodies of employees in large and noisy factories. On the other hand, and as a direct result, certain commodities could be produced much more cheaply. Gradually, the price of these came within the reach of the working class. Workers became, for the first time, an important sector of the market. Yet despite price decreases, only the wages of the best paid of workers in this

¹⁰⁶ IBID, Evidence of Owen McGarvey, manufacturer and dealer in house furniture, p.726; Evidence of Charles Edmond Ranger, boot and shoe trader, p.714; Evidence of John T. Redmond, bookseller, pp.728-729; Evidence of Gustave Piché, ironmonger, p.714.

period could cover the purchase of new furniture, books or cutlery. The wages of the unskilled, as we have seen, left no room for such expenses. Unless they could devise other ways of making money or limiting expenditures they could not benefit from most of these price decreases until several children reached working age and found steady, well paid jobs,

Insecurities for unskilled workers derived from the major fluctuations in work available that accompanied the cycles of expansion and contraction characterizing this period. Skilled workers were also effected by these cycles. In addition, they had to deal with the restructuring of production and the lowering of wages, strategies utilized by employers to aid accumulation in such crisis periods. The effects stretched beyond the workplace and into the home. Men and women were forced to rethink old customs about marriage and family size, to adjust the age at which they would marry and perhaps even the number of children they would have to fit the realities of their wage labour. Marriage represented the creation of a new family, and for wage earners, the setting up of a family wage economy. The final section of this chapter examines how men's jobs and class position influenced family formation.

Marriage and Family Formation

Marriage made a man the legal and economic head of his family. It was a husband's duty to provide shelter, protection and the necessities

of life according to his means. It was his right to choose where to live and in what dwelling. The wife was legally bound to follow. A man had sole legal rights over the correction of his children. Children had to seek his permission to marry or to leave home until they reached the age of majority. A husband could legally expect his wife to submit to him at all times. The legal and economic subordination of women ensured that most would do so.¹⁰⁷ The incentives to marriage were strong for working class males, the initial drawbacks minor. Most men in Montreal married, a fact made easier for them by the predominance of females in the city. In the sample populations of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards only 6 to 7 per cent remained single by their late 40's and early 50's in 1861 and only 3 to 6 per cent in 1881. In 1871, when good times apparently offered more men the material basis for marriage, under 2 per cent of males in the sample population and under 8 per cent of males in the whole city had not been married by age fifty.¹⁰⁸ (See Table 2.8).

The decision to marry was apparently an individual one, the result of a personal or family choice. Yet, a myriad of external factors influenced this most personal of decisions. Demographers and historians have shown that the average age at which people marry and even the

¹⁰⁷ See footnote 4, this chapter for the literature on legal responsibilities.

¹⁰⁸ The 1871 aggregate census lists a total of 7010 men aged 41 to 61 of whom 6043 were married and 448 widowers. Lower percentages single in the sample result from the absence of large hotels and boarding houses in those areas. Canada, 1871 Census of Canada.

TABLE 2.8

PERCENTAGES OF MALES UNMARRIED AT AGES 40 - 44 AND 45 - 49
1861 - 1881

<u>Sample Population</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1881</u>
40 - 44	10%	9%	9%
45 - 49	7%	1%	4%
Total these ages	126	161	210
<u>Montreal Totals</u>			
Ages 40 - 50	9%	Ages 41 - 61	7%
			8%

Source, Random Samples, 1861-1881; Census of Canada, 1861, 1871, 1881.

proportion ever wed has varied dramatically throughout history.¹⁰⁹ Demographers have long argued that industrialization and urbanization coincided with the demographic transition from high birth and death rates to the lower death rates and eventually birth rates that now characterize modern western societies. More recent careful studies at the local level in Europe and England have shown that the transition was more complex than imagined, that it varied from place to place and that the marriage rate and the age at which people decided to marry was a

¹⁰⁹ E.A. Wrigley, Population and History. Essays in Historical Demography, (New York, McGraw Hill, 1966); J. Hajnal, "European marriage patterns in perspective", in D.V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley eds., Population in History, (London, Edward Arnold, 1965); J. Hajnal, "Age at Marriage and Proportions Marrying", Population Studies, VII, (November 1953); H.J. Habbakkuk, "Family Structure and Economic Change in Nineteenth Century Europe", Journal of Economic History, XV (No.1, 1955); Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work and Family, pp.7,91-96; David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers, pp.75-78.

crucial component in changes in population growth.¹¹⁰

The most compelling arguments about why past variations in marriage rates occurred have linked peoples' decisions to marry with the nature of production and inheritance systems in a particular area and to changes over time.¹¹¹ Thus, in those Northern European societies where farming was done by a peasantry and land not divided, marriage tended to be late. Inheriting children postponed family formation until they had the means to support a family, and other children migrated elsewhere. In areas where land was divided on or before a father's death, marriage was earlier and population growth more rapid. In North American pioneering areas, including New France, a ready supply of land meant that fathers could set up their sons or daughters on the land well before their own death. The average marriage age was low, fertility

¹¹⁰ See especially, David Levine, Family Formation; also see, Etienne Van de Walle, The Female Population of France in the Nineteenth Century, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1974); John Knodel, The Decline of Fertility in Germany, 1871-1939, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1974); F. Mendels, "Industry and Marriages in Flanders before the Industrial Revolution", in P. Deprez, ed., Population and Economics, (Winnipeg, University of Manitoba Press, 1970); E.A. Wrigley, "Family Limitation in Pre-Industrial England", Economic History Review, 2d Ser, 19 (1966).

¹¹¹ Rudolph Braun, "The Impact of Cottage Industry on an Agricultural Population", in David Landes ed., The Rise of Capitalism, (New York, Macmillan, 1966); Rudolph Braun, "Early Industrialization and Demographic Change in the Canton of Zurich" in Charles Tilly ed., Historical Studies of Changing Fertility, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1978); David Levine, Family Formation, Lutz K. Berkner and F. Mendels, "Inheritance Systems, Family structure and demographical patterns in Western Europe, 1700-1900", in Charles Tilly ed., Historical Studies in Changing Fertility (Hereafter, "Inheritance Systems").

high.¹¹² As new land became scarce, the marriage age rose and fertility dropped. In Peel County, Ontario, for instance, as land became scarce between 1856 and 1860 "the average age at which young women married shot upwards from 20 to 23, in just five years". There, Gagan argues, "delayed marriages were one more by-product of the forces let loose by mid-century social, economic and demographic crises".¹¹³

The factors affecting ages at which people married in industrial areas and complex cities are perhaps less obvious and more complicated than in rural communities. Yet the average age at marriage remains a sensitive indicator of economic transition and crisis. In Europe, the emergence of proto-industry in the decades before factories were built offered couples the chance to set up viable economic units without awaiting inheritance, so that in most areas where such cottage industry dominated there is evidence of a drop in the age of marriage.¹¹⁴ David

¹¹² Lutz K. Berkner and F. Mendels, "Inheritance Systems"; David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers, pp.50-57; Richard A. Easterlin, George Alter and Gretchen A. Condran, "Farms and Farm Families in Old and New Areas: The Northern United States in 1860", in T.K. Hareven and M.A. Vinovskis eds.; and M.A. Vinovskis eds., Family and Population in Nineteenth Century America, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1978); R. Marvin McInnis, "Childbearing and Land Availability: Some Evidence from Individual Household data", in Ronald Demos Lee ed., Population Patterns in the Past, (New York, Academic Press, 1977); Jacques Henripin, Trends and Factors of Fertility in Canada, (Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1972).

¹¹³ David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers, pp.76-77.

¹¹⁴ Rudolph Braun, "The Impact of Cottage Industry"; Hans Medick, "The proto-industrial family economy: the structural function of household and family during the transition from peasant society to industrial capitalism", Social History, 3 (October 1976); David Levine, Family Formation; F. Mendels, "Proto-industrialization: the first phase of the industrialization process", Journal of Economic History, 32 (1972).

Levine has argued that such a drop was crucial in precipitating rapid population growth because it added fertile childbearing years to marriage and reduced the intergenerational gap. The timing of the decline was influenced by the demand for labour at the village level.¹¹⁵ Generally the spread of wage labour that accompanied the transition to industrial capitalism led to a further fall in the marriage age and to a concomitant rise in fertility. This was followed later in most western countries by a gradual controlling of fertility as couples attempted to have fewer children.¹¹⁶ Such broad models of demographic transition hide local and conjunctural variations. Cultural norms, local opportunities and living conditions have led to widely divergent demographic responses in those areas studied by demographers and historians to date. Paul Spagnoli's research into proletarianization, marriage and fertility in the Lille region of France, has led him to question the assumed "relationship between patterns of marriage and fertility and industrial development". There he found "no necessary link between industrialization, early marriage and high fertility." The population growth that occurred in the area resulted from high fertility within marriage despite a late mean age at marriage for men between 26.7 and 31.6 in different areas. However, within this "overall late marriage framework", people did marry younger in regions experiencing economic expansion.¹¹⁷ Despite Spagnoli's reservations, he does return to

¹¹⁵ David Levine, Family Formation, p.11,147.

¹¹⁶ Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work and Family, pp.227-229.

¹¹⁷ Paul G. Spagnoli, "Industrialization, Proletarianization and Marriage : A Reconsideration" Journal of Family History, 8 (Fall

economic expansion as a factor contributing to early marriage.

Decisions of individual family members to marry may have been made largely for their own reasons as David Levine suggested.¹¹⁸ Yet at an aggregate level, the age at which people marry does tell us something about responses to the impact of a particular economic period and their class position in it. In a time of transition and economic uncertainty, such as existed in Montreal between the 1860's and 1890's we would expect to find some modification of traditional marriage patterns. The involvement of a growing proportion of the population in wage labour, along with the French Canadian tradition of early marriage,¹¹⁹ would lead us to predict a fairly young average age at marriage, although it could be expected to fluctuate with economic swings and changes in the cost of living.¹²⁰ At the same time we should expect to find some differences between working class families and those with property and between French Canadians, the Irish and other ethnic groups with a tradition of later marriage.¹²¹

1983), pp.239,238.

¹¹⁸ David Levine, "For their own reasons': Individual Marriage Decisions and Family Life", Journal of Family History, 7 (Fall 1982). But in contrast, see Bengt Ankarloo, "Marriage and Family Formation", in Tamara K. Hareven ed., Transitions, p.115.

¹¹⁹ Jacques Henripin, La Population Canadienne au début du XVIII^e Siècle, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1954); Jacques Henripin, Trends and Factors of Fertility in Canada;

¹²⁰ Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work and Family, p.7.

¹²¹ Jerry Wilcox and Hilda H. Golden, "Prolific Immigrants".

Class position, cultural tradition and religious teaching interacted in a complex manner with the particular economic conjuncture to determine patterns of marriage. While cultural norms were strong in dictating a suitable marriage age, the age at which it was feasible for anyone to set up a family was determined by "economic resources, career stage and income".¹²² In 1861 in these wards, as elsewhere in the world, non-working class men married later than the working class.¹²³ (see Table 2.9). That year their mean age at marriage was 29.¹²⁴ Until 1881 the non-working class men of these wards were always less likely to marry before the age of thirty than any other group. In 1881 their mean age at marriage, and the proportions married in each age group fell. This phenomenon may well have been limited to the small owners, clerks and various service workers of these wards. It may not have been duplicated amongst the wealthy elsewhere in town.

Within the working class the mean age at marriage was around twenty five in 1861. In subsequent decades economic depressions, structural transformations and altered cultural traditions led to

¹²² Bengt Ankarloo, "Marriage and Family Formation", p.113.

¹²³ IBID, Jerry Wilcox and H. Golden, "Prolific Immigrants"; John Hajnal, "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective".

¹²⁴ The mean age at marriage was calculated using the formula devised by John Hajnal and set out in "Age at Marriage and Proportions Marrying", Population Studies, VII (November 1953), p.30. It must be considered in conjunction with the percentages married or single in each age group, because the result is strongly influenced by the proportions single at ages 45 to 54. In small samples, as opposed to national populations the proportions single at these ages can overinfluence the result.

TABLE 2.9

CLASS DIFFERENCES IN MALE MARRIAGE PATTERNS
STE. ANNE AND ST. JACQUES COMBINED

Percentages Ever Married

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Non Working Class</u>	<u>Skilled</u>	<u>Injured Trades</u>	<u>Semi and Unskilled</u>	<u>Male Totals</u>
<u>1861</u>					
15-19	0	0	14	0	1.3
20-24	3.8	27.8	27	22.7	17.7
25-29	56	62.7	62.5	82.5	58.6
30-34	86	80.6	85.7	97.1	84.7
<u>Mean Age at Marriage</u>	29	25.6	25.0	25.6	26.5
Total Numbers 15-34	(148)	(214)	(61)	(211)	(789)
<u>1871</u>					
15-19	0	2.3	11.1	3.7	1.7
20-24	28.2	41.1	63.6	24.1	32.6
25-29	46.9	70.7	89.5	60.5	63.2
30-34	89.5	85.7	70.6	86.4	83.9
<u>Mean Age at Marriage</u>	27.8	23.9	24.7	27.2	26.5
Total Numbers 15-34	(234)	(261)	(86)	(239)	(930)
<u>1881</u>					
15-19	0	0	3.3 ¹	4.2 ²	1.9
20-24	25	29.6	12.5 ²	26.3	23.5
25-29	64.3	52.2	81.5	67.2	62.7
30-34	79.6	84.8	88.2	81.0	78.8
<u>Mean Age At Marriage</u>	26.3	27.5	26.0	24.2	26.5
Total Numbers 15-34	(300)	(344)	(96)	(346)	(1222)

1 2 cases only.

2 1 case only.

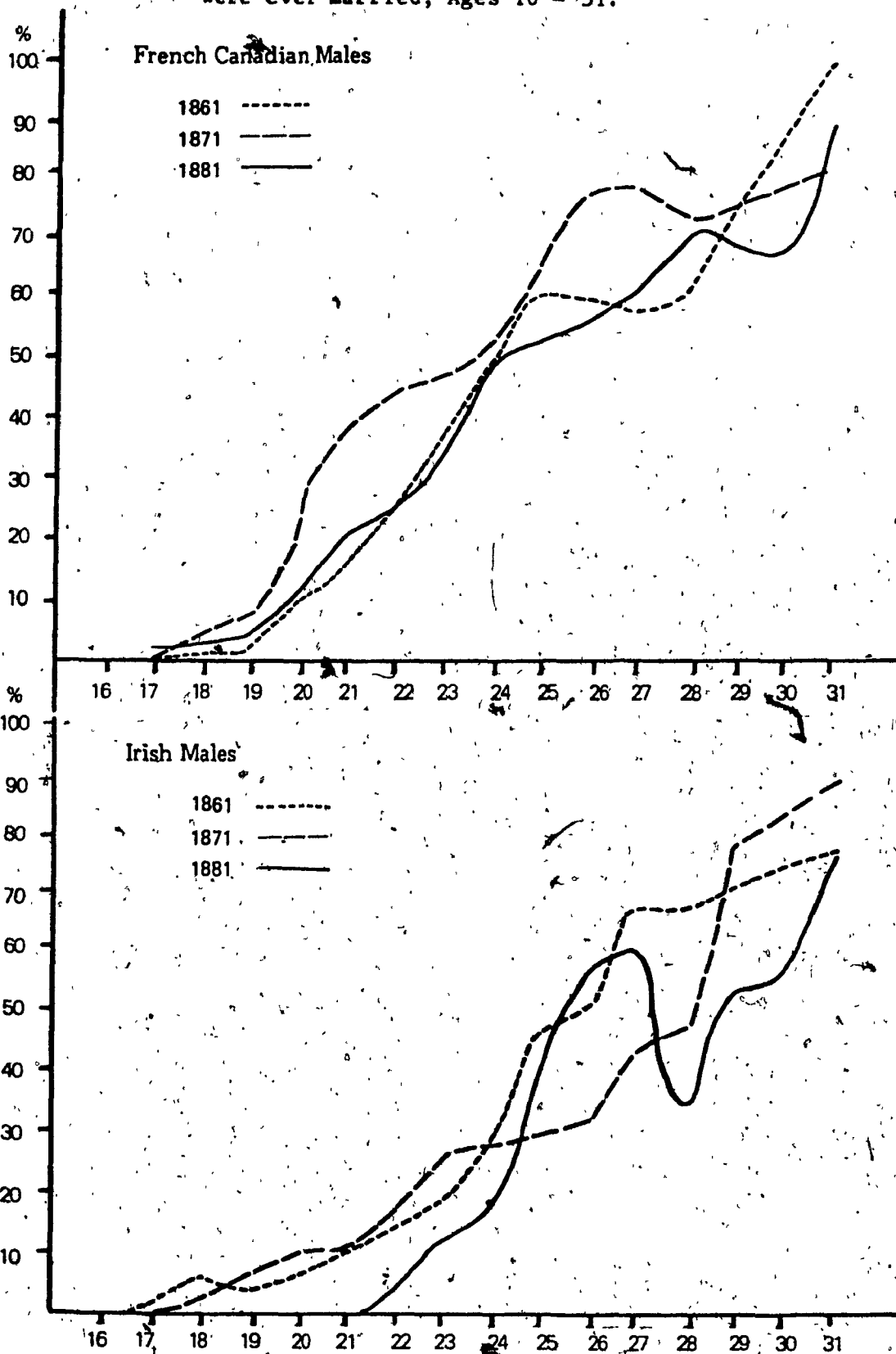
The mean age at marriage was calculated according to the formula devised by John Hajnal and set out in "Age at Marriage and Proportions Marrying", Population Studies, VII (November 1953), p. 30.

complex differences within the working class. Skilled workers and those in the injured trades apparently found sufficient work in the years preceding the 1871 census to marry fairly young. The skilled were then marrying at 23.9 - an average of 1.7 years younger than they had a decade earlier. Whereas 28 per cent were married between ages twenty and twenty four in 1861, in 1871 41 per cent were. Shoemakers and others in the most injured trades also married younger in 1871 whereas 27 per cent had been married by age twenty four in 1861, a decade later 64 per cent were. The depression which hit in 1879 throwing thousands out of work robbed young men of the material basis for early marriage, effecting those in the injured trades and skilled workers in construction and other sensitive areas alike. The mean age at marriage of the skilled shot up to 27.5, of the deskilled to twenty six. Whereas in previous decades 60 to 70 per cent of skilled workers aged twenty five to twenty nine were already wed, in 1881 only 52 per cent were.

These patterns cannot be explained solely in terms of the jobs that men held, for cultural norms also exercised their influence. The peculiar and unusually late marriage age of 27.2 among the semi and unskilled workers in 1871, followed by dramatic drop to 24.2 a decade later, partially reflects the pattern of the Irish who constituted the majority of that group. Their age at marriage fell from the late mean of 28.4 in 1871 - a year when all other groups took advantage of good times to marry younger - to 26.6 in 1881. (See Figure 2.2 and Table 2.10.)

Class and ethnicity were so inter-related that to disentangle their

Fig. 2.2 Percentages of French Canadian and Irish Males that were ever married, Ages 16 - 31.



SOURCE : Random samples, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques combined, three year moving averages.

TABLE 2.10

PERCENTAGES MARRIED UNDER 35
AND THE MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE
FOR MEN OF DIFFERENT ORIGINS

<u>Percentages Ever Married</u>	French Canadians	Irish	English and Scottish
<u>1861</u>			
15-19	1.3	2.2	0
20-24	25.4	15.4	5.9
25-29	62.1	57.8	43.5
30-34	97.6	80.6	75.0
Men's Mean Age at Marriage	25	27.5	29.6
Number Aged 15-54	(347)	(252)	(92)
Women's Mean Age at Marriage	24.6	25.1	25.8
	(390)	(333)	(85)
<u>1871</u>			
15-19	2.2	1.7	0
20-24	40.4	17.1	25.0
25-29	72.9	36.4	65.4
30-34	83.3	85.7	82.1
Men's Mean Age at Marriage	24.9	28.4	26.6
Number aged 15-54	(485)	(250)	(169)
Women's Mean Age at Marriage	23.5	23.7	24.6
	(573)	(265)	(145)
<u>1881</u>			
15-19	1.6	0	9.1
20-24	28.5	8.0	24.1
25-29	62.1	51.4	72.7
30-34	77.8	79.3	81.0
Men's Mean Age at Marriage	26.9	26.6	26.2
Number aged 15-54	(758)	(277)	(156)
Women's Mean Age at Marriage	25.7	25.5	24.6
	(925)	(289)	(142)

Source: Random Samples, all men, 1861-1881. Mean age calculated according to the formula in John Hajnal, "Age at Marriage", p.30.

influence, to control for the effects of the one on the other is complex. The two factors combined and interacted in their influence on the behaviour of the men and women of different origins who made up a varied proportion of each class. Over the period, however, the reality of class position clearly modified cultural tradition. Table 2.10 outlines the mean age at marriage for men and women of French Canadian, Irish and English and Scottish origin. Here we find a converging trend that mirrors the class pattern. Inherited cultural norms, and position in the workforce reinforced by religious teaching made French Canadians consistently likely to marry younger than the Irish. "Moralists", a French Canadian health officer explained in 1876, "recommend that marriage should take place before 20 or 22 for young girls and 24 or 25 for men, while "sanitarians" and psychologists" argued such early marriage should be avoided as it was believed to increase the chances of contracting tuberculosis.¹²⁵ In fact well under half the French Canadian males and females aged twenty to twenty four in these wards were married throughout this period. One quarter of males in this age group had married in 1861, 40.4 per cent in 1871 and 28.5 per cent in 1881. The mean age was twenty five in 1861 and 1871. It rose to twenty seven in 1881, largely because fewer thirty to thirty five year olds had yet married. The mean age for their wives went from 24.6 in 1861 to 23.5 in 1871 then up again to 25.7 in 1881. Amongst the Irish, English and Scottish, in contrast, the average age decreased when 1861 and 1881 are compared. The mean age at marriage converged at between 26.2 and 26.9 for all groups in 1881, but this hides continued cultural differences in

¹²⁵ "Report Upon the Sanitary State", MAR, 1876, p.63.

timing. Even in 1881 a higher proportion of French Canadians married before age twenty five than any other group. The Irish continued to be less likely than all others to marry before age thirty. French - Irish differences persisted in Montreal despite their similar religious backgrounds. By 1881, however, the class differences in the mean marriage age were greater than ethnic ones.

The differences in the early years between French Canadian and Irish marriage patterns in Montreal reflect those found in similar populations resident elsewhere in North America. Amongst the residents of Prescott County in Ontario, Chad Gaffield found that there were two to three years difference between the marriage age of French Canadians and those he categorized as being of British origin. He gave no evidence, however, of changes in this differential over time.¹²⁶ Wilcox and Golden found that in five western Massachusetts towns French Canadians married earlier than the Irish both in 1850 and 1880, and that this fact explained fertility differences.¹²⁷ Bengt Ankarloo extrapolated further from the three to four year French Canadian - Irish differences in Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1881 to explain their significance for a man's family. There:

one-fourth of the marrying Irish males were 29.5 years or more, with a reproductive cycle of at least 63 years. Equally one fourth of the Canadian males were 21 years or less at marriage, with a cycle of at most forty six years. The formation of a

¹²⁶ Chad Gaffield, "Canadian Families in Cultural Context", pp.58-61.

¹²⁷ Jerry Wilcox and Hilda H. Golden, "Prolific Immigrants".

Canadian family occurs in a two generational setting that is quite different from that of an Irish family. The likelihood, for instance, of a Canadian child having age peers among his aunts and uncles is considerably higher. And his grandfather will still be in mid career.¹²⁸

French Canadian males in Montreal married somewhat later than their compatriots elsewhere, probably because their work in the seasonal and injured trades of Montreal left them particularly vulnerable both annually and cyclically.

The fall in the mean age at marriage of Irish males in Montreal from 27.5 in 1861 to 26.6 in 1881 duplicates the trend set by their countrymen in English, American and Irish cities, a trend that had its roots in pre-famine Ireland. In the early nineteenth century the Irish had begun to delay marriage as subdivision of the land, poverty and expropriations had minimized the chances of young couples surviving decently. By the 1840's men in Ireland were marrying at a mean age of almost twenty nine, women nearly twenty six. A growing number remained unmarried.¹²⁹ Migration to the cities of Ireland or overseas changed the material basis of most immigrants' existence. Wage labour in the city offered the chance of "an independent income at an earlier age than in the Irish countryside".¹³⁰ The result was that they married younger, lowering their marriage age toward that of the native population. In

¹²⁸ Bengt Ankarloo, "Marriage and Family Formation", p.122.

¹²⁹ Lynn Lees, Exiles of Erin, p.142.

¹³⁰ John Modell and Lynn H. Lees, "The Irish Countryman Urbanized: A Comparative Perspective on the Famine Migration", in Theodore Hershberg ed., Philadelphia, p.352.

London, Lynn Lees found that by 1861 the average age of marriage amongst the Irish had dropped to twenty four for women, twenty six for men. In Philadelphia "the shift to earlier marriage seems also to have taken place". Irish migrants there apparently set up households "at even younger ages than in London".¹³¹ Irish in Montreal too seemed to follow this pattern, although there is an inexplicable rise in the mean age in 1871, a time when all other groups, except the semi and unskilled workers were marrying earlier. Furthermore the decrease appears to have been much slower than in London or Philadelphia.

The English and Scottish, who were more likely not to be working class, especially in St. Jacques ward, also married earlier over these years. Whereas such men had been nearly thirty on marrying in 1861, by 1881 they averaged just over twenty six. One quarter were married before the age of twenty five. It is clearly inadequate to take one year, especially 1871, and argue as Lorne Tepperman has, that in their patterns of marriage and fertility, ethnic groups were "probably maintaining" practices they brought with them as immigrants from Europe in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹³² All groups in these wards were clearly modifying their traditional behaviour to reflect the situation within which they lived. In 1881 major ethnic differences in the mean age at marriage had disappeared though

¹³¹ Lynn Lees, Exiles of Erin, p.260; John Modell and Lynn Lees, "The Irish Countryman Urbanized", p.353.

¹³² Lorne Tepperman, "Ethnic Variations in Marriage and Fertility: Canada 1871", Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 11 (1974), p.335.

differences of timing remained. More French Canadian men continued to marry before they were twenty five than among other groups. Distinctions within the working class apparently became more important as ethnic ones diminished, although the effects of the depression clearly complicate the analysis of trends. In 1881 men in the injured trades were the least likely to marry before age twenty five. The skilled were most likely to. Greater security at work appears to have allowed them to marry earlier.

Most men did marry, father children and become the major breadwinner, the person whose wages were fundamental to survival. Children followed soon after marriage. By ages twenty five to twenty nine men had an average of one and a half or more living children. The size of their family would peak when they were about fifty at between three and four children. As they moved into their fifties older children began to leave home and marry themselves, depriving the family of extra breadwinners. (See Table 2.11) Over this period there was a major decline in the average number of children resident in families. The decline was common to all age groups, nationalities and occupations except skilled workers.

While age was the only really significant predictor of the number of children a man would have, his occupation, origins and religion did make a difference and their significance changed over the period. In 1861 there was a slight relationship between ethnic and religious groupings and the average number of children. By 1881 these factors were no longer significant. Class position was. (See Table 2.11) It

TABLE 2.11
AVERAGE NUMBER OF SURVIVING CHILDREN
OF MALE FAMILY HEADS
1861 and 1881 COMPARED

	1861		1881	
	Average	No. of Cases	Average	No. of Cases
a) <u>Average Numbers of Children in all male headed families</u>	2.58		2.45	
b) <u>Average Numbers of Children For Men of Different-Ages</u>				
20-24	0.7	20	0.7	60
25-29	1.6	91	1.4	130
30-34	2.3	83	2.1	135
35-39	2.9	73	2.9	116
40-44	3.4	60	3.1	113
45-49	3.6	52	3.7	82
50-54	3.4	44	3.2	77
55-59	3.4	26	2.8	54
Average for Men Aged 20-59	2.67	449	2.47	767
Significance of age		.001		.001
c) <u>Average Numbers of Children For Men of Different Origins and Religions</u>				
French Canadian Catholics	2.54	224	2.47	567
Irish Catholics	2.89	124	2.55	141
English or Scottish Protestants	2.80	40	2.67	92
Irish Protestants	2.14	29	2.61	33
English or Scottish Catholics	.88	8	1.82	17
Significance of Origin/Religion		.090		n.s.
d) <u>Average Numbers of Children For Men in Different Class Positions</u>				
Non Working Class	2.86	90	2.68	223
Skilled Trades	2.36	131	2.70	237
Injured Trades	2.38	26	2.15	71
Semi-Skilled	3.09	53	2.70	67
Unskilled	2.54	125	2.11	194
Significance of Class		n.s.		.010
e) <u>Average Numbers of Children For Men in the Two Wards</u>				
St. Jacques	2.67	180	2.47	434
Ste. Anne	2.56	245	2.54	358

Source: Random Samples, Male Family Heads only. The means and levels of significance were generated using multiple classification analysis. See Appendix F.

must be borne in mind that the figures being used here represent surviving children. Infant mortality hit French-Canadians and the poor the hardest. Numbers of surviving children thus reflect the interaction between children conceived, and the numbers that did not die. The surprising fact that in these two wards Protestants averaged as many or more children than Catholics must be partially explained by the differential impact of infant mortality. In 1861 English and Scottish protestants averaged 2.80 co-resident children, falling just behind Irish Catholics who had 2.89. By 1881 the former had 2.67, while Irish Catholics had dropped to 2.55. In 1881 French Canadians averaged the smallest families - 2.47. Adjusting for the varied age structure of the groups made no significant difference to these figures.

The average number of children at home gives some indication of the size of the family men had to support. In addition it reflects fertility patterns and the effects of infant mortality. In 1861 non-working class men and the semi skilled averaged more children than workers. By 1881 the situation had changed. The non-working class families were slightly smaller, perhaps as a result of birth control.¹³³ Within the working class the number of surviving children varied with men's occupations and changed over time. Amongst workers the least skilled groups had averaged the most children in 1861. By 1881 the situation had reversed. Men in semi- and unskilled jobs averaged

¹³³ Angus McLaren, Birth Control in Nineteenth Century England (London, Croom Helm, 1978), p.12. The fact that this group was marrying younger, yet still having fewer children adds support to the hypothesis.

roughly half a child less in 1881 than in 1861 - a major change in two decades. Those in the injured trades also had smaller average families. The decrease resulted from three factors all related to the precarious economic situation of these groups. Most of the semi- and unskilled had married late in the decade before 1881. Unless they chose wives much younger than themselves, their average marriage age of over twenty seven in 1871 had eliminated the most fertile years from their wives' married lives. More important in controlling their family size in Montreal was the dramatic impact of infant diseases that killed well over one in three or four of the children of the poor.¹³⁴ The skilled workers, in contrast, seem to have conceived and succeeded in supporting and rearing more children. Theirs is the only group in which the average number of children increased over these years. From 2.36 children in 1861 it rose to 2.70 in 1881. Early marriages in the good years preceding 1871 had lengthened their wives' chances of conceiving. Furthermore, their children were more likely to survive simply because steadier work and better wages could ensure decent housing and more adequate food.

Men's jobs then influenced not only their day-to-day work, but permeated the inner rhythms of family life, altering old customs, dictating new strategies and influencing their family size. Within the working class, differences of 25 cents a day translated over a year into the possibility of divergent standards of living, roughly dividing the skilled workers, those in injured trades and the unskilled into separate factions within the working class each with its own life styles and

¹³⁴ For more details on infant mortality, see Chapter Four.

family economies. The age at which men married, the number of children they would father, the food, clothing and housing they could afford were all related in some way to the size and regularity of their wages and to major cyclical fluctuations. The inadequacy of wages in so many occupations made alternative income generating strategies imperative.

The daily departure of wage earners from the home reshuffled old patterns of work, leisure and sleep. The act of leaving to work highlighted the family dependence on a wage - representing a daily statement of the fact that they possessed no productive unit, that all they had to sell was their labour power. The geographical separation of home and work highlighted the distinction between the two, hardening age and especially gender distinctions within the family in the process and redefining the roles of children and women. It is to these differences of age and gender and their impact on the life course of boys and girls as well as to the role of children as additional wage earners that the next chapter turns.

Chapter Three

Daughters and Sons in the Family Economy.

It was in the life course of children and in their contributions to the family economy that some of the most striking changes occurred in this period of transition. Not only were steadily growing numbers of children drawn into the city's labour market and schools, but, within the working class family the wage labour of children became more and more important. The need of families for additional income and the demands of Montreal's expanding industries for young workers interacted reshaping the components of the family economy, the wider economy and the contours of youth. This increase in the importance of the wage labour of children comes as no surprise. Historians of the industrial revolution in England, France and America have long documented the widespread use and abuse of child labour. What has not been made clear until recently is the very different involvement of boys and girls in wage labour and in the family economy. Over-influenced by the research on textile mills which did draw in large numbers of girls and married women, historians and sociologists failed to see that in most communities gender made a large difference to women's life and work histories.¹

¹ Neil J. Smelser, Social Change in the Industrial Revolution. An Application of Theory to the Lancashire Cotton Industry, 1770-1840 (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959); Michael Anderson, Family Structure; Tamara Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time are all now classic studies on the family and industrial development, yet all focus on milltowns. For a critique of generalizations made from

If we are to grasp the differences in growing up between boys and girls, then analysis of the importance of age and gender must accompany distinctions of class and ethnic background. For historians are now demonstrating that the age at which children began and left school, and whether and when they entered the work force were all intimately related to their father's job, sometimes to their ethnic background, and to their age and sex.²

Within families the "direction of children to work and/or to schooling" represented "two powerful elements in the overall cost to the nation and to the family, and two important forms of socialization".³ In a period when education was only loosely equated with schooling and when no legislation compelled children to attend school or prevented them from working, patterns of school attendance and work take us to the core of decision making within the family economy. To understand gender differentiation this family decision making process must be grasped, not in isolation, but in a specific historical and economic context. This

such studies see Michael B. Katz et al., The Social Organization, p.6. For a careful examination of how, even in textile communities, women's involvement in wage labour was life cycle specific see Gail Cuthbert-Grant, "Weaving it together: Life Cycle and the Industrial experience of Female Cotton Workers in Quebec, 1910-1950", Labour/Le Travailleur, 7(Spring 1981):

² Carl F. Kaestle and Maris A. Vincovskis, "From Fireside to Factory"; Chad Gaffield and David Levina, "Dependency and Adolescence on the Canadian Frontier: Orillia Ontario in the Nineteenth Century", History of Education Quarterly, 18 (Spring 1978); Michael B. Katz and Ian Davey "Youth and Early Industrialization".

³ P.E. Hair, "Children in Society, 1850-1890", in Theo Barker and Michael Drake ed., Population and Society in Britain, 1850-1980 (London, Batsford Academic and Educational Press, 1982) p.46

chapter begins by describing the patterns of schooling for boys and girls in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards, and then turns to an analysis of their work roles. The varying importance of the wage labour of children in the family economies of men in skilled, semi- and unskilled jobs and in the injured trades is assessed. The chapter concludes by focussing on changes in children's residential patterns evident between the census of 1861 and that of 1881.

Children and Schooling

Until children were old enough to work and to help their mother around the house they represented a drain both on the family income and the mother's energy and time. Educators and school inspectors argued that mothers should not work. A good mother was to devote herself entirely to her children's needs.⁴ In fact working class mothers struggling to keep a family fed, clothed and clean in the poorly built and crowded houses of Montreal's poorer citizens would have had little time to devote to other than the most basic needs of their children. Marriage and the birth of children did mean that most women stopped going out to work for wages. They laboured full time at home instead. To many mothers, long burdened with babies and toddlers, it must have been a relief when some children reached school age and could be away

⁴ Rapport du surintendant de l'instruction publique de la Province de Québec, 1875-76, p. 211, cited in Marta Danylewycz, "Sexes et classes sociales dans l'enseignement: le cas de Montréal à la fin du 19^e siècle", in Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Micheline Dumont, Maitresses de maison, maitresses d'école. p. 111 (Hereafter, "Sexes et classes").

from under their feet for much of the day. The school attendance of around 3 per cent of children four and under throughout this period does suggest that some mothers used schools as an alternative to infant daycare - or that children attending the city's salles d'asiles, church run daycares, were reported as at school.⁵ To parents of children of all ages school offered a way of keeping them out of the house, it might equally have represented an investment in their future potentially giving their sons or daughters a chance to improve their position in society and their chances in life.

In Lower Canada, schooling was neither free nor compulsory.⁶ School attendance figures therefore indicate which parents consciously chose to send their children to school, and in the majority of cases, which were willing or able to pay for that education. Here, then is some indication of parental "motivation",⁷ though its content is unclear. Such figures cannot tell us what children learned or who emerged from the schools literate. Nor is any assessment of how regularly children had attended school that year possible. Only in an average sense can we

⁵ On the daycares run by the Grey Nuns see Micheline Dumont Johnson, "Des garderies au XIX^e siècle: les salles d'asiles des Soeurs Grises a Montreal", RHAF 34 (June 1980).

⁶ Schooling was made compulsory for six to fourteen year olds in Quebec in 1943.

⁷ Allen Greer, "The Pattern of Literacy in Quebec", Histoire Social/Social History, XI (November 1978) (Hereafter, "The Patterns of Literacy"), p.322.

estimate how long children remained at school.⁸ Parents' replies to the census taker regarding the number of their children at school simply gave a very broad indication of the importance placed on education in a specific place at a certain time. Which families sent children to school, at what age, and differences in the patterns of boys' and girls' attendance can thus be gauged. Furthermore, in a broad sense choices that were made between the relative importance of schooling and wage labour can be assessed.

In 1861 just under 50 per cent of both boys and girls aged five to nine attended school in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards.⁹ After age six boys were more likely to go to school than girls at all ages - 70 per cent of seven to twelve year old boys compared to 65 per cent of girls attended. (See Table 3.1) Amongst those aged fifteen to nineteen, 17 per cent of boys were attending school compared to only 9 per cent of girls. Throughout this period, most children began school around the age of six. Over half the boys and girls were at school by age seven. By age fourteen, in most years, half were not. Schooling therefore took up a relatively brief span of working class children's lives compared to

⁸ Not until 1901 did the census ask about the months of schooling children had had. That year most of the Ste. Anne and St. Jacques children reported having attended for ten months.

⁹ It is important to note that the way people responded to the 1861 census sometimes makes it difficult to determine just which specific children in a family were attending school. Some parents or enumerators simply listed the total numbers at school, not making it clear which offspring were involved. The patterns reported here are based on intelligent guesses in those cases where it was unclear and should be viewed as such. The 1871 and 1881 method of reporting was much clearer.

TABLE 3.1
PERCENTAGES AT SCHOOL AT AGES 4 TO

a) Single Years

Age	Males			Females		
	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881
4	10	12	5	5	10	7
5	10	29	10	14	28	24
6	42	41	41	37	54	36
7	61	62	67	57	66	60
8	70	70	78	67	62	76
9	76	71	78	66	78	78
10	76	60	73	69	69	79
11	74	65	65	48	69	86
12	68	70	67	81	60	79
13	52	42	67	46	62	56
14	44	35	29	39	27	41
15	38	10	31	28	13	27
16	3	7	25	-	8	18
17	27	7	17	16	7	9
18	10	3	9	-	-	5
19	-	8	4	-	3	-
Numbers Aged 4-19	(488)	(600)	(707)	(478)	(638)	(720)

b) Percentages at School in Five Year Age Groups

Age Groups	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881
0-4	3	3	2	3	3	2
5-9	48	53	55	47	57	53
10-14	62	54	63	57	57	68
15-19	17	7	16	9	6	13
Numbers Aged 0-19	(656)	(804)	(957)	(608)	(849)	(994)

c) Percentages at School Ages 10-19

42% 32% 41% 26% 36% 41%

Source: Random Samples, All children residing with their parents, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards combined.

today. Most boys and girls probably spent some time in school, although in any one year at least one quarter of all children aged between seven and twelve were not at school.

The proportion of girls attending school increased steadily after 1861, so that by 1881 they outnumbered boys in all age groups up to fifteen. (See Table 3.1) Education past that aged was clearly reserved for a minority of children, most of them male. Figure 3.1 captures the overall increase, by including the experience of all boys and girls aged ten to nineteen. The steady growth in girls' school attendance and the more erratic pattern for boys' hints at relationships between age, gender, schooling and wage labour to which we shall return shortly. Of all boys aged ten to nineteen living with their parents, about 40 per cent were at school in 1861 and 1881. In direct response to increased job opportunities in 1871, the percentage of boys at school fell to 32 per cent. Amongst girls, in contrast, 26 per cent were at school in 1861. This percentage increased steadily until in 1881 girls in this larger age grouping equalled boys with 41 per cent receiving an education in the city's schools.

Does this convergence of schooling patterns represent the growing equality of boys and girls in the eyes of the family reflected, perhaps, in decisions about the importance of education? Or were educators placing a new stress on the importance of education for girls? Education for females, except in a few expensive academies, taught the most basic and general of subjects and housekeeping-type skills. Whereas boys' schools listed bookkeeping and geography, girls' schools

offered music, needlework and sewing.¹⁰ For girls there was no question of orientation toward a career. Marie-Paule Malouin has concluded that the curriculum of this period aimed to prepare them to fulfill their future roles as housekeeper, wife and mother.¹¹ Indeed, the Superintendent of Education found the stress on music and such graces in girls' schools superfluous. He feared that many young women were being educated above their station in life and suggested that bookkeeping and domestic economy would better form the basis of female education.¹² Most did learn at school what would help them at home - elementary literacy and skills suitable to females of their class. Differences in boys' and girls' schooling stretched beyond the subjects taught. Among the schools run by the Catholic School Commission of Montreal, girls' schools received six to ten times less money per student than did boys'. Whereas between 1860 and 1877 six new schools for boys were built and financed by the commission, none were constructed for girls.¹³

In separate schools, with a curriculum that moulded life roles based on gender distinctions, girls were not going to reshape their futures dramatically by staying slightly longer in school over this

¹⁰ L.A.Huguet-Latour, L'Annuaire de Ville Marie. Origine, utilité et progrès des institutions catholiques de Montréal (Montreal, Senecal, 1877), pp.165-170 (Hereafter, L'Annuaire).

¹¹ Marie-Paule Malouin, "Les rapports entre l'école privée et l'école publique: l'Académie Marie-Rose au 19^e siècle", in Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Micheline Dumont, Maîtresses de maison, p.90 (Hereafter, "Les Rapports").

¹² Marie-Paule Malouin, "Les Rapports" p.90 Québec, Documents de la Session, 1874, "Rapport du Ministre de l'Instruction Publique", p. vii.

¹³ Marta Danylewycz, "Sexes et classes" p.102.

Fig. 3.1 : School and Work Patterns of Boys & Girls Aged 10 to 19, Ste. Anne & St. Jacques combined.
1861 - 1881



period. They apparently did succeed in making themselves more literate on the average than the males of their cohort.¹⁴ Gender differences, however, were reproduced, not minimized in the schools.

The growing percentage of girls at school in these two wards was not a phenomenon limited to Montreal. Michael Katz and Ian Davey have reported on a remarkably similar pattern in Hamilton, Ontario between 1851 and 1871. There girls were less likely to attend school in 1851, but by 1871 "young women aged 13 - 16 had established a notable lead over men: 49.4% of them compared with 42.6% of men attended school."¹⁵

Katz and Davey explained the greater increase in female attendance as a result of the fact that in Hamilton "there was very little work in industry available to women "under the age of 16". The "explanation for trends in school attendance", they suggest, "lies partially in the labour market".¹⁶ For Montreal boys the labour market explanation seems to fit. The pattern for girls is somewhat more ambiguous. In these two wards the attendance of girls of work age decreased slightly from 32 per cent in 1861 to 29 per cent in 1871, then rose again to 36 per cent in 1881. The small increase in girls' attendance over the two decades was accompanied by a growth in labour force participation. Both increased, not simply at the expense of each other, as Katz's argument would

¹⁴ Allan Greer, "The Pattern of Literacy", pp. 326-327.

¹⁵ Michael B. Katz and Ian E. Davey, "Youth and Early Industrialization", p. 594.

¹⁶ IBID.

suggest, but rather by replacing staying at home in apparent "idleness". Among girls aged ten to fourteen, for instance, in 1861, 41 per cent neither attended school, nor reported work. (See Table 3.2) What they were doing was not the concern of most census enumerators. The column describing an individual's occupation was generally filled only for those in steady, remunerated jobs. Occasional respondents, however, listed people's work rather than their job, confirming the sexual division of labour within their family.

Take Louis Coutur's family. He was a fifty year old carter in 1861. He reported that his twenty one year old son worked as a shoemaker. His wife Marguerite's work was described as "housework", a job which clearly included care of the family's pig listed as her property. Their seventeen year old daughter's work was also clearly defined. She "helped with the housework". The five year old son was considered too young to work. He was specifically described as still a young child.¹⁷ It seems fair to assume, making allowance for possible underenumeration of girls' steady labour,¹⁸ that most of the girls who listed no job or school attendance worked periodically, if not frequently, at domestic labour as mothers' helpers, in the home. It is thus in family decisions about the allocation of labour power, rather

¹⁷ Mss. Census, 1861, St. Jacques, 11, fo. 7750.

¹⁸ On this problem see Sally Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth Century London: A Study on the Years 1820-1850", in Juliett Mitchell and Ann Oakley, eds., The Rights and Wrongs of Women, (London, Penguin Books Ltd, 1978), pp.63-66 (Hereafter, "Women's Work"); and Mason, Vinovskis and Hareven, "Women's Work", p.191.

Table 3.2
Percentage of Children 0-19
at Work, School or Neither

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number Aged</u> <u>0-19</u>	<u>0-4</u>		<u>5-9</u>		<u>10-14</u>			<u>15-19</u>		
		<u>School</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Home</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Work</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Work</u>	<u>Neither</u>
a) <u>St. Jacques - Sons</u>											
1861	243	4	96	42	58	69	6	25	14	42	44
1871	375	3	97	50	50	54	11	35	8	58	34
1881	513	1	99	51	49	62	6	32	21	50	29
b) <u>St. Jacques - Daughters</u>											
1861	261	6	94	43	57	54	3	43	4	22	74
1871	379	4	96	48	52	57	6	37	4	31	66
		3	97	49	51	71	5	24	15	38	47
c) <u>Ste. Anne - Sons</u>											
1861	412	2	98	50	50	58	7	35	18	38	44
1871	430	3	97	56	44	54	9	37	6	64	30
1881	444	4	96	61	39	64	10	26	10	75	15
d) <u>Ste. Anne - Daughters</u>											
1861	347	1	99	50	50	60	1	39	12	9	79
1871	468	3	97	64	36	57	8	35	9	34	91
1881	460	1	99	57	43	66	6	28	10	30	60
e) <u>Both Wards - Sons</u>											
1861	656	3	97	48	52	62	7	31	17	39	44
1871	804	3	97	53	47	54	10	36	7	61	32
1881	957	2	98	56	44	63	8	29	16	62	22
f) <u>Both Wards - Daughters</u>											
1861	608	3	97	47	53	57	2	41	9	15	76
1871	849	3	97	57	43	57	7	36	6	32	64
1881	994	2	98	53	47	68	5	27	13	36	51

Source: All children at home with parents, Random Samples.

than in the market place alone, that patterns of school attendance and workforce participation must be interpreted. The sexual division of labour within the family determined the different work paths taken by boys and girls. Girls were consistently more likely to remain at home than their brothers as Figure 2.1 makes clear. Only in 1881 were more at school than at home. Even then, 40 per cent of daughters aged ten to

nineteen were neither at school nor at work, compared to 20 per cent of sons.

Children of all ages and both sexes in these working class wards of Montreal were less likely to attend school than were the young of Hamilton, Ontario. Differences were most marked in 1871, when, with the exception of girls aged five to six around 20 per cent more children in every age group in Hamilton were at school. (See Table 3.3) Most attended school between the ages of seven and twelve. In 1871, 66 and 67 per cent of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques boys and girls that age were reported at school, compared to 86 and 85 per cent of Hamilton youngsters. Amongst older children and boys in particular the greater availability of work would explain some of the differential. More teenage boys were likely to need to contribute wages to the family economy in predominantly working class areas than in a more mixed population like that of Hamilton, Ontario. And more work was available, particularly in good years like 1871. The drop in school attendance for boys age thirteen to sixteen from 35 per cent in 1861 to 23 per cent a decade later bears witness to the lure of jobs for Montreal sons in times of expansion. A decade later, following six years of depression the percentage at school had increased to 41 per cent.

The very different history of educational legislation in Quebec and Ontario must also have influenced the number of children attending school. It warrants a brief explanation, as does the availability of schools for working class youth. Education had been made a provincial responsibility in 1841, it remained so after Confederation in 1867.

Table 3.3

A Comparison of School Attendance Patterns

in Montreal 1861-1881 and Hamilton

1851-1871

	<u>Boys</u>			<u>Girls</u>		
a) <u>Ste. Anne & St. Jacques Wards</u>						
<u>Ages</u>	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881
5-6	25%	36%	26%	25%	41%	30%
7-12	70%	66%	71%	65%	67%	76%
13-16	35%	23%	41%	32%	29%	36%
Number Aged						
5-16	376	472	529	360	501	543
% @ school	49%	47%	55%	48%	51%	54%
b) <u>Hamilton</u>						
<u>Ages</u>	1851	1861	1871	1851	1861	1871
5-6	27.0%	29.6%	53.8%	20.4%	26.5%	49.3%
7-12	54.1%	72.6%	85.7%	46.5%	70.8%	84.5%
13-16	30.1%	51.5%	42.6%	25.6%	52.0%	49.4%

Sources: Hqs Census, Ste. Anne & St. Jacques samples combined. All Children residing with their parents: Michael B. Katz and Ian Davey, "Youth and Early Industrialization", p. 593.

Free schools had been a possibility in Upper Canada since the School Act of 1850 enabled school trustee boards to levy taxes for this purpose. By the late 1850's over half the common schools in that Province were free. Katz, unfortunately, makes no reference to the types of schools available to the children of Hamilton. In 1871 Ontario law deemed that the "public elementary schools into which the lower grades of the common schools had evolved were required to be free by law". Furthermore, all children aged seven to twelve had to attend school for a minimum of four months a year. Those requiring a catholic education had the right to

separate schools.²⁰

In Lower Canada, and after Confederation in Quebec by contrast, schools were neither required to be free nor compulsory until the twentieth century. The school system became complex as divisions between the Catholic and Protestant schools and English and French hardened. Developed with rural areas in mind the system did not succeed in providing equal access to children of all classes within the urban areas.²¹ By 1875 the Catholic and Protestant systems were completely separate. The control and influence of the Catholic Church had grown dramatically in both public and private Catholic schools. All bishops were members of the Council of Public Education. Sisters and priests were rapidly outnumbering lay teachers within the Catholic system.²²

Within Montreal, the expansion of the church and its services meant that a wide variety of orders within the Catholic church were running public and private schools - often in the same building. The costs of education were met partially with grants from the government, as well as monies from local taxation and fees. In practice costs were subsidized by the Church through their provision of personnel at minimal costs and by wealthy parents whose children's fees were used by certain orders to

²⁰ Alison Prentice, The School Promoters, Education and Social Class in Mid Nineteenth Century Upper Canada (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1977) pp.125-130;139.

²¹ Marie-Paule Malouin, "Les Rapports", p.80.

²² Louis Phillippe Audet, Le Systeme Scolaire de la Province de Quebec (Montreal, Les Editions Erable, 1950) pp.56-9.

support the non-paying pupils.²³ Parents seeking schools for their children thus faced a complex variety of options. Their religion and language no doubt eliminated aspects of the complexity, yet there still remained a diversity of schools within most neighbourhoods. Between the 1860's and the late 1880's Bishop Bourget had introduced new teaching orders from France and sanctioned the creation of local ones. The Christian Brothers, the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, the Sisters of Providence and numerous other orders ran schools throughout the city. So did lay women and lay men.

For most of the working class the fees of .25 cents to \$2.00 a month demanded in the majority of schools would have placed inordinate strain on already tight budgets. Yet, we have seen that Eli Massy and his cigarmaking colleagues were willing to pay .50 cents a week for their children's education even though this absorbed 7 per cent of their wages.²⁴ A major contribution of the Catholic orders was in providing some free schooling for the city's predominantly Catholic working class. Around ten Catholic schools existed in both Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards in 1877. The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame (CND) offered free classes to about 705 girls in Ste. Anne that year and to 698 in St. Jacques.²⁵ The Sisters of Providence also offered two free

²³ Marie-Paule Malouin, "Les Rapports", p. 89.

²⁴ RCRC, Quebec Evidence, Cited in Greg. Kealey, Canada Investigates, p. 213.

²⁵ L.A. Huguet-Latour, L'Annuaire, p. 142

classes for poorer children in their school in St. Jacques.²⁶ The size of classes for non-paying pupils gives some indication of the kind of education possible. In the Ste. Marie school, at the corner of Craig and Visitation streets in eastern St. Jacques ward the CND offered six classes to 200 paying pupils, in classes that averaged thirty three pupils. They also gave eight classes for the non-fee paying students - an average of eighty seven girls per class.²⁷ Ratios of up to one hundred pupils per teacher could be found in such free classes. This practise of educating both fee paying and "free" students within one school did enable these orders to provide an education for those unable to pay. Free did not, however, mean equal. Not only did paying students enjoy lower teacher pupil ratios, but they also had better equipment and broader curriculums. Even desks were sparse in the public, free classes. Class distinctions were thus reflected and perpetuated in the distinctions between fee paying and non-fee paying students.²⁸

Free classes made some education, however minimal, available to poorer children. The fact that most schools required some fee must, however, have limited working class attendance. Indeed, that so many did go to school in these two wards testifies both to the determination of

²⁶ l'Institut de la Providence, Histoire des Filles de la Charite, Servantes des Pauvres Dites Soeurs de la Providence, iv (Montréal, Providence, 1930) pp. 205-6 (Hereafter, Histoire des Soeurs de la Providence).

²⁷ L.A. Huguet-Latour, "L'Annuaire", p. 142.

²⁸ Marie-Paule Malouin, "Les Rapports", p. 89.

parents and children to get an education and to the importance of such free schools. Parents of all backgrounds sent their children to school. The French Canadians of these wards were somewhat more likely than the Irish or even the English and Scots to send sons to school.²⁹ (See Table 3.4). In 1861, 74 per cent of French Canadian boys aged seven to twelve attended school, compared to 62 per cent of the Irish and 70 per cent of the Scots and English. In 1881 more French Canadian boys aged thirteen to sixteen attended than other groups, although the proportion of the younger age group had dropped since 1861. Over these decades French Canadian girls, however, did not increase their level of school attendance as quickly as other groups, perhaps because of their involvement in the sewing industry. The differences were not, however dramatic.

Schooling and work were not necessarily mutually exclusive occupations for nineteenth century children, particularly working class offspring. Children often attended school for several months, leaving when required to work for wages. In this, their patterns of schooling resembled those of rural children kept home to help with such seasonal work as planting and harvesting. School and work also merged in nineteenth century thought, as educators disagreed about the relative socializing merits of each. Hard work was considered by many as the best form of education available. Education for the working class, in particular, aimed to serve as a precursor to work. Schools attempted to inculcate just those habits of obedience, punctuality and hard work that

²⁹ C.F. Allan Greer, "The Pattern of Literacy", pp.333-4.

Table 3.4

Origins, School Attendance and Work

<u>Males</u>		French Canadians			Irish			English		
a) <u>School</u>										
<u>Ages</u>	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881	
5-6	28%	39%	27%	23%	20%	22%	17%	46%	23%	
7-12	74%	63%	72%	62%	76%	67%	70%	60%	78%	
13-16	31%	24%	43%	37%	21%	42%	29%	18%	28%	
% at school	50%	46%	56%	47%	48%	52%	44%	48%	55%	
b) <u>Work</u>										
5-6	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
7-12	3%	2%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%	
13-16	25%	36%	27%	21%	37%	27%	14%	35%	39%	
Total Ages										
5-16	164	253	320	136	125	120	36	86	80	
% at Work	9%	13%	7%	7%	12%	9%	3%	8%	9%	
<u>Females</u>		French Canadians			Irish			English		
a) <u>School</u>										
<u>Ages</u>	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881	
5-6	27%	29%	42%	32%	62%	14%	0%	58%	20%	
7-12	65%	65%	74%	63%	74%	80%	57%	65%	78%	
13-16	27%	23%	31%	33%	33%	51%	40%	47%	31%	
% at school	46%	45%	53%	48%	57%	58%	39%	60%	56%	
b) <u>Work</u>										
5-6	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
7-12	0%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	
13-16	8%	15%	24%	7%	19%	14%	0%	10%	0%	
Total Ages										
5-16	167	262	322	127	148	137	41	74	72	
% at Work	2%	6%	9%	2%	7%	4%	0%	3%	0%	

Source: Random Samples, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques combined. All children residing with parents.

would be required in the workplace. Such habits were equally enforced by factory owners who locked out late-comers and levied heavy fines and heavier punishments on non-conformists.

The complementarity of school and work as educator of the young is captured in one letter to the editor of the Montreal Daily Witness, written at the time that compulsory education was being debated in Ontario. This observer applauded the general idea of mandatory education but wondered whether a half day system would not be better. Recognizing the realities of economic need amongst many Montreal families he suggested it would not be just to take children away for a whole day in cases "where parents are dependent on the services of their children". More philosophically he suggested that:

A half day's study of 3 hours, and a half day's work of the same length, leaving 3 to 4 hours for meals and recreation would probably bring up children with symmetrically trained and healthy minds and with good habits for life.³⁰

In fact, the patterns of school attendance suggest that parents got the best of both worlds, not necessarily by splitting the day, but by sending most of their children to school for varying lengths of time before they reached thirteen or so and then sending some of them, boys particularly, out to work. The following section examines the work experiences of boys and girls and the importance of their contribution to the family economy of the working class.

³⁰ Montreal Daily Witness, December 1868.

Young Children and Work.

Examining children's work patterns involves certain problems. Underenumeration of the wage labour of children is likely, though impossible to measure. Luckily, perhaps, for the historian, no child labour laws existed in Quebec until 1885, so that fear of repercussions would not have inhibited parents from reporting a child's occupation. It seems fair to assume that under-reporting of children's jobs would have been no greater in Montreal than in other cities of Canada, England and America, and possibly less. More of a problem lay in the casual and irregular nature of many children's work. Journalists, child reform societies and descriptive literature of the period attest to the widespread involvement of children in a variety of street trades. Children "male and female", could gain "a few pence by retailing newspapers or, as is sometimes the case, supplement the labour of begging by the sale of daily journals". Such children formed an "irregular squad of urchins who may be seen around the printing offices at the hour of publications". Others, observers suggested, were "thrust forth" in the morning from comfortless homes to beg or to steal.³¹

By the 1880's reform societies, most notably the Society for the Protection of Women and Children, were attempting to prevent young children, particularly girls, from night ~~time~~ work on the streets. They

³¹ The Saturday Reader, Montreal, IV, 1867, p.22.

began to push for factory legislation to outlaw the work of girls under twelve and boys under fourteen. And they called for controls on children "being employed for begging, picking up refuse or other degrading occupations." "Children of tender years" were to be prevented "from accompanying or assisting vagrants or begging musicians". That these trades continued to employ large enough numbers of the young to cause concern, is clear from the determination expressed by the same group in 1888 and again a year later to pressure all levels of government about the need to "prevent the employment of young children in the streets in inclement weather and late at night" and to stop girls under 10 years of age from being exposed to the street under any circumstances." Finally, despairing of government action, the society resolved to write to the parents of girls found on the street, warning them that unless they stopped their children from going out at night on such errands they would be proceeded against.³² The results lie buried in the legal records of the time.

Boys selling newspapers regularly or irregularly, or cleaning shoes on street corners, like the young girls who turned to prostitution or the young of both sexes hawking whatever they could sell were more likely to catch the attention of police and reformers than to be reported at work to the census taker. Apart from such occupations that clearly brought in cash, many children were fairly constantly at work

³² Montreal Society for the Protection of Women and Children, Minute Book, 24 February 1882, PAC, MG 28, I-129, 31 January 1888, 12 February 1889, 12 March 1889.

"gathering coals, wood or water, tending animals, or working in the home garden....running messages, washing clothes, cleaning the house, and attending to or assuming the regular workload of ill family members". In Toronto, in this period, such tasks and wage labour accounted for 16.1 and 27.7 per cent respectively of non-attendance at school.³³ These forms of children's work are also hidden from Census statistics. Such casual work might free other family members to earn wages or bring in small but crucial amounts of cash. It served as a bridge, a transition from home and school to work.

The timing of children's transition into the workforce differed for boys and girls and varied over time and between families. The work of young children aged ten to thirteen or fourteen captured the imagination and elicited the horror of the middle class in the 1880's. Analysis of the census returns, however, confirms the assessment of contemporaries that steady work by children under fourteen or fifteen was common only in the families of those in greatest need. Within most families adult children resident at home were the most important second wage earners, followed by teenage children. The contribution of those under fifteen was relatively insignificant statistically, though crucial for survival in those families where it occurred. However, because it was just this group of young workers that became the focus of reform legislation it is worth examining their labour before turning to the more statistically important contribution of older children.

³³ John Bullen, "Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Household Economy in Early Industrial Ontario", Unpublished Paper, Canadian Historical Association, Annual Meeting, 1983, pp.2-3.

Qualitative evidence suggests widespread child labour in this period. In 1881, "the employment of young children in mills and factories" was considered to be so widespread as to "warrant the Government in issuing a Commission in relation to the subject". William Lukes and A.H.Blakeby, the Commissioners, believed that such an enquiry "met the approval of the public at large". They confirmed the employment of children aged ten to fourteen, even under ten, in the mills and factories of diverse sectors of the economy. Their report suggested child labour was both "extensive and on the increase, the supply being unequal to the demand, particularly in some localities".³⁴

In 1888, when the factory work of boys under fourteen and girls under twelve in Quebec had been legislated against, workers and employers in cigar-making, shoemaking, dry-goods and other trades reported the presence of some children as young as nine in factories and shops. Cash-boys in dry goods stores began as young as age ten. A girl of ten and a half was reported in one cigar manufactory. Several Montreal witnesses reported beginning their "apprenticeship" as cigarmakers at the age of eleven or twelve.³⁵ One shoecutter reported that children worked "from the age of six years up", not in the

³⁴ Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers, 1882, Paper no.42, "Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Working of Mills and Factories of the Dominion and the Labour Employed Therein", (Hereafter, "The Working of the Mills and Factories"), pp.3,8.

³⁵ RCRLC, Evidence of Samuel Carsley, p.18; Evidence of Louis Laramée, Dry Goods Clerk, pp.372-3; Eli Massy, cigarmaker, p.21; George S. Warren, cigarmaker, p.58; Achille Dagnais, cigarmaker, p.25; Ferdinand Brissette, cigarmaker, p.28; Patrick J. Ryan, cigarmaker, p.32.

factories, but in "the houses where they are employed on the work obtained from factories".³⁶

There is an apparent discrepancy between qualitative evidence and the reporting of occupations by young people to the census taker, between the evidence of Royal Commissions and of the census. This is not surprising. The conditions of work for such young people warranted public outrage. Such children were noticed, however, because they were the exceptions within their peer group. Most parents did not send children under fourteen out to work. Even the figures on child employment collected by Lukes and Blackeby confirm that the labour of young children was limited to specific sectors and to a small proportion of children. Overall, in the 465 factories that they visited in Ontario, the Maritimes and Quebec, under 5 per cent of workers were below fifteen and well under 1 per cent were under ten.³⁷ Acts outlawing the employment of such young children did not reshape the experience of the majority because most did not start work at such a tender age.

Not until they passed the age of fifteen or sixteen did most children in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards perform sufficiently steady waged labour to report an occupation to the census taker. Under 2 per cent of nine to ten year olds reported a job. At ages eleven to twelve, 5.6 per cent of boys worked in 1861, 8.4 per cent in 1871 and 6 per cent.

³⁶ IBID., Evidence of John F. O'Rourke, p. 245.

³⁷ Canada, Sessional Papers No. 42, "The Working of the Mills and Factories", pp. 10-13.

a decade later. The proportion of girls the same age was under 5 per cent in 1881. In the buoyant early 1870's fully one quarter of boys aged thirteen to fourteen had a job, this dropped to 17 per cent a decade later. The increase in girl's involvement was slower - growing from 7.9 per cent of thirteen and fourteen year olds in 1861 to 15 per cent in 1881. Boys under twelve and girls under fourteen, the categories that would be covered by the Factory Acts of 1885, clearly represented both a small proportion of the children at work and of their cohort. Only 10 per cent of sons and 7 per cent of daughters aged ten to fourteen reported a job in the peak year of employment, 1871. (See Table 3.2)

Compared to their contemporaries in the textile towns of England and the United States Montreal children did not start work young. In Preston, Lancashire, for instance, 88 per cent of boys aged fourteen were recorded as employed in 1851.³⁸ Amongst the Irish studied by Lynn Lees in London, England, nearly 23 per cent of both boys and girls aged ten to fourteen were at work in 1851.³⁹ The equivalent figure for Montreal boys was 7 per cent in 1861 and 10 per cent in 1871. For girls it ranged between 2 and 7 per cent over these decades. (See Table 3.4) Underenumeration of young Montreal child workers on a scale unmatched elsewhere seems unlikely. Children do seem to have been less likely to have been involved in relatively full time wage labour. Despite the expansion of Montreal industry over this period there were probably

³⁸ Michael Anderson, Family Structure, p.75.

³⁹ Lynn Lees, Exiles of Erin, p.111.

simply not enough jobs for large numbers of very young workers. Those families needing additional wages chose older children when they had them. The wage labour of girls under fifteen and boys under twelve was thus limited to families in dire need.

Contemporaries agreed that those young children in factories, workshops and commercial establishments were there because of their family's poverty. "It is generally the financial circumstances of the family that brings him to work so young", argued Mr. J.M. Fortier, the cigarmaker whose black hole and brutal disciplining methods shocked Montrealers when it was made public at the Royal Commission hearings of 1888. If he employed a child under the legal age, it was, he justified, "the fault of the father or the tutor".⁴⁰ "Given the lack of means common to most working class families", health officer, Louis Laberge had no doubt that "in the families of working people, where the average of children is 8,9 or even 10, there is need of the handiwork of children under 14 years of age."⁴¹ Even those advocating stricter legislation to control the labour of those under fourteen believed parents in financial need should be allowed to "send their children to work if obliged to do so", and that exceptions should be made, for instance, "when a widow needed twelve year olds' to work to live".⁴² "When we are not rich,"

⁴⁰ RCRLC Evidence of J.M. Fortier, pp. 123-4.

⁴¹ IBID., p. 4.

⁴² IBID., Evidence of S. Carsley, dry goods merchant, p. 18.

explained a widow simply, "we need the help of our children's work."⁴³ When Lukes and Blakeby asked "very young children" in 1881 "why they were at work so young", they received the following answers: "Having no father, had to help mother to get a living". "~~Would rather work than go to school.~~"⁴⁴

Analysis of those families with ten to fourteen year olds at work confirms the importance of economic need - both as a result of a father's particular occupation and of the economic conjuncture. Families headed by men in the unskilled or injured trades were most likely to send youngsters to work in 1861. In 1871, 28 per cent of semi-skilled workers reported at least one child working as did 24 per cent of unskilled families with children that age and 15 per cent of those in the injured trades. (See Table 3.5) The mean number of young workers per family shows the same differential - .39 for the semi-skilled, .27 for the unskilled and .24 for those in the injured trades. In 1871 only 7 per cent of the skilled had young workers. A decade later, however, as skilled workers too found their trades under attack, and as construction workers and others responded to years of lower wages and less work, they became as likely as the unskilled to rely on a young child's wages. Depression and work restructuring thus touched the lives of a growing minority of working class young, forcing them into the workforce at an age that would be outlawed in future years.

⁴³ IBID., Evidence of Dame Rose de Lima Lavoie, widow, pp.72-3.

⁴⁴ Canada, Parliament, Sessional Paper no.42,1882, "The Working of the Mills and Factories", p.2.

The percentages of young workers were remarkably similar whether a family had two to three children or over six. Family size, even the ages of other children will not explain the wage labour of those children under fifteen. Other factors must be sought. The impact of such daily challenges as unemployment and ill health is largely hidden in the census returns, although the higher proportion of young workers in the families of the least skilled in 1861 and 1871, and the whole working class in 1881 must surely reflect their greater insecurity and vulnerability to such crises.

Ethnic background also bore no independent relationship to the labour of such young children. French Canadians, Irish and English Canadians alike found jobs for such young children when they had to. In 1861 French Canadians were less likely to have young workers than others. In 1881 they were more so. Ste. Anne families always averaged more young workers than those of St. Jacques, but differences were not significant. Nor did the presence of older siblings mitigate against a younger child working. Indeed the presence of other children fifteen or over in the family increased the likelihood of the young working. In 1871, for example, families where half the children were under fifteen (life cycle stage IV) had an average of .15 youngsters at work compared to .37 for those families where half the offspring were over fifteen and .43 where all were over fifteen. (Table 3.5) Clearly when extra income was needed, either because of unemployment, low wages, illness or drink, more than one additional working child was needed to boost it sufficiently.

TABLE 3.5
YOUNG WORKERS IN MALE HEADED FAMILIES

a) Percentage of Families with young workers among men of different occupations.

	1861			1871			1881		
	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2
Number of Children Aged 10-14 at work									
Non Working Class	95%	5%		86%	14%	0%	93%	5%	1%
Skilled Trades	100	0		93	7	0	80	20	0
Injured Trades	89	11		85	10	5	77	17	6
Semi-Skilled	95	5		72	17	11	96	4	0
Unskilled	84	16		76	21	3	80	16	3

b) Mean Numbers of Young Workers.

	1861		1871		1881	
	Unadjusted Mean	Adjusted Mean	Unadjusted Mean	Adjusted Mean	Unadjusted Mean	Adjusted Mean
Overall Mean, Number of Cases	.09 (167)		.20 (227)		.17 (249)	
<u>Life Cycle Stage</u>						
IV Half Children Under 15	.07	.07	.15	.15	.17	.17
V Half 15 and Over	.18	.18	.36	.37	.20	.21
VI All Children over 15	.00	.02	.43	.43	.45	.44
<u>Class Position</u>						
Non Working Class	.04	.03	.13	.15	.08	.09
Skilled Trades	.02	.04	.11	.09	.24	.23
Injured Trades	.50	.45	.24	.25	.17	.20
Semi-skilled	.07	.06	.39	.37	.04	.02
Unskilled	.17	.17	.27	.20	.24	.25
<u>Origins</u>						
French Canadians	.06	.09	.20	.20	.18	.21
Irish	.16	.11	.19	.17	.15	.10
English/Scots	.00	.00	.19	.25	.17	.14
<u>Ward</u>						
Ste. Anne	.14	.13	.21	.21	.19	.22
St. Jacques	.02	.04	.18	.19	.15	.12

Source: Random Samples, All male headed families with some children aged 10 to 14. The adjusted means represent the hypothetical means that would result were the influence of the other variables controlled for. These were generated using Multiple Classification Analysis. See Appendix F.

Those youngsters who did work before they reached fifteen were employed, not surprisingly in the sectors of Montreal's economy that were largely dependent on child and female labour - in clothing, tobacco working, commerce and textiles. Few found jobs in heavy industry, and few worked in trades that would give them a skill for life. The industrial transformation created a variety of jobs which were age specific. Children performed them for a while until they became too old or too experienced to be paid low wages. Then they were let go. The boys of both Ste. Anne and St. Jacques found jobs in commerce as clerks and office boys and in factories as tobacco workers and cigar makers. In Ste. Anne some also worked as general labourers, as nailers or carpenters and in St. Jacques as shoemakers. The young girls of St. Jacques who fell in the sample reported only two jobs - sewing and tobacco work. Ste. Anne girls found more varied factory work as typewriters, tobacco workers, seamstresses, working in printing establishments or as clerks or domestics.

Most of these jobs involved long and tedious hours either repeating monotonous tasks, or in the case of message boys, continually coming and going or sitting around waiting for errands. Children of all ages employed in the factories worked the same hours as adults - an average of about ten hours, six days a week. Overtime could keep them in some mills and factories until 8 or 9 in the evening. Lukes and Blackeby reported in 1881 that by the afternoon on hot summer's days the "appearance and condition of the children was anything but inviting or desirable".

They have to be at the mills or factories at 6.30 am, necessitating their being up at from 5.30 to 6 o'clock for their morning meal, some having to walk a distance of half a mile or more to their work.⁴⁵

The tobacco of the cigar factories and the lead in printing shops and type casting establishments exposed children at this early age to substances that would prove to be health hazards. Tobacco workers and cigarmakers were well aware of the high chance of disease even death that accompanied their occupation.⁴⁶ Indeed, even the (more conservative of the two Reports arising from the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital commented on the "painful nature" of the testimony respecting children employed in cigar and tobacco factories. Having watched:

the evident fact that the tobacco had stunted the growth of the witnesses and poisoned their blood. They were undersized, sallow and listless, wholly without the bright vivacity and rosy hue of health which should animate and adorn children.⁴⁷

It was this period that saw the beginnings of the widespread unemployment of children in cigarmaking, cotton mills and printing works. Boy cigarmakers were taken on as apprentices in name, being paid \$1.00 weekly the first year, \$2.00 the next and \$3.00 in their final years' apprenticeship. At the end of that time they could seldom

⁴⁵ Canada, Sessional Papers, no. 46, 1882, "The Working of the Mills and Factories", p.3.

⁴⁶ RCRLC, Evidence of Patrick J. Ryan, p.37; IBID., George S. Warren, p.58.

⁴⁷ RCRLC., "Appendices to Freed Report", cited in Greg Kealey, Canada Investigates Industrialism, p.22.

perform more than a single task. Their years of apprenticeship gave the employer a source of cheap labour and initiated the boys to the discipline required in factory work. It was in just these sectors in which young children were concentrated that the most dramatic forms of disciplining were revealed to the Royal Commission in 1888. Young children, particularly boys, constituted a rough and unruly workforce. To discipline them employers drew on a wide variety of tactics, ranging from fines to dismissals, from minor slapping across the fingers to serious beatings, from detention rooms to the "black hole" of M. Fortier's Montreal cigar factory. There children were placed in a "sort of coal box. The coals are stored there, and when the children don't behave they stick them among the coals".⁴⁸ Witnesses reported that some children remained locked in for one to two hours, sometimes for most of the afternoon and early evening.⁴⁹

The relationship between these young workers, their parents and the employer was complex. Parents appear to have endowed the employer with the patriarchal and disciplinary powers usually attributed to a father. Indeed, some employers claimed such powers for themselves. M.J.M. Fortier himself argued that in his tobacco factory boys had not been beaten "other than what they have deserved for wrongs they have committed, the same as a parent would punish his child."⁵⁰ He and his manager claimed that parents asked them to discipline their children,

⁴⁸ RCRLC, Anonymous Evidence, p.42

⁴⁹ IBID., Evidence of Theophile Charron, p.26

⁵⁰ RCRLC, p.124

especially in situations where family discipline consistently failed. Punishment, even locking up children was done, he argued, at the request of parents. One boy's mother "told me to use any means in my power to chastise the boy as she could not get any good at all out of him." Fortier similarly justified throwing an eighteen year old girl on the ground and beating her when she refused to make one hundred cigars. "I had seen her mother, and her mother prayed me to do the best I could and to correct her the best way I could".⁵¹ When "apprentices" in his factory failed to turn up on time, he first notified the parents, then "had the child arrested". "We have had parents come to us over and over again", he assured the commissioners, "and threaten to hold us responsible if we did not make the apprentices attend to their work." Other tobacco manufacturers reported having been requested by parents "to correct their children". Still others sent the children home to their parents when they did wrong.⁵²

Obviously children needed "disciplining" to conform to factory routine. Adults too had to learn the punctuality and application that new work processes demanded. What is apparent, however, in the relationship between children, employer and parents, is that the latter appear to have assumed that employers performed the same role as masters of apprentices had done in former times. Most employers, on the other

⁵¹ IBID., p.125.

⁵² IBID., Evidence of Alexander McGregor, foreman at Fortier's factory, pp.98-9,103; Evidence of A.H.Wood, p.140; Evidence of Ovide Grothe, cigar manufacturer, p.145.

hand, were concerned only with employing and disciplining a cheap labour force. The family and the child did not gain the benefits of a trade well learned in return. They merely earned some much needed money. Even this was whittled away by the most prevalent disciplinary measure - the imposition of fines. Child after child working in the textile mills of Hochelaga and the tobacco factories of Montreal testified to losing major proportions of their meagre wage in fines. Ferdinand Brissette reported that one week he had earned \$1.60 but had been fined \$1.75 "for talking too much and throwing stones at each other. Not for work badly done".⁵³ Fines were clearly used to teach suitable behaviour, to encourage punctuality and good work habits. They were imposed for talking, for running, for looking around,⁵⁴ even for being away sick, for dropping their lunch "among the tobacco, "although there was" no other place to eat, except on the floor,".⁵⁵

Fines were also used to break children's independence. The foreman of the shoe department of Canada Rubber Company explained that if a girl did not want to make the style of shoe that the management had chosen "and we don't want her to choose for us, and if she insists" they used fines to "enforce obedience to orders". Such attitudes were limited to the new hands. Soon management were able to "get them in the way of working according to our orders".⁵⁶

⁵³ RCRUC., p.28.

⁵⁴ IBID., Evidence of Stanislas Goyette, tobacco worker, p.42.

⁵⁵ IBID., Anonymous tobacco worker, p.553.

⁵⁶ IBID., Evidence of William Gallagher, p.685.

Fines were an age and gender specific form of punishment. They were "only imposed upon females and children, the most helpless class of operatives. Men will not put up with deductions from wages which they have toiled hard to obtain".⁵⁷ Deducting money was a particularly effective form of punishment for young children because their parents were likely to be more upset about a child's reduced pay package than about minor forms of corporal punishment. One employer explained that fines were imposed:

in order that the parents may see it marked on the envelope, that it may thus attract the parent's attention. They will see ten cents marked as a fine and they will know about it. They will then find out from the children how it occurred, or they will go to the overseer and speak about it and that generally effects the result we desire.⁵⁸

Parents did intervene trying to get back fines that they considered had been levied unfairly.⁵⁹ And they no doubt re-inforced the employer's disciplinary measures by demanding that their children avoid future fines.

In 1885 the Quebec government made the work of boys under twelve and girls under fourteen illegal in most factories. Hours of work were limited to ten for both children and women. Yet child labour continued both in the shops, sweatshops and other small establishments not covered

⁵⁷ RCRLC., "Appendices to Armstrong Report", cited in Greg. Kealey, Canada Investigates Industrialism, p.47.

⁵⁸ IBID., Evidence of R.W.Eaton, p.392.

⁵⁹ IBID., Evidence of Ferdinand Brisette, p.28.

by the law as well as in the factories that were covered. The factory inspectors' reports of the 1880's stressed the need for stronger controls and the complicity of some employers. Generally, however, they laid the blame on the desire of parents for the money their children could earn and on their hurry to profit from their children's labour. Inspectors deplored the life chances of those "taken from school where they had learned nothing and sent to the factory...without even knowing how to read".⁶⁰ The cost to the children's present and future health, the stunting of their growth, as well as the dangers they were exposed to and the life long health problems that could ensue for them and their children were all real and should not be minimized.⁶¹

The work of these children continued, however, in most cases for the very reason it had existed initially. A certain proportion of families simply could not exist on the wages other family members could make. Controlling legislation had to be accompanied by more general employment opportunities and higher wage rates before child-work would be curtailed further. Even then, some families through illness, drunkenness or other disabilities would continue to need the wages of such youngsters. If the figures for Ste. Anne and St. Jacques ward are representative of the city as a whole, then it seems likely that the labour of a small percentage of very young children continued despite labour laws, not

⁶⁰ Quebec, Documents de la Session, doc. no.2, 1890, p.139; doc.no.7, 1896, p.76, "Factory Inspectors Reports", cited in Jean de Bonville, Jean Baptiste Gagnepetite, pp.58-9

⁶¹ Jean de Bonville, Jean Baptiste Gagnepetite, p.60.

only because of a lack of enforcement, but because it was already limited to those families in most desperate need. Those unable to balance their budgets chose any and every means possible of getting extra cash. Most avoided the labour of very young children. If necessary, what amounted to the sacrifice of a child's future health and education was taken. Some families continued to do this well into the twentieth century. Writing in 1912, a reform group concerned with children's welfare recognized that some young children were "driven out to work by the pressure of a need stronger than all laws, sometimes by the fear of actual starvation for the family."⁶²

Teenage and Adult Sons and Daughters in the Family Economy

While the work of young children under fifteen was limited to families in most need, older children were expected to work. "In our culture", reported Alice Lacasse, the daughter of a French Canadian immigrant to New Hampshire, "the oldest children always went to work".⁶³ Wage labour for boys over fifteen became the norm in this period. More children of both sexes were drawn into the labour force between 1861 and 1881. The proportion of boys, however, remained consistently higher than of girls for all age groups. And the pattern of involvement over a girl's life course continued to be completely different from a boy's.

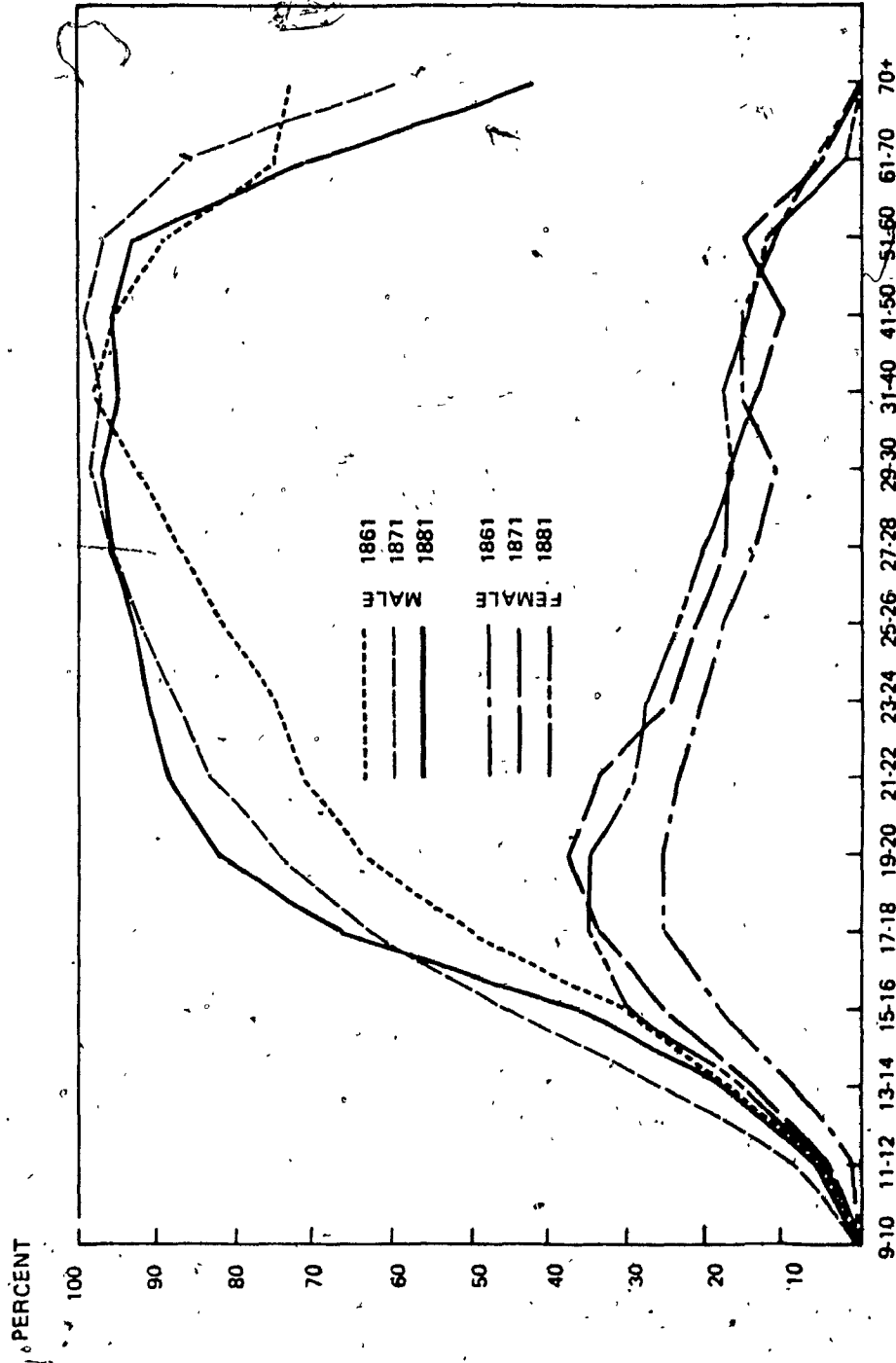
⁶² Child Welfare Exhibition Souvenir Handbook, (Montreal, 1912)p.32.

⁶³ Tamara K.Hareven and Randolph Langenback, Amoskeag, p.262.

Once boys reached fifteen or sixteen their likelihood of working for wages began to increase dramatically. At that age 30 per cent reported jobs in 1861, nearly 46 per cent in 1871 and 37 per cent in 1881. By ages seventeen to eighteen 50 per cent worked in 1861, nearly 68 per cent two decades later. Until that age the pattern of involvement of sons and daughters reflects that found in the younger age groups. Boys were much more likely to find jobs in 1871 than 1881, but girls steadily increased their reported involvement over the decades. (See Figure 3.2) Thus at ages fifteen to sixteen the proportion of girls reporting a job increased steadily from 18 to just under 30 per cent. For those age seventeen to eighteen involvement grew from 25 per cent in 1861 to 35 per cent in 1881. At the peak age at which girls reported working, nineteen to twenty, 25 per cent worked in 1861, nearly 38 per cent in 1871, then 35 per cent in 1881. Even then the participation rate of girls was only half that of boys. After age twenty the experiences of boys and girls diverged quickly and dramatically as Figure 3.2 makes clear. Growing proportions of boys continued to work, reaching over 90 per cent among men aged twenty three to twenty four in 1881 and continuing to climb till age fifty. That of women decreased rapidly as marriage took the majority out of the labour market.

Some of this male-female differential may result from the fact that girls working as domestics in homes outside these wards would not have been reported by most family heads. Census instructions were sufficiently ambiguous to make it unclear whether parents or employers

Fig. 3.2 : Percentages of Males & Females Listing an Occupation — 1861 - 1881



Source Random samples, Ste. Arne and St. Jacques wards combined, three years moving averages.

should report them on their schedule.⁶⁴ Thus the figures on which Figure 3.2 is based include some daughters reported as domestics by their parents, who may have lived elsewhere, and some residing in the homes of the wealthy families of these areas. Between 4 and 6 per cent of daughters in these wards did report to working as servants. More probably left these working class wards seeking placement elsewhere in the City. Servants in Montreal were concentrated in St. Antoine ward, the wealthy English ward immediately to the north of Ste. Anne. There in 1871, lived 1,790 servants, nearly 45 per cent of Montreal's live-in domestics. Nearly one half of them were of Irish origin, 17 per cent were French Canadian. Many must have left the working class homes "below the hill" in Ste. Anne, to work in the homes of men of commerce, professionals and manufacturers for long hours, shelter, more protection than they may have appreciated - and minimal pay. Engagement contracts from this period show that the youngest were placed in service quite simply because their own family could not supply their needs.⁶⁵ Those leaving such homes, where hunger had at times been a fact of life, were probably better sheltered, fed and clothed than before. What wages they received is difficult to determine. One family in 1861 reported paying between \$2.50 and \$4.00 monthly to its servants.⁶⁶ Contracts signed in the early 1870's stipulated that girls would receive around 19 pounds or

⁶⁴ "Instructions to Census Enumerators", pp.127-8.

⁶⁵ Claudette Lacelle, "Les domestiques dans les villes canadiennes au XIX^e siècle: effectifs et conditions de vie", Histoire Sociale/Social History XV (May 1982) pp.185,199.

⁶⁶ Ms. Census, St. Jacques, 1861, fo. 8765 .

\$76.00 annually.⁶⁷ Such amounts would have helped families a little. In addition, the absence of one dependent female child could save the family about \$40.00 annually in food costs at 1882 prices. (See Appendix D)

Teenage boys in these two wards reported working in a wide variety of crafts and in skilled and unskilled jobs in all sectors of Montreal's economy. No longer were they limited to the unskilled factory positions of the youngest workers. This broadening of jobs in the teenage and adult years was not experienced by girls. They remained concentrated in a few types of factory work - as typewriters, tobacco workers and in shoe and collar factories. They were concentrated most dramatically, however, in dressmaking. Over 90 per cent of the teenage girls who reported jobs in St. Jacques in 1871 were seamstresses. In Ste. Anne over half were. The proportions were similar for females over twenty one who lived at home. Such levels of concentration continued into the 1880's.

While domestic service took young women away from their own families and into the homes of others, sewing kept many daughters working at home. Clothiers, haberdashers and shoemakers all attested in the 1870's to the widespread existence of homework in their trades. Mr. Young, a Montreal haberdasher, for instance, reported in 1874 that his firm had five establishments in Montreal employing "about fifteen

⁶⁷ Claudette Lacelle, "Les domestiques", p.201. Conversion to \$ made from the table in Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, Histoire Economique, Appendix I.

hundred people working indoors and out-doors... About one half of some of our goods are taken home and made by out-door work-women to be finished. They are all private persons and not small manufacturers."⁶⁸ In 1888 wholesale clothiers Hollis Shorley and James O'Brien both reported that almost all their work was done outside.⁶⁹ Homework and putting out were clearly not disappearing over this period.

The census returns in Canada give no indication of where people worked. However, the clustering of two to five family members, all seamstresses, so commonly found in the census returns for St.Jacques ward suggests very strongly that here was a centre of homework. It was not uncommon to find three to four sisters, ranging in age from eleven to twenty-eight, all working, presumably together, as sewing girls. In the Moisan family of St.Jacques ward, for instance, four daughters worked as seamstresses in 1871. The father worked when he could as a labourer and although the wife reported no occupation, she probably also did some sewing at times.⁷⁰ Or take, for example, the family of Marie and Michel Guigère. In 1881 they had nine children at home aged two to twenty three. He worked as a joiner. Four girls age thirteen to twenty three reported that they were seamstresses, one son worked as a labourer, and the thirteen year old son was an apprentice. Marie kept house for the workers, caring for the younger children, shopping,

⁶⁸ Canada, Journals, 1874, "Select Committee on the Manufacturing Interests", pp.61-3.

⁶⁹ RCRLC, p.294.

⁷⁰ Mss.Census, St.Jacques, 1871, 6-137.

cooking, cleaning and looking after her husband's seventy seven year old father who lived with them. She too probably helped sporadically with the sewing.⁷¹ These girls may have sewn shoes rather than clothing, for homework was equally a part of the shoemaking industry. "Most of the women we employ," reported shoe manufacturer Z.Lapierre in 1888, "take their work home to their families. They have their own machines at home, and they get their work done there".

Piece-work at home at minimal rates and for long hours initiated these girls to wage labour. Working at home they were free from the constraints of factory hours and factory discipline; but to make more than a pittance they were obliged to work continually. When A.W.Wright examined the Sweating System in Canadian cities later in the century he found that women and children sewing at home worked "many more hours daily than would be permitted in shops and factories under the regulation of" the Factory Acts.⁷² Employers asked about homework in the 1880's were conveniently hazy about hours worked, wages paid, even prices paid per piece. James O'Brien a wholesale clothier believed that mothers and daughters "working by the piece", received \$1.00 to \$2.00 for making a dozen workmen's shirts. A good hand, he thought, would make two or three shirts in ten hours.⁷³ At the higher rate of pay and at three shirts a day, girls could have earned only .49 cents a day, or

⁷¹ Mss.Census, St.Jacques, 1881, 12-101:108.

⁷² Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers, 1896, Paper no.61, "Report Upon the Sweating System in Canada", p.8.

⁷³ RCRLC, pp.294-5.

under \$3.00 a week. When work was completed it had to be returned to the factory in order to receive payment. It was carefully inspected, and if something was wrong the girls had to "take it back and change it." This could waste half a day's valuable work time, so that many let the inside staff redo the work and the amount was "deducted from their pay".⁷⁴ A.W.Wright found that in these situations the fines usually far exceeded the value of the repairs, further reducing their pay.⁷⁵ There were no set agreements about the price that was to be paid per article. Employees working at home would seldom have known what other workers received.

Whereas girls working outside the home could perhaps forget their jobs for the few hours of relaxation possible between work and sleep, homework was always there. Not only did it dominate daily existence, but in the small houses of Montreal's poorer working class it filled up needed space in bedrooms and living rooms.⁷⁶

Homework involved both hand sewing and machine work. Those families which invested in sewing machines or button holers faced additional problems. Regular payments had to be made to the sewing machine companies or the machines were repossessed. "If ...by sickness or death...the poor woman is unable to pay the installment when due, she

⁷⁴ RCRLC, Evidence of Hollis Shorley, p.287.

⁷⁵ Canada, Sessional Papers, 1896, "Report Upon the Sweating System", p.8.

⁷⁶ IBID., p.7.

loses all that she has paid upon the machine".⁷⁷ Prices paid per piece might drop so low that money invested in a machine for homework would never be recuperated. Shoe manufacturer Z. Lapierre reported that he had originally introduced a button hole machine into his factory. He stopped using it, however, as it became cheaper for him to have work done outside. Girls who had bought these machines to do the work at home themselves were making a poor living because the price per 100 buttonholes dropped from .60 cents to .16 cents. "It paid so well that everybody went into it; and now they are doing it for almost nothing".⁷⁸

Why did so many girls apparently sew at home for particularly low wages rather than work in factories or shops where wages, while still low, were higher? Employers in 1874 all agreed that most of their workers were French Canadians and were "females who can get nothing else to do."⁷⁹ Probably there was little option. This was one trade in which women possessed an advantage, usually having at least some sewing experience. And while there was a scarcity of certain kinds of skilled labour in Montreal, there was an over abundance of unskilled female labour. As old trades were deskilled and production re-organized, unskilled labourers, women and children alike, all competed for the existing jobs. With the shift in the shoemaking and the clothing trades from producing custom work to ready made items, homework multiplied.

⁷⁷ IBID., Evidence of Montreal Daily Witness journalist, pp.603-4.

⁷⁸ IBID., p.439.

⁷⁹ Canada, House of Commons, Journals, 1874, "Select Committee on the Manufacturing Interests", p.8.

Cutting out and skilled work took place in the factories where mechanization increased the speed at which articles could be prepared for sewing. The numbers of outworkers required expanded in proportion, drawing growing numbers of women and children into such work.

Yet to argue that girls and other homeworkers had no options would be incorrect. Some sewing work was available inside factories. There was always a shortage of domestics in Montreal. Jobs for women and girls existed, as we have seen, in tobacco factories, in printing establishments and in shops as well as other workshops and factories. Some young girls were no doubt attracted by the independence from family ties that accompanied work away from home. Those girls sewing at home, in contrast, were likely among the first generation of workers experiencing wage labour. Probably, like their equivalents in the early years of the industrial revolution in Great Britain, as long as there was a choice between home and factory they chose the home. As Sydney Pollard has pointed out:

The reasons for the repulsion of factory industry, were many and varied and they were not all economic. There was more to overcome than change of employment or the new rhythm of work. There was a whole new culture to be absorbed and an old one to be traduced and spurned, there were new surroundings... and new uncertainties of livelihood, new friends and neighbours, new marriage patterns and behaviour patterns of children and adults within the family and without.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Sydney Pollard, The Genesis of Modern Management. A Study of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain, (London, Edward

Homework in clothing and shoemaking, by its very nature a product of the advanced division of labour and of factory production, offered these women a chance to resist the split between home and workplace and the adjustments this entailed. Older girls helped with domestic labour around the house, whether they brought in wages or not. Homework meant that for them as for married working women, the two occupations could be combined. Moreover, sisters could work together and parents did not have to worry about daughters being in dangerous, possibly immoral work environments. At home the women had at least the illusion of setting their own pace; they could modify the contours of "continuous employment...one of the most hated aspects of factory work".⁸¹ Even outside factories' work hours were long and rigid, conditions grim. In the dry goods business many shops stayed open till 9 even 11 p.m. on Saturday nights, from 8 a.m. till 6 p.m. on other days. In retail stores, serving girls were forced to stand all day. Others worked in tiny, stuffy sewing rooms attached to retail outlets.⁸²

The wage work of girls within the family should not be overstressed. While many daughters of working class parents probably earned wages at some point prior to marriage, at any one time most did not. Within the family, even among those in greatest need, sons were sent out to work for wages in preference to daughters. Take the case of

Arnold, 1965) p. 162.

⁸¹ IBID., p. 166.

⁸² IBID., Evidence of Samuel Carsley, pp. 14-20.

labourers' families. Their food costs alone could exceed the incoming wage of a father once three children reached their teens. Yet boys were much more likely to hold jobs than girls. Among labourers' families in Ste. Anne in 1881, 66 per cent of those with sons over the age of ten had one or more at work. Only 28 per cent of those with girls the same age reported having daughters at work. If older brothers were working, girls generally did not. Girls of twenty or more remained home, while a teenage son worked. Their respective roles seem clear. Twenty six year old Ellen Mullin, for example, reported no occupation. Two brothers, aged nineteen and twenty three worked as carters. Her father was a labourer. She would have helped her mother in the domestic labour necessary to support the workers and her fourteen year old younger brother.⁸³

Even families without sons, or with young sons, seem to have been unwilling to send girls to work. Forty two year old Octave Ethier must surely have had trouble supporting his four daughters aged one to seventeen and his wife on his labourer's wages. Yet neither seventeen year old Philomene, nor fifteen year old Emma reported having a job.⁸⁴ The girls in labourers' families who did report an occupation fell into two categories. Half were the oldest child, with brothers who were much younger or without any brothers. Nineteen year old Sarah Anne Labor, for instance, was the oldest in a family of six children. The closest brother was only seven. She worked as a toilet soap maker. Her wages

⁸³ Mss.Census,Ste.Anne,1881,5-1:1.

⁸⁴ Mss.Census,Ste.Anne,1881,5-122:129.

and the money saved by sharing their household with several other families and individuals clearly helped this family survive.⁸⁵

The remainder of the girl workers came from families which sent almost all their children to work, regardless of gender. Catherine Harrigan, for instance, was fourteen. She worked as a servant. Her two brothers aged fifteen and twenty were labourers like their father. Her younger sister went to school.⁸⁶ This latter group of families appears the most desperate, perhaps because of recurrent illness, or the habitual drunkenness of a parent. Their use of daughters and young children to earn wages contrasts with the apparent reluctance of other labourers, highlighting the relative infrequency of daughter's work even among those with the lowest incomes.

While boys became accustomed to wage labour, girls moved between wage labour and housework in response to the family's economic needs and their position in the family. At home they served an apprenticeship in the reproduction of labour power - in babysitting, cleaning, mending, cooking and shopping. It made good economic sense to have boys earn wages rather than girls. For, while young children of each sex often earned a similar wage, once they reached fifteen or sixteen girls' wages were less than mens'.

⁸⁵ Mss.Census, Ste.Anne, 9-261:278.

⁸⁶ Mss Census, Ste.Anne, 1881;9-208:219.

The reporting of wages to the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital gives some indication of wage differentials based on age and gender. In 1888, children earned as little as \$1.00 a week in cigarmaking, .25 cents to .30 cents a day in the cotton mills. Girl apprentices in dressmaking, mantlemaking and millinery might have earned nothing for several years until they had learned the trade, then they received around \$4.00 a week, well under the \$6.00 of an unskilled labourer. In workplaces where young women and men both had jobs, differentials based on gender were standard. "Girls" making uppers in Olivier Benoit's shoe manufactory, for instance, received \$3.00 to \$4.00 a week. Men, in contrast, made \$7.00 to \$8.00. Girl bookbinders made \$1.50 to \$6.00 a week, journeymen bookbinders an average of \$11.00.⁸⁷ In a Montreal shirt and collar factory "ladies" were paid less per dozen buttonholes made than were men.⁸⁸ In newspaper offices children on piece work were reported to have been paid 12 cents per 1,000 "ems", journeymen were making between 29 cents and 30 cents on similar jobs while most women earned 26 cents or less.⁸⁹ After analyzing all the wage data presented to the commission, Fernand Harvey has concluded that the average male shoemaker's wage was \$8.00 compared to \$4.00 for females. Male tailors averaged a similar \$8.00, females only \$3.00.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ RCRLC., Evidence of Patrick Ryan, cigarmaker, p.37; Machinist, Hudon Mills, p.271; Samuel Carsley, Dry Goods Merchant, p.15; Olivier Benoit, Boot and shoemaker, p.365; Henry Morton, printer, p.297; F. Stanley, foreman at the Star, p.331.

⁸⁸ IBID., Evidence of A.H. Simmons, Shirt and Collarmaker, p.494.

⁸⁹ IBID., Evidence of F. Stanley, foreman of the Star composing room, pp.331-2.

⁹⁰ Fernand Harvey, Revolution Industrielle, pp.150-1

Low wages for women and children were justified because it was assumed they were secondary wage earners. For families in need of additional income it made sense to send boys out to work, simply because they could earn more. Economic reality thus reinforced ideology to perpetuate the importance of the home as women's place, even within working class households. Gender differences in patterns of labour involvement, thus reflect pragmatic decisions made by families in the context of the Montreal labour market at that time.

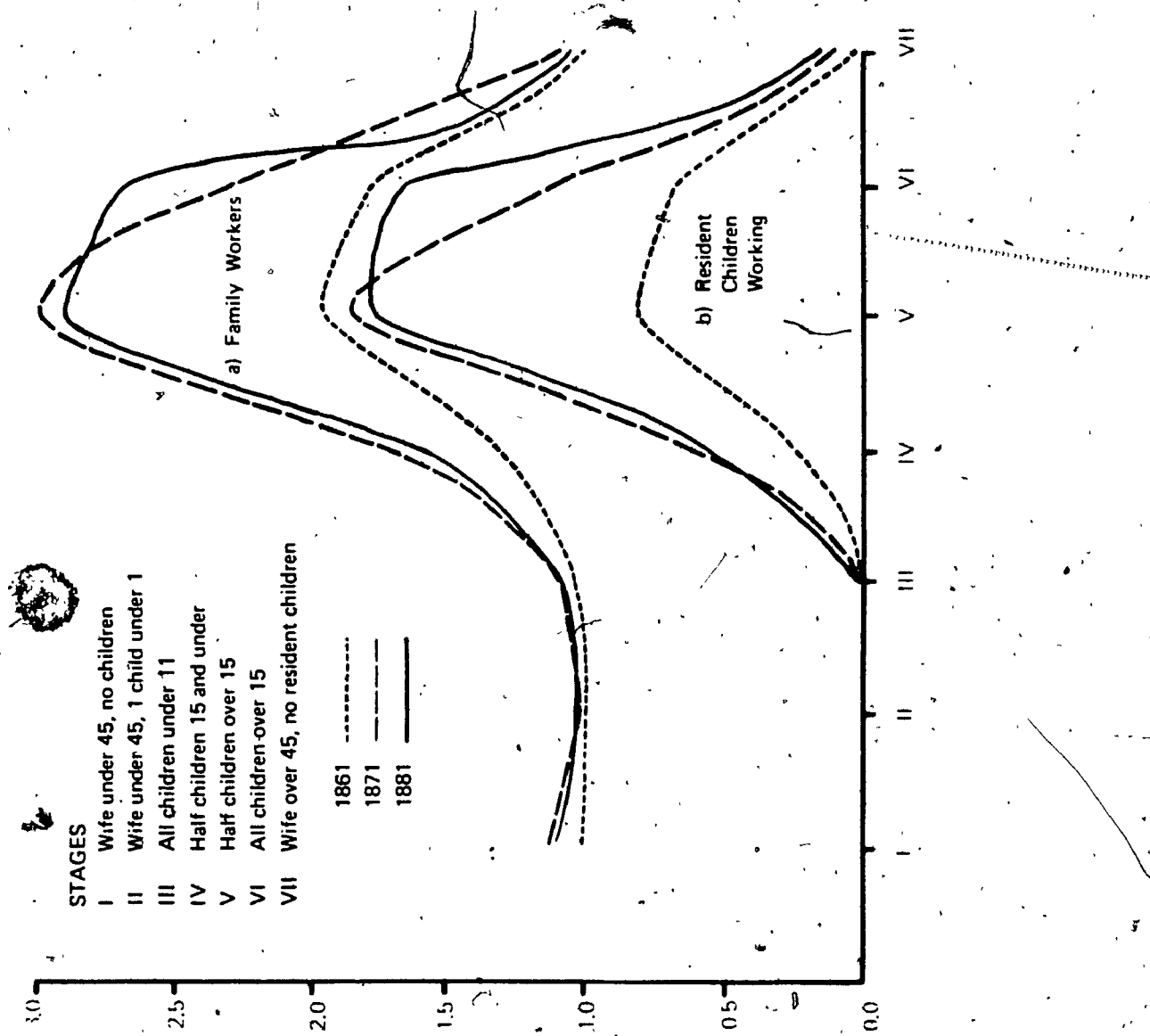
Average Numbers of Workers Per Family

Most male wages were not, as we have seen, a family wage. To cover the costs of all but the most basic foodstuffs, and the lowest of rentals, other income generating strategies were required in the families of the unskilled, those in the injured trades and those with several older children. The wage labour of co-resident offspring, particularly sons, was the most obvious strategy used to counter low wages. It is within the context of the family economy and its interaction with the wider economy that the overall increases in the wage labour of children must be viewed. Analysis must shift from the level of participation of boys and girls to focus on the family - on the average numbers of workers and particularly of resident children at work. For then the importance of the family life cycle in determining whether children's wage labour was a possible survival strategy or not, becomes evident. Then the centrality of a father's class position in shaping children's work experiences becomes clear.

Families could not always draw on additional workers to complement the head's wage. Take, for instance, an unskilled worker marrying at the average age of 25.6 in 1861. Not until ten years later, at the absolute minimum, would he send a child out to work. When his oldest child reached ten he would have had about three children to support. By the time the oldest child reached its early teens, the average father had four children. For this ten to fifteen year period additional cash had to be earned by a man's wife, by co-resident relatives or gained in other ways. In the early years, when the children were under five or six, food expenses were not too high. Rent could be minimized by taking small apartments or sharing space. As the children reached their early teens, food and clothing costs and space requirements increased dramatically. This was the critical period for many families. Successive children increased the cost of living at a time when only a few families could rely on any additional workers. Not until children were old enough to work would the family again be relatively secure. Once children left home an elderly couple, widow or widower could once again face hardship even misery. This poverty cycle faced the majority of families. Family responses are captured in the figures for the average number of workers and of co-resident children who reported jobs at each stage. Figure 3.3 makes clear the importance of several workers and the growing contribution of children's wage labour to the family economy over this period. By 1881 families averaged almost as many children at work once all children were over fifteen as they had total number of workers in 1861.

Families averaged just over one worker before they had children and

Fig. 3.3 Average Number of Family Workers & Resident Children Working throughout the Family Life Cycle.



STAGES

- I Wife under 45, no children
- II Wife under 45, 1 child under 11
- III All children under 11
- IV Half children 15 and under
- V Half children over 15
- VI All children over 15
- VII Wife over 45, no resident children

1861
 1871 - - - - -
 1881 _____

a) Family Workers

b) Resident Children Working

while the children were under eleven. Extra workers at those stages were wives or co-resident relatives. As offspring reached the age of fourteen or fifteen they became the major secondary contributor to the family wage economy, until, by the time half a family's children were fifteen they constituted over 60 per cent of family workers. Families at this stage averaged under two workers in 1861. By 1871 they averaged nearly three. Once all children had passed the age of fifteen the older ones began to marry and leave home. The average number of workers dropped down to two and finally back toward one again.

Average figures hide class and ethnic variations as well as important changes over the period. In 1861 male headed families averaged 1.3 workers. In the next two decades the average rose to 1.5. This increase was the direct result of the growing numbers of children involved. For, whereas in 1861 the average family with children over the age of eleven had only .48 of them at work, in 1881 it had 1.16. (See Table 3.6). At life cycle stage V, when half the children were fifteen or older, the average number at work increased from .85 to 1.85 over these two decades. Children's wages became more and more important as they came to constitute a wage-earning family's major resource.

For the children of these families, gender and class interacted to frame the contours of their life course within the family. Over these years the patterns of the working class and non-working class families of these wards diverged. In 1861 the non-working class included a high proportion of artisans and shopkeepers, men whose family economy required not the wages, but the work of wives and children. As a result

the average number of workers and of children at work in their families was higher than groups excluding the unskilled.⁹¹ Over the next two decades artisans became less and less common. Family labour was increasingly limited to enterprises like small corner groceries. After 1871 the work of children was least likely among this group. The contribution of children's wages to working class families, in contrast, became more and more important. Major increases were evident among those in the injured trades, and the skilled workers, and to a lesser extent the unskilled. Families headed by men in the injured trades averaged .55 children at work in 1861 and 1.51 two decades later. The unskilled averaged .60 in 1861 and 1.34 in 1881. Whereas there was no increase in the average number of children working between 1871 and 1881 in the non working class and semi-skilled families, all other families showed major increases. (See Tables 3.6-3.8).

In 1861 the life cycle stage of a family and its ethnic origins were significant predictors of the number of family workers. (See Table 3.6) By 1881 ethnicity was no longer important in and of itself. Class had emerged as a major determinant of a family's labour commitments one that was as significant as the life cycle stage.

Wage differentials and the degree of security and regularity of a man's job were thus reflected in the numbers of family members, especially children, who would go out to work. The relationship was not

⁹¹ This difference remained significant when life cycle stages, ethnicity and other variables were controlled.

Fig 3.3 Average Number of Family Workers & Resident Children Working throughout the Family Life Cycle

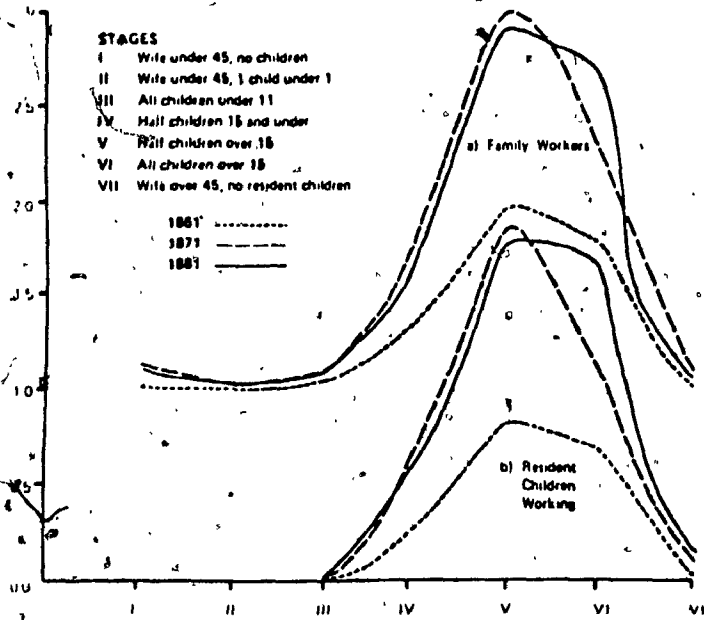


Table 3.4
 Average Numbers of Exported Workers
 and Co-resident Children at Work
 in Male Headed Families

	1961		1971		1981	
	All Workers	Co-resident Working Children	All Workers	Co-resident Working Children	All Workers	Co-resident Working Children
Mean - All Families	1.30	.48	1.34	1.01	1.53	1.16
Class						
Non-working Class	1.38	.56	1.59	.79	1.45	.84
Skilled Trades	1.25	.49	1.34	.94	1.64	1.39
Injured Trades	1.07	.50	1.38	.88	1.41	1.51
Semi-skilled	1.19	.17	1.74	1.00	1.39	.85
Unskilled	1.41	.56	1.70	1.35	1.57	1.34
Significance	(n.s.)	(.09)	-	(.08)	(.001)	(.002)
Life Cycle Stage						
I. Wife Under 45, No Children	1.14	-	1.22	-	1.03	-
II. Wife Under 45, 1 Child Under 1	1.00	-	1.02	-	1.05	-
III. All Children Under 11	1.12	-	1.07	-	1.10	-
IV. Half Children Under 15	1.34	.23	1.75	.56	1.63	.57
V. Half 15 and Over	1.97	.85	1.00	1.85	2.94	1.84
VI. All Children Over 15	1.79	.67	2.20	1.14	2.69	1.63
VII. Wife Over 45, No Children	1.08	-	1.19	-	1.03	-
Significance	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)
Origin						
French Canadian	1.39	.52	1.59	1.21	1.54	1.17
Irish	1.24	.48	1.51	.97	1.53	1.14
English & Scottish	1.07	.27	1.59	.73	1.44	1.09
Significance	(.002)	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Ward						
St. Anne	1.28	.45	1.55	.93	1.50	1.27
St. Jacques	1.33	.48	1.53	1.20	1.55	1.06
Significance	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Total Number/Number with Children Over 11	472	162	415	259	740	290

* The significance of each variable was generated via Multiple Classification Analysis. See Appendix F.

always direct, for the broad categories of skilled, unskilled or injured trades hid a diversity of jobs and wage rates. Furthermore, individual housekeepers varied dramatically in their ability to stretch a wage and families differed in their ability to resist alcohol and illness and the unemployment and costs that accompanied them. Yet the patterns are clear enough. Class position made a major and growing difference to the average number of children working that a family would have. If the averages are adjusted to control for the influence of the families' life cycle stage and origins then the patterns are clearer. (See Table 3.7)

In 1871 skilled families averaged 1.5 workers, those in injured trades 1.59, the skilled 1.62. Amongst those families with some children aged fifteen or over, (i.e. at life cycle stages IV, V or VI), skilled fathers averaged .95 children at work, shoemakers and others in the injured trades .88, the unskilled 1.3. Again, the growing importance of children in the family economy of the working class, and the differentials within it may be seen in the increased contribution of children. Over the two decades there was a 75 per cent increase in the average number of children reporting a job in non-working class families, and a 167 per cent, 174 per cent and 123 per cent increase among the skilled, injured and unskilled respectively. Semi-skilled families had fewer children at work although the increase was dramatic. Montreal's proletariat was growing not only by drawing in migrants from the countryside and overseas, but also by absorbing growing numbers of the children of the city into wage labour - children whose fathers could not earn sufficient wages alone to support a family.

Families clearly attempted to shape their own economies by adjusting the numbers of wage earners to fit their expenses. In so doing they influenced the city's labour pool and enhanced their own survival. The 1871 census captured family economies at a time when most skilled workers could find fairly steady work at a relatively decent wage. The 1881 figures suggest that the depression, combined with the spread of work restructuring into a growing number of crafts, was taking its toll on the skilled as well as the injured trades. Whereas skilled workers with children over eleven had sent an average of .95 to work in 1871, in 1881 they sent 1.39. In the families of men in the injured trades the average nearly doubled in this decade from .88 to 1.51. (See Table 3.7) Amongst the shoemakers' families who constituted the majority of this group, this increase reflected the continued, perhaps growing importance of homework. Clearly in shoemaking as in the sewing trades if children could be kept at home to work, the family had a much better chance of living comfortably. That they did so is suggested by the figures for the number of older children resident at home and working. In 1881 families in the injured trades averaged 1.39 resident working children who were over twenty one and 1.03 teenagers, compared to 1.32 and .84 for the skilled and 1.02 of each for the unskilled. (See Table 3.8)

This increase in the average numbers of workers in all families and the differentials within the working class suggest several important conclusions. Working children clearly became a more important component of the family economy over this period. The increasing availability of wage labour in the factories, workshops and construction sites of

Table 3.7

Mean Numbers of Family Workers and Co-resident

Children at Work when the Influence of Life

Cycle Stage, Origins and Ward of Residence are Controlled

	1861	1871	1881	% increase 1861-1881
<u>Average Number of Workers</u>	1.30	1.54	1.53	
Non Working Class	1.30	1.45	1.34	4%
Skilled	1.27	1.50	1.62	31%
Injured Trades	1.08	1.59	1.62	32%
Semi-skilled	1.14	1.69	1.38	16%
Unskilled	1.45	1.62	1.66	11%
No. of Families	394	615	740	
<u>Average Number of Co-resident Children at Work</u>	.48	1.01	1.16	
Non Working Class	.48	.84	.84	75%
Skilled Trades	.52	.95	1.39	167%
Injured Trades	.55	.88	1.51	174%
Semi-Skilled	.17	.97	.85	400%
Unskilled	.60	1.30	1.34	123%
No. of families with children over 11	162	259	290	

Source: Random Samples, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques. The adjusted mean numbers were generated using multiple classification analysis. See Appendix F.

Montreal meant that even in times of depression more and more sons and daughters could and did find some work. The reliance of employers in certain sectors on women and children resident at home depressed male wages while offering families the opportunity to counter a father's low earnings. Economic transformation thus interacted dialectically with family needs reshaping the labour market, the family economy and the life course of children. This interaction is clearest in the case of workers in those sectors undergoing most dramatic transformation. The continued re-organization of production in trades like shoemaking was reflected in delayed marriage, declining average family size, high

TABLE 3.8

AVERAGE NUMBERS OF ADULT, TEEN AND YOUNG
WORKERS IN FAMILIES HAVING CHILDREN IN THOSE
AGE GROUPS. 1861-1881, STE. ANNE AND ST. JACQUES COMBINED

	Co-resident children 21 and over		Co-resident children aged 16 to 20		Co-resident children 11-15	
	Unadjusted	Adjusted*	Unadjusted	Adjusted*	Unadjusted	Adjusted
<u>1861</u>						
Non-manual	.47	.48	.59	.59	.04	.03
Skilled	.83	.77	.50	.50	.02	.04
Injured Trades	.00	.07	.50	.52	.50	.45
Semi-skilled	.00	.00	.19	.24	.07	.06
Unskilled	.60	.73	.54	.54	.17	.17
No. of cases		(69)		(114)		(167)
<u>Overall Mean</u>		.55		.48		.09
<u>1881</u>						
Non-manual	.89	.98	.49	.56	.13	.15
Skilled	.72	.72	.73	.77	.11	.09
Injured	1.50	1.44	.44	.38	.24	.25
Semi-skilled	.78	.64	.54	.42	.39	.37
Unskilled	1.16	1.15	.88	.82	.27	.29
No. of cases		(101)		(176)		(227)
<u>Overall Mean</u>		.92		.68		.20
<u>1881</u>						
Non-manual	1.00	.93	.58	.54	.08	.09
Skilled	1.28	1.32	.86	.84	.24	.23
Injured	1.43	1.39	.90	1.03	.17	.20
Semi-skilled	.33	.51	.82	.87	.04	.02
Unskilled	1.07	1.02	1.00	1.02	.24	.25
No. of cases		(148)		(190)		(249)
<u>Overall Mean</u>		1.06		.82		.17

* Adjusted for life cycle stage, origins, ward and the number of co-resident children.

levels of household sharing and the greater increase in the number of their children that worked for wages over the period.

The interaction between family and economy is also apparent when the composition of the labour force in the lowest paying areas of employment is examined and compared with other sectors. In the clothing trades less than one quarter of the employees living in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards were family heads. By 1881 55 per cent were children living at home. Thus by relying predominantly on secondary earners, particularly female ones, clothing manufacturers were able to continue to pay wages that fell well below the level necessary for survival. (See Table 3.9)

Finding work for children of all ages appears to have been a family responsibility. Parents were frequently cited in 1888 as trying to talk employers into taking on their young. Few jobs were advertised in the papers and many workers could not read. There was no organized system of getting an employer and worker together. Pubs were one place men might learn of where work was available around the city. Kin constituted another important source of information. When Walter Smith arrived in Montreal from England in the 1870's for instance, he found work in the following manner.

We arrived on Tuesday and the next Friday morning before I was up, Uncle knocked at the door; I jumped out of bed and let him in, says he, -offer of a job at printing, right away at J.C. Wilson and C., come down and start as soon as you have had your breakfast. I did so ...⁹²

Table 3.9

Leading Sectors, of Employment and the Family Characteristics of the

		Workforce								Total Sample
		Family Head		Spouse		Child		Relative or Boarder		
		%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	
General Labouring- Unspecified	1861	80%	(132)	1%	(2)	8%	(14)	11%	(18)	166
	1871	74%	(158)	-		17%	(37)	9%	(20)	215
	1881	65%	(191)	2%	(6)	26%	(77)	7%	(22)	296
Construction Trades	1861	73%	(77)	-		16%	(17)	11%	(12)	106
	1871	71%	(107)	-		25%	(37)	4%	(6)	150
	1881	71%	(103)	-		25%	(36)	4%	(6)	145
Clothing Trades	1861	24%	(22)	14%	(13)	26%	(24)	33%	(30)	91
	1871	14%	(20)	2%	(3)	69%	-	11%	(15)	140
	1881	20%	(40)	6%	(12)	55%	(109)	19%	(37)	199
Transportation	1861	75%	(59)	-		13%	(10)	10%	(8)	77
	1871	70%	(54)	-		21%	(16)	9%	(7)	77
	1881	64%	(73)	-		22%	(25)	14%	(16)	114
Metal & Products	1861	63%	(46)	-		-	(15%)	16%	(12)	73
	1871	56%	(54)	-		-	(28%)	16%	(15)	96
	1881	58%	(73)	-		-	34%	7%	(9)	125
Shoemaking	1861	51%	(22)	-		28%	(12)	21%	(9)	43
	1871	70%	(48)	1%	(1)	15%	(10)	13%	(9)	68
	1881	70%	(58)	1%	(1)	27%	(22)	2%	(2)	83

Source, Random Samples, Ste. Anne & St. Jacques combined - All those reporting a job, male and female.

It was apparently common for mothers to seek work for their daughters and sons and to act as go-betweens. For instance when Sara Fontaine's two daughters were dismissed from their jobs in a cotton mill at Hochelaga she went to the "boss asking why they had been dismissed". "I have need of their assistance to live", she explained.⁹³ In these cotton

⁹² Draft letter in notebook, "Box", Walter H. Smith Collection, Rare Book Room, McGill.

⁹³ RCRLC., Evidence of Dame Sarah Fontaine, p.641. See also Evidence of R.W.Eaton, p.397.

mills at Hochelaga whole families were hired. Fathers and children worked side by side. Such family employment was not the norm in most trades outside the textile industry. Yet in most factories members of the nuclear family and other relatives appear to have frequently worked together. In M. Fortier's cigar factory there were reported to have been five siblings at work. In a shoe factory at least one girl under the age of fourteen worked alongside her father. Cousins worked together in the same factory. A paper box manufacturer reported that some seven sisters from the same family had all worked for him before they married.⁹⁴

Work for whole families offered a chance for the family unit to stay intact, at least within the confines of one factory. It also meant that the employer could pay lower wages, and that parents could be expected to exercise some discipline over their children. The whole family could thus be moulded to the demands of industrial work with minimum friction. And, conversely, as Tamara Hareven has shown, families could in turn influence hiring and other aspects of work.⁹⁵ In situations where parents and children or siblings and other relatives worked together the lines between family and work were softened and the tasks of initiation and supervision shared. Fathers labouring alongside children maintained more contact, control and influence than those working separately. The earning of an independent wage was thus less

⁹⁴ RCRLC., Evidence of Andrew F. Gault, p. 380; Evidence of R. W. Eaton, p. 394; Diverse Evidence, pp. 128, 438, 407.

⁹⁵ Tamara K. Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, pp. 90-101; 128-30.

likely to give these children a feeling of complete independence. The contribution of that wage to the family economy might be made with less friction.

Changing Patterns of Residence

Wage labour potentially offered children freedom from their family in a way that had not been possible in family economies based on shared work. This has led some historians to argue that traditional family ties weakened with the spread of wage labour. Edward Shorter has suggested that the authority linking parent and child, and family and community was minimized as the young put aside old traditions. Historians of the German family, Mitterauer and Seider echo this argument. Middle class children, they argue, became more dependent on their parents because the length of time devoted to education was prolonged. Lower class children in contrast:

started working at an early age, found it easier to get work outside the home, this did much to free them from the rigid system of parental control that had characterized the family as an economic enterprise.⁹⁷

A lack of reliable, representative sources makes it very difficult to analyze changing patterns of authority in working class families in this

⁹⁶ Edward Shorter, The Making of the Modern Family, pp.259-60.

⁹⁷ Mitterauer and Seider, pp.110-11.

period.⁹⁸ What is clear, however, in Montreal as in many other cities, is that children were not expressing independence by leaving home more frequently than their peers of previous generations. In these wards children of both sexes and all ages remained living at home with their parents for longer in 1881 than they had in 1861.⁹⁹ The wage labour that accompanied the growing dominance of industrial capitalism does not appear to have offered these children a chance to free themselves from the constraints of the family economy. Children were not leaving home to reside independently before marriage, although in the buoyant years around 1871 they did marry younger. Paul Spagnoli has suggested that "those who argue that employment opportunities for teenagers encouraged them to leave home at an early age neglect parental attitudes, the other side of the coin.... "Precisely because young adults could find jobs it was in the interest of parents to keep their children at home as long as possible."¹⁰⁰ What struggles may have gone on between parents and children over their place in residence and their timing of leaving home can only be deduced from their actions. In a careful analysis of which

⁹⁸ For a masterly analysis of changes in middle class American families see Mary P. Ryan, The Cradle of the Middle Class.

⁹⁹ This pattern duplicates that found in such diverse parts of North America as Oneida County New York, Hamilton, Ontario, Orillia and Peel Counties, Ontario, in fact in virtually all areas where the issue has been addressed by historians. Mary P. Ryan, The Cradle of the Middle Class; pp.168-9; Michael B. Katz and Ian E. Davey, "Youth and Early Industrialization", pp.87-92; Chad Gaffield and David Levine, "Dependency and Adolescence on the Canadian Frontier. Orillia, Ontario in the Mid Nineteenth Century", History of Education Quarterly, 18 (Spring 1978) p.44; Richard Wall, "The Age at Leaving Home"; Journal of Family History, 3 (Summer 1978) pp.181-202.

¹⁰⁰ Paul Spagnoli, "Industrialization, Proletarianization and Marriage", Journal of Family History, 8 (Fall 1983), p.238.

children left home, Michael Anderson found that boys in Preston Lancashire were "more likely to leave home and renounce familial obligations than were girls, ...widows were more likely to receive sympathetic treatment particularly from girls." He believes that children "were making a conscious calculation of the advantages and disadvantages, in terms of the standard of living which they could enjoy", and then deciding between living with parents and setting up on their own. Whether they would leave or not depended on their wage, their father's wage and the amount they were obliged to hand over to their parents.¹⁰¹

If the reasons for children remaining home were largely calculative as Anderson suggests, then Montreal boys should have boarded more frequently than girls because their higher wages would have allowed them to have done so. This was not the case. In 1861 girls from age fifteen to seventeen were more likely than boys to board. At age sixteen 15 per cent of girls boarded, 15 per cent were servants. Only 3 per cent of boys that age boarded. (See Table 3.10) At age twenty around 40 per cent of girls and boys lived with relatives, non-relatives or were servants. Boarding became less important over these decades, but girls continued to outnumber boys in sufficient proportions to indicate that the imbalance was not simply a result of more girls coming to the city and boarding while seeking work.

In 1861 living with others was still an important stage in the

¹⁰¹ Michael Anderson, Family Structure, pp.67,127-9.

TABLE 3.10
PATTERNS OF RESIDENCE AND LEAVING HOME
GIRLS AND BOYS, 1861-1881
 (Single Years)

<u>GIRLS</u> <u>Age</u>	<u>At Home</u>		<u>Living</u>	<u>Boarder</u>	<u>Servant</u>	<u>Spouse</u>	<u>Female</u> <u>Family</u> <u>Head</u>	<u>Number</u>
	<u>No Job</u>	<u>Job</u>	<u>With</u> <u>Relatives</u>					
<u>1861</u>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
15	74	7	10	7	-	-	-	31
16	63	4	4	15	15	-	-	27
17	45	20	14	14	7	-	-	29
18	59	6	2	16	8	3	-	49
19	51	2	15	15	2	15	-	41
20	30	8	11	26	4	21	-	47
21	24	-	3	24	12	36	-	33
22	30	3	7	17	7	33	3	30
23	24	3	3	9	6	51	3	33
24	20	7	7	10	7	43	7	30
25	13	2	2	9	7	61	7	46
26	22	-	-	11	6	61	-	13
27	19	-	5	14	-	57	5	21
28	8	3	-	-	-	80	10	30
29	4	-	14	4	-	78	-	23
30	9	-	4	11	2	63	11	46
<u>1871</u>								
15	75	19	2	2	2	3	-	48
16	67	20	-	10	-	3	-	36
17	63	25	3	6	3	-	-	32
18	31	42	9	2	-	13	-	45
19	38	28	-	8	4	23	-	53
20	33	25	3	10	10	18	2	40
21	9	30	12	3	3	39	3	33
22	15	21	5	18	3	37	-	38
23	11	30	-	15	-	44	-	27
24	10	8	-	5	2	73	2	40
25	5	12	2	7	-	71	2	41
26	5	7	-	9	5	72	2	43
27	18	14	-	9	-	55	-	22
28	6	6	3	3	-	80	3	35
29	5	10	-	5	-	75	5	20
30	11	2	2	4	2	71	7	45
<u>1881</u>								
15	64	29	-	6	2	-	-	52
16	59	27	3	5	2	2	-	44
17	54	34	-	4	2	6	-	50
18	40	31	2	9	9	7	2	55
19	46	29	5	12	-	7	-	41
20	26	19	3	10	2	38	2	58
21	21	24	5	10	5	35	-	58
22	21	16	3	11	4	42	3	71
23	21	23	5	14	-	34	5	44
24	8	12	4	4	2	65	6	52
25	19	14	5	12	-	48	2	58
26	16	9	5	9	2	50	9	44
27	3	6	-	13	-	75	3	32
28	8	8	-	-	10	75	-	40
29	7	7	4	13	-	64	4	45
30	8	6	-	2	6	71	6	48

Table 3.10 continued

BOYS							
Age	At Home		With	Boarder	Servant	Head of Family	Number
	No Job	Job	Relatives				
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
<u>1861</u>							
15	68	18	3	12	-	-	34
16	61	32	3	3	-	-	31
17	55	30	7	4	4	-	27
18	31	35	7	24	3	-	29
19	25	47	9	19	-	-	32
20	12	42	15	21	3	6	33
21	23	26	7	26	-	19	31
22	11	39	8	31	-	12	26
23	-	36	12	28	4	20	25
24	31	12	-	25	-	31	16
25	14	11	3	25	-	47	36
26	8	5	3	25	-	60	40
27	-	21	4	8	-	67	24
28	6	3	9	16	-	66	32
29	5	10	5	-	-	80	20
30	-	3	6	19	-	72	32
<u>1871</u>							
15	47	47	3	-	3	-	32
16	32	62	2	2	2	-	47
17	28	66	-	7	-	-	29
18	12	77	-	12	-	-	42
19	21	62	10	3	-	3	29
20	19	60	-	19	-	3	32
21	12	44	3	9	-	33	34
22	7	37	-	11	-	41	27
23	5	34	3	26	3	32	38
24	5	27	7	18	-	44	41
25	5	24	2	15	2	46	41
26	-	24	-	12	-	65	17
27	-	15	-	12	-	73	26
28	-	15	-	12	-	73	26
29	-	14	5	5	-	76	21
30	2	8	2	8	-	80	60
<u>1881</u>							
15	65	30	5	-	-	-	20
16	45	50	-	5	-	-	20
17	29	50	8	13	-	-	24
18	14	62	3	10	7	3	29
19	19	68	10	3	-	-	31
20	7	72	-	10	-	10	29
21	9	41	5	5	-	36	22
22	6	62	-	6	-	27	34
23	25	40	5	5	-	25	20
24	8	26	3	8	-	56	39
25	2	23	2	9	2	62	47
26	4	39	13	4	-	39	23
27	4	17	13	-	-	67	24
28	-	30	-	-	-	70	33
29	-	17	6	6	-	72	18
30	3	24	-	3	-	70	37

Source: Random Samples; All Children aged 15 to 30, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques combined.

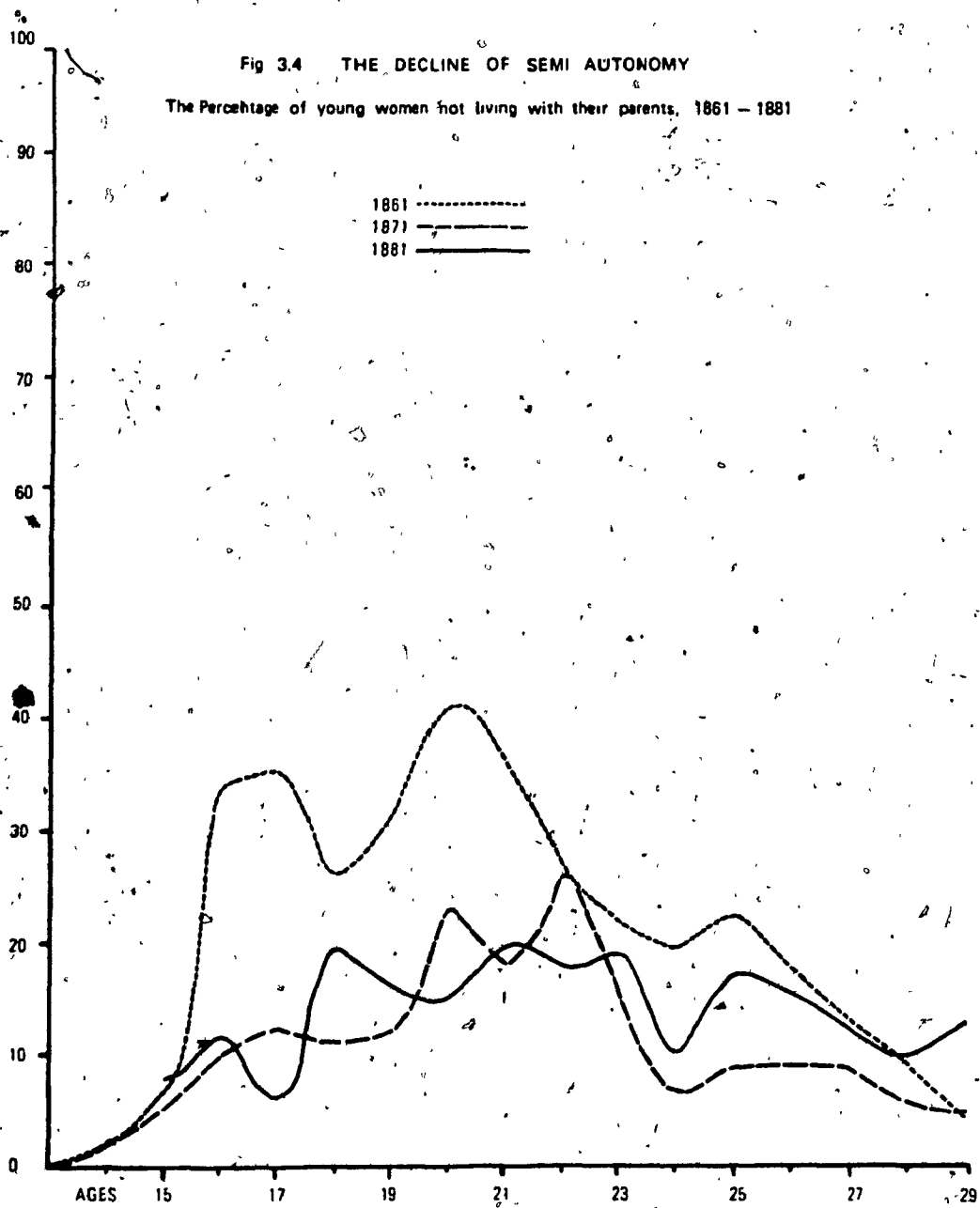
lives of the majority of young people of both sexes. Young people were frequently working and living "as members of a household other than that of their parents", in what Michael Katz has called a stage of "semi-autonomy". In Hamilton, Ontario he found that 71 percent of boys aged fifteen to nineteen in 1861 were living with their parents.¹⁰² In Montreal where job opportunities were greater 80 per cent did so. By 1881, the importance of boarding had declined further. Amongst twenty year olds only 10 per cent of boys and 13 per cent of girls lived as boarders or with relatives. Similar reductions of about one third over the two decades characterized all age groups and both sexes. The decline in this stage of semi autonomy for the girls of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards is captured in Figure 3.4.

Prolonged residence at home co-incident with growing involvement in wage labour. In 1861 12 per cent of all twenty year old boys living at home had not reported occupations, and 42 per cent worked. In 1881 only 7 per cent reported no job, while fully 72 per cent were working. Those who left home were doing so largely to marry. Thus while 12 per cent of twenty two year olds were heading their own family in 1861 this proportion rose to 41 per cent in 1871 then dropped to 27 per cent following the depressed years that preceded the 1881 census. (See Table 3.10) In these wards the spread of wage labour appears to have been accompanied by growing proportions of children remaining home while working and, conversely, by increasing numbers marrying young,

¹⁰² Michael B. Katz, The People of Hamilton, pp.257, 261.

Fig 3.4 THE DECLINE OF SEMI AUTONOMY

The Percentage of young women not living with their parents, 1861 - 1881



RANDOM SAMPLES STE ANNE & ST JACQUES COMMUNES

particularly when economic opportunities were good. Both dependence and independence thus increased at the expense of what Katz called "semi-autonomy" and what Joseph Kett, in a slightly different context aptly named "semi-dependence".¹⁰³ Unravelling the relative significance of autonomy and dependence and their relationship to a child's gender, its father's job or even its position in the family is a complex process. The major shift that occurred in children's place of residence is, however, clear.

Shreds of evidence suggest that most children living at home did, indeed hand over most or all of their wages to parents. Certainly French Canadians interviewed in Manchester, New Hampshire suggested that this was the French Canadian way.¹⁰⁴ Once a child had contributed some or all of their earnings for a while, most parents would have been loathe to take the drop in the standard of living that loss of those wages represented. Conflict and tension surely ensued at times over how much children would contribute and over a child's expressed desire to leave home either to marry or to board elsewhere.

In whatever struggles there were, parents appear to have been the

¹⁰³ Joseph Kett, "Growing Up in Rural New England, 1800-1840", in Tamara K. Hareven, ed., Anonymous Americans: Explorations in Nineteenth Century Social History (Englewood Cliffs, 1971), pp. 1, 13.

¹⁰⁴ French Canadian respondents in Tamara Hareven's interviews in Manchester New Hampshire, reported handing over their pay. There is no reason to suppose that such a practice would have either increased with immigration or over time, indeed the opposite would be more likely. Amoskeag, p. 239; Tamara K. Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, p. 214.

winners. Not only did more children remain home over this period, but more working children did. Among the unskilled, the skilled and the injured workers' families we have seen that the numbers of working teenage and adult children increased over these decades. Indeed the retention of older children at home in 1881 significantly altered the pattern of the number of workers over the family's life cycle, so that whereas in 1871 the average fell off rapidly from 3 to 2.2 once all children passed the age of fifteen, in 1881 the decline was only from 2.9 to 2.7. (see Figure 3.3) Some proportion of this shift must be attributed to the lower wages and less regular work opportunities of 1881 which minimized the possibility of setting up a household or marrying. Certainly fewer of the sons aged fifteen to eighteen who lived with their parents had jobs that year than in 1871, although the same was not true for girls.

Overall the growth in the likelihood of all children both residing at home and working for wages over the two decades was dramatic and reflected one of the series of transformations that was reshaping the pattern and content of childhood and the composition of the city's labour force. Only 16 per cent of all those reporting jobs in these two wards in 1861 were children living at home. By 1881 nearly one third of all workers were children resident with their parents. Boarders, who had made up 14 per cent of all workers in 1861 constituted only 7 per cent in 1881. (See Table 3.11) That nearly one third of all workers lived with their parents must have had an impact not only on the general wage rate but also on the organization of workers. Certainly male workers in trades undergoing rapid change perceived children as the major cause of

depressed wages. Cigarmakers and shoemakers were quite sure that the employment of children was destroying their trade and their living. "Do you believe the reduction in wages is due to child labour?", cigarmaker, George Warren, was asked by the Commissioners in 1888. "Yes, I do", he replied. He felt cigar makers would be in more demand in Montreal, "but on account of so many children being employed most of our men have to go to the States".¹⁰⁵ Shoemakers generally identified machinery rather than children as the reason for lower wages in their trade. They too pointed, however, to the problem caused by young people taken on not as apprentices, but:

only as help in the factory. As soon as they get a chance of increasing their wages by taking the place of a mechanic, or even of a man who has a family to work for; they do so.¹⁰⁶

Taking on "girls" as strike breakers had helped one Montreal printer defeat organized workers in his establishment. The foreman was sure there would be no further troubles "so long as we have the girls to fall back on".¹⁰⁷

It was not the children who were ultimately responsible for men's lower wages or loss of control in the workplace. By re-organizing production, subdividing the labour process and purchasing new steam powered machinery, employers had opened up the possibility of taking on

¹⁰⁵ RCRLC., Evidence of George Warren, p.56.

¹⁰⁶ IBID., Evidence of Olivier Benoit, Boot and Shoemaker, pp.364-5.

¹⁰⁷ IBID., Evidence of John Beatty, printer, pp.358-9.

TABLE 3.11
THE FAMILY POSITION OF WORKERS

	1861		1871		1881	
	% with jobs	% of workforce	% with jobs	% of workforce	% with jobs	% of workforce
Family Head	87	57	93	58	86	55
Spouse	5	3	2	1	3	2
Children at Home	10	16	20	30	21	32
Parents-resident with offspring	0	0	16	4	5	1
Living With Relative	46	5	49	1	46	2
Boarders	52	14	56	7	51	7
Servants	100	5	100	2	100	2

Source: Random Samples, All individuals reporting an occupation, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques combined.

both young children and other unskilled labour in trades that had previously demanded greater skill. Employers were able to capitalize on the need of families for additional workers, and could pay low wages to young and female workers just because they were unskilled, unorganized and dependent on their parents. Once a boy reached a skill level or age where he could command higher wages, in many cases he would be let go and a "new boy taken to get work done cheaply".¹⁰⁸

The roles of sons and daughters within the family economy of the working class constituted living apprenticeships for the positions they would later take on when they formed their own families. Traditionally in the rural areas of Quebec and Ireland all members of the family had contributed to the family economy. It was not the work of children that was new, but the predominance of wage labour. In rural families labour had been apportioned by age and sex. This sexual division of labour continued to operate in the city and was re-inforced by differentials in the market place. Traditional values for French Canadians, Irish and

¹⁰⁸ IBID., Evidence of S.C. Stevenson, pp.7-9.

other groups alike were shaped and reshaped pragmatically in response to the family's needs.

The wage labour of children under fifteen did not approach the levels that characterized the milltowns of New England or English cities during the industrial revolution. It was the wages of teenage and adult children that were most important in bolstering the family income. The higher wages that sons could command made them the preferred choice as second or third wage earner when families could chose. Girls did work for wages, but were never as likely to do so as their brothers. Their experience was invariably brief, sandwiched for the majority, between the ages of seventeen and twenty two. Most of those who married ceased wage labour. Their major role became the transformation of the wage into food, clothing and shelter, and the raising of children - the future generation of workers. This work was equally vital to proletarian survival, but less obvious because it took place largely within the home. It is to the domestic labour and work conditions of married women that the following chapter turns.

Chapter Four

Childbearing, Childrearing and Domestic Labour:

Women's Work in the Home.

Husbands and some children in working class families left home daily to work, seek work for wages or attend school. The fact that they had to leave home underlined the family's dependence on a wage - their need to sell their labour power. Their departure resulted from the separation of home and work that was accompanying the growing concentration of capital and in the process reshuffling the rhythms of family life and redefining the work role and place of women. In most cultures and eras before the growth of industry, labour had been apportioned by both sex and age. Certainly previous generations of Irish and French Canadian married women and children had performed specific tasks and had been largely responsible for food preparation and child-related activities.¹ In the households of the expanding proletariat, however, these activities increasingly took place separate from others. They coalesced to form "housework", something now clearly separate from and different to productive labour.² Housework was not

¹ M. Arensberg and S. Kimball, Family and Community in Ireland (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1940); Charles-Henri-Phillipe Gauldrée-Boileau, "Paysan de Saint-Irène" (Quebec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 1968); Leon Gerin, Le Type Economique et social des Canadiens Français. Milieux agricoles de tradition française (Montreal, Fides, 1938); Everett Hughes, French Canada in Transition (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1943 reprinted 1964); Horace Miner, St Denis. A French Canadian Parish (Chicago, Phoenix Press, 1939).

² Ann Oakley, Woman's Work, pp 44-6.

rewarded with wages, although wages were necessary to perform it. It was largely invisible - "hidden in the household".³ Its invisibility and the growing physical isolation of women in the home led, especially in middle class ideology, to the idea of the home as a separate and feminine sphere. Yet, as historians Susan Strasser, Mary Ryan and others have carefully argued, this sphere was only apparently separate.⁴ And it was more so in middle than working class homes. At numerous levels and in a myriad of different ways women's lives and work in the home were connected to, influenced by and indeed, interacted upon the broader society and economy. To view working class women's role in the home in terms of a separate sphere, or as part of a separate mode of production is misleading.⁵ Their work is best understood as involving the reproduction of labour power, or in Engels' terms, as the "reproduction of daily life."⁶ Viewed thus the links between home and

³ Bonnie Fox ed., Hidden in the Household.

⁴ Mary P. Ryan, The Cradle of the Middle Class. pp.199,239-40; Susan Strasser, Never Done. pp.5,180-185 Nancy Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1977); Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work and Family, p.232.

⁵ Heleieth I.B. Saffioti, "Women, Mode of Production and Social Formations", Latin American Perspectives, 12 and 13 (Winter-Spring 1977).

⁶ Frederick Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and The State (New York, International Publishers, 1942) pp.71-2. There is now an abundance of theoretical literature that deals with the concept of domestic labour as the reproduction of labour power. For an overview of the literature as well as further development of the "domestic labour debate" see Bonnie Fox ed., Hidden in the Household; Veronica Beechy, "Women and Production: a Critical Analysis of some Sociological Theories of Women's Work", in Annette Kuhn and Ann Marie Wolpe Ed., Feminism and Materialism. Women and Modes of Production (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978) pp.182-187. (Hereafter, "Women and Production"). Roberta Hamilton makes a cogent critique of the limitations of the domestic labour

society, between production and reproduction cannot be ignored. Housewives' work in the home is clearly identified as reproducing "the labour force, both in the literal sense of conceiving, bearing and caring for children, and in the broader one of preparing workers to go to work daily."⁷

The initial section of this chapter analyses patterns of marriage, childbirth and childrearing. Women's domestic labour is then examined - firstly in terms of a wife's access to the wage, then her transformation of that wage into sustenance by shopping and cooking. The conditions under which housework was performed are then described. The following chapter investigates that minority of wives who worked for wages and their involvement in non-wage forms of subsistence such as animal raising, gardening, household sharing or taking in boarders.

Marriage, Childbearing and Child survival

For most working class women sole responsibility for domestic labour and childrearing began with marriage. A wedding signalled the start of a new role - that of wife and wage manager, the sustainer of those who worked for wages and the potential producer of a future generation of workers. The dominance of the man's work over family

debate in her review of Hidden in the Household, Atlantis 7 (Fall 1981) 114-126.

⁷ Susan Strasser, Never Done, p.5.

rhythms began with the marriage itself. A study of weddings in St. Bridget Parish, which lies partially within St. Jacques ward, shows that the majority of couples were married on week days in the morning before work began.⁸ Here, apparently, was no major community or family celebration, but the simple act of founding a family economy in the presence of a priest and one or two relatives. Whereas middle class marriages were witnessed by a vast array of friends and kin, most working class couples' unions were witnessed by no more than two relations - usually the father of whichever spouse came from the Montreal area and one other relative.⁹

On marrying, the women of Quebec were bound by the iron-clad principle of the legal incapacity of wives.¹⁰ Initially under the Custom of Paris, and after 1866, under the modified Civil Code, married women were legally incapable of acting in most public situations without their husbands' permission. A wife's legal rights reverted to those of a minor or interdicted person. To sell her own property she required her husbands' permission. Such authorization was also necessary to acquire

⁸ Lucia Ferretti and Daniel Le Blanc, "Cadre Religieux et univers culturel dans une paroisse ouvrière Montréalaise: Sainte Brigide, 1880-1914", *Memoire de Maîtrise en arts (Histoire) UQAM*, 1982, pp.200-202.

⁹ Archives Nationales du Québec à Montréal, *Marriage Register, 1861*. (Hereafter ANQAM). This observation is based on a perusal of the register, not on a systematic analysis.

¹⁰ Jennifer Stoddart, "The Dorion Commission - 1929 - 1931: Quebec's Legal Elites Look at Women's Rights", Unpublished Paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, 1979, pp.6-10. A revised version has been published in Marie Lavigne and Yolande Pinard, eds., *Travailleuse et Feministes*, pp.307-335.

property, to receive donations, to make contracts or to set up a business. Without it such acts were null and void. The Civil Code of 1866 modified some aspects of a wife's legal subordination. The minority who married under separation of property were legally recognized as able to sell, mortgage or buy property without their husband's consent. In practise, however, the courts usually demanded the husband's permission before a woman sold her own goods. Few working class women had much property. Most married under the community of property agreement. For them, any property became jointly owned on marriage, though the wife had no legal independent power over it or access to it. In this their position was better than that of women elsewhere in Canada. For them common law offered absolutely no legal existence apart from their husband, who, on marriage assumed absolute control of both their person and their goods.¹¹ Yet within Quebec, wives were still not legally entitled to have an occupation different from that of their husband, nor to dispose of their own salaries. They had no legal control over their children, and were expected to submit to their husband's will.¹² In-reality a small percentage of wives worked at whatever jobs they could find. Still more exercised real if not legal control over their children simply because working husbands were seldom at home to discipline and socialize the young.

¹¹ Ibid; Le Collectif Clio, L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec Depuis Quatre Siècles (Montréal, Quinze, 1982) p.153-4 (hereafter, L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec); L.Loranger, De L'Incapacité Légale de La Femme Mariée (Montréal, Senecal Cie, 1899).

¹² Micheline Dumont-Johnson, "History of the Status of Women", p.43; Paul-Andre Linteau, Rene Durocher and Jean-Claude Robert, Histoire du Québec Contemporain. pp.219-22.

Marriage placed women in a situation of legal and economic dependency. Yet it was economically a more viable alternative than spinsterhood. Most women's wages were too low to allow a single person to live alone. For working class women, without parents able to support them, marriage offered some chance of security, however meagre. Whether a woman would marry depended on personal inclination, meeting a suitable man, on the ratio of males and females and on the particular economic times at which she reached marriage age. Some women chose not to marry - most obvious amongst these were the growing numbers that entered convents over this period.¹³ For more, however, external and structural factors would influence their marriage chances.

Within Montreal, females outnumbered males in most wards,¹⁴ a fact reflected in the higher celibacy rates for females in areas like St-Jacques. In Ste Anne, where the proportions of each sex were more equal, fewer women failed to find a husband. Pressure to remain at home and contribute to the family economy, especially amongst those women sewing for the putting out industry may have delayed marriage for some of the French Canadian daughters of St Jacques. For others, postponed marriage effectively removed them from the marriage market. When depressions hit and unemployment bred insecurity, working class males delayed marriage and some women apparently missed out. In 1881, after

¹³ Marta Danylewycz, "Taking the Veil in Montreal, 1840-1920 : An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood and Spinsterhood", unpublished Phd. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1981.

¹⁴ Suzanne Cross, "The Neglected Majority", p.69.

seven years of depression 17 per cent of French Canadian women aged 35 to 49 remained unmarried (See Table 2.2). The majority of these single women were concentrated between the ages of 35 and 39. The effects of depression on them bear comment. Almost three quarters of their peers were already married a decade earlier in 1871. Those who had not married by age 35 found it particularly difficult to find a husband in times of depression. In 1881 fully 22 per cent of this cohort remained single.

Yet the attraction of marriage was apparently strong and the checks few amongst families lacking property. Most women did marry. The 9 to 13 per cent that remained single in these wards, indeed the 15 per cent in the City as a whole were low proportions demographically.¹⁵ Such proportions characterise the broad pattern of increasingly universal marriage that constituted part of the demographic transition in Europe and that has been generally associated with industrialisation and urban growth.¹⁶

Cultural tradition about the timing of marriage, was as we have seen in looking at men's experience, modified in response to economic fluctuations and the realities of men's class position. The girls in

¹⁵ Calculated from Census of 1871, Vol II, Tables VII and VIII.

¹⁶ John Hajnal, "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective", in D.V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley eds., Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography. (London, Edward Arnold, 1965); Leslie Page Moch "Marriage, Migration, and Urban Demographic Structure; A Case from France in the Belle Epoque", Journal of Family History 6 (Spring, 1981) p.71.

Table 4.1
Percentages Unmarried
Ages 35-49, 1861-1881

	<u>1861</u>		<u>1871</u>		<u>1881</u>	
	<u>%</u>	<u>Total no. that age</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total no. that age</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total no. that age</u>
a	<u>Gender</u>					
	women, both wards	9 (187)	10 (267)	13 (387)		
	men, both wards	8 (207)	6 (264)	7 (334)		
b	<u>Origins - women only</u>					
	French Canadians	12 (84)	9 (147)	17 (242)		
	Irish	9 (68)	11 (76)	6 (289)		
	English and Scottish	5 (19)	10 (42)	7 (41)		
c	<u>Ward - women</u>					
	Ste Anne	7.5 (106)	8 (150)	9 (173)		
	St. Jacques	11 (80)	13 (116)	16 (213)		
	<u>- men</u>					
	Ste Anne	11 (127)	8 (138)	9 (157)		
	St. Jacques	4 (80)	5 (126)	7 (127)		

Source: Random Samples, 1861-1881

Ste Anne and St. Jacques wards began to marry around the age of 18, although a few were wed at 16 or 17. By age 23 in 1861 and 24 in the next two decades half the girls were married. By age 30, only one quarter remained unwed. The similarity of this pattern over these decades masks what appears to be a gradual shift away from early marriage, particularly amongst French Canadian girls. The mean age at marriage for all women in the two wards increased from 24.2 in 1861 to 25.5 in 1881, although the good years preceding the 1871 census appear to have minimized the barriers to marriage, and led to a temporary

decrease. (See Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1) French Canadian girls married at an average of 24.6 in 1861, of 25.7 two decades later. Fewer and fewer married before the age of twenty. In 1861 and 1871, 11 to 13 per cent were married in their teens. In 1881 the percentage dropped to 3. This might have been a temporary decline caused by the Great Depression. Other evidence suggests not. An overall increase in the age at marriage is supported by Jacques Henripin's research indicating that the age at which Quebec women married began to rise after 1850. He estimated for instance, that in 1851 10.2 per cent of Québec girls aged fifteen to nineteen were married, by 1871 6.7 per cent were and by 1891 only 5.7 per cent were.¹⁷ The trend in St. Jacques ward particularly, appears similar, but, as would be expected of an urban area, accelerated. There 9 per cent were married in 1861, 11 in 1871 and only 3 per cent in 1881. These figures clearly reflect the French Canadian experience (See Table 4.2).

Women in these wards, like their counterparts throughout Canada responded to a complex mixture of individual choice, cultural tradition, and economic imperative or restraint in deciding when to marry. Most ethnic differences in 1871 were similar to those estimated by Lorne Tepperman for the country as a whole. French Canadian women were marrying at an average of between 23.5 and 24, Irish women fractionally older, and the English and Scots later.¹⁸ Yet 1871 appears to be a

¹⁷ Jacques Henripin, Tendances et Facteurs, p.380.

¹⁸ Lorne Tepperman, "Ethnic Variations in Marriage and Fertility, Canada 1871", Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology 11 (November 1974) p.332.

Table 4.2

The Mean Age at Marriage and Proportions
Ever Married for Young Women of Different Origins and in
Each Ward, 1861-1881

a) Men and Women Compared, Ste Anne and St Jacques combined

	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1881</u>
<u>Women</u>			
Mean	24.2	22.3	25.5
No. aged 15-54	(789)	(995)	(1274)
<u>Men</u>			
Mean	26.5	26.5	26.5
No.	(789)	(930)	(1222)

b) Women of Different Origins - Percentages Ever Married

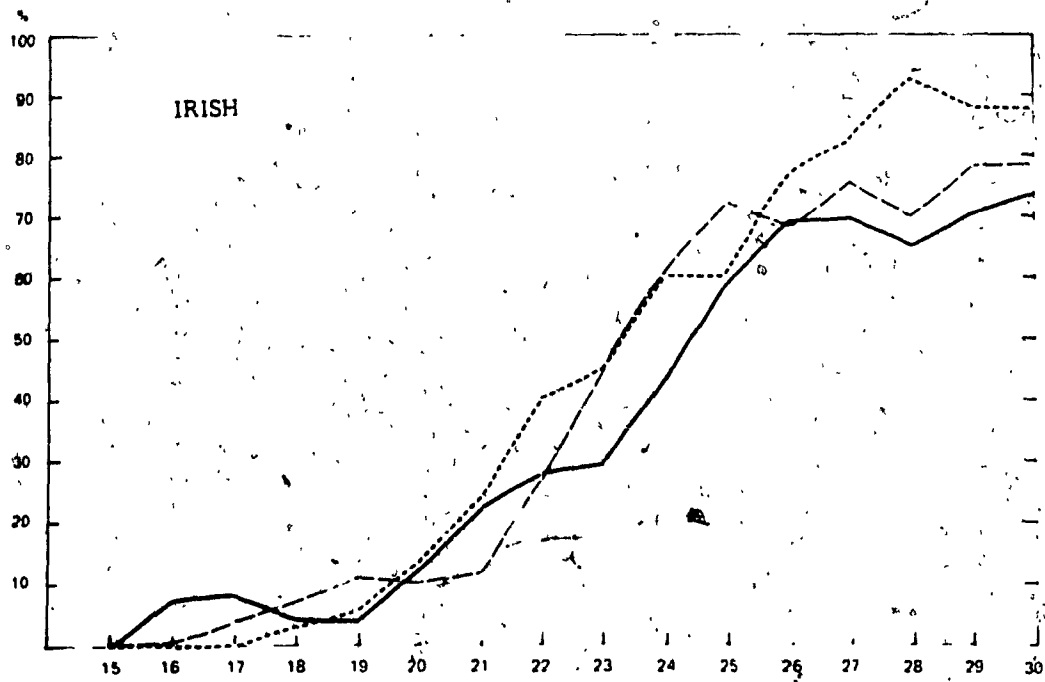
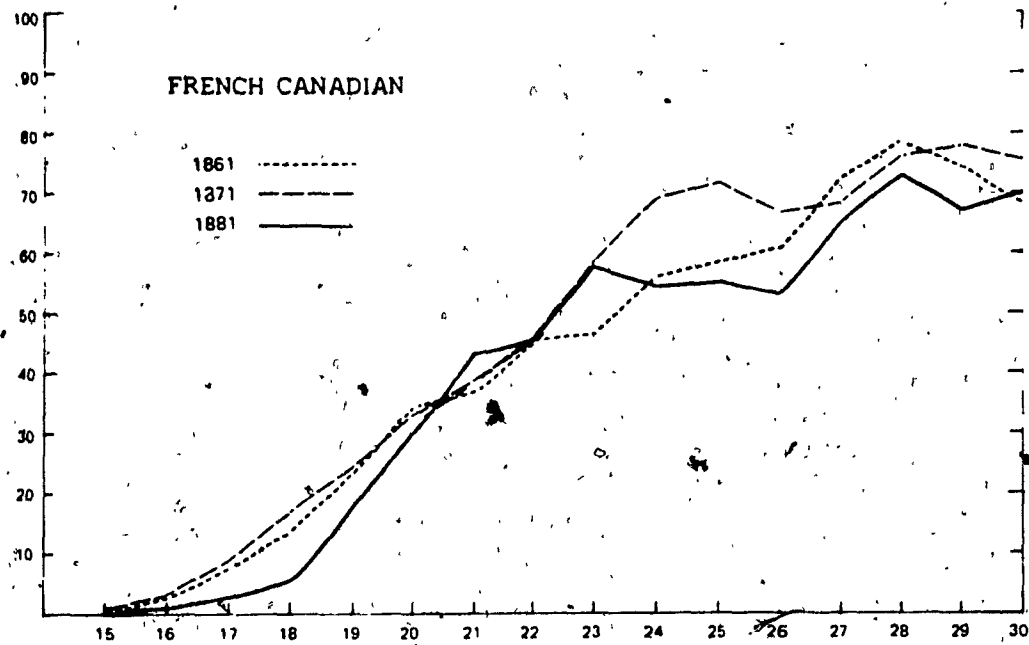
<u>Age Group</u>	<u>French-Canadians</u>			<u>Irish</u>			<u>English and Scotch</u>		
	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1881</u>
15-19	11	13	3	2	4	5	0	8	14
20-24	43	48	50	33	36	2	36	44	36
25-29	68	73	60	84	72	69	83	80	79
30-34	76	84	80	86	86	77	78	87	95
Mean	24.6	23.5	25.7	25.1	23.7	25.5	25.8	24.6	24.6
No.	(390)	(573)	(925)	(283)	(265)	(289)	(85)	(145)	(142)

c) Ste Anne and St Jacques Compared - Percentages Ever Married

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Ste Anne</u>			<u>St Jacques</u>		
	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1881</u>
15-19	1	9	5	9	11	3
20-24	18	42	40	34	49	46
25-29	62	72	69	71	75	67
30-34	84	80	85	68	87	77
Mean	26.3	22.9	24.6	25.0	21.8	26.2
No.	(475)	(507)	(545)	(368)	(486)	(825)

Source: Random Samples

Fig 4.1 Percentages of Women Ever Married, Ages 15 to 30 1861 1881



Source: Random Samples, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards combined, three year moving averages.

peculiar year, perhaps atypical in the numbers marrying young. Over the three decades, Irish women seem to have gradually married a little later, a pattern that contrasts with their husbands, but is difficult to explain. Their mean age at marriage increased slightly from 25.1 in 1861 to 25.5 in 1881, with a dip to 23.7 in 1871. The proportion married before age 25 dropped from a third or more in 1861 and 1871 to under one quarter in the depression. What constitutes a trend, and what represents a response to the economic conjuncture is difficult to determine without equivalent data for 1891. English and Scottish women in these wards gradually married younger, as did their husbands. Their mean age at marriage decreased from nearly 26 in 1861 to 24.6 in 1871 and 1881.

Most girls married men of the same origin, language and religion as themselves. Even in Ste. Anne, the city ward that offered the most opportunity for meeting with, living near or working with those of a different background, 86 per cent of couples were of the same origin. Language and culture apparently kept the French Canadians apart from the English, Scots and Irish. In 1871 in Ste. Anne, for instance, only eight per cent of French Canadians did not have a French Canadian spouse. Over three quarters of Irish partners were both Irish, with a significant minority (13 per cent) married to Englishmen or women, some of whom they had met and married while working in England en-route to Montreal. The Scots and English who had fewer compatriots in these wards were more likely to take a spouse of a different origin.

Prospective husbands might be met in the neighbourhood, amongst friends or relatives or in the workplace. Most working class children would have chosen their own spouse, for parents without property had little leverage with which to prevent a son or daughter's marriage. For the family of origin a daughter's departure may at times have been welcomed as one less mouth to feed. Or it may have represented the loss of a wage earner or valuable domestic helper and thus constituted a source of tension, perhaps friction in the family. In either case if the girl lived at home before marrying, as increasingly most did, her marriage reshaped the family economy that she left, as well as heralding the founding of a new one.

After marriage a woman's role was the bearing and raising of children and the carrying out of domestic labour for the whole family. How many children she had, how many survived and the span of childbearing years would be important factors shaping her daily work, the economic security of the family and often her own health. Her fertility was conditioned by the age at which she married, cultural tradition, the adequacy of her diet, whether she breastfed or not and any decision she or her husband made to limit births. How many children survived depended on where the family lived, her skill or luck in avoiding infectious diseases and the prevalence of fatal diseases. In practise, infant mortality and the deaths of young children predominated amongst the working class and especially the French Canadians. We have seen that the smallest families in 1881 were to be found amongst the semi- and unskilled workers and those in injured trades. It is now important to examine some of the reasons for such class differences in

family size.

Fertility rates, like the marriage rate, are a sensitive indicator of changed economic circumstances and of the impact of new more "modern" ideas about family size. Amongst Montreal families we would expect to find a lowering of the crude fertility rate, perhaps at a faster rate than for the Province as a whole. In Lower Canada the rate began to drop around 1850 or 1860, largely, Henripin has argued, as a result of the rise in the age at marriage.¹⁹ The fall in the mean age at marriage apparent in these wards would suggest a related lowering of fertility because in populations without reliable birth control the marriage age is the "single most important determinant of family size".²⁰ We might also expect class and ethnic differences in fertility to parallel those found in marriage patterns.

Unfortunately, determining how many children women bore is difficult. Canadian census takers in this period did not ask how many children women had ever had. We know from municipal and parish records that the French Canadian crude fertility rate was extremely high, well above that of the Irish and all other groups. In 1875 city officials placed the rate for Montreal as a whole at 43.65. The French Canadian rate was 61.43, the largely Irish, "English" Catholic rate was 28.66 and

¹⁹ Jacques Héripin, *Tendances et Facteurs*, p.62.

²⁰ David Gagan, *Hopeful Travellers*, p.86; Peter T. Marcy "Factors Affecting the Fecundity and Fertility of Historical Populations: A Review", *Journal of Family History*, 6 (Fall 1981), p.309. (Hereafter "Factors Affecting Fecundity").

the Protestant rate was 27.4.²¹ Such rates simply measure births per 1,000 population and do not control for the age-structure of the group. Thus they tell us little about how many children women bore, or about ethnic and class differences. They tell us nothing about how many children survived. If we are to understand the contributions of families to the City's population growth we require different measures. Childbearing histories may be reconstituted from parish registers only when women remain resident in one place. In a city the size of Montreal this is a major task, complicated by extreme geographic mobility and shared names. Historians elsewhere have turned to census figures estimating the number of children aged 0 to 4 as a ratio of the numbers of married women at childbearing ages. This measure has the advantage of being computable from both aggregate and manuscript returns. Results can be compared with similar studies elsewhere, in which major fertility declines have been shown over periods as short as twenty years.²²

The child - women ratios shown in Table 4.3 suggest that in these wards French Canadian and Irish fertility was much more similar than the crude fertility rates imply, and that the number of surviving children under five were in fact highest in protestant, not Catholic families.

²¹ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State of Montreal, MAR 1875, p.8'

²² See for instances: Michael Haines, Fertility and Occupation. Population Patterns in Industrialization (New York, Academic Press, 1979) p.100; Tamara K. Hareven and Maris Vinovskis, Family and Population in Nineteenth Century America, pp.90-101; David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers, p.73. Unfortunately each of these historians uses different age groupings either for the children or the mothers, rendering comparison more difficult.

TABLE 4.3
CHILDREN UNDER 5 PER THOUSAND MARRIED WOMEN
1861 - 1881

	<u>1861</u>		<u>1871</u>		<u>1881</u>	
	<u>Child-Woman</u> <u>Ratio</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Cases</u>	<u>Child-Woman</u> <u>Ratio</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Cases</u>	<u>Child-Woman</u> <u>Ratio</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Cases</u>
<u>1) Children 0-5 per 1,000</u> <u>women aged 15-49</u>						
a) French Canadians	1040	(185)	1000	(305)	1020	(430)
b) Irish	1040	(134)	1040	(138)	1000	(145)
c) English and Scottish	1210	(39)	1010	(78)	1150	(82)
<u>2) Children 0-5 per 1,000</u> <u>women aged 20-49</u>						
a) French Canadians	1050	(176)	1020	(289)	1030	(425)
b) Irish	1050	(133)	1050	(136)	1010	(143)
c) English and Scottish	1210	(39)	1030	(76)	1160	(80)
<u>3. Children per 1,000 women</u> <u>of different religions</u>						
a) Protestant	1280	(54)	990	(104)	1110	(94)
b) Catholic	1020	(304)	1020	(417)	1020	(563)
<u>4) Children per 1,000 women</u> <u>in each ward</u>						
a) Ste. Anne	1090	(205)	1040	(272)	1100	(286)
b) St. Jacques	1020	(153)	980	(249)	980	(371)

Source: Random Samples, Ste. Anne and St Jacques wards, ever married women only.

For all the major ethnic groups there were over 1,000 children under five for every thousand married women aged twenty to forty nine. This compares to ratios of 953 and 885 for "Canadians" and Irish found by Maris Vinovskis and Tamara Hareven in Salem, Massachusetts in 1880.²³

²³ Tamara K. Hareven and Maris Vinovskis, Family and Population, p.100.

In 1861 Irish and French Canadian women had 1050 children under five per 1,000 women, while the English and Scottish of 1210. All but the Irish appear to have had fewer children in 1871. By 1881 the Irish had the smallest number of surviving children with a child-women ratio of 1010. The French Canadians had a ratio of 1030 while the English and Scottish had 1160. The high ratio for the Irish - equal to French Canadian women in 1861 and exceeding it in 1871 corresponds with the pattern found by Wilcox and Golden in Massachusetts. In the towns they studied, the Irish apparently reproduced more quickly than French Canadians, once they were married, though they always married later.²⁴

All groups show some decline in the numbers of surviving children, a decrease of 20 per thousand among French Canadian women and of 40 for the other groups. None approach the decline of almost 150 per thousand women reported by Michael Haines among American mining populations over the same period, or the 46 per cent drop among women aged fifteen to twenty four found by David Gagan in Peel County, Ontario between 1851 and 1871.

What the figures must reflect is a greater survival rate among English, Scottish and Irish children under the age of four, with any higher fertility that existed amongst the French Canadians being eradicated by infant and child deaths. This interpretation is reinforced if the average number of children at home is compared for the

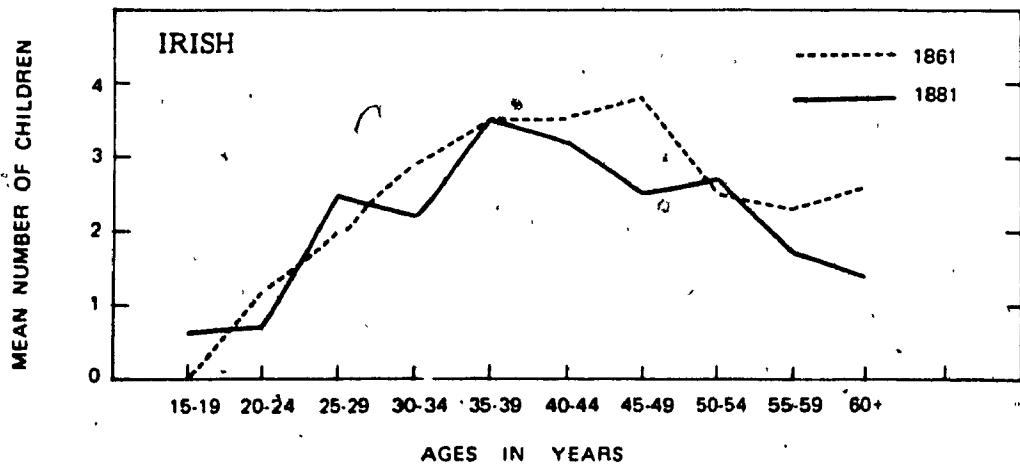
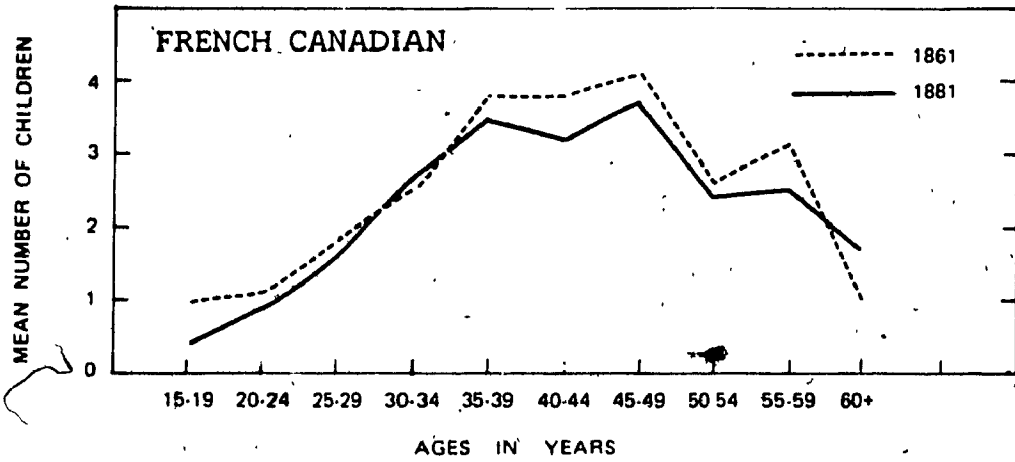
²⁴ Jerry Wilcox and Hilda Golden, "Prolific Immigrants", p.281.

two major ethnic groups. (See Figure 4.2) Despite their slightly later marriage, Irish women in 1861 and 1881 reached an average of two children at home at age twenty five to twenty nine. French Canadians did so when they were five years older. Both averaged between three and four children by ages thirty five to thirty nine. By the time they were in their late forties more French Canadian children remained at home. By this stage in a family's life cycle, however, many other factors could explain the numbers of children still at home.

The number of surviving children per family fell, whether it is measured as a child-women ratio, as an average, or as children per women aged 40 to 44. The decrease was common to French Canadian and Irish families. (See Figure 4.2). Thus the cohort of both French Canadian and Irish women who reached 40-44 in 1881 averaged only 3.2 children compared to 3.8 and 3.5 respectively amongst those reaching that age a decade earlier. Here then apparently is a pattern of convergence in the practices of these two Catholic groups reflecting marital changes. As infant mortality did not increase over this period, and as children were staying at home longer, the fall in children at home must reflect a real fertility decline.

The age-distribution of mothers reporting births to the Census takers in 1861 suggests that some form of control already existed within marriage. Jacques Henripin has argued that 40 to 50 per cent of women should have given birth every year at least until the age of thirty five

Fig. 4.2 : Mean Number of Children Residing at Home with Married Women — 1861 & 1881



Source Random samples, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques combined.

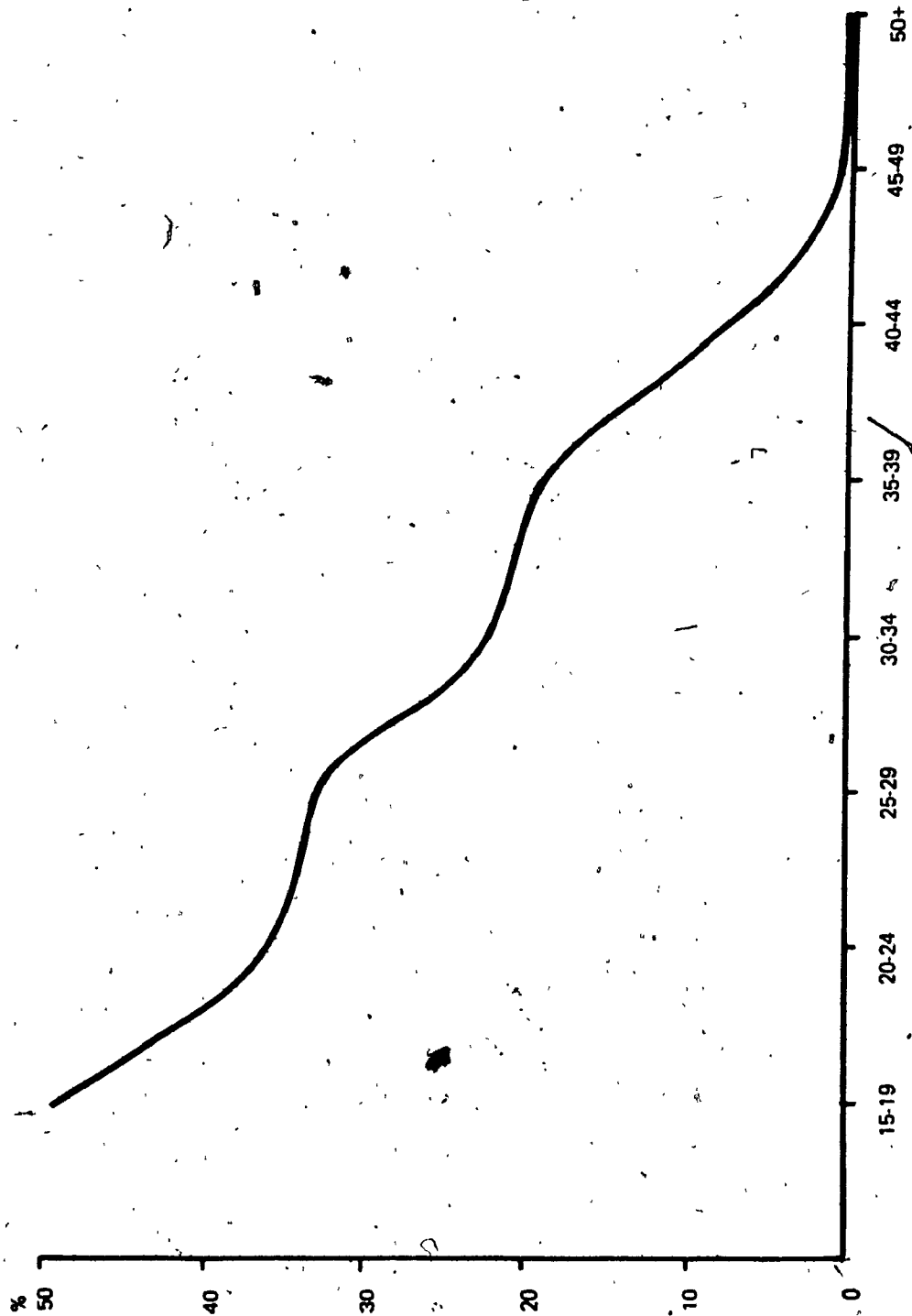
if no form of control was exercised.²⁵ In 1861 Census takers did ask women whether they had borne a child that year. Their answers make it possible to examine patterns of childbearing in more detail for the beginning of our period and hence to assess the possibility of women controlling births. The overall pattern for all women in these two wards is close to the one which Henripin describes in which acceptance of nature has been replaced by some degree of control.²⁶ (See Figure 4.3). Over 50 per cent of married women under 20 had borne a child, as had 37 to 38 per cent of those aged 20 to 29. The percentage dropped to below 25 per cent of those aged 30 to 34. However, this neat pattern of even decline hides religious and ethnic differences. Furthermore, while it indicates that women generally were not having babies as often as previously, it does not tell us why.

The ages at which the greatest proportion of women were bearing children reflect the pattern of ethnic differences in the age at marriage in 1861. French Canadian women married at an average age of twenty four in 1861. Their most fertile married years were between fifteen and thirty. For the Irish, ages twenty to twenty nine were the most fertile years, while most married English and Scottish women, in contrast, gave birth between the ages of twenty five and thirty four. (See Table 4.4). Religious differences reflect ethnic ones,

²⁵ Jacques Henripin "From Acceptance of Nature to Control: the Demography of the French Canadians Since the Seventeenth Century", in Michiel Horn and Ronald Sabourin, Studies in Canadian Social History. (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1974), pp.79-80.

²⁶ IBID.

Fig. 4.3 : The Percentage of Married Women of Different Ages Reporting a Child Born in 1861
Ste. Anne and St. Jacques combined



highlighting a major contrast between Protestant and Catholic patterns. While nearly 40 per cent of married Catholic women aged twenty to twenty four reported having a child, only 10 per cent of Protestants did. Conversely, whereas 26 per cent of Catholics aged twenty five to twenty nine had borne a child in 1861 nearly 60 per cent of Protestants gave birth. Clearly both Irish and French Canadian Catholics had children earlier and stopped earlier. While it is normal for childbearing to slow down as women age, the decline in the percentage of births to Irish women over age thirty and to French Canadians over age thirty five is greater than would be expected were no form of birth control exercised.

Two factors could explain this fall in births. Either women were consciously attempting to control births once they had borne several children, or a significant proportion of the women were failing to conceive or to sustain later pregnancies as a result of inadequate diet or illness. While this whole question requires detailed and careful study in parish registers and medical literature, these two possibilities must be raised. Our knowledge of how women controlled births in this period is minimal. Abstinence, coitus interruptus, home-made abortificients or commercially available "remedies", advertised as regulating women's periods, may all have been used. Certainly English daily newspapers advertised various pills reported to have "wondrous properties", including solving "female irregularities" and cleansing "all impurities and removing dangerous and suspended secretions". Some were proclaimed to "never fail; never weaken the system; and always bring about what is required". According to one researcher, such advertisements peaked in the 1860's, died down, then

TABLE 4.4

PERCENTAGE OF MARRIED WOMEN REPORTING A BIRTH IN 1861

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	Total aged 15-44
a) <u>Origins</u>							
French Canadians	67%	27%	36%	23%	21%	6%	169
Irish	0	50%	38%	19%	21%	10%	122
English and Scottish	0*	25%	53%	43%	33%	17%	28
b) <u>Religion</u>							
Roman Catholic	60%	40%	29%	22%	23%	11%	288
Protestant	0	17%	67%	31%	22%	6%	78
c) <u>Ward</u>							
St. Jacques	71%	23%	28%	23%	23%	10%	144
Ste. Anne	25%	43%	45%	25%	23%	9%	223

Source: Random Samples, 1861, married women only.

* Nil married.

appeared in greater numbers in the 1890's.²⁷ Toward the end of the century some English Canadian women were apparently aware of the rhythm method although it was badly misunderstood. Women were also aware of the potentially contraceptive effect of long term breastfeeding.²⁸ Some of these methods may have enabled English speaking women to control the

²⁷ Peter Gossage, "Absorbing Junior: Patent Medicines as Abortifacients in Nineteenth Century Montreal", Unpublished graduate paper, McGill History Department, 1980, p.3. (Hereafter "Absorbing Junior").

²⁸ Angus McLaren "Birth Control and Abortion in Canada, 1870-1920", Canadian Historical Review 59 (September 1978) (1978) pp.319-40. (Hereafter "Birth Control and Abortion in Canada").

numbers of children they borne. Irish Catholic women, however, would have been breaking the teachings of the Church which condemned books dealing with sexuality in marriage and forbade contraception. French Canadian Catholic women faced the same religious taboos and lacked access to any information in their own language.²⁹ For English or French women not wanting a child already conceived, abortion was a final and often dangerous resort. In 1861 a pregnant seventeen year old, Olive Savariat, died as a result of taking drugs given to her by the child's father to induce an abortion. In Olive's trial that resulted the mother reported that "during the first month of her pregnancy, James Collins gave her MEDICINE STRONG ENOUGH TO BURN THE INSIDE OF A HORSE".³⁰ Eight years later, in 1869 the State stepped in. Anyone performing an abortion was made liable to imprisonment for life. A woman seeking one could receive up to seven years in prison.³¹

Traditional folk remedies, abstinence, special pills and abortions were no doubt turned to by some women seeking to prevent pregnancy and limit their family size. Their effect on the birth rate cannot be determined with accuracy, but was probably minor given the ineffectiveness of most methods. Perhaps we should not seek too deeply for conscious attempts at birth control within working class families in

²⁹ Le Collectif Clio, L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec, p.171.

³⁰ "The late Criminal Trials; the Patterson Abortion Case", transcript of the proceedings of the Court of Queen's Bench, Montreal, 25 June 1861, reported in the British American Journal of Medicine, 11, 1861, cited in Peter Gossage, "Absorbing Junior", p.3.

³¹ Le Collectif Clio, L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec, p.171.

this period.³² The fall in births and children per family may equally reflect other factors rendering a woman incapable of giving birth - namely malnutrition and disease. Rose Frisch has recently argued that if a woman's body weight falls by 10 or 15 per cent she may be incapable of bearing a child. This did not require famine conditions. It might occur among mildly undernourished women, for instance among those involved in the "arduous work common in the pre-industrial world."³³ We have seen that most semi- and unskilled workers in Montreal earned insufficient money to feed a family properly. The wage earners generally received the lion's share of food. We could thus expect that women in such families might experience major weight loss in the first five to ten years of married life as they struggled with new responsibilities, with successive children and with the heavy toil that nineteenth century housework involved.

Lacking sufficient stored calories once she had borne one or two children, successive conceptions may quite simply not have been carried to term. Or, undernourishment may have lengthened the interval between births. For "in undernourished women - those who must deplete their own stored fat for energy - it takes longer to replenish the critical fat

³² Peter T. Marcy "Factors Affecting Fecundity", p.312.

³³ Rose Frisch, "Population, Food Intake, and Fertility", Science, 199 (1978); Susan Frisch "Nutrition, Fatness and Fertility: The Effect of Food Intake on Reproductive Ability", in W. Henry Mosley, ed. Nutrition and Human Reproduction (New York, Plenum 1978) cited in Peter T. Marcy, "Factors Affecting Fecundity", p.313. It should be noted that Frisch's arguments are apparently hypotheses, largely unproven.

ratio required for the return of ovulation".³⁴ That such a situation is at least plausible is suggested by Peter and Patricia Ward's study of the birth weights of babies born to the poor English speaking women who used the university Lying in Hospital. They have uncovered a dramatic decline in birth weights in the years between 1851 and 1905, which they attribute to a long history of progressive malnutrition". The result was a fall in birth rates approaching those found areas that had experienced famines. The years of most rapid decline roughly coincided with or followed economic downswings. The greatest drop was in the early 1880's, following the depressed years after 1873. Birth weights dropped by 119 grams from the late 70's to the early 1880's.³⁵

Poor diet, illness and attempts at controlling births no doubt limited the numbers of children that women bore. The number that survived was much more dramatically controlled by forces over which women had only minimal control - the diseases that ravaged generations of Montreal children. French Canadian women especially had little incentive to control births. Not only was it against the teachings of their priests, but most knew the chances of losing some children soon after their birth were high. Montreal's infant mortality rate was dramatically high in this period and continued so into the 1930's. Contemporary observers, Montreal physicians and health officials alike constantly reminded the public of the problem. Usually they attempted

³⁴ Peter T. Marcy "Factors Affecting Fertility", p.317.

³⁵ W. Peter Ward and Patricia C. Ward, "Infant Birth Weight in Industrialising Montreal", 89 (April 1984), pp.330,337 (Hereafter, "Infant Birth Weight").

to rationalize its extremity by the high birth rate. "The infantile mortality of Montreal is greater than most of the large cities", wrote the health officer in 1876, for instance, "But...the birth rate is larger than any other city in the world. This high birth rate is owing to the prolificness (sic) of the French Canadian race."³⁶

No consistent data exist to accurately estimate infant mortality rates throughout this period.³⁷ It is clear, however that the high death rate cannot simply be rationalized away as a result of the high birth rate. If deaths of children under one per one thousand live births are calculated, the usual method of determining infant mortality, then the high birth rate is controlled for. Philip Carpenter's estimate that in the 1860's two out of every five children were dying before they reached one would produce a rate of around 400. His evidence was inflated somewhat by the horrifying mortality of the foundlings at the Hospital run by the Grey Nuns.³⁸ For some years these can be excluded. Thus, in 1874, the rate excluding foundlings was 361. Over one in three children

³⁶ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, 1876, MAR p.11.

³⁷ The deaths of the Catholic population were fairly reliably recorded in the Parish registers; Protestant ones were less consistently reported. The Annual Reports of the Montreal Health Department cite deaths based on these figures, which usually include specific age-groups. It is, however, impossible to know exactly what the total Parish population was at any time, or the City population between censuses.

³⁸ Philip Carpenter, "On Some of the Causes of the Excessive Mortality of Young Children in the City of Montreal", Canadian Naturalist and Quarterly Journal of Science, June, 1869, pp.198-204.

were failing to reach one year old; not to mention the numbers dying in the next four years of life.³⁹ In 1875 the rate appears to have dipped to 275 and in 1878 to 225 - still nearly one in four.⁴⁰ This pattern would continue, as Terry Copp has shown, until the Second World War.⁴¹

Overall rates hid variations in the experience of families of different classes, origins and city neighbourhoods. Death hit unequally, predominating amongst the children of the poor. If labourer's families are taken as examples of the poor their disproportionate loss of children is clear. In 1861, when labourers constituted approximately 13 per cent of the City population the deaths of their children made up nearly 30 per cent of all children dying under the age of one. Nor was it only their babies who died disproportionately. In August, the peak month for deaths, 31 per cent of children dying aged one to two had a labourer father, as did 44 per cent of boys and girls between the ages of three and five.⁴² Only one

³⁹ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, MAR 1874, p.8.

⁴⁰ IBID, 1875, 1878.

⁴¹ Terry Copp. The Anatomy of Poverty. pp.93-100.

⁴² Death Register, Notre Dame Parish, 1861. The deaths of all children under 16 were recorded along with the occupation of their father. It should be noted that the percentages compared give only a rough indication, as the Parish was larger than the City, and it contained only Catholics, who were disproportionately represented amongst labourers and other semi and unskilled workers. The increased proportion of older children dying in labourers' families seems to reflect the situation described by Maud Pember Reeves in her study of working class families in England between 1909-13. The Fabian Women's group gave extra food to pregnant mothers and babies up to one year of age. In this first year the babies grew much more rapidly than their siblings had, at times growing larger than the "ex-baby". By one year and in the following years, however, the

quarter of the babies died in the first month of life - the period when congenital defects were most likely to take their toll. Exogenous factors - unsanitary conditions, contagious diseases and polluted food or milk were clearly behind the diarrhoea, other intestinal diseases, smallpox and infantile cholera that predominated as causes of death. The children born in the University Lying Hospital can be taken as representative of the poorest of Montreal families. Those that survived birth began life with the disadvantages that accompanied their low birth rates. They would be much more susceptible than healthier, larger children to all such forms of disease.⁴³

TABLE 4.5
DEATHS PER THOUSAND LIVING CHILDREN AGED 0-15
BASED ON THE CENSUS REPORTING OF DEATHS,
1861-1871*

Age	Ste. Anne 1861		Age	Ste. Anne 1871	
	Male	Female		Male	Female
Under 1	152.70**	172.80	0-1	201.7	205.27
1-5	25.30	36.25	1-6	42.12	40.00
5-10	5.23	2.21	6-11	5.71	7.79
10-15	6.89	4.40	11-16	5.38	6.25

Age	St. Jacques 1861		Age	St. Jacques 1871	
	Male	Female		Male	Female
Under 1	136.20	84.08	0-1	304.05	311.80
1-5	11.60	18.31	1-6	55.30	56.05
5-10	5.34	6.62	6-11	2.85	6.57
10-15	-	1.23	11-16	4.06	3.70

Source: Calculated from 1861 Census of Canada, Table V; 1871 Census of Canada, Vol. 11, Tables VII and XVI.

*The Census reporting of deaths is notoriously unreliable. The above rates should therefore be viewed as gross approximations and certainly as underestimates.

**This is not an infant mortality rate. It simply represents the number of deaths of children that age as a proportion of the numbers reported living in the same age group.

poor surroundings, reduced diet and illness had taken their toll, so that "often by the time it is old enough to go to school it has developed rickets or lung trouble". Maud Pember Reeves, Round About A Pound a Week (London, Virago, 1979 (1913) p.179.

⁴³ Peter and Patricia Ward, "Infant Birth Weights", pp.328-9.

Geographical variations in infant mortality reflected the growing differentiation of the city by class and ethnicity. Table 4.5 shows estimates of the age and sex specific mortality rates for Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards in 1861 and 1871. The rate is based on the reports of deaths to the census taker which always underestimate deaths, especially those of children. It appears to show an interesting pattern amongst children under the age of five. In 1861 more children were reported as dying in the rapidly industrializing ward of Ste-Anne, than in the largely artisanal French Canadian ward of St. Jacques. A decade later, when St. Jacques had become an overcrowded working class suburb, the situation had reversed. By then St. Jacques had one of the highest death rates in the city. The accelerated proletarianization of French Canadians, inadequate wages, overcrowding and an unsanitary environment had combined to create a climate that was lethal for babies and young children. By 1871 approximately one third more infants were dying in St. Jacques than in Ste Anne. One fifth more children aged one to six also died. Furthermore, the death rates among children in both wards appear to have increased over the decade.

Women were giving birth at home in crowded unsanitary conditions. Controlling the spread of contagious diseases and maintaining a sanitary environment was a constant and uphill battle, one which few mothers possessed either the knowledge or the stamina to fight effectively. One factor might have minimized the deaths of babies under the age of seven or eight months - breastfeeding. Historians elsewhere comparing areas of breastfeeding with those where it was uncommon have found "enormous,

even staggering" differences.⁴⁴ Wherever it has been possible to find communities with opposite traditions of childrearing, but similar in other ways, dramatic differentials have been evident.⁴⁵ Knodell's study of selected Bavarian cities and districts suggests the order of differences breastfeeding could make.

For almost all the areas with little breastfeeding, over 30 per cent, and in many cases over 40 per cent, of the infants died before their first birthday. While in most areas with extended breastfeeding, less than 20 per cent died by age one, and in no cases did infant mortality exceed 25 per cent of live births.⁴⁶

Doctors and health officials in Montreal saw few enough mothers breast feeding to believe the practice was rare. Certainly the infant mortality rates of over 30 per cent are similar to those found in non-breast feeding areas elsewhere. "The majority of mothers", wrote the Medical Officer in 1876,

believe themselves incapable of nursing their infants and have recourse to artificial alimentation which is one of the principal causes of the excessive mortality of children under one year of

⁴⁴ J.D.Wray, "Maternal Nutrition, Breastfeeding and Infant Survival", in W.H.Henry Mosley ed., Nutrition and Human Reproduction (New York, Plenum 1978) pp.206-15, cited in Peter T. Marcy, "Factors Affecting Fecundity", p.319.

⁴⁵ John Knodell and Hallie Kintner "The Impact of Breast-Feeding Patterns on the Biometric Analysis of Infant Mortality", Demography 14 (November, 1977) p.404; Ulla-Britt Lithel "Breast-Feeding Habits and their Relation to Infant Mortality and Marital Fertility", Journal of Family History, 6 (Summer 1981).

⁴⁶ John Knodell and Hallie Kintner "The Impact of Breastfeeding", p.404.

A Dr Grenier who practised among the working classes and was especially concerned about reducing the high death rate of Montreal children corroborated this evidence. It was extremely rare, he reported, to find a Montreal child completely nourished at its mother's breast.⁴⁸ At the turn of the century doctors continued to attribute the high mortality rate among French Canadians, particularly, to lack of breastfeeding and early weaning.⁴⁹

Why did women not breastfeed when it was apparently both easier and safer to do so? "The refusal to nurse", Elizabeth Badinter has argued is "the first indication of the rejection of the child". She was describing seventeenth and early eighteenth century France when women of most classes sent their children to wetnurses.⁵⁰ Few Montreal women used wetnurses, yet the mortality rates were equally high.⁵¹ Are we, nonetheless, seeing in Montreal a low period in the history of motherly love, a period similar perhaps to France one and a half centuries earlier when, she has argued, children "died like flies", "because the

⁴⁷ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, MAR, 1876, p.54.

⁴⁸ Georges Grenier, Quelques considérations sur les causes de la mortalité des enfants contenant des conseils aux mères sur les soins à donner aux enfants (Montréal, Senecal, 1871), p.9. (Hereafter, Quelques Considérations).

⁴⁹ Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty, p.96.

⁵⁰ Elisabeth Badinter, Mother Love, p.40.

⁵¹ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, 1876, p.64. Elisabeth Badinter, Mother Love, p.109.

mothers showed so little interest in them?"⁵² Such an explanation does not seem tenable for nineteenth century Montreal, nor perhaps for the earlier centuries in France. Contemporary observers, largely doctors, attributed women's reluctance to nurse to ignorance, misjudgment and diffidence rather than rejection.⁵³ Dr. Grenier considered this question in some depth. He suggested that some were discouraged during the first days after the birth before a mother's milk arrives.⁵⁴ Still more may have been put off by unsuccessful friends, relatives or neighbours. Both Badinter and other such observers ignore the nutritional and energy pre-requisites for nursing. Susan Frisch reports that "the energy requirements of pregnancy, 50,000 extra calories, are far exceeded by those of lactation - 120,000 extra calories for a minimum of four months."⁵⁵ Many Montreal families as we have seen could not afford such additional food. Undernourished women produce insufficient milk. To continue nursing in this situation can lead to maternal depletion which "may have a significant impact on the mother's fertility, health and subsequent children".⁵⁶ Furthermore "mothers working long hours at arduous tasks may find the energy requirements for hard work competing

⁵² Elisabeth Badinter, Mother Love, p.60.

⁵³ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, 1876, p.65; Grenier, Quelques Considerations, pp.7-9.

⁵⁴ Georges Grenier, Quelques Considerations, p.8

⁵⁵ Rose E. Frisch, "Demographic Implications of the Biological Determinants of Female Fecundity", Social Biology 22 (1975), p.20, cited in Peter T. Marcy, "Factors Affecting Fecundity", p.317.

⁵⁶ Robert Buchanan, "Breastfeeding Aid to Infant Health and Fertility Control", Population Reports, Series J (1975) J.54, cited in IBID, p.317.

with those for lactation."⁵⁷ Nineteenth century housework was certainly arduous. Hard daily toil and an inadequate diet combined in the poorer families to influence childbearing and child feeding, weakening mothers and leaving both babies and mothers susceptible to infectious disease.

Mothers incapable or unwilling to breastfeed turned to what no doubt seemed appropriate alternatives - milk diluted with water, cornstarch mixtures with crushed bread, flour and biscuits added and other concoctions. Yet both milk and water were frequently adulterated or infected in Montreal. Nursing bottles were difficult to clean, so that the milk soured.⁵⁸ Once children grew sick, as inevitably they did, the ready-made remedies available in the pharmacies were used to cure them. Their alcohol and opium bases led to addiction thus compounding disease. Dr. Grenier reported that few houses in which several children lived were without narcotic preparations like Mrs Winslow's syrup, Le Tresor Des Nourrices, Prince of Wales Syrup etc. He believed that many deaths attributed to constitutional weakness, brain maladies or convulsions were, in fact, a by product of opium use and addiction.⁵⁹

Amongst Catholics disease and death were apparently accepted philosophically as God's will. Used to death, some parents attributed "disease and misery to the Divinity which are rather the consequence of

⁵⁷ R.G.Whitehead, "Nutrition and Lactation", Postgraduate Medical Journal 55 (1979) p.305 cited in Ibid p.318.

⁵⁸ Georges Grenier, Quelques Considerations, pp.9; Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, MR, 1876, p.65.

⁵⁹ Georges Grenier, Quelques Considerations, p.19.

ignorance and often unpardonable neglect". Children were exposed to contagious disease, they became affected and it was said that 'God ordained it'. Seldom, Dr. Grenier asserted, did he treat an infant without hearing some variant of the belief that if the child's hour had come, it would die.⁶⁰ This belief prevented some mothers from consulting doctors. Indeed Dr Grenier felt he had to stress the importance of a physician's role as life saver as equally noble if less elevated than that of a priest, when he wrote on infant mortality in 1871.⁶¹

Sanitary reformers and physicians tended to blame mothers for the high rates of infant mortality, focussing on the value of breast feeding and the need to educate women about hygiene and diet. Yet the books and journals written on the topic were unlikely to reach the homes of the mothers struggling to feed, clothe and raise a family.⁶² Few could have read them had they had the time. Most women would not have heard about, let alone understood, how germs spread. Even contemporary doctors were still in disagreement about this. Indeed doctors did not realize the connection between adequate nutrition for the mother and children's life chances. Some mothers may have lost children through gross neglect, as a result of drink or indifference. Most simply had no way of knowing

⁶⁰ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, MAR, 1876, p.65; Georges Grenier Quelques Considérations, p.25.

⁶¹ Quelques Considérations, p.4.

⁶² Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, MAR, 1884, p.10; Georges Grenier, Quelques Considérations pp.4,30 ff: Health and Home - A Journal of Sanitary Science and Home Hygiene, (February, 1884) pp.6, 27,34.

what the best way of avoiding disease was. Women feeding their children narcotic based elixirs to calm upset stomachs or help them sleep, no doubt had the best of intentions. The potions were readily available. One Montreal pharmacy alone was reported to have sold 30,000 bottles of just one such preparation in a single year late in the 1860's.⁶³ Some mothers seeing the results, specifically requested remedies to treat addiction.

In the absence of reliable birth control, some parents may have been relieved at a child's death. A few may have consciously wished for it, perhaps purposely caused it. A significant number of children in Montreal were deserted at birth, left in the hands of the Grey Nuns, on some street corner or doorstep, or dropped in the Canal.⁶⁴ The death registers for Notre Dame parish bear testimony to the hundreds of children of unknown parents dying each year. We cannot assume that all were born out of wedlock, or came from outside the City. In 1861, for instance, the deaths of nearly 500 children of unknown parents were listed in the register - constituting fully 18 per cent of all deaths.⁶⁵ In the 1890's doctors reported that some women were purposely suffocating their children at birth and reporting a stillbirth.⁶⁶ How

⁶³ Georges Grenier, Quelques Considérations, pp 18-19.

⁶⁴ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, 1874, p.8; J. Germano, "Histoire de la Charité à Montréal; Revue Canadienne, 32 (1896); Philip Carpenter, "On some of the Causes", pp.198-204.

⁶⁵ Death Register, Notre Dame Parish, 1861.

⁶⁶ R.R. Rentoul, "Proposed Registration of Stillborn Children", Canada Medical Record, XX, 12, (1892); cited in Peter Gossage, "Absorbing Junior", pp.2,15.

common these desperate responses were is unknown.

Apart from such deliberate acts of desertion and infanticide, most parents had little real control over the conditions that were killing their children. Extreme cleanliness would have helped, but would not have eliminated the contagious diseases and the terrible living conditions. As early as the 1860's Dr Philip Carpenter highlighted the dangers of unsanitary housing.

* It is the children who are confined to the house and its immediate surroundings who are, in this city, so peculiarly unhealthy. The principal causes of the death rate must be looked for in the condition of the dwelling.⁶⁷

Workers from the Montreal Diet Dispensary came to the same conclusion.

"The root of the trouble ... was ... to be found in bad housing, bad feeding and bad employment conditions".⁶⁸ Mothers bearing and raising children with insufficient money in these crowded and unsanitary homes had little control over the state of the housing, still less over the steadiness of the incoming wage. "It is the duty of Council", Dr Philip Carpenter argued as early as 1855:

to see that the wages of death are no longer wrung from the hard won earnings of the poor, but that all who undertake to let homes shall be compelled to put them and their surroundings into a condition favourable to health.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Philip Carpenter, "On Some of the Causes of the Excessive Mortality of Young Children in the City of Montreal", June 1869, pp.195-6.

⁶⁸ "A Chronicle of the Montreal Diet Dispensary, 1879 - 1957", Montreal Diet Dispensary Records, McGill Rare Books Room, "Box", p.14.

Over subsequent decades increased surveillance of milk production, city water supplies and inoculation against smallpox combined to reduce the crude death rates. Infant mortality, however, remained high until well into the twentieth century.⁷⁰

High levels of infant and child mortality, later marriage amongst French Canadians, some attempts at birth control and possibly a reduced capacity to conceive and bear children, combined in Montreal to reduce the size of completed families more dramatically than elsewhere in the Province. Between 1866 and 1870 the average size of completed families in Quebec dipped below seven for the first time since the Conquest.⁷¹ In these wards the peak numbers of children co-resident with their parents in 1871 was 4.5 for women aged 40-44. It is unlikely that an average of three children were absent from home, thus death or reduced births appear to have limited the size of these largely working class, urban families. In the same period French Canadian women in Prescott and Russell counties in Eastern Ontario had over seven children at home at ages 45-49, while the largely English speaking women of Peel Country, Ontario had over five.⁷² In the City, as elsewhere, averages masked a

⁶⁹ Philip Carpenter, On the Relative Value of Human Life in Different Parts of Canada (Montreal, Lovell's, 1859). p.15.

⁷⁰ Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty, Chapter 6.

⁷¹ Jacques Henripin and Yves Perron "La Transition Démographique de la Province de Québec", in Hubert Charbonneau ed., La Population Du Québec: études retrospectives (Montréal, Boréal Express, 1973) pp.30-3.

⁷² Chad M. Gaffield "Canadian Families in Cultural Context," p.61; David Gagan, "Hopeful Travellers", p.71.

wide variety of different family sizes. At ages forty to forty-four around 15 per cent of both Irish and French Canadian mothers in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques had eight or more children at home, while 46 per cent of Irish and 64 per cent of French Canadians had four or less.

Despite the smaller numbers of children that these urban women had to care for at home, they, like their rural counterparts would still spend almost all their married life bearing and rearing their children. Although birth intervals increased as they aged, nearly 10 per cent of women aged forty to forty five gave birth in 1861. Those five years younger had an average of 1.5 children under five at home and just under three older ones. Even at age 50 most still had nearly three children living with them. Women began childbearing at marriage and continued to menopause, with smaller or larger gaps between births depending on their desire or ability to delay conception, their health, their husband's survival and the death of previous babies. Dependent children would remain in the household for most of a woman's married, even widowed life. (See Figure 4.2).

Surviving children had to be fed, clothed, sheltered and taught the skills necessary for continued survival. The Church saw education as a right and duty of the father - one that should be passed on to priests and nuns. In fact, as more and more men were absent from the home all day, teaching, disciplining and generally raising the young became a mother's task until they could send them to school. It was their responsibility to prepare their sons and daughters for adult life, and, in the eyes of the Church, to raise them as good Catholics or

Protestants and citizens. Yet the children of this era were growing up in a period of rapid social change. They would live, work, marry and try to survive in a world that was very different from that of their parents' childhood. Most mothers lacked the experience and skills to socialize them to deal with the lives they would live. Priests in this period reported repeatedly on the lack of control that parents had over their children.⁷³ Employers too, as we have seen, testified to parents' lack of ability to discipline their children.⁷⁴ Every historical period sees some conflict and insubordination between generations. That Church authorities would report that parents neglected their duties, is not surprising. Yet, the complaints of this period appear to have been of a different order. The spread of wage labour meant more children were able to earn money themselves. This gave them a sense of individualism and a source of power in the family that had been absent when all family members worked together without wages. The parish curé for Lachine, just west of Montreal, for instance, lamented annually about children who earned a wage at age thirteen or fourteen and became insubordinate toward their parents as a result.⁷⁵

As the City grew larger, as changes in production and in institutions reshaped daily living, the Church too had difficulty in

⁷³ See, for example, ACAM, Rappports Paroissals, St. Alexis, 1872; IBID, Lachine, 1883.

⁷⁴ RCRLC, Quebec Evidence, 1889, Evidence of J-M Fortier, p.125; Evidence of Alexander McGregor p.98.

⁷⁵ ACAM, Rapport Paroissal, Lachine, 1883.

exercising the control it so coveted. One of Bishop Bourget's arguments for the dismemberment of the Montreal Parish in the 1860's was based on the need for priests to regulate family life more closely. With smaller parishes, he argued, priests and cures could:

help to remedy the secret miseries of families, appease internal dissention, bring together those spouses whose marriages were not working, make unruly children obey their parents, and raise the vigilance of fathers and mothers who were neglecting their most important duty - that of raising their children well.⁷⁶

Raising children well, by Church or family standards, had never been easy. The conditions of urban life compounded the task. Men and older siblings left early in the morning for work, not returning till the evening. The women, children and any other non-wage earning adults remained behind. Washing, cooking and housework were herculean tasks that left little time to devote to disciplining and teaching children. Some French Canadian and Irish mothers took advantage of the salles d'asiles run by the Sisters in each of these wards to send their children out of the home as young as age two or three.⁷⁷ It was partially the baby sitting function of the schools that must have made them so attractive to parents. Whereas traditionally children had spent time with and learned from both parents, now they would spend their early years with their mother, seeing little of their father. Schools

⁷⁶ Mandements, Montreal, Lettre Pastorale, 1866, p.144. My translation.

⁷⁷ See Micheline Dumont-Johnson, "Des garderies au XIXe siecle", RHAF, 34 8 (June, 1980); Suzanne Cross, "The Neglected Majority".

would gradually replace parents as the formal educators of children. Women's role as both bearer and socialiser of children was in transition, shifting and changing as new survival skills were required for the whole family and for the children.⁷⁸

Women's Domestic Labour and the Workers' Wage

The discipline and demands of capital stretched out beyond the workplace and into the homes of workers, setting up new rhythms and new timetables that reshaped the contours of family life. Montreal factories opened as early as 6.30 am six mornings a week. Long before the sun rose on a winter morning someone, usually the wife, had to ensure that the wage-earners were awake, fed and ready to go to work. In the streets running toward the factories workshops and construction sites, doors would have opened as a stream of half wakened men, women and children made their daily journey to work. It was their wages, or part of them, that would be the basis for women's second major task - the transformation of that wage into goods and services, the daily reproduction of life itself. For these families survived not by producing their food, but by purchasing it. This apparently simple fact revolutionized a woman's role; along with that of her family. Consumption had replaced production as the major function of the family.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ For a masterly analysis of changes in women's roles earlier on in the transition within an American Town, see Mary P. Ryan, The Cradle of the Middle Class. especially pp.98-104.

⁷⁹ Susan Strasser, Never Done, pp.5,11.

Women replaced men as the usual purchasers in the market place - a fact recognized in Quebec when the Civil Code was reformulated in 1866. Whereas previously a married woman had not been legally entitled to buy goods herself, the new Code recognized women as capable of doing shopping and even making modest household purchases without their husband's authorization. They could also pay the bills, the rent and the taxes.⁸⁰ Women were thus legally recognized as shoppers, as the wage-managers.

Before children were born, while children were growing up, and even when she worked for wages herself, domestic labour was the wife's task. As daughters grew older they might help, both with looking after younger children and with housework, but the responsibility was her's. From the 1850's on a growing proportion of Montreal women found their major task to be the shopping, cooking and cleaning that was necessary for survival. Not that their grandmothers, either in rural areas or the city had not cooked, cleaned and perhaps shopped occasionally. They had, but they had also helped in the productive work of the farm or workshop. Now, however, domestic labour had to be performed largely with the incoming wage. Virtually all food and household goods had to be purchased although a minority of families, as the following chapter makes clear, continued to raise animals for food, to garden and to produce commodities at home. By the 1880's, however, most had to purchase almost all their basic needs. This new situation, a result of the dramatic changes in the mode of production and of the spread of

⁸⁰ Le Collectif Clio, L'Histoire des Femmes au Québec, p.153.

capitalist industry, was outlined by J.S. Woodsworth a few decades later;

But in the city, before you can get breakfast you must have secured the services of the milkman, the baker, the butcher and a score of other tradesmen, who in carrying on their business are directly dependent upon the commission agents and wholesale dealers.⁸¹

Food, most clothing and other household requirements had to be purchased with a wage that was paid to the husband or children as a result of their labour outside the home. Working class wives were dependent on that wage and on the husband making some or all of it available to them. Irregular payment, infrequent work by the husband, his refusal to hand over the wage or his tendency to spend some of it on alcohol, could all make the woman's task more difficult. The method and regularity of wage payment were factors that had immediate impact on a woman's ability to perform her role as housewife.⁸²

Irregular work was, as we have seen, the norm for most labourers and in many of the other trades predominating in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques. Irregular work meant irregular pay and hence major difficulties for a housewife unless she could secure credit. Even men

⁸¹ J.S. Woodsworth, My Neighbour (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1972, 1911)p.14.

⁸² For a discussion of the impact of irregular wages on budgeting and food allocation in English working class families see Maud Pember Reeves, Round About a Pound A Week, p.106.

and children with steady work were not always paid regularly. Nor till the end of the century were they always paid in cash. Regular cash payment was a major demand in several strikes during the 1870's. Striking workers on the Lachine Canal in 1877 included both regular fortnightly payment and an end to the "truck system" in their demands. In the end their sole demand was for fortnightly payment in cash.⁸³ Longshoremen, joiners, street cleaners and dry goods employees all testified in 1888 to the problem of irregular pay. One joiner reported that he was usually paid on Saturdays, but sometimes had to wait till the following Monday or Tuesday. He was asked by the Commissioners in 1888 if it was a great inconvenience to be without money on a Saturday night. "Naturally", he replied, "when the wife expects \$7 or \$8 to live upon and the husband arrives and has not got it it is not convenient."⁸⁴

While some wives were clearly given that proportion of their husband's wage that was necessary to "live upon" without much argument, others must have found that they had to argue, cajole and compete with other ways of spending it. Despite insufficient wages many a working man desperately needed the relaxation and escape that alcohol offered. And "nothing was as common as a tavern in nineteenth century

⁸³ Peter de Lottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal. Working Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1889", Labour/ Le Travailleur, 8/9 (1981-82) p.21; Jean Hamelin, Paul Larocque and Jacques Rouillard, Repertoire des grèves dans la province de Québec aux XIXe siècle. (Montreal, Presses d 'Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales, 1971); RCRLC, Evidence of Robert McCoy, p.632.

⁸⁴ RCRLC, Evidence of Stanislaus Paquette, joiner, p.652; IBID, Evidence of Samuel Carsley, p.16.

Montreal.⁸⁵ Taverns were grouped around the docks, the manufacturing establishments and some of the markets. They lined the "streets which the labouring men frequent on their way home, to their work and from their shops to their dwellings."⁸⁶ Ste. Anne ward consistently had more taverns per capita than any other residential ward in the city. Up to one quarter of all taverns known to police could be found there. (See Table 4.6). In 1871 that ward boasted one tavern for every 200 men, women and children. A year earlier there had been one for every 143 residents. They catered to the workers in the many factories of the area and to local residents.⁸⁷

For those with money in their pocket the lure of the tavern was strong. Patrick Dalton, a longshoreman, suggested that the fact that he and his fellow workers were paid two to three times a week presented the men with the:

temptation to spend it instead of taking it home to their families whereas if the men got it once a week it would have a better effect on them and they would not be under the same temptation to spend it, and would not leave so much of it in the grog shops, but would take it to their families.⁸⁸

In a reasoned plea against drinking an article in the French Knights of

⁸⁵ Peter de Lottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal," Labour/Le Travailleur, 8 /9 (1981/82) p.11.

⁸⁶ RCRL, Evidence of Stedman A Lebourreau, Advocate, Secretary and Solicitor, law and Order League of Montreal, p.299; Evidence of Philorum La Montagne, p.237.

⁸⁷ Montreal, Annual Report of the Chief of Police, MAR 1870, 1871.

⁸⁸ RCRLC, p.186.

TABLE 4.6

a). NUMBER OF TAVERNS

	STE. ANNE		% of whole	CITY TOTAL	ST. JACQUES		% of whole
	Legal	Illegal			Legal	Illegal	
1867	91	54	24	601	58	11	11.5
1868	86	23	21	517	42	14	11
1869	101	19	21	563	60	9	12
1870	106	24	23	569	61	5	12
1871	42	51	23	399	13	24	9
1872	46	33	21	380	21	3	6
1873	56	40	19.5	490	32	18	10
1874	48	40	20	389	14	16	7
1875	47	32	21.5	367	19	9	7.5
1876	49	30	18.5	427	33	12	10.5
1877	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1878	39	8	12	380	38	9	12
1879	43	10	16	339	35	4	11.5
1880	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1881	50	6	16	337	33	10	13
1882	51	3	15	356	28	4	9
1883	63	4	17	338	36	3	10
1884	60	4	13	499	50	2	10
1885	62	3	17.5	368	37	2	10.5
1886	73	3	19	403	40	2	10
1887	76	5	19	420	37	3	9.5
1888	79	3	16.5	493	52	2	11

b) TAVERNS PER CAPITA, MONTREAL WARDS - 1871

	Population	Taverns	Taverns per capita
Ste. Anne	18,639	93	1 per 200 people all ages
St. Jacques	17,680	37	1 per 477
St. Louis	14,916	26	1 per 573
Ste. Marie	13,695	27	1 per 507
St. Antoine	23,925	73	1 per 327
St. Laurent	13,106	42	1 per 312
Centre	1,100	23	1 per 48
West	1,265	31	1 per 40
East	2,889	47	1 per 61
City Total	107,225	399	1 per 268

Source: Montreal, Annual Reports of the Chief of Police, 1867-1888.

Labour newspaper, Le Trait d'Union, highlighted the problem:

Beside the workshop, you see, there is the bar. Not that we want to argue that the bar is of itself a dangerous institution. No. The customs of the country have created it and the finances of the government grow there. But what we would argue ... is that the bar absorbs most clearly the salary of the worker... Just think that behind you there is your wife and young children who impatiently await your return from the workshop or shanty. Domestic comfort costs so little however and drink so much.⁸⁹

For a wife waiting for the wage "to live upon", taverns and the male culture they embodied must have often seemed as much of a threat to family survival as did unemployment or low wages.

Yet men were not the only drinkers. Women too drank, and it was while out shopping that temptation must have been strongest. Alcohol was available in Montreal in a variety of legal and illegal outlets including grocery stores. A reformer described with horror the licensed groceries that were spread throughout the city "at the corner of every street almost, especially where there is a larger population." In places, he argued, there were such groceries on three of four corners of a street. "People who would not go into saloons would go there, especially women and young people." Legally such grocers were supposed to sell by the bottle, but many made drinks available by the glass converting their shop partially into places of recreation.⁹⁰ Such

⁸⁹ Le Trait d'Union, Montreal, 1 February 1887. (My translation).

⁹⁰ RCRUC, Evidence of F.E. Grafton, p.234.

groceries may have served a purpose for women similar to that of taverns for men. While shopping they could exchange gossip, relax, talk with other mothers about the problems of feeding and clothing their children and arrange to care for each others' children, or to share major housekeeping tasks. Some no doubt drank to forget their problems. The drinks could be put on the grocery bill along with household purchases. Very often, a temperance advocate argued:

a man finds that his grocery bill is exceedingly large, and he cannot understand it. He receives a large bill for legitimate groceries while as a matter of fact, a large portion of it is often for liquor sold to his wife.

How widespread this practise really was is impossible to determine.⁹¹

Shopping was a daily task for most women. Some only knew from day to day how much money they would have to work with. Few had the storage space or containers necessary to buy in bulk had they had the cash.⁹² Mary Smith, the printer's wife probably had typical shopping habits although she was able to purchase a greater variety of food stuffs than most wives. She always bought in small quantities. Even durable goods such as sugar and oatmeal were purchased two to three times a week. Every day except Sunday she went out at least once for several items. Such trips to the butcher, baker, grocer or local market could be a

⁹¹ IBID., Evidence of Stedman A. Lebourreau, Law and Order League, pp.299-301.

⁹² On this type of buying see Maud Pember Reeves, Round About a Pound A Week, p.104.

major undertaking for women with several small children. Probably children were left at home, sometimes under the eye of an older sibling, sometimes alone.⁹³ On the cold winter's days when Montreal temperatures could drop to as low as minus 15 or 20 Celsius, even a short walk was an ordeal for women unable to afford adequate footwear and clothing. Women would buy no more than they could carry home. Note the apparent weight of the baskets being carried home from market by the woman in the accompanying lithograph. (See Photo 4.1) Milkmen who delivered to the home, street vendors who sold vegetables, fish, meat and even dairy products and hucksters selling what they could, relieved women of the need to go out in search of food and bargains and of the burden of carrying food home. They were, as Susan Strasser has argued for American housewives, "convenient, even necessary for consumers without refrigeration who were compelled to shop frequently".⁹⁴

The major articles that working women bought were reported by one grocer to have been sugar, tea, coffee, oatmeal, molasses and rice. Bread from the baker, the cheapest cuts of meat - boiling meat and shank - from the butcher and potatoes or legumes were probably the other main items, with some differences between Irish, French Canadian and other families.⁹⁵ Huguette Lapointe-Roy has suggested that corn, flour,

⁹³ Some of the English wives studied by Reeves did their shopping "when the baby is asleep". IBID, pp.108-9.

⁹⁴ Susan Strasser, Never Done, p.19. In Montreal city regulations began to curb and control many forms of street trading throughout this period. This whole fascinating topic requires further investigation.

⁹⁵ IBID, Evidence of Charles Lacaille, grocer, p.710; IBID, Evidence of Thomas Gratorex, labourer, p.87.

Photo 4.1



NATIVE - ST. ANNE'S MARKET, MONTREAL.

Source: "Canadian Illustrated News, 27 March 1880, reprinted in Charles P. deVolpi and P.S. Winkworth, Montréal. Recueil Iconographique, p. 293.

oatmeal, beans and peas were the major foodstuffs consumed by poor French Canadians. These clearly provided insufficient protein or vitamins to resist disease.⁹⁶ While in summer women could buy fresh fruits and vegetables at the markets or from the street vendors who plied their wares from house to house, in winter few working class women could afford them. Within the working class we have seen that the wives of those skilled workers with steadier and higher incomes and small families could better afford to feed their families. Mary Smith, was able to purchase a reasonably balanced diet of bread, milk, eggs, potatoes, rice, vegetables, fruit and meat.⁹⁷

The food bought, however, was often neither fresh, clean nor pure. Milk might be inadvertently adulterated when milk cans were washed with "water taken from wells ... situated too close to stables." "Chalk, starch and even the brains of sheep" were reported to be added to increase milk's specific gravity. Milkmen were "frequently accused of not taking the precaution to milk cows" with skin diseases into:

separate vessels as it is not a very rare thing to find puss, blood, and abnormal cells in milk. The milk of diseased cows sours and decomposes very soon.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Huguette Lapointe-Roy, "Paupérisme et Assistance Sociale à Montréal, 1832-1865," pp.37-44.

⁹⁷ Walter H. Smith Collection. Rare Book Room, McGill, "Cash book". On the usefulness and gradual elimination of street vendors in the U.S.. See Susan Strasser, Never Done, pp.14-19.

In an 1882 examination of dairies supplying the city, not a single milkman's premises were found to be in perfect condition. Drinks in general were "of an inferior quality", being adulterated to such an extent as to injure those using them. The water supply was polluted in many areas because the sewers and drains were so inadequate. Meat was frequently infected. Rotten fruit was apparently "often exposed for sale." Coloured confectionery needed careful inspection. Tea, coffee, sugar, mustard and marinades were also frequently adulterated. Tea was "diluted with stalks and teadust" and coffee "largely adulterated with chickory, peas, roasted corn and roasted, damaged wheat."⁹⁹

Once food had been purchased a woman's work had only begun. Unlike factory labour, work at home was predominantly hand labour. In this period "few manufactured products relieved the housewives' tasks once they had brought the food home."

All year round, food arrived in the kitchen unprepared. Shoppers returned from the market with live chickens that had to be killed, or dead ones that had to be plucked; their work at home matched that of the farmer or the poor urban chicken keeper. Even purchased fish had scales; ...Roasting and grinding green coffee, grinding and sifting whole spices, cutting and pounding lump or loaf sugar, sifting heavy flour that might be full of impurities, soaking oatmeal overnight, ... tasks like these accompanied nearly every ingredient of every recipe, whether it came from the garden or the market.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, MAR, 1877, p59.

⁹⁹ IBID., 1882, p.62; 1875, p.22 1879, p.19 RCFLC, Evidence of John Baker Edwards, pp.664-6.

Housing and Health - The Conditions of Domestic Labour

Working with little money, with poor quality if not adulterated foodstuffs and only the sparsest of facilities, women in the poorer families particularly, faced an uphill battle. In the workplace capitalists were devising and using new machinery to transform work processes and eliminate some of the heaviest and most repetitive tasks. But by this period, however, only one major technological innovation helped women in the kitchen and none "changed the fundamental character of cooking". Cast iron stoves "reduced but did not eliminate most of the hazards and difficulties of fireplace cooking".¹⁰¹ Various Montreal foundries produced cast iron stoves. By the 1870's they appear to have been in widespread use. They were, according to a worker testifying in 1888, "the one really essential piece of furniture for a labourer's family". This English labourer believed that workingmen were better off in his country than in Montreal largely because there ranges were provided in rented houses. In Montreal they had to be purchased by the family. New ranges cost over \$20.00, but they could be bought second hand in the 1870's for \$2.50.¹⁰² For some families such stoves constituted the only piece of furniture. Amongst the poorest, like one

¹⁰⁰ Susan Strasser, Never Done, p.29.

¹⁰¹ IBID., p.33

¹⁰² RCRLC, Evidence of labourer, Thomas Gratorex, p.87: Suzanne Cross, "The Irish in Montreal", 1867-1869, p.202.

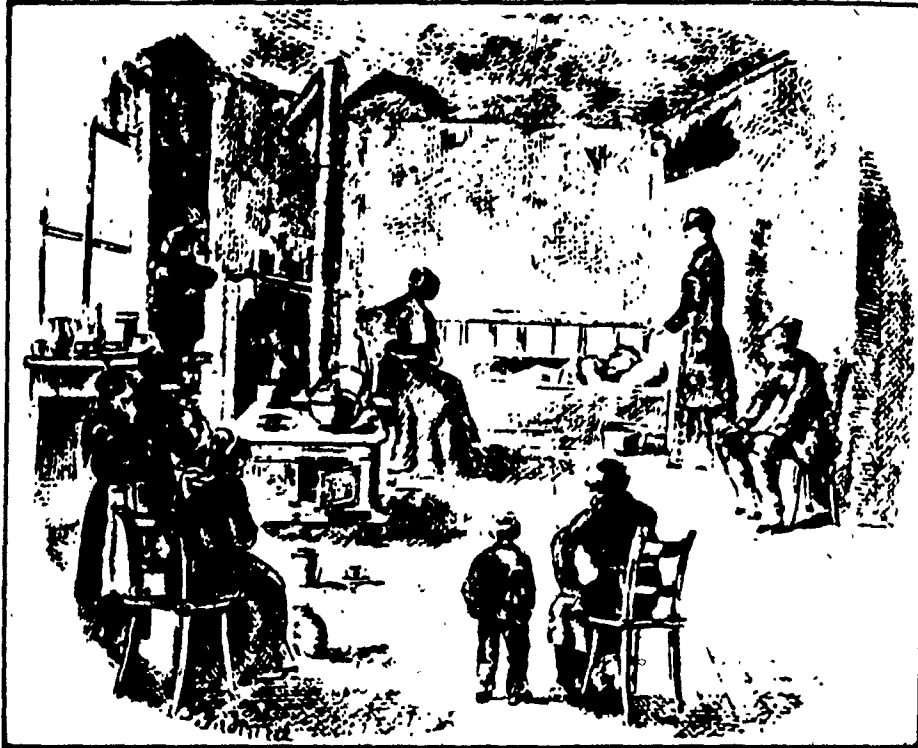
of the families in a subdivided building on Ontario Street, kitchen facilities were minimal. "The only contents of the room were an old cracked stove, some chairs, a couple of cups and a tin plate, and a narrow shelf against the wall, serving as a table." Five adults shared these furnishings in their one room apartment. In the same building fourteen people shared another room, perhaps on a temporary basis. Their furnishings comprised a stove, a table made of a board on an empty barrel, a couple of rickety stools and a shelf holding two old kitchen basins.¹⁰³

While such extreme crowding and minimal cooking facilities were probably limited to the poorest of families, many labourers shared both space and stoves, pooling their resources but minimizing their privacy. Dr. Dougless Decrow compared the situation of mechanics with that of labourers before the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital. Mechanics usually lived in a house with two to four rooms. If the house was bigger "we usually find them renting rooms, or else the families club together, using one stove." Day labourers were more likely to have had two families in a house with three or four rooms. "If there are several families, each family will have one room for a sleeping room, and use the kitchen for a dining room - the kitchen and stove in common with others."¹⁰⁴ (See Photo 4.2)

¹⁰³ Montreal Daily Star, 24 December 1883, p.4.

¹⁰⁴ RCRCL, p.606.

Photo 4.2 : Inside a Working Class Home



The meagre furniture and facilities as well as the crowding and perpetual presence of illness is captured in this 1873 sketch.

Source: Canadian Illustrated News, 6 December 1873, reprinted in Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher and Jean-Claude Robert, Histoire du Québec Contemporain.

Sharing cooking facilities, possibly sharing cooking at times, may well have appealed to some women. For cooking in the nineteenth century was a much heavier task than today or that a few years later when electricity revolutionized both cooking and lighting. Wood or coal for the fire had to be carried inside. While the men might chop it, carrying it in was usually the wife's job. Any water used for cooking, washing up, laundry or family washing had to be carried from the tap, if there was one, to the stove and heated there. The heat from a stove made small, crowded lodgings unbearable on the humid days that characterized Montreal's summer. Little wonder that working class wives bought bread rather than making it and that the "labouring husband" was used to a dinner of "bread and cheese".¹⁰⁵

In winter a stove was a place of congregation, for, in many a quickly and poorly built dwelling, huddling around it was the only way to keep warm in the four to five months of cold northern winter. At the end of a long workday the open fire or stove may have offered the only place for families to sit and talk together. More often in crowded homes, exhausted workers probably competed with each other and with the children for the warmest spot, creating friction and tension in the household.

In the winter months and on wet spring and fall days, working class women draped their wet washing around the stove, the only source of

¹⁰⁵ Anon. The Skilful Housewife's Guide; A Book of Domestic Cookery Compiled from the best authors. (Montreal, Armour and Ramsay, 1848), p.112.

heat, in a desperate attempt to get it dry. Busy with other housework, children or out shopping, it was sometimes forgotten. City officials cited this practise, so "widespread among the lower classes", as one reason for the very high incidence of fires in the City.¹⁰⁶ Drying the clothes represented only the final hurdle in doing the laundry. Some women had to haul the water up several flights of stairs. Most had to boil the water, carrying it to and from the stove. Only hard rubbing eliminated the dirt and grime.

All Montreal citizens paid for the water provided by the City in their water tax, a tax levied on occupants not owners of buildings. All were not, however, guaranteed water services or adequate drainage. Only by the 1880's did most houses apparently have water piped into the house. And then it was only to the kitchen. In older working class housing, like that built in Pointe St. Charles in the 1860's, washrooms, wells and laundry facilities were located in the backyard. Women must constantly have gone up and down the outside staircases collecting water, coal and wood, or taking out dirty washing, rubbish and ashes from the fire or stove.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Cited, in Huguette Lapointe-Roy, "Paupérisme et Assistance Sociale à Montreal, 1832-1865" p.30.

¹⁰⁷ On the process of washing in this period see Susan Strasser, Never Done, Chapter 6. On the sending out of laundry see S.A. Lortie, "Compositeur Typographe de Québec en 1903", in Pierre Savard ed., Paysans et Ouvriers Québécois d'Autrefois, p.106; on Montreal Chinese laundries in this period see Denise Helly, "La Promoton d'un Secteur de Service à Montréal: Les Buandaries Chinoises (1877-1923)", Rapport de Recherche, Federal Ministry of Education, 1981.

A water service did not signify indoor plumbing. Susan Strasser has pointed out that:

"Nineteenth century technological development did not ... foster the production of any intermediate devices for water ... despite a broad range of technological possibilities for getting water and disposing of sewage, indoor plumbing accentuated the class differences that were developing.¹⁰⁸

In Montreal, drains "in the houses occupied by the working classes where there is usually overcrowding" were seldom efficient or sanitary. "For convenience sake" sinks were placed near the back door that led out onto the verandahs. Four rough planks stretched from these sinks down into the drain in the yard "with a wooden sink connecting with them at each story.¹⁰⁹ In parts of Ste. Anne there were "no sinks or drains of any kind in the houses". In Drakes yard in:

houses where the workmen live ... there are no drains in the houses, the people living in the upper tenements have to come out onto the galleries, and have to throw their slops into a wooden pipe to descend or go down into the sewer. There is one drain in the middle of the yard, and a small cesspool in front of each door.

Many drains were open and uncovered. Sometimes they percolated into the backyard and were thus "highly injurious to the health of the tenants."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Susan Strasser, Never Done, p.94.

¹⁰⁹ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, 1866, p.13.

¹¹⁰ RCRLC Evidence of Arthur Short, p.549 For more details on living conditions in Montreal during this period see Jean de Bonville, Jean Baptiste Gagnepetit. pp.115-28 and Jacques Bernier, "La Condition des Travailleurs".

When families did not pay their water taxes the city turned off their water supply compounding a difficult situation. In the depression after 1873, revenues from water taxes dropped dramatically as the poorer tenants found it impossible to pay. An increase in the valuation of properties between 1873 and 1875 had pushed water rates up just as this major depression left most families without extra cash.¹¹¹ Furthermore, collection was made just before the winter:

when the attention of citizens of MODERATE means is being directed to provision for our long and inclement winter. At the time when the cheapness of fuel renders it important for the workingman to be able to lay in a stock of it to outlast the snow, he is called upon to pay in advance for the whole of the water he will consume during the year. It is easy to perceive what a strain this may place upon the resources of men who live upon daily wages, especially if from any casualty, to which they are all liable, they should happen to have been out of employment for any period of the year.¹¹²

As the depression deepened health officials attempted to convince authorities to remit, reduce or delay water tax payment in cases where families were suffering from poverty, illness, or where they had water closets. In 1879 city councillors had resolved that water for the poor should not be cut off. Rather it was to be supplied as cheaply as possible or free "in order that poor people may have the means of attending to their personal cleanliness as well as that of their

¹¹¹ RCRLC., Evidence of George E. Muir, Assessor, City of Montreal, p. 263.

¹¹² City of Montreal, Mayor's Inaugural Address, MAR, 1886, p. 8.

houses."¹¹³ In 1889, when the depression had long lifted, 777 Montreal households were reported to have had their water taxes remitted, reduced or delayed, 43 per cent for poverty, the others for illness or sanitary reasons.¹¹⁴ More must surely have found it impossible to pay when the depression was at its worst. Women, who under the Civil Code could now pay taxes, were the ones who protested when their water rates were increased or the water turned off. It was their daily tasks that were most affected by lack of water, and their budgetting that was upset when money needed for food had to be paid in taxes.¹¹⁵

Cleaning these small, overcrowded houses, with insufficient water and deplorable drains must have been a constant and uphill task. Keeping the inhabitants clean was equally difficult. The outdoor privy was the rule not the exception, and one can imagine the problem in families where diarrhoea and infectious diseases were common. Few had baths. The sanitary officer reported in 1886 that "in the majority of poor people's lodgings it is rare to see a bath, and they are therefore deprived of the necessary means of securing perfect cleanliness". "Yet", he continued:

if we are to judge from the numbers attending the Wellington bath it is evident that the labouring classes are aware of the benefits to be derived from such a hygienic establishment.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, MAR, 1886, p.15.

¹¹⁴ IBID., 1889.

¹¹⁵ RCHLC, Evidence of George E. Muir, Assessor, City of Montreal, p.262.

Lack of space made it impossible to install baths in existing workers' homes.¹¹⁷ The city had only two public bathsons of which, the Wellington bath, was in the centre of Ste. Anne ward. There were none for women. In one of the poverty stricken families visited by the Star reporter in 1883, "the mother actually confessed that, being without a supply of water, she had not been able to wash her children for ten years." "It was not hard to credit her statement", he commented.¹¹⁸

Some women proudly strove to keep their houses clean. Others, worn out, working occasionally for cash or preoccupied with young children, did not. Suzanne Cross has cited a description of Irish women's housekeeping abilities that was written by a priest looking back on his visit to working class homes in Griffintown, Ste. Anne ward in 1869.

The Irish women of the lower class, it is well known, form two distinct species. having absolutely nothing in common. Some of them cannot be equalled by any other women except the French in motherly attention. Spotless cleanliness, sweet smiles and words, devotedness to duty, and everything which entitles women to the name of angels, belongs above all to many Irish women. But the others? Let us not speak of them. However excellent their heart may be, they have not the first notion of the simplest housekeeping. Everything breaks under their hands, you see nothing in their homes but dilapidated furniture, tattered linen and clothing, broken plates and jugs etc. Whatever is not besmeared with filth is overlaid with dust . . .

¹¹⁷ IBID., 1890, p.21.

¹¹⁸ Montreal Daily Star, 24 December 1883, p.4.

How particularly Irish this apparent diversity of housekeeping skills was, is clearly questionable. The Priest's observations suggest someone unacquainted with the arduous nature of housework under such conditions. Middle class women running the Protestant Home for Friendless Women also commented on the inability of some poor women to keep house in what they deemed an appropriate manner. Most of the needy women to whom they gave needlework were, they believed, "unable to perform the most simple household labour and, in nine out of ten cases, cannot sew well enough to make the coarsest garment for themselves."¹²⁰

Wives of labourers and other unskilled and poorly paid workers faced a running battle against disease and death within their families. Childraising and housework, whatever their relative skills, took place in an environment that was less healthy than the workplaces of most husbands. We hear much of dangerous work conditions in the industrializing city. The most lethal places, in Montreal, however, were working class homes, where old and rotten drains, outdoor privies and minimal sewage facilities combined to spread contagious diseases amongst both children and parents. Doctors were only just beginning to

¹¹⁹ A.J. Thébaud, Forty Years in the United States, p.223, cited in Suzanne Cross, "The Irish in Montreal", p.206. Such commentaries should be read with the observer's values in mind. In Maude Pember Reeves' study of English working class families she observed that "the women who do not insist upon doing the impossible, and fretting themselves and everybody else because it is impossible, often arrive at better results - with regard at least to the human beings about them - than the women who put furniture first and the peace of the family second". Maude Pember Reeves, Round About A Pound a Week, p.19.

¹²⁰ Second Annual Report of the Protestant Home for Friendless Women, (Montreal, Lovell, 1877).

understand how germs spread. The Health Department's preventative measures were still based largely on the belief that disease grew in piles of refuse and spread via noxious gases and miasmas. Yet, their identification of worker's homes as the most unsanitary places in the city and their concern about improper plumbing and toilet facilities was quite legitimate. Terry Copp in writing about conditions several decades later, derides this stress on the Sanitary Ideal. There is little doubt, however, that had this ideal - which included well constructed houses and stressed the importance of fresh air, and the elimination of faecal and other waste material - been achieved, mortality rates would have decreased.¹²¹ For, improved water supply and especially sewage disposal do appear to have proved crucial in lowering mortality rates, especially amongst children.¹²²

In Montreal, sewage disposal remained inadequate well into the twentieth century and the associated deaths from diarrhoeal and other food and water borne diseases remained high. The illness and death that

¹²¹ Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty, pp.89-91. Thomas McKeowan and R.G.Record in their well known article on the "Reasons for the Decline of Mortality in England and Wales during the 19th Century", attribute mortality decline partially to "Hygienic changes introduced by the sanitary reformers.", reprinted in Sima Lieberman, Europe and the Industrial Revolution, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Schenkman Publishing Co.,1972), p.336. In his later work McKeowan changes his emphasis, stressing the importance of an improved standard of living, as a major factor in mortality decline. This is clearly something that has occasioned great debate and is much more difficult to define or substantiate.

¹²² McKeowan's earlier stress on improved environment, especially air and water is also stressed by Samuel H. Preston and Etienne Van de Walle in their article on "Urban Mortality in the Nineteenth Century", Population Studies, 32 (July, 1978), pp.279-80.

resulted robbed parents of children, children of parents and employers of present and future workers. Deaths represented only the tip of the iceberg. "Every death from diarrhoea disease represents many episodes of diarrhoea in the population, each of which leaves the host in a depleted and weakened condition and hence more susceptible to death from respiratory infection".¹²³ A Montreal doctor believed that if sanitation were enforced:

It would be a saving to the tenant and to the proprietor. The workingman would be oftener at work, and would be able to prosecute his work better with healthful surroundings at his home. As it was, the law regarding such vital matters as cesspools was,

he believed, "such that a coach and four horses could be driven through it".¹²⁴

Women, like the children who spent most of their time in the houses, were most susceptible to those diseases' carried by both water and air. Today men in virtually all age groups have higher death rates than women. In nineteenth century Montreal, in contrast, female death rates were equal or slightly higher than men's among both teenage girls and women aged fifteen to forty. (See Table 4.7)¹²⁵ Only after age forty

¹²³ IBID, p.281.

¹²⁴ RCRLC, Evidence of Dr. D. Decrow, p.607.

¹²⁵ Table 4.8 is based on the death reports by doctors for the city's health department. The numbers were averaged for the four years surrounding the census date, then applied to the population reported in each group in the census of 1881.

and particularly after sixty was the male death rate dramatically higher than that for women. Contagious diseases and "constitutional" diseases - largely tuberculosis, explain the majority of women's deaths. The only category in which men's deaths exceeded those of women aged five to forty was in deaths from violent and unknown causes, including work based accidents.

Similar patterns have been found in other nineteenth century cities and communities. Arthur Imhoff has argued that in Germany the differential resulted from the additional burden of women "within the sex-specifically structured daily working world".¹²⁶ In England, too, women's role rendered them more susceptible than men to tuberculosis. Not till this disease declined in the 1880's did women's life chances improve and exceed men's. Within Canada, indeed North America,¹²⁷ however, Montreal's rate was high and remained so into the twentieth century. Tuberculosis was never such a dramatic killer in Canada as in England, but the persistence of somewhat higher female death rates here reflects its continued importance and the unhealthy living conditions. Women's position and work in the home and the conditions there must be seen as at the root of their relative disadvantage. Young girls were more

¹²⁶ Arthur E. Imhoff, "Women, Family and Death: Excess Mortality in Women of Childbearing Age in Four Communities in Nineteenth Century Germany", in Richard J. Evans and W.R. Lee eds., The German Family, (London, Croon Helm, 1981), p.154.

¹²⁷ Sheila Ryan Johansson, "Sex and Death in Victorian England: An Examination of Age- and Sex-Specific Death Rates, 1840-1910", in Martha Vicinus, ed., A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women, (Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1977), p.165-167; Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty, p.100.

TABLE 4.7
AGE, SEX AND DISEASE SPECIFIC MORTALITY RATES,
MONTREAL CITY, 1881

<u>Age</u>	<u>Overall Death Rate</u>		<u>Contagious Diseases</u>		<u>Constitutional Diseases</u>	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
0-1	356	284	111	99	19	17
1-5	53	52	27	27	4	4
5-15	7	8	3	4	1	1
15-20	6	7	2	3	2	4
20-40	9	11	1	1	4	6
40-60	18	16	2	1	5	6
60-	73	58	3	2	7	8

Includes: Smallpox, diarrhoea, diphtheria, and infant cholera.

Includes phthisis (or TB), dropsy, anaemia, cancer.

<u>Age</u>	<u>Local Diseases</u>		<u>Developmental</u>		<u>Violence and Unknown</u>	
0-1	91	72	106	83	28	15
1-5	17	16	4	4	1.2	1.0
5-15	2	2	-	-	0.6	0.2
15-20	1	1	-	-	-	-
20-40	3	3	-	-	0.7	0.4
40-60	9	8	-	-	1.3	0.8
60-	42	26	14	20	3.9	2.2

Includes: brain disorders, heart disease, pneumonia, stomach disorders.

Includes: birth-related orders, childbirth, old age-lung disease, including related problems.

* The reported deaths for 1879, 1880, 1881 and 1882 were averaged then applied to the number of people in that age group in the 1881 census and a rate per thousand calculated. In all but the final category rates were rounded to the nearest whole figure.

Source: 1881 Census of Canada, Table VII, "Report Upon the Sanitary State", MAR, 1879-1882.

likely to have been at home than their brothers. Married women, worn down by housework, poor nutrition, pregnancies and childbearing were only too susceptible to disease particularly, but also, to death. Childbirth itself accounted for only 3 per cent of the deaths of women between 20 and 40, whereas phthisis, the most prevalent form of tuberculosis, accounted for nearly 50 per cent of all deaths in that age

group; contagious diseases for 14 per cent. Contemporaries explained the origins of phthisis as follows:

The predisposition to phthisis is acquired by want of exercise, by occupations which confine the thorax, by impure air, by an insufficiency and bad quality of nourishment and above all anything that lowers the morale.¹²⁸

While the diagnosis goes somewhat against later findings about tuberculosis, it does capture the situation of both mothers and daughters. Housework, sewing in the putting out industry, or working in airless shops and factories contributed to their poor health. Diarrhoea made them susceptible to other diseases. Smaller food portions for girls and mothers, who cut back on their own food intake to make sure that the wage-earners had sufficient, contributed further to their disadvantage. Lauren Oren and Maude Pember Reeves have shown how women in English families skimped on food for themselves. In recommending food that would be suitable to take to the poor, a Montreal publication, The Skilful Housewife's Guide, suggested the practise was common here as well. It stressed the relief that industrious mothers, "whose forbearance from the necessary quantity of food, that others may have a larger share", would feel on being taken some hot food. For it was recognized that such "self denial frequently reduces that strength upon

¹²⁸ Report Upon the Sanitary State of Montreal, MAR, 1877, p.63. On the campaign against tuberculosis in a later period see K. McCuaig, "From Social Reform to Social Service - The Changing Role of Volunteers - the Anti-tuberculosis Campaign, 1900-1930, CHR, LXI, 4(1980).

which the welfare of her family essentially depends".¹²⁹ In families where all members were inadequately fed, "any deductions from a woman's diet, even in proportion to her body weight, further undermined an already low nutritional standard".¹³⁰

In Montreal, as elsewhere, a mother's caring role exposed her to infection, more than her husband. As the nurse of sick family members she was at risk "especially when handling and cleaning the clothes and bedclothes".¹³¹ When any family member fell sick, especially from a contagious disease, the work of the mother multiplied. Doctors recommended isolation in a separate room, something impossible for the many families with no extra space. Women were advised to remove "carpets, curtains and all others effects" from the sick room and to hang a "series of cloths soaked in carbolic acid or chloride of lime outside and inside the door to prevent contagion spreading". Floors were to be examined, crevices filled with wax for fear "that particles of contagion might get into them". Bedding and clothing of the patient were not to be "removed from the room without being steeped in carbolic acid for at least an hour". All handkerchiefs were to be burned, excreta placed in a solution of sulphate of iron, and all cups, glasses

¹²⁹ Lauren Oren, "The Welfare of Women in Labouring Families: England, 1860-1950", in Mary S. Hartman and Lois Banner, eds., Clio's Consciousness Raised. New Perspectives on the History of Women, (New York, Harper and Row, 1974), pp.229-231; Maude Pember Reeves, Round About : A Pound A Week, p.97, 118, 143-145; Anon, The Skilful Housewife's Guide A Book of Domestic Cookery, compiled from the best Authors. (Montreal, Armour and Ramsay, 1848), p.112.

¹³⁰ Lauren Oren, "The Welfare of Women", p.230.

¹³¹ Arthur E. Imhoff, "Women, Family and Death", p.154.

and spoons used by the patient to be washed in a solution of carbolic acid. If the patient recovered, died or went to the hospital, the mother's job continued, unless of course, she were the sick one.

The bed covering and articles that cannot be washed should be suspended in the room, the doors and windows, the chimney opening and any other apertures should be closed ... An ordinary spirit lamp should be taken ... into which should be put 4 oz. of carbon; it should then be placed in the middle of the room ..., and lit, the operator immediately retiring, taking care to close the door ... The ceilings should be whitewashed and the wallpaper removed and burned, and the furniture washed with carbolic soap. The flooring should be scraped, and the crevices cleaned out with a brush.¹³²

One can imagine the difficulty faced by a woman with several young children, perhaps sick herself, adding these tasks to her daily shopping, cleaning and cooking chores. Little wonder women resisted the advice and inspection of city health officials.

Not only were the homes of the poor likely to harbour contagious diseases but they were also periodically burned or flooded in the fires and floods that ravaged Montreal throughout this period. The houses of the low lying areas of Ste. Anne were especially likely to be flooded in the Spring. This too, brought extra housework. In 1886 the City Health Officer suggested what should be done following the flooding of a house. The housewife was to open all doors to ventilate the house and light large fires to dry and purify the air. Slime on cellars, yards and sheds was to be completely removed, and quick lime and chloride of lime

¹³² Report Upon the Sanitary State, 1883, pp.49-50.

sprinkled profusely on them. All walls, partitions and ceilings were to be whitewashed with quick lime. Everything that had been in contact with the water - floors, woodwork, walls, furniture and utensils - was to be thoroughly washed and scrubbed first with lye then with a strong solution of carbolic acid, salicylic acid or otherwise powerful disinfectant. All carpets, clothes and bedclothes were to be washed then disinfected with sulphurous acid or heated to 250 degrees in an oven.¹³³ The Montreal Witness gave similar advice. "If the men are careless about the jobs of cleaning up after floods and after the winter snow had uncovered the refuse", the editor advised that the women take them up, and not "rest till all putrid accumulations are removed. Remember it is the poor little ones who suffer most from the stench and malaria and with them the question may be cleanliness or death".¹³⁴ How families were expected to afford this array of chemicals is unclear.

Between the 1860's and the 1880's there was a growing stress on sanitation and sanitary regulation in Montreal as in other Canadian cities. From 1875 on, the City had a Board of Health and health officers whose duties included the inspection of houses and yards for cleanliness, of drains and pipes for their sanitary state, and the inspection of meat. Vaccination against smallpox was available "free of charge" after 1875 for all "who would apply for it".¹³⁵ These measures

¹³³ IBID, 1886, pp.42-43.

¹³⁴ Montreal Daily Witness, April 1873.

¹³⁵ Report of the Medical Officers of Health, MAR, 1875, p.12.

led to a drop in the crude death rate, and thus did represent an improvement in the life chances of Montreal's citizens.

Over the period there also appears to have been a shift in concern. Initially the measures were aimed simply at controlling the spread of disease and death, especially from the poorer areas where it was prevalent to the richer ones. By the 1880's the concern had broadened. The waste of life and especially the illness of workers was recognized as being against the interest of the city's employers. While they could count on an abundant supply of labour at virtually all times, employers lost money when one worker left and another had to be trained, or when skilled workers failed to turn up because of illness. Under the prevailing living conditions labour power was not being adequately reproduced. Employers like Ames, and sanitary experts alike, recognized the problem. The conditions under which those owning residential property were making a profit, were causing problems for those capitalists operating in production. Medical and sanitary authorities argued that the conditions of working class life were hindering the essential reproduction of life. Children were inheriting weak and feeble constitutions and perishing rapidly in unhealthy homes. "From an economic point of view", wrote A. Nicols in the Journal d'Hygiene Populaire, "the health ideal is a vigorous organism assuring a long life, which in all its phases will permit the subject to do as much work as possible".¹³⁶ Many working class women had been unable to perform

¹³⁶ Claudine Pierre-Deschenes, "Santé publique et organisation de la profession médicale au Québec, 1870-1918", RHAF, 35, (December 1981), p.367; Journal d'Hygiène Populaire, I,7,8, 1 (September 1884), p.73, cited in IBID. My translation.

that task which was crucial for the employer - the sending to work each day of a healthy, strong, worker.

As the definition of the problem shifted to focus on reproduction, attention was turned away from sewers, and to the person whose usual job the reproduction of labour power was, the mother. If the mother had a good knowledge of the principles of hygiene, the City health officer argued in 1883, she would bestow more intelligent care on the children and help the development of all their faculties. The blame could also be shifted - to the ignorance of mothers. In the following years, programmes such as the schools teaching domestic education, would attempt to redress their perceived ignorance.¹³⁷

Women's jobs in the home extended beyond the provision of the food and clothing necessary for life to the management of the tensions that accompanied family life under such conditions.¹³⁸ When wages were low or non-existent, sickness endemic, and living conditions damp, dirty and unhealthy, maintaining a degree of harmony within the household, even keeping the family together, must have been an uphill battle. At times tension would become unbearable and erupt in a variety of ways. Men beat their wives, wives deserted their families or simply let the

¹³⁷ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, 1883, pp.7-8; Claudine Pierre-Deschenes, "Santé publique", *RHAF*, (December 1981), p.369; Nicole Thivierge, "L'enseignement ménager, 1880-1970", in Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Micheline Dumont, *Maitresse de Maison*, pp.199-142.

¹³⁸ For a description of this aspect of women's role in a later period see Meg Luxton, *More than a Labour of Love*, pp.49-50, 65-70.

children roam the streets. Both men and women turned to the bottle. "Catherine Brennan, mother of ten children was found beastly drunk in Wellington Street" in early December 1868. As it was her first offense, the Recorder discharged her.¹³⁹ Another Ste. Anne woman, Ellen Grant, a wife and mother and "otherwise respectable" was found drunk and disorderly that same year. Her husband wanted her sent to jail. If she was not, he argued "he must leave her for he could bear her conduct no longer, having yesterday left a good position on her account". When the Recorder suggested he give her another try, if she would "sign the pledge" that afternoon, he agreed to take her back.¹⁴⁰

Desperate and unhappy people broke the peace both within and outside the family. Wife beating testified to the tensions within some families struggling to manage. Hundreds of cases went unrecorded each year, as wives refused to prosecute their husbands and other witnesses were unavailable or unwilling.¹⁴¹ Between 1860 and the late 1880's between 40 and 90 husbands were fined or sent to prison each year for this crime. The numbers convicted rose during the depression years after 1873, probably reflecting the increased difficulties and tensions of family life. They dropped again in the 1880's. When a man was convicted he was subject to a fine or to a term in jail. As the fine of \$2 to \$20 was too high for most workers, the majority went to jail,

¹³⁹ Montreal Daily Witness, December 1868.

¹⁴⁰ Montreal Daily Witness, 2 July 1868.

¹⁴¹ Annual Report of the Chief of Police, MAR, 1867, p.4.

bringing temporary psychological relief to the family, but depriving it of his wages to live up on.¹⁴²

In a study of English cases of wife beating Nancy Tomes has argued that most tensions originated in "questions of privilege and allocation of resources". Wage earners paid their wives part of their wages "to keep house" and kept the rest for themselves. In return for supporting her, a man "expected his wife to run errands for him, prepare his food, and keep the house. The wife's own wishes were subordinate to the husbands".¹⁴³ In the absence of detailed records of cases brought before Montreal's Recorder it seems reasonable to assume that the sources of conflict were similar. Here, as in England, a wife's role in the home was that of caring for the basic needs of the wage earner and the children. If she failed to do this, she was viewed both by society and her husband as deserving of punishment.

Married women's major contribution to the family economy lay in her transformation of the wage of others into sustenance and shelter. Wage dependency locked wives and children to husband and father in a relationship that was mutual, but also hierarchical and dependent. It was not an equal relationship. Its very equilibrium was embedded in the sexual division of labour within the family and in the economy. Women and girls could seldom make as much as their husbands, fathers or older

¹⁴² IBID, 1861-1891.

¹⁴³ Nancy Tomes, "A Torrent of Abuse: Crimes of Violence Between Working Class Men and Women in London, 1840-1875", Journal of Social History, 11, 3 (1978), p.33.

brothers. They were, therefore, more likely to be the homemakers. Economics, ideology and practicality mingled inextricably to perpetuate and reify men and women's different roles. Gender based roles were reinforced by spatial separation. Working class males and older children left home to work for wages. The woman's tasks took place in the home - the "private domestic labour of proletarian subsistence".¹⁴⁴ They worked in conditions very different from the modern working class home or from middle class homes of the period. In Montreal worker's houses were the most unhealthy, unsanitary place to spend one's time. While the wives of skilled workers might spend most of their lives in a three to four room house, unshared with others, the families of the unskilled were likely to spend large portions of their lives in tiny homes or "doubled up" with other families. In houses lit with coal oil lamps, without baths, with only outside privies, minimal cooking facilities, improper drainage and rampant with disease, women attempted to raise a new generation of workers and to feed and clothe the current one. The loss of over one quarter of their children testifies not to their failure, but to the abysmal conditions allowed to continue in the city.

Physically separate in their homes, working class women in no way inhabited a sphere that was set apart from the wider economy and society. Women's responsibility for reproduction of labour power linked them daily and over generations to the world of work and the wider

¹⁴⁴ Wally Secombe, "Domestic Labour and the Working-Class Household", in Bonnie Fox, ed., Hidden in the Household, p.41.

economy. Their daily labour partially determined the health and strength of the city's workers. Yet it was conditioned by the amount of pay their husband received and allowed them. Decisions about when they would marry and the number of children they would have were influenced by the state of the economy and the process of economic transformation. Resulting demographic change, in turn, affected future population growth, conditioning the size of subsequent generations of workers.

Women's work in the home could and often did make the difference between adequate survival and hunger or discomfort. When there were steady wages for the major earner, when an older son or daughter could also work for wages, and when the wife could adequately feed and clothe the family, this was the best arrangement that working class men and women had. The family did not disappear amongst the working class as Engels had predicted. Nor were distinctions of age and sex erased by all members of the workman's family entering the workforce as Marx suggested. The family remained, because, as Jane Humphries has pointed out, it was the only institution through which the people could control, to some degree, their own standard of living.¹⁴⁵ It was in their control over that standard of living that working class women played a crucial role. Those that could stretch wages by careful shopping and cooking, or by protesting raised water taxes helped families to live somewhat

¹⁴⁵ Jane Humphries, "Class Struggle and the Persistence of the Working Class Family", Cambridge Journal of Economics, (3, 1977), p.224-258; "The Working Class Family, Women's Liberation and Class Struggle: The Case of Nineteenth Century British History", The Review of Radical Political Economics, 9 (Fall 1977).

better and keep out of debt. Those few women who had jobs that brought in wages had more leeway. Those who could get cash in other ways ensured some money for themselves and for housekeeping over which there was less likely to have been a struggle. It is to married women's wage labour and alternative non-wage forms of subsistence that the following chapter turns.

Chapter Five

Cash Raising Strategies:

Married Women's Wage Labour and Non Wage

Survival Strategies.

A wife who could earn even a little money gained for herself some measure of the importance that went with contributing cash to the family economy. Most would have ensured too that a portion of the family income would be theirs and available with minimal cajoling or struggle. Women in this period utilized a variety of strategies to bring extra money into the home. Some drew on long standing rural and urban traditions, adapting them to the realities of mid nineteenth century urban life. Others devised new ways of making money or avoiding the purchase of food and commodities. This chapter begins an examination of such strategies, focussing on practices that could be ascertained to some extent from people's responses to the census takers. The first section outlines the extent of wage labour among married women. Subsequent sections investigate animal raising and gardening as ways of raising cash or avoiding purchases. The final part of the chapter looks at the taking in of boarders and the sharing of households as other money saving strategies.

Married Women and Wage Labour

For some married women, work outside the house must have seemed a welcome escape from children, housework and family crises. Yet wage labour away from home "precluded easy reconciliation of married women's

activities".¹ Housework still had to be done and children cared for. For working class women factory labour offered only temporary relief from family ties and housework. It now seems clear that in the early decades of industrial capitalism most married women did not take work outside the home unless forced to by poverty or widowhood.² Early English observers and historians who found large proportions of mothers in mills and factories believed the working class family would disintegrate as a result.³ They were viewing the exceptions rather than the rule. Overall the factory stage of the industrial revolution led to a decrease not an increase in the productive labour of women, and relegated them to private, domestic labour. Thus in France:

in the 1860's, where home and workplace were one in the many small family farms and family run businesses, some 40 per cent of all married women worked. In industrial England, in contrast, in 1851, only 25 percent of married women had an "extraneous occupation."⁴

¹ Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work and Family, p.124.

² Michael Anderson, Family Structure p.71; Tamara Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, p.190, but compare the assertion that French Canadian women continued to work after marriage in Tamara Hareven, "Family Time and Industrial Time: The Interaction between Immigrant Families and Industrial Work in a Planned Corporation Town, 1900-1924", Journal of Urban History, 1(1975); Claudia Goldin, "Family Strategies" in Theodore Hershberg ed., Philadelphia, p.309; Karen Oppenheim Mason, Maris A. Vinovskis and Tamara K. Hareven, "Women's Work and the Life Course in Essex County, Massachusetts", in Tamara Hareven ed., Transitions, p.197; Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work and Family, pp.124, 228.

³ Frederick Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England, (1844) (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1892); Neil J. Smelser, Social Change in the Industrial Revolution; Margaret Hewitt, Wives and Mothers in Victorian Industry, (London, Rockliffe, 1958).

Even in a milltown like Preston, Lancashire, where opportunities for factory work were good, Michael Anderson found that only "26 per cent of all wives living with their husbands" were "employed in non factory occupations". These women worked out of necessity. The wife's work was "a major solution to family poverty".⁵

Nowhere in North America have similar proportions of wage-working wives been enumerated. In Berkshire County, Massachusetts in 1880, 11.5 per cent of French Canadian wives, 13.4 per cent of Irish and 22.5 per cent of the wives of native born Americans reported an occupation. There woollen mills, paper mills, cotton and mixed textile mills all offered "substantial employment opportunities for women".⁶ In Manchester, New Hampshire, Tamara Hareven found that in 1902, 12.6 per cent of married women residing with their husbands worked. In Essex County, Massachusetts, in 1880 the percentage of wives reporting an occupation ranged from 0.8 per cent in rural areas to only 9.9 per cent in the textile town of Lawrence.⁷ In Philadelphia the same year under 4.00 per cent of white, married women of all origins reported having a job.⁸

⁴ Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work and Family, p.124.

⁵ Michael Anderson, Family Structure, pp.71-72.

⁶ Judith A. McGaw, 'A Good Place to Work'. Industrial Workers and Occupational Choice: The case of Berkshire Women", Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 10 (Autumn, 1979), p.20.

⁷ Tamara Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, p.198; Mason, Vinovskis and Hareven, "Women's Work", p.197.

⁸ Claudia Goldin, "Family Strategies", p.309.

When Michael Katz found "almost no married women with a husband at home" listing an occupation in Hamilton, Canada West, between 1851 and 1861 he concluded this was because the city had not yet reached "the industrial age".⁹ Such an assumption is based on the fallacious idea that the high percentage of married women at work reported in the textile towns of England and to a lesser degree in the United States would be duplicated in towns with different economic bases. Industrialization did not in and of itself lead automatically to the labour of married women. Rather, with the development of industrial capitalism increasing proportions of the population became dependent on wages. Within different trades the process of work was re-organized, in some cases opening up vast areas of employment that seemed to capitalists to be well suited to women and children. Low wages necessitated several family workers, and where the nature of local production encouraged it, the extra family workers included married women. For individual families of all cultures in the nineteenth century, however, children appear to have been the preferred secondary wage earners.

Montreal's mixed economy dominated partially by the clothing and shoemaking trades, offered many opportunities for female labour. Yet only in very few families did married women take on relatively steady jobs and report an occupation to the census taker. Still more worked occasionally, taking in washing, ironing, sewing, mending or babysitting for neighbours, relatives or friends. Work for wages by married women

⁹ Michael Katz, The People of Hamilton, p.273.

was probably under-enumerated by census takers.¹⁰ Unused to finding such women in paid employment they may have neglected to determine wife's occupations. Husbands, ashamed that their wife had to earn wages, may not have mentioned it.¹¹ Yet, even if only half the wives actually working for wages reported a job, the most striking feature about married women's wage labour in these areas of Montreal between 1861 and 1881 was its scarcity. Over the three decades only 1 to 5 per cent of women reported wage work (See Table 5.1).¹² Specific numbers varied both in place and time from a peak in St. Jacques in 1861 of 5.3 per cent to the low of under 1 per cent in Ste. Anne in 1881. The high 1861 figure may be an aberration produced by a boom in the sewing trades in response

¹⁰ On this problem see Sally Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-1850", in Juliett Mitchell and Ann Oakley, eds., The Rights and Wrongs of Women, (England, Penguin Books Ltd, 1976), pp.63-66, and Mason, Vinovskis and Hareven, "Womens Work", p.191.

¹¹ Frances Early cites the reaction of a French Canadian in Lowell, Massachussetts, whose pride was piqued whenever his wife earned money taking in laundry. "My wife had always been cared for by me and had never had to work for others", he explained. "The French Canadian Family Economy and Standard-of-Living in Lowell, Massachussetts, 1870", Journal of Family History, Vol.7, 2, Summer, 1982, p.183. Yet the instructions to Canadian Census Takers were quite clear on this point, at least after 1871. "In the case of a woman, unless they have a definite occupation beside their share in the work of the family or household, the column is to be filled with the sign "—"; as also in the case of children. If they have a special occupation such as seamstress, clerk, factory hand etc., then it should be entered accordingly". Canada, Sessional Paper No.64, 1871, p.134.

¹² Analysis of the wage labour of wives is based on all women listing themselves as married, resident with a husband and reporting an occupation in the two wards, rather than on the 10 per cent sample which rendered too few examples to give a detailed picture. Percentages are therefore based on the numbers found as a proportion of all those women listed as married in the aggregate returns.

to the need for war clothing in the United States. Throughout the period the putting out industry so prevalent in St. Jacques offered work to women in their homes, explaining the higher percentage of wage working wives there and their predominant occupation as seamstresses.

Table 5.1

Percentages of Married Women Reporting an Occupation

	<u>1861</u>		<u>1871</u>		<u>1881</u>	
	<u>%</u>	<u>Actual number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Actual number</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Actual number</u>
Ste. Anne	2.2	60	2.4	78	0.9	33
St. Jacques	5.3	90	2.4	75	3.3	187

Source: All married women, living with their husband and reporting an occupation, as a proportion of all married women listed in the published census.

Structural, ideological and individual reasons explain the relatively small proportion of married Montreal women involved in wage labour. Whereas early industrialization in England drew large numbers of married women into paid employment this did not occur in Canada, at least not in Montreal. There are several reasons for this. The "industrial revolution" was imported to Canada, in a sense ready made. There never was the period of extensive putting out of weaving and spinning that characterized the early stages in England. When putting out became entrenched in the shoemaking and clothing industries of Montreal, other parts of the labour process were already taking place in factories. Because industrial development occurred in Canada at a time when technologies existed for full scale factory production, early industrial capitalists were able to make a different kind of use of the available labour power.

More specifically, the lack of wage labour among married women in Montreal reflects the general scarcity of jobs which prevailed throughout this period. In each census between 1861 and 1881 there were more people in the potential workforce than those listing a job. A vast pool of labour existed that was too numerous for available jobs.¹³ Thus, individual men, women and children, and families constantly faced not only seasonal and cyclical unemployment, but also the fact that there were more people available to work than there were jobs. This contrasts with the mill towns of the United States where capitalists needed to attract sufficient workers for their operations. In Montreal, workers with specific skills were needed, indeed imported, but of unskilled labour there was an abundance.

Women, children and unskilled labourers in Montreal, as elsewhere, constituted an industrial reserve army that could be drawn into production in good times, pushed out in bad. Married women functioned as a disposable and flexible labour force in a particular way. The specificity of their position arose from their domestic role in the family.¹⁴ Thus the few married women who did labour for wages in nineteenth century Montreal were likely to attempt to enter and leave the workforce in response to conditions within the family as much as in the workplace. Such conditions included the nature and stability of the major wage earner's job, interruptions in his earnings as a result of

¹³ Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher and Jean-Claude Robert, Histoire du Québec Contemporain, (Montréal, Boréal, 1979) p.142.

¹⁴ Veronica Beechy, "Women and Production", p.190.

illness, drunkenness or unemployment, and the life cycle stage of the family.

Those wives who reported working for wages were clustered in the poorer sections of both wards. Virtually all had husbands with unskilled jobs, in the injured trades or in highly seasonal construction work. Around one-quarter of the women were wives of labourers. In 1871 in St. Jacques, while 10 per cent of the ward's population were in unskilled jobs, 36 per cent of the wage-working wives were married to unskilled workers. While 7 per cent of wage workers were shoemakers, 21 per cent of working women were the wives of shoemakers. And, while 10 per cent of the population worked in construction, 19 per cent of the wives were married to construction workers. Between 5 and 10 per cent of these wives earned money helping husbands who were small proprietors, running grocery stores, a baker's shop, a tavern, working as traders or running a small stall at the market.

Married women, however desperate, do not appear to have simply taken whatever work was available. They were apparently attracted to specific occupations, ones that enabled them to combine their domestic duties with wage labour.¹⁵ Hence the predominance of the sewing trades, of small proprietors and washerwomen amongst their occupations (See Table 5.2). Women were attuned to the increased chances of work in better years. In 1871, when more money was available a much greater

¹⁵ Mason, Vinovskis and Hareven raise this possibility in "Womens Work", p.190, although they don't pursue it. Michael Anderson found the same pattern in Preston, Family Structure, p.71.

proportion found work doing washing for other families. The majority in both wards, however, worked in the sewing trades. They worked at home, especially in St. Jacques where sewing was part of the putting out system, so basic to Montreal's clothing industry. When commissioners William Lukes and A. H. Blakeby examined 465 mills and factories throughout Canada in 1881 they found only three hundred and twenty four married women at work - under 1 per cent of all workers. Only fifty two of those women were "actually engaged at the factory, the rest take the work to their houses". Over three quarters of these married women worked in the clothing trades, and 10 per cent worked with wool, silk and buttonholes - all trades in which homework was possible.¹⁶

TABLE 5.2
OCCUPATIONS REPORTED BY MARRIED WOMEN

	1861		1871		1881	
	Ste. Arne	St. Jacques	Ste. Arne	St. Jacques	Ste. Arne	St. Jacques
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sewing Trades	50	75	53	73	66	63
Labourers	22	7	4	7	3	18
Washerwomen	3	1	15	10	3	8
Small Proprietors	8	10	14	4	21	8
Servants, housekeepers	5	3	8	-	3	1
Other	12	4	6	7	3	2
Total Number	60	90	78	75	33	147

Source: Random Samples, 1861-1881, married women with husbands present.

¹⁶ Canada Sessional Papers, 1882, Paper No.42, "The Working of the Mills and Factories", 1882, pp.10-13. It should be noted that because of the prevalence of homework they were unable to classify 1,885 workers - 4 per cent of the total. Many of these could have been married women, but were equally likely to be daughters.

Homework as we have seen brought minimal pay, with wages almost always paid by the piece. The more people who could work the better. In 1861, when the highest proportion of St. Jacques' working wives were seamstresses, 47 per cent had other family members in the same work. Mme. Dufresne, for instance, took in sewing as did her four daughters aged 20 to 34.¹⁷ Twenty years later the same pattern was found in numerous families. Rachel Racette, the wife of a labourer, was a seamstress as were four of her daughters, aged seventeen to twenty eight. A fifth daughter aged thirteen attended school while the twenty five year old son worked as a cigarmaker.¹⁸ Some of Ste. Anne's working wives, in contrast, would have worked as seamstresses in the local merchant-tailor's shops which employed three to nine people, or in the larger workshops of clothiers, dressmakers, and milliners in the neighbourhood. Some would have found jobs in the large clothing or hat-making factories of the area. In 1871 at least three of the married women dressmakers of Ste. Anne ran establishments of their own. Of those reported to the census taker one claimed an annual production of fifty dollars worth of dresses, the other two, three hundred dollars.¹⁹ Not one of St. Jacques' women was reported as proprietor of her own establishment. Homework for them would continue to be the piecework of the putting out system.

¹⁷ Mss. Census, 1861, St. Jacques. fo. 8068.

¹⁸ Mss. Census, 1881, St. Jacques. 17:340-549.

¹⁹ Manuscript Census, 1871, Personal Returns and Schedule 6 matched, Subdistrict 3, Households 105, 128 and 156.

It was convenient for employers to believe that for these mothers and daughters sewing was a secondary family occupation, something done in their spare time when "breakfast, dinner and supper" were over.²⁰ Mr Muir told the 1874 Select Committee that most of the women were the "wives and daughters of mechanics, who earn enough to keep the house" and to buy finery ... which they would not be able to buy but for this industry".²¹

The working wives of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques were certainly not in this position. They worked to supplement the irregular and low wages of their husbands. Their jobs as seamstresses, labourers or washerwomen brought in small amounts of cash that could help provide food or pay minor debts. The majority of those that worked did so when there were none of working age available to do so. In all years, 40 to 60 per cent of the working wives either had no children or no children of work age. They were the only extra family member available. Between 13 per cent and 28 per cent of the women who worked did so before they had any children. At this stage a couple might have been able to live quite well, possibly saving up a little for the future, or perhaps purchasing basic household necessities. Another 40 to 50 per cent worked at that crucial stage of the family life cycle when they had several young children. In most years a higher percentage of the working wives of St. Jacques continued to work for wages even when they did have children

²⁰ ²⁴ Canada, House of Commons, Journals, 1874, "Report on the Manufacturing Interests", p.36.

²¹ IBID.

over sixteen, than did the women of Ste. Anne. They continued to work largely because they and their daughters could work together, combining sewing and housework (see Table 5.3).

Some literature on immigrants to American cities suggests that French Canadian wives were more likely to work than those of other ethnic backgrounds. Tamara Hareven has argued that in 1900 French Canadian wives were more likely to work than other married women in Manchester, New Hampshire. As working class immigrants, she suggests that they had not yet absorbed the "middle and upper class ideology that censored the work of wives and mothers outside the home" and that most "couples perceived no conflict" in married women labouring outside the home.²² Yet she herself has unearthed evidence to the contrary. At least one of the French Canadians that she interviewed recalled that her parents had fought when her mother suggested going out to work.

My father didn't really want her to work. That was the big issue because she always wanted to go in and earn a little money ... He'd say "no, you're not going to work. You're going to stay home." And that's why she did other things. She'd make clothes for him, take in boarders, rent rooms. She used to rent one or two rooms for \$12.00 a week to people who worked in the mills. Sometimes she'd also work little stretches at night, from six to nine, because

²² Tamara Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, p.202.

TABLE 5.3
THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGE OF WAGE WORKING WIVES

	1861		1871		1881	
	Ste.	St.	Ste.	St.	Ste.	St.
	Arne	Jacques	Arne	Jacques	Arne	Jacques
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Wife Under 45, no children	28	13	27	17	21	20
Children all 11 and under	33	35	29	25	36	33
Some Children 11-15, none over 16 over 16	8	4	24	15	12	12
Some or all children over 16	25	34	19	43	30	27
Wife over 45, no children	5	12	-	-	-	8
	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total number	60	90	78	75	33	147
% with no children of working age	66%	60%	56%	42%	57%	61%

Source: Random samples, 1861-1881.

we lived right in front of the mills. When there were big orders, the mills were always looking for people to work. But my father didn't want to keep the children. That was woman's work his work was outside.²³

Other evidence suggests that this was not an outlook acquired in the early twentieth century. Desneiges Albert was the wife of a French Canadian woodchopper and carter who had arrived in Lowell,

²³ Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach, Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory City, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1978), p.255.

Massachusetts around the 1870's. When she proudly showed her husband a dollar she had earned taking in laundry he responded angrily: "I have not reached a level here which requires you to work. I think we can get along without that".²⁴ French Canadians had recently formed a small community in Lowell. When the census was taken in 1870 mothers there almost all reported themselves as "keeping house".²⁵ A decade later in Berkshire county French Canadian wives were the least likely ethnic group to report an occupation.²⁶ And, in their study of Essex County, Massachusetts, Hareven, Vinovskis and Mason argued that the higher employment rates among first generation immigrants was "more consistent with an economic interpretation than a cultural one, raising questions about the significance of cultural factors for variations in women's work".²⁷

Any argument based on the idea of a cultural preference or tradition among French Canadians that would have supported a high proportion of mothers working for wages seems untenable in the face of such evidence. In Quebec too it has been suggested that French Canadians wives were more likely to work than others. Suzanne Cross has argued that from the 1850's on, working outside the home became more and

²⁴ Frances Early, "The French-Canadian Family Economy", p.183.

²⁵ IBID.

²⁶ Judith McGaw, "A Good Place to Work", p.240.

²⁷ Mason, Vinovskis and Hareven, "Womens Work", p.209.

more frequent for married French Canadian women. She based this assertion on the widespread use of church run daycares by French Canadian parents. Because there were few "Salle d'asile" in the English speaking community she concluded that only French Canadian mothers worked outside the home.²⁸ Yet such an assumption is based on several faulty premises. Firstly it involves the twentieth century idea that daycares represent a major form of child care. In the nineteenth century, however, older children, and other family and household members were much more important and could well have been used in the English speaking community. Secondly it implies that most children were sent to daycares because their mothers were working for wages. Micheline Dumont has sensibly suggested that some parents may have enrolled their children to get them out of the meagre dwellings that were their homes.²⁹

In Ste.Anne and St.Jacques wards both French Canadians and English speaking wives worked. There were, however, some differences in the percentages of each reporting an occupation. In 1861 French Canadian wives were, in fact, disproportionately involved in wage labour. That year 68 per cent of the population of St.Jacques ward was French Canadian, but 87 per cent of working wives were. This discrepancy of 19 per cent dropped to 15 per cent in St.Jacques a decade later and to a meagre 8 per cent in 1881. Only in 1861 were the French Canadian wives

²⁸ Suzanne Cross, "The Neglected Majority", pp.74-5.

²⁹ Micheline Dumont, "Des garderies au 19e siecle: Les salles d'asile des Soeurs Grises a Montreal", reprinted in Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Micheline Dumont, Maitresses de Maison, p.263.

of Ste. Anne disproportionately represented as wage labourers and that year the involvement of Irish wives was of a similar order. (See Table 5.4) Most of these French Canadian women were working as seamstresses, predominantly at home. Economic need, the availability of homework and the possibility of combining wage and domestic labour coalesced to set the patterns of their work. By 1881 French Canadian wives were only slightly more likely to report jobs than those of other origins. The wage labour of all wives derived largely from their material situation. It is significant that, with the exception of small grocers and traders, no wives were found to work for wages amongst the proprietors and professionals or even the clerical workers of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques. Even amongst those families in greatest need in Montreal the most significant fact about married women's wage labour was its scarcity.

The presence of these few French Canadian women in the workforce may put into question the exclusive role of the French Canadian mother as devoted body and soul to the well being of her family and domestic labour".³⁰ It should not, however, be exaggerated. Most married women, and mothers in particular, did not work for wages. Their responsibility for domestic labour did not, however, represent the simple absorption of a middle class, North American ideology. Indeed, the whole idea of women's separate sphere resulted from the structural changes in the

³⁰ Marie Lavigne and Yolande Pinard, "Travail et mouvement des femmes: une histoire visible. Bilan historiographique", in Travailleuse et Feministes, p.22.

Table 5.4

A Comparison of the Percentage of Irish and French Canadian Wives Reporting a Job with the Percentage of these Ethnic Groups in the Population

	1861		1871		1881	
	Ste. Anne	St. Jacques	Ste. Anne	St. Jacques	Ste. Anne	St. Jacques

a) French Canadians

Percentage of working wives who were French Canadian

95% (140)

24% (8)

97% (73)

19% (15)

87% (78)

33% (20)

Percentage of the female population that was French Canadian

87%

28%

82%

26%

68%

18%

Difference

+8%

-4%

+15%

-7%

+19%

+15%

b) Irish

Percentage of working wives who were of Irish origin

1%

42%

3%

53%

4%

40%

Percentage of the female population of Irish origin

1%

14%

8%

10%

2%

30%

Difference

-1%

-8%

-5%

+3%

+2%

+10%

Source: All working wives with husbands present. 1861, 1871 and 1881 Census of Canada.

*Note: The origins of people were not asked in 1861, those of Irish origin as opposed to birth. Used here, would probably have constituted 10-20%.

economy that relegated most middle and many working class women to the home.³¹ In working class families women's responsibility for domestic labour represented a sensible and rational allocation of labour power within families attempting to survive in the capitalist system of that time. Provided that the husband alone or with one or more children could earn sufficient money for survival, a wife best served the family economy by managing the household. In the process, however, the sexual division of labour was both hardened and perpetuated.

Contemporary ideology regarding gender roles within the family economy was nicely illustrated in the 1882 report of Lukes and Blakeby on the labour employed in the mills and factories of Canada.

The number of married women having domestic cares are very few in the mills and factories, although, we are sorry to say, we found two or three instances in which the husband reversed the civilized custom by sending the wife and mother to the factory while he attended to the cares at home. Other instances have come under our observation where the husband and father being delicate, the wife with a moral heroism and courage, has gone to the factory to provide the daily bread for the family. In connection with this it may be mentioned that factory or mill hands can earn better wages than are usually paid for domestic services.³²

For mothers of young children who did work for wages and whose job took them away from home some way of caring for them had to be found.

³¹ Mary P. Ryan, "The Cradle of the Middle Class", pp.239-240.

³² Canada, Sessional Papers, 1882, Paper No. 42, "The Working of the Mills and Factories", p.4.

Siblings were frequently put to work to care for slightly younger brothers and sisters.³³ Mothers also relied on the assistance of additional household members.³⁴ Thus, in St. Jacques in 1861, in half the households in which the wife worked and there were children under eleven there were non-family members present who could act as babysitters. Some had elderly parents or sisters living with them. A few had other female relatives or an extra family. Still more had female boarders without a job. In the Cerat household, for instance, the forty eight year old father worked as a stone cutter as did his two sons. Both sons were married. Their wives and children all lived with the grandfather. Both mothers worked as seamstresses. Working together they could supervise the three children under five.³⁵ When Marguerite Courtois, apparently an unmarried mother, had a daughter she went to live with her brother, a baker in St. Jacques. He had three children himself. Marguerite and her sister-in-law, Flavy Courtois, both took in work as seamstresses and probably shared caring for the children as well as the cooking, washing, shopping and general housework.³⁶ Additional household members thus served not only to spread the costs of rent and to provide additional household income, but also to share the tasks of daily reproduction.

³³ "Les premières salle d'asile et les première crèches au Canada", in Journal de l'Instruction Publique, 11, 10, (October 1858), pp.184-5, cited in Micheline Dumont, "Des Garderies", p.264.

³⁴ Michael Anderson found a similar pattern in Preston, Family Structure, p.180.

³⁵ Mss. Census, St. Jacques, 1861, fo. 7429.

³⁶ Mss. Census, 1861, St. Jacques, 11, No. 7743 }

Other mothers, unwilling or unable to trust their young to older sisters or to find relatives, boarders or neighbours to help could turn to the daycare centres run by the Church. The Grey Nuns took in children aged three to seven years. Their goal was stated to be "to free the time of parents among the lower classes so that they could work profitably for their family".³⁷ In 1872 around 1712 children aged three to seven attended the daycares of the Grey Nuns and Sisters of Providence.³⁸ All of their mothers may not have worked, some may simply have wanted their children out of the home, or hoped that they would receive one square meal while there. Such centres did give mothers options about how their children should be cared for and were very popular. Demand was always greater than the space available. In 1865 the Sisters of Providence reported turning around 400 children away from their daycare in St. Jacques because of lack of space.³⁹

Womens' involvement with wage labour was transitory and temporary, undertaken at specific stages of the individual life course, of the family life cycle and in times of crisis. In these Montreal wards it was only the wives of workers, especially the unskilled, and of small,

³⁷ Archives of the Grey Nuns, Montreal, "Salles d'Asiles tenues par les Soeurs de la Charité dites vulgarement Soeurs Grises, dans la ville et le diocèse de Montréal", January 1872, 2 cited in Micheline Dumont-Johnson, "Des garderies au XIXe siècle: Les Salles d'Asiles des Soeurs Grises à Montréal, RHAF, 34, 1, (June 1980), p.29. My translation.

³⁸ This figure results from combining the figures given by Suzanne Cross in "The Neglected Majority", p.76, with those given in the Chroniques de l'Orphelinat St. Alexis".

³⁹ "Notes pour les chroniques de l'Asile St. Vincent", Handwritten manuscript, ASP, Montreal.

precarious entrepreneurs who reported an occupation. Most wives facing similar problems sought different solutions, devising alternate ways to supplement wages and to avoid the purchase of some foodstuffs and commodities with much needed cash. In so doing they helped cushion the family against life cycle related poverty, illness and unemployment. And they ensured that some portion of the family income was directly under their control.

To argue that wages were crucial in the working class family economy is not to suggest that wages were the only source of survival. Nor was the wage work of children or wives, and the careful domestic labour of a wife the only method of balancing budgets. Largely new to wage dependence, yet only too aware of its implications, working class families sought to retain some element of control over their means of subsistence - the one area of their life that could be kept autonomous to some extent from "the dictates of their relations with the ruling class in the sphere of production".⁴⁰

Early nineteenth century non-wage forms of survival were numerous and diverse, allowing workers to complement wages, or slip in and out of wage labour. Rag pickers, peddlars, prostitutes and people who sieved through discarded cinders for lumps of coal all represented non wage survival strategies. The following sections examine other strategies by which families could and did complement wage labour between 1861 and

⁴⁰ Wally Secombe, "Domestic Labour and the Working Class Household", in Bonnie Fox ed., Hidden in the Household. p. 33.

1881 - strategies that were largely the responsibility of the women at home. For, to fully understand the family economy of the working class in this period of early industrial capitalism, it is necessary to go beyond a simple consideration of the sufficiency of wages, to put aside the equation of work with wage labour and to examine other ways in which survival could be ensured or enhanced. To do so is to raise further questions about what was being done within the home and to begin to identify other types of work done by the women of the working class. Inevitably this leads to a more careful, if less tidy, picture of the role of the family and of women in a period of transition - indeed to a more complex understanding of the nature of that transition itself.

Animal raising, gardening, domestic production, the taking in of boarders and doubling up with other families all represented methods of retaining an element of self sufficiency - of producing something that could either be used directly for food or exchanged for cash. All were not equally important, nor are they equally apparent to the researcher. The focus in the following sections is largely on the raising of animals, the sharing of space and the taking in of boarders. Data in the manuscript censuses of 1861 and 1871 enable the historian to begin to analyze the importance of these forms of survival in the years in which they were being undermined by the forces of industrial capitalist production, urban growth and the beginnings of urban reform.⁴¹

⁴¹ Information on animal keeping, home production, and gardening is based on analysis of all families reporting such practices to the enumerator in those years. This information is given on the main Schedule in 1861, and on schedules 4 and 5 in 1871.

Unfortunately, the equivalent material for 1881 has been destroyed, so there are only the published data to rely on.

Over this period, with the exception of boarding and doubling up, such ways of complementing wages were largely eroded. City legislation in Montreal began to curb the keeping of animals, specifically of pigs. Denser housing patterns eliminated most gardens except in areas too far from jobs for workers to live. Home production of cloth, clothing and butter, bread and wool was gradually and unevenly curtailed as more and more items of consumption were produced not within the household but by capitalist enterprises. Over the length of a generation the Montreal proletariat was largely cut off from access to such means of supplementing its incomes. Wage dependence became almost total by the end of the century.⁴²

Stock in the City and in the Family Economy.

In mid-nineteenth century Montreal, people and animals intermingled

⁴² John Cooper has argued that by "the end of the fifties the Montreal Workingman had little recourse but his wages," "The Social Structure of Montreal in the 1850's", Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1956, p. 63. My evidence suggests that some subsistence production continued into the 70's and 80's. In fact, as the city spread and outer working class suburbs developed, workers there were able to have gardens, and at times keep animals. Bruno Ramirez has stressed the importance of gardens for a later generation of workers, the Italian immigrants, who, nearer the turn of the century, chose specifically to live in parts of the City where they would have access to land for gardens. Bruno Ramirez and Michael Del Balso, The Italians of Montreal: From Sojourning to Settlement, 1900-21 (Montreal 1980).

in a way unimaginable today. Carters and their horses transported all their wares from railways and docks to the factories, warehouses and shops of the city. Montreal's street railway system was pulled by horses until 1892.⁴³ Personal carriages took the wealthy of the city to and from work or to visit their friends. Cows grazed in backyards and on street verges. Pigs scrounged in courtyards and alleys, and poultry could be heard and seen throughout the city. Cattle, swine, goats and cows continued to roam at large on city streets throughout the 1870's and 1880's despite by-laws making it a municipal offense. The removal of dead animals was a source of constant concern both to municipal health authorities and residents quite naturally upset by rotting carcasses in their neighbourhoods. In 1883 the police reported removing nearly 1,000 dead animals from the city streets.⁴⁴ In a year of peak effort, health authorities and the police combined removed nearly 4,500 carcasses.⁴⁵

Gradually, from the 1850's on, the presence of both live and dead animals began to offend those who sought a cleaner, more sanitary and more orderly city. By-laws were passed prohibiting the grazing of animals and the driving of stock through certain streets, enforcing the licensing of dogs and eventually outlawing pigs and controlling cows

⁴³ Jean Claude Marsan, Montreal in Evolution, Historical Analysis of the Development of Montreal's Architecture and Urban Environment. (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981), p.183.

⁴⁴ Annual Report of the Chief of Police, MAR., 1883.

⁴⁵ IBID., and Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State of Montreal MAR., 1887, p. 11.

within the city limits. Butchers were forced to slaughter in two abattoirs sanctioned by civic authorities, rather than in their own backyard abattoirs.⁴⁶

The control of animals - an early element in the imposition of order - represented a major step forward, a progressive move in the eyes of Sanitary Reformers. There is no doubt that many measures enacted helped to make the city a cleaner and safer place to live. Yet, at the same time, some legislation struck at the traditional practises and survival strategies of urban families. The impact was harder amongst the families of the working class and especially its poorer fractions. Their need to supplement unsteady wages was greater, and it was their specific practises that came under attack. It was the "poor man's pig", rather than the cow, which was more likely to be kept by the bourgeoisie, that was first outlawed.

Before examining the legislation that curtailed the keeping of animals, it is important to ascertain just which families kept what kind of animals prior to their control. As no animals were illegal in Montreal before 1864, the census returns for 1861 give some idea of their distribution amongst different families and throughout the city. Unfortunately the census acts as a snapshot as far as property is concerned, relating "solely . . . to the amount . . . held at the time

⁴⁶ Mayor's Inaugural Address, MAR., 1885, p.6.

for(sic) taking the census".⁴⁷ It gives, therefore, little idea of whether families had animals at other times of year, having sold or eaten them by census time. This is particularly problematic as the 1861 Census was taken in January, in the depths of winter, while in subsequent years enumeration took place in the spring. Families may well have slaughtered food animals like pigs, perhaps even sold a cow to avoid the higher fodder and shelter costs of the winter months. The figures for 1861 should, therefore, be viewed as minimal, an underestimate of the extent of animal raising as an urban practise. In that year there were nearly 3,000 horses in the city of Montreal, 2160 milk cows, 2,644 pigs, and an indeterminable number of poultry of various kinds. Had these animals been evenly spread amongst the city's families this would have represented an average of one animal for every second family. In the previous decade the number of pigs, milk cows, and horses had all increased by approximately 40 per cent, a rate that was only slightly lower than the city's population growth. Legislation in subsequent decades, to which I shall return shortly, would dramatically change this growth pattern. Because pigs, cows and sheep were food producing animals and thus a fairly obvious direct alternative to purchases, the following discussion is limited to families holding them. Horses, which were more important as work animals, or as part of a person's trade are ignored, although they too could clearly at times be used to supplement a wage income.

⁴⁷ Sessional Papers, 1871, Paper No.64, "Instructions to Officers", p.132

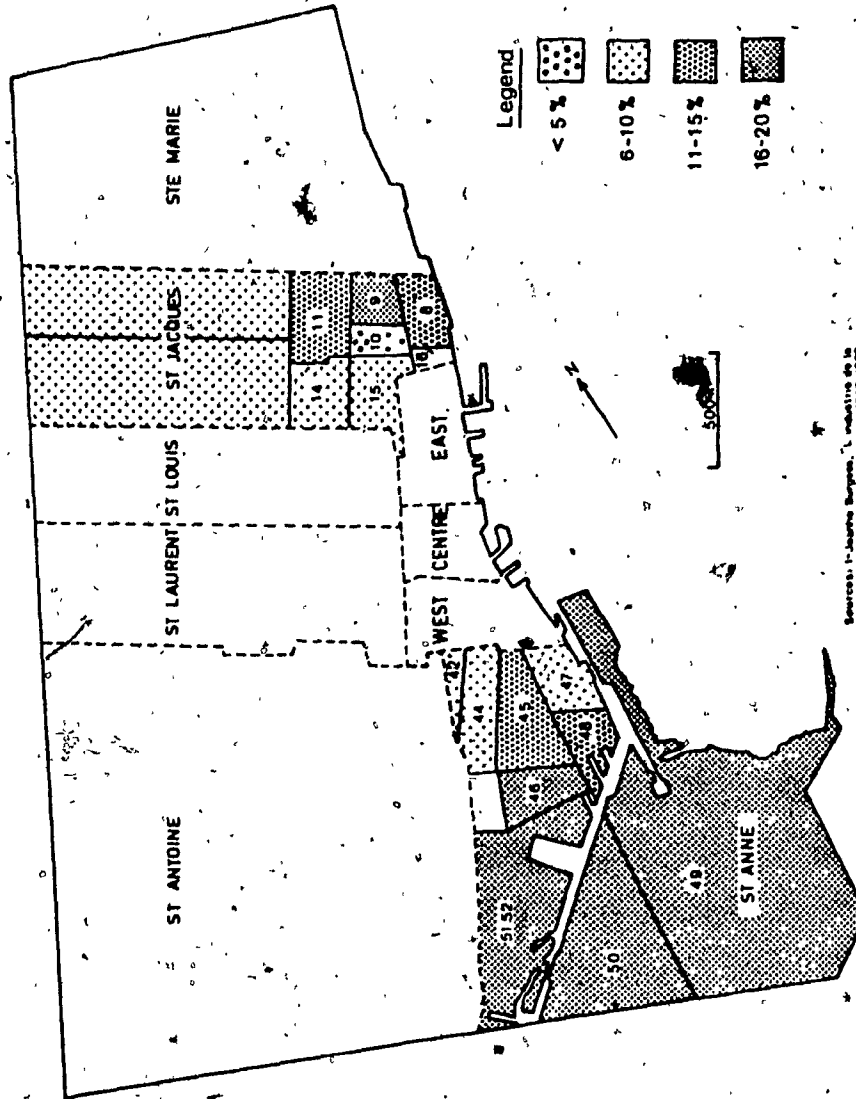
Animals were not evenly spread throughout the city, nor amongst all classes and groups. The proportion of families which kept them varied widely across the city depending on the economic base of the area, the size of lots, the availability of free land and on the class and ethnic structure of the neighbourhood. In Ste. Anne and St. Jacques 16 and 12 per cent of families respectively kept one or more animal other than horses or poultry. In the smaller census subdistricts of these wards the percentage holding such animals varied from as low as five to as high as twenty. (See Map 5.1)

Historians have paid little attention to the importance of animals in the family economy of urban residents.⁴⁸ When considered, the keeping of stock has been treated either as a survival of rural practise, or as the resort of those in direst poverty. Harvey Graff, for instance, has describe stock keeping as "one strategy with which to confront urbanism and poverty" by "adapting older customs to new places".⁴⁹ In Montreal, and I suspect elsewhere, such explanations simplify reality. A substantial minority of both bourgeois and working class families kept

⁴⁸ Exceptions include, most importantly, Richard L. Bushman, "Family Security" and for an earlier period, Carl Bridenbaugh, Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America, 1625-1742 (New York, Capricorn Books, 1964); and Carl Bridenbaugh, Cities in Revolt: Urban Life in America, 1743-1776 (London, Oxford University Press, 1971).

⁴⁹ Richard L. Bushman, "Family Security", p. 247; Harvey Graff, The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth Century City (New York, Academic Press, 1979)p. 94

MAP 5.1 - PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS KEEPING PIGS AND COWS BY CENSUS SUBDISTRICTS,
1861 - ST ANNE AND ST JACQUES WARDS



stock. There were, however, differences in the kinds of animals they kept and in the role these animals played in the family economy.

In Ste. Anne and St. Jacques two groups of people predominated amongst the keepers of pigs and cows, the ~~most~~ commonly held stock. Proprietors and professionals were most likely to keep all kinds of animals with about 21 per cent of them doing so in January 1861. (See Table 5.5). Semi and unskilled workers were next with approximately 17 per cent of them raising stock in Ste. Anne ward in 1861 and 12 per cent in St. Jacques. Such families were the least likely to be able to afford the costs of keeping animals over the winter. It is possible that had the census been taken at another time of year, the proportions of semi and unskilled families keeping pigs in particular, may well have been higher.

Pigs and cows clearly offered families different benefits. Small entrepreneurs, especially grocers and traders kept cows. They were less likely to raise a pig. A few grocers used their cows to produce their own butter and possibly milk for customers. Hotel and innkeepers raised both cows and pigs, presumably using them for food for their clients. Some bakers kept cows to produce the milk they used in bread and biscuit making.

For families of all classes a cow represented a valuable investment, especially when there were young children in need of a

TABLE 5.5

PERCENTAGES OF FAMILIES KEEPING
COWS, PIGS, GOATS OR SHEEP
STE. ANNE AND ST. JACQUES, 1861

Occupation of Family Head	Estimated No. of Families**	% with Animals Excluding Horses	% with Cows goats or sheep, with or without Pigs	% with Pigs only
Ste. Anne				
Professional or Proprietor	365	23% (84)*	18% (67)	5% (17)
(excluding butchers and milkmen)	352	20% (71)	16% (55)	5% (16)
Clerical and Service	240	10% (24)	7% (16)	3% (8)
Skilled Workers	1175	9% (99)	4% (53)	4% (46)
Semi and Unskilled	1240	17% (209)	9% (113)	8% (96)
Widows	280	10% (28)	5% (16)	5% (14)
No Occupation and Misc.	120	10% (11)	6% (7)	4% (4)
Estimated Overall Percentage**				
Households	2846	16%	9%	7%
Families	3419	13%	8%	5%
St. Jacques				
Professional or Proprietor	370	19% (71)	12% (44)	7% (27)
(excluding butchers and milkmen)	346	14% (48)	9% (34)	4% (14)
Clerical and Service	180	4% (7)	2% (4)	2% (3)
Skilled Workers	800	7% (59)	3% (22)	5% (37)
Semi and Unskilled	670	12% (79)	4% (29)	7% (50)
Widows	290	1% (4)	Nil	1% (4)
No Occupation and Misc.	100	9% (9)	6% (6)	3% (3)
Estimated Overall Percentage***				
Households	1915	12%	5%	6%
Families	3854	6%	3%	3%

- * Figures in brackets represent the actual number of families found in each category.
- ** The estimated number of families in each group was reached by multiplying the number falling in that group in the ten per cent random sample by ten.
- *** Number of families and households reporting stock in the manuscript census as a percentage of the total numbers of families and households reported in the aggregate published census.

steady, reliable and clean supply of milk. Whereas a pig only produced food or cash once slaughtered, a healthy cow could produce a steady supply of milk for over a year after calving.⁵⁰ Many of the families keeping cows had young children. Indeed Dr. Grenier's 1871 pamphlet, outlining how to curtail Montreal's appalling infant mortality rate, recommended that mothers use milk - always from the same cow or goat - if breastfeeding or finding a wet nurse were impossible.⁵¹ No families in these wards reported keeping goats in 1861, only three did so a decade later once pigs were largely illegal. Cows were clearly the preferred milk source. Amongst the poorer professionals and the working class the wife or mother would have been in charge of caring for the cows. For the more wealthy, milking the cow was servants' work. "Wanted, a thorough servant", advertised one family living on St. Laurent Street in 1873, "one who can milk a cow; no washing".⁵²

Their usefulness made cows the preferred choice of all families. However, access to the capital to purchase a cow and to the greater space necessary to raise one meant that a much greater proportion of proprietors' families than of the working class could afford to own one. Thus, while 16 per cent of the professional and proprietor's families of Ste. Anne owned one or more cows in 1861, only 9 per cent of the semi- and unskilled did. (See Table 5.5). The relative proportions were

⁵⁰ Research needs to be done on how families with cows in the city arranged for access to bulls for calving.

⁵¹ Georges Grenier, Quelques Considérations

⁵² Montreal Daily Witness, 26 March 1873.

similar in St. Jacques. That pigs and other stock were used to counteract poverty by the semi and unskilled is suggested by the fact that they were more likely to keep animals that were the families of skilled workers. Twelve and 17 per cent of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques semi and unskilled families respectively kept some stock, compared to only 7 and 9 per cent of the skilled. Nearly half the pigs, indeed half the stock in these two parts of the city, were kept in families headed by the semi and unskilled, although they constituted only one third of the family heads.⁵³ For these families poultry, pigs and when they could afford it a cow, represented not a piece of property, but rather a source of food or cash, both of which were, as we have seen, often in short supply in the families of many unskilled workers and those in injured trades. Pigs cost virtually nothing to raise and were cheaper to purchase than a cow. Pork formed an important component of both French Canadian and Irish cooking and diet. Pigs might be bought live at market as piglets or perhaps obtained from relatives in the country. They might also be stolen fairly easily. In the mid 1870's after pigs had been outlawed in the city, farmers were constantly reporting having their sheep stolen when they stopped for refreshment on the way to market.⁵⁴

While roving, pigs scavenged in the courtyards and roadsides - doing cleaning up that firms contracted by the city only seldom did efficiently. Once fattened they could be slaughtered and salted to

⁵³ Such families held 46 per cent of all reported stock excluding horses.

⁵⁴ Le Courier de Montréal, 16 December 1874.

provide cheap meat for several months. Or pigs could be sold to nearby butchers for cash. For few labourers ^{or} as shoemakers could afford to buy pork often at the .13 cents it cost a pound in 1882. A pig could sell for as much as \$12 to \$15 in 1874 at a time when a labourer's wage was \$1 to \$1.50 a day and women involved in wage labour earned as little as \$2.00 a week. The value that owners placed on their pigs, when asked by the census takers varied from under \$3.00 to as high as over \$20.00. Notaries and businessmen generally reported that their pigs were more valuable than did labourers or shoemakers. This may have reflected on their holding better or more mature stock. More likely it reflected a greater concern for value. Most pig owners in St. Jacques ward in 1861 considered their swine worth between \$6.00 and \$10.00. Inexplicably those of Ste. Anne generally reported lower values.

Chickens, like pigs scrounged for food. A few good laying hens could save a family the cost of 24c-25c a dozen, or the equivalent of two-thirds of a woman's daily wages in the clothing industry.⁵⁵ Even twenty five cents, saved weekly would have added much needed flexibility to the family budget of the lowest paid workers. When hens were first counted by the census takers in 1891, there were over 8,000 within the city limits. They were concentrated in Ste. Marie, the poorest of the city's wards.

⁵⁵ Retail prices are taken from Le Courier de Montréal, 11 November 1874 and Hamelin and Roby, Histoire Economique du Quebec, Appendix 20; Wages are from Canada, House of Commons, Journals, 1874, "Report on the "Select Committee on the Manufacturing Interests" Appendix 3.

It thus made good economic sense for the wives of labourers and other unskilled workers to raise whatever fowl or animals they could afford in the backyards, courtyards and alleys around their homes. And raise them they did, especially amongst the Irish families of Ste. Anne until new laws and a lack of space made it extremely difficult. In 1861 one quarter of the city's pigs, compared to 14.5 per cent of the population, were to be found in that one ward. There, housing and factories were mixed together. The empty spaces between factories, workshops and houses, larger corner sections and as yet sparsely populated areas in the western part of the ward offered extra space for both animals and gardens. St. Jacques, we have seen, was emerging as the most densely populated area of the city. In 1861, 3854 families were housed in 1915 households. Around six per cent of these families and twelve per cent of the households held animals, compared to thirteen and sixteen per cent respectively in Ste. Anne. In St. Jacques one quarter of the cows and pigs were held by small producers - milkmen and butchers who raised their animals and sold their wares in the city. This practise was much less prevalent in Ste. Anne.⁵⁶ In both wards the keeping of animals was more common in the least populated areas furthest from the center of the city - in the western sections of Ste. Anne, and the eastern parts of St. Jacques (See Map 5.1).

Animal keeping was not limited, however, to families with plenty of space. Even on fairly densely populated streets families living in rear

⁵⁶ Canada, 1861 Census of Canada, Table XVI. 1871 Census of Canada, Table I.

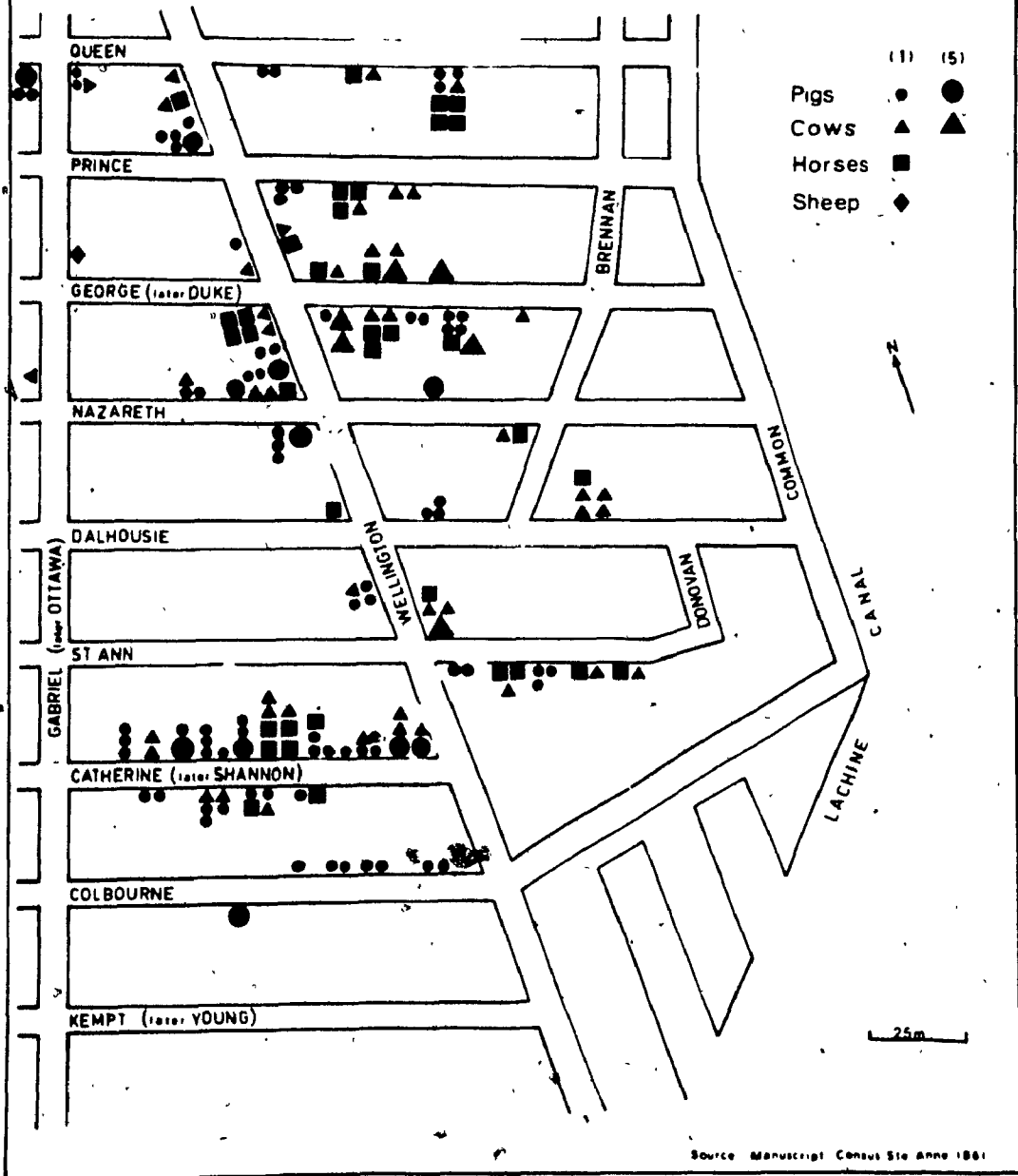
houses, duplexes and in row houses all kept pigs and cows. A walk along George or Catherine Street in Ste. Anne ward was likely to involve skirting pigs or cows and their droppings. In one small block of the latter street, between Wellington and Ottawa Streets, over twenty families, ⁿ more than half of them headed by labourers, kept up to nine pigs each. (See Map 5.2). One resident, Elizabeth Martin, the 50 year old wife of a labourer reported herself to the census taker as a housewife. Her household duties included mothering four children, housekeeping in their one storey, frame house and taking care of seven pigs and four cows. A twenty year old daughter worked as a servant, and a fifteen year old boy as a labourer. Elizabeth kept more animals than most labourer's wives.⁵⁷ Most kept no more than three pigs, a minority had a cow as well.

People raised their animals in whatever space they had available. Those with a horse and a stable no doubt used that for other animals as well. Carters who no longer possessed a horse may have sheltered other animals in the remaining stables. Some clearly kept animals inside their houses as it was considered necessary to outlaw this practise in 1875. In the winter months this was the only warm place. A visiting traveller in 1877 remarked with some amusement in his diary that while driving around Montreal in mid winter he had seen "two dead pigs trying to climb up the wall of a cottage, frozen of course".⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Mss. Census, Ste. Anne, 1861, fo. 2076.

⁵⁸ PAC, Henry St. Vincent Ames, "Diary of Travels in North America," MG24 H61, December 1877.

MAP 52 - HOUSEHOLDS WITH PIGS, COWS, SHEEP AND HORSES.
 1861 - SUBDISTRICT 45 AND SURROUNDING, STE ANNE WARD



Irish cultural tradition supported the raising of pigs by wives, both in rural and urban areas. The households of pre-famine cottiers and labourers had depended on raising and selling animals and their produce for part of their income. As early as 1780 Arthur Young reported that such households survived by "converting every pig, fowl and even egg into cash".⁵⁹ It was the women who spun, made butter, cared for the pigs and poultry and sold the eggs. In 1835 it was estimated that between 18 and 31 per cent of labourers' family incomes in Munster county came from the sale of eggs, poultry and pigs.⁶⁰

In the city as in the country raising fowl or animals was the work of women and children.⁶¹ Children took their animals to graze on the banks of the Canal or railway embankment in summer. Some were kept well under control, but stray and lost animals were a constant problem and were often reported in the papers.⁶² One particularly sad story was reported of a two year old boy in the Pointe Saint Charles area who had been attacked by a neighbour's large gander. It knocked him down,

⁵⁹ Arthur Young, A Tour in Ireland...in 1776, 1777, 1778, (London, 1780), Vol. 2, p. 203, Cited in Lynn H. Lees, Exiles of Erin, p. 107.

⁶⁰ Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), "First Report... (on) the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland", Appendix D, pp. 89-90, 108-11, cited in Lynn H. Lees, Exiles of Erin, p. 107.

⁶¹ On women's role as chicken and pig keepers in rural areas of Quebec see Charles Henri Gauldrée-Boileau, "Paysan de Saint-Irénée de Charlevoix en 1861 et 1862; On Ireland see Lynn H. Lees, Exiles of Erin, p. 107, and for a later period, Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, Family and Community in Ireland, p.49.

⁶² Montreal Post, 13 May 1886, cited in Suzanne Cross, "The Irish in Montreal", p. 213.

pulled at his clothes and "so frightened him that he fell into convulsions, and after lingering a few days in an unconscious condition, died of fright".⁶³

Irish and French Canadian families in Montreal were continuing a practice that derived not simply from a farming background, but from a long tradition of having to supplement low wages. The Irish were over-represented among the keepers of pigs. In Ste. Anne in 1861 they constituted about 50 per cent of the family heads, but nearly 70 per cent of the pig keepers. Amongst labourers' families 12 per cent of the Irish kept pigs compared to 7 per cent of French Canadians. Pig and poultry keeping was much more than a cultural survival, a quaint rural or Irish custom. The families of French Canadian rural labourers were also used to supplementing wage labour with poultry and pigs and continued to do so in urban areas.⁶⁴

Until the late 1860's, the presence of such animals within the city was apparently tolerated by the authorities and the population at large. But, as the city's population increased, as open spaces were filled up between the houses, and as the divisions between workers, the middle classes and the capitalists became clearer, an assault on animals began.

⁶³ Montreal Daily Witness, 3 June 1873.

⁶⁴ Charles-Henri Philippe Gauldrée Boileau, "Paysan de Saint Irenee...en 1861 et 1862", pp.31-2.

This attack on the roaming, raising and slaughtering of animals in the city, appears to have coincided with the creation of the Montreal Sanitary Association. In September 1868 it sent a memorial to City Council forcibly expressing the opinion that "the keeping of pigs in dense and populated cities is offensive and prejudicial to public health."⁶⁵ The Health and Market committees agreed and suggested that pigs be outlawed except in certain limits on the outskirts of the city. In December, the by-law incorporating this motion was passed and pigs became illegal in all but the western parts of Ste. Anne, the area north of Ste. Catherine St. and in Ste. Marie in the east. (See Map 5.3).⁶⁶

More laws followed. In March 1870 a new by-law stated that:

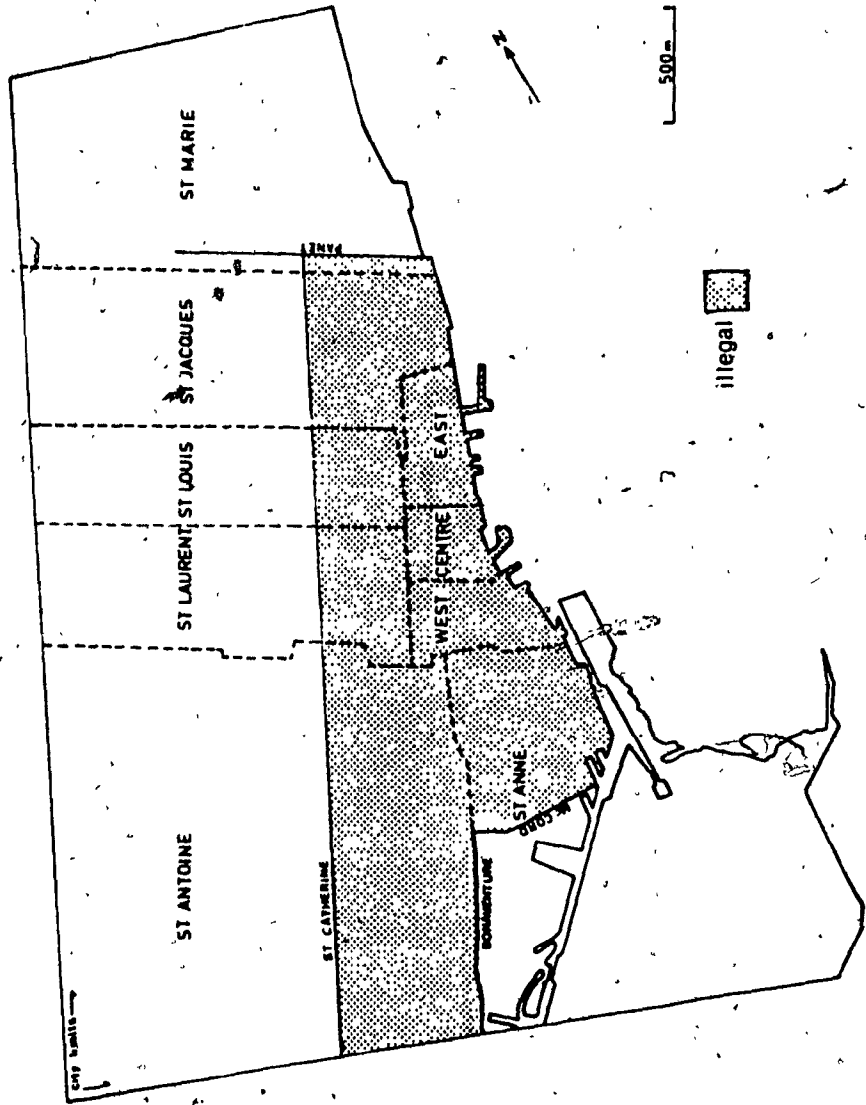
No horse, cattle, swine, hog, sheep, or goat shall be permitted to run at large at any time in the city, or graze, browse, or feed upon any of the streets squares, lanes, alleys, or public places of this city.

To recover an animal impounded for breaking this law, owners had to

⁶⁵ Minutes of the Montreal City Council, 9 October 1868, p.2 (Hereafter, Montreal Minutes).

⁶⁶ Montreal Minutes, 15 December 1868; Montreal City By-laws No.44.

MAP 5.3 - AREA WHERE PIGS BECOME ILLEGAL - BY LAW #44, 1868.



pay 10c for a sheep, 25c for a "gelding, mare, ox or cow", 50c for a hog or swine and \$1.00 for "each stallion, bull, boar or ram." Pigs were clearly perceived as a worse evil than much larger animals, like horses and cows. In March 1874 pigs were made illegal in all areas of the city. A year later the driving of "any live stock or horned cattle" except on specified streets leading to the markets was outlawed, although "milk cows and their calves", were excepted. Finally, in September 1876, it became illegal to keep any "horse, cow, calf, pig, sheep, goat or fowl in a house or tenement."⁶⁷ Outside, all but pigs apparently remained acceptable.

Resistance to the initial by-law against pigs, while not dramatic, certainly occurred and from two rather different quarters. The first to complain were "certain persons" in Ste. Anne ward - the area where one quarter of the city's pigs were kept. They requested that the limits within which pigs could be kept be extended and that the time at which the by-law should take effect be deferred. Deferral would at least have given them time to raise their pigs to a suitable size for slaughtering. The matter was referred to the health and market committees where it seems to have remained.⁶⁸

More successful, were the second group of petitioners, the pork

⁶⁷ Montreal City By-Laws, Nos.43, 77, 223, 105.

⁶⁸ Montreal Minutes, 25 May 1869, p.239.

butchers of the city. In June, the Montreal Daily Witness reported that "a great many butchers belonging to the markets in the city" had been brought up before the Recorder for keeping pigs. He deferred any decision for a week, during which time council proposed amending the by-law so it would not apply to pork butchers or interfere with their trade. Attempts by some councillors to at least regulate the slaughtering of pigs by these butchers so as not to cause a "nuisance in the neighborhood where the work is done and subject" them to sanitary regulation failed. The by-law appears to have been temporarily amended to exclude the butchers.⁶⁹

Citizens continued to complain without effect. Some called for the annulment or modification of the law. Others suggested that citizens be allowed to keep pigs in their yards between October and May each year - the months when the health hazard was lower, and when additional food was most needed by those in the vast number of seasonal Montreal jobs.⁷⁰ In the years following the 1868 relegation of pigs to the city's outer areas, civic officials prosecuted those keeping them outside the legal areas, forcing them to pay the 50 cent fine and to sell their swine.⁷¹ Either people willingly gave up their pigs or, more likely, lack of personnel prevented the city from mounting a wholesale search for evaders. For, only fifty offenders were prosecuted in the first year,

⁶⁹ Montreal Daily Witness, 10 June 1869; 2 July 1869; Montreal Minutes, 15 June 1869; 2 July 1869.

⁷⁰ Montreal Minutes, 1 December 1869.

⁷¹ Montreal Daily Witness, 16 June 1869.

around thirty in the next year, then fewer and fewer in subsequent years.⁷² Perhaps the fact that the city's poorly paid policemen had been among the swine keepers in 1861 made these men loathe to seek out such law breakers. Many families may simply have sold their pigs, purchased a sheep, goat, more poultry, or if they could afford it, a cow instead. Where pigs had constituted a vital part of the food or cash supply families may have moved to one of the areas where they were still legal.

Between 1861 and 1871, as a result of the by-law, the number of pigs reported to Census takers dropped from 2644 to 831 in the entire city. This decrease occurred despite the fact that the former census was taken in mid winter when families may have slaughtered their animals. The 1871 census, in contrast, was taken in April, just when pigs might well have been purchased to raise over the summer. Yet, by 1871 not a pig remained in the old part of the city, although people there still kept horses and cows. In St. Louis only forty pigs remained; in St. Laurent ward a meagre twelve. In St. Jacques, where one hundred and sixty families had kept nearly five hundred pigs in 1861, only five families continued to keep them - or at least to report them to the census taker. One carpenter and his wife kept two pigs along with their horse, three sheep and three cows. From the latter she reported producing 411 pounds of butter, sufficient to feed her husband and three young children, and to sell some for cash.⁷³ Such families

⁷² Annual Reports of Penal and Civic Prosecutions and Complaints disposed of before the Recorder's Court, MAR, 1869-1894.

⁷³ Mss. Census, St. Jacques, 1871, subdistrict 5, p.23, line 14.

were exceptions.

Most of those able to afford the greater outlay appear to have shifted from keeping pigs to cows, as the number of cows doubled in the 1861 - 1871 decade. Still others raised cattle instead, and sold them to local butchers. In one small area of St. Jacques ward, stretching along Beaudry Street, local carters, grocers, shoemakers and blacksmiths all reported killing a beef cattle during 1870-71. This was an area with at least three butchers running small abattoirs. These butchers, each working with one assistant, had slaughtered nearly 3,000 animals between them over the previous year. Included among these must surely have been the thirty or so cattle, pigs and sheep that locals had "killed or sold for slaughter or export". If their contribution to the butcher's income was minor, the cash from slaughtered cattle would, nevertheless, have provided a significant portion of a family's annual income.⁷⁴ In Ste. Anne's ward as in the eastern city, pig raising was pushed into the few outer areas where it was still allowed by the 1868 by-law. In the ward as a whole the number of families reporting any pigs dropped from two hundred and fifty-six to seventy.

Keeping pigs on the city outskirts, raising cattle for local butchers, even keeping cows all gradually came under fire as unfit practises within a modern, sanitary, industrial-capitalist city. "Have we a City Government", one irate citizen complained in a letter to the editor in 1868. He described sidewalks "littered every here and there

⁷⁴ Mss. Census, St. Jacques, 1871, Subdistrict 9, Schedules 1 and 6.

with the droppings of cows, through which Ladies have to pick their way". Any street with grass borders, he pointed out, was especially liable to the nuisance. "Are the streets paid for by the citizens for their own use, or for the use of cows?", he wanted to know. Cows wandered into people's gardens and plots eating vegetables and flowers. The police, he concluded, should impound every roaming cow.⁷⁵ In 1881 the Post reported that goats were becoming a nuisance. Herds of goats were reported ranging around the City. People complained that it was impossible to cultivate a garden without them devouring all they grew.⁷⁶ Unfortunately goats were never specifically counted by the census takers, an omission that is difficult to understand. Certainly goats would have been cheaper to raise than cows and their milk was equally good, if not better for some children. Yet neither goat meat nor goat milk appear to have been a traditional component of the diet of the French Canadians or the Irish.

As more and more housing was built in the area south of the Lachine Canal and to the North of the Grand Trunk Railway yards, some local "proprietors and residents" petitioned council to prevent the keeping of pigs in that neighbourhood too. This was a poor area, where many day labourers and widows lived keeping cows, pigs and probably poultry. The health committee responded by going even further. It suggested it was time that pigs be prohibited throughout the city. Some initial

⁷⁵ Montreal Daily Witness, 16 September 1868.

⁷⁶ Post, 13 August 1881.

opposition from city councillors stalled the passage of the by-law built on this recommendation. By March 1874, however, it was ready for consideration and passed. Most of the aldermen treated the legislation as an occasion to make "facetious...remarks on the species of animal that was to be excluded from living in the metropolis of Canada". The more intelligent and reform minded councillors no doubt believed, with some justification, that pigs were not simply a nuisance, but also a serious menace to public health. Yet, in this period, contaminated milk represented a much more important source of disease and death than any germs transmitted by pigs. Pigs were perceived as dirty, as disease carriers. Legislation was enacted in response to this perception. Middle class reformers and most councillors did not see that for the working class the benefits of pig raising outweighed any drawbacks.⁷⁷ Only one alderman, the representative for Ste. Anne ward, opposed it on the grounds that it was hard "if a poor man was to be debarred from keeping a pig or two". He succeeded only in having the maximum fine for the offense reduced from the proposed \$40 to \$20.00.⁷⁸ From then on no person could legally "rear, keep or feed a pig within the limits of the City of Montreal".⁷⁹

⁷⁷ There was some connection made between pigs and the spread of cholera, but available evidence points to humans rather than animals as the major carriers. See Geoffrey Bilson, A Darkened House. Cholera in Nineteenth Century Canada, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1980) p.117; On the problems of the milk supply see Terry Copp, The Anatomy of poverty, pp.96-100.

⁷⁸ Montreal Daily Witness, 22 September 1874 Montreal Minutes, 26 May 1873; Minutes of the Board of Health, 30 May 1873; Montreal Minutes, 2 July 1873; Montreal Daily Witness, 22 September 1874; Montreal Minutes, 21 September, 1874.

⁷⁹ Montreal City By-law 77.

Prosecutions again were not vigorous or dramatic. Over the next eight years, only fifty people were found guilty of keeping pigs. Yet the law was apparently successful. The 1881 census reported that only one hundred and fifty pigs remained in the city. A decade later the number had been halved. Many of these were raised within the walls of the convents and other institutions where self-sufficiency and domestic production continued to exist apparently beyond the reach of the law.

Between 1861 and 1881 the numbers and types of animals kept within the city had changed dramatically (See Table 5.6). Whereas in 1861 pigs, sheep and cows - all sources of food had comprised nearly two-thirds of the animals kept, by 1881 they represented under one-third, by 1891 only one-fifth. The number of cows decreased slowly and steadily, the number of pigs dramatically to the 92 reported in 1891. Overall, the number of animals apart from pets and poultry decreased and the proportion of work animals to food animals was completely reversed (See Table 5.6). Within a generation food production for use within the home and production for sale within the city were severely curtailed. These two decades saw a complex web of regulations erected curtailing the raising, slaughtering, and sale of animals by unlicensed, uninspected and ordinary citizens.

At a general level the city's role as importer of foodstuffs increased. The division between rural and urban rigidified. Food producers - farmers, milkmen and butchers moved to the outer city limits, to other parishes or joined the proletariat. By the end of the 80's the Health Department was euphorically reporting that the number of

milkmen resident in the city had diminished and that an increasing number had taken up residence in distant parishes of the island of Montreal. There was, they argued, a "double advantage of economy and healthfulness." By the 1880's the common practise was for milk to be sent into the city every morning to milkmen who then distributed it to the different families comprising their customers.⁸⁰ No longer then did independent milk producers raise their cows and sell the milk in the city. Now one family raised the cows outside the city and the urban milkman had become an intermediary.

Equally importantly, that proportion of the city's poorer families which had previously been able to rely on pigs as a source of food or cash had lost one important alternative to paying out cash for food. By 1871 only 4 to 5 per cent of the families in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques ward had any animals apart from horses or fowls, compared to at least 13 per cent in Ste. Anne a decade earlier and 6 per cent in St. Jacques. Furthermore, especially in St. Jacques, the raising of food animals had become a bourgeois and petty-bourgeois privilege, with 12 per cent of proprietors' and professional's families retaining some stock compared to 3.5 per cent of the unskilled. Pigs had been effectively eliminated. (See Table 5.7). For the workers, dependency on wage labour would increase. Women who had once kept a pig, chicken or cow, and thus helped provide for the family's food, would have to seek new strategies.

⁸⁰ Report Upon the Sanitary State, MAR p.26.

TABLE 5.6
ANIMALS IN MONTREAL, 1861 - 1881

	Colts & Fillies	WORK ANIMALS			Milk Cows	Other Horned Animals		Pigs	FOOD ANIMALS				
		Horses over 3 years	Working Oxen	As % of total		Sheep	Mena & Chickens		Turkeys	Geese	Ducks	Other Fowl	
1851	n/a	2077	-	37%	1528	-	131	1877	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1861	"	2892	-	37%	2160	-	91	2644	"	"	"	"	"
1871	72	3458	34	52%	1837	178	414	831	"	"	"	"	"
1881	67	4412	26	66%	1658	95	350	180	"	"	"	"	"
1891	118	6633	39	802*	1290	78	170	92	8053	74	58	179	925

*Excluding Fowl of all kinds.

Source: Censuses of Canada, 1851-1891. (In 1851 and 1861, in particular, the published tallies were counted very carelessly. The figures here should therefore be viewed as a rough indication of total numbers.)

TABLE 5.7
ESTIMATED PERCENTAGES OF FAMILIES KEEPING COWS, PIGS, GOATS OR SHEEP
1861 AND 1871 COMPARED

Occupation of Family Head	Percentage with Animals - Excluding Horses				Percentage with any Pigs		Estimated Number of Families (Number in random sample multiplied by 10)
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	
<u>STE. ANNE</u>							
Professional or Proprietor	23	(84)	9	(51)	2	(9)	570
Clerical and Service	10	(24)	2	(6)	0	(0)	280
Skilled Workers	9	(99)	3	(44)	1	(17)	1350
Semi and Unskilled Workers	17	(209)	6	(87)	3	(39)	1410
Widows	10	(28)	6	(12)	2	(4)	210
No Occupation and Misc.	10	(11)	4	(3)	1	(1)	80
Overall Percentage *	13%		7%				
<u>ST. JACQUES</u>							
Professional or Proprietor	19	(71)	12	(74)	0	(1)	600
Clerical and Service	4	(7)	3	(10)	0	(0)	380
Skilled Workers	7	(59)	2	(33)	0	(1)	1500
Semi and Unskilled Workers	12	(79)	3.5	(26)	0	(2)	740
Widows	1	(4)	5	(7)	0	(0)	140
No Occupation and Misc.	9	(9)	13	(9)	1	(1)	70
Overall Percentage *	6%		4%				

* The percentage represents the number of families reporting holding food animals as a proportion of the actual number of families reported in the published Census for that ward.

Source: All families reporting holding food animals, Ms. Census, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques, 1861-1871.

Gardening and Home Production.

Gardening was clearly cheaper than raising animals. Problems of fodder costs, shelter in winter, slaughtering and possible disease that faced keepers of stock were not encountered by those raising vegetables in backyard gardens to sell or to eat. Furthermore, the very presence of so many horses, pigs and cows within the city offered a nearly limitless supply of manure to improve a small garden's yield. With such fertilization Montreal's soils could produce good vegetables and fruits despite the short growing season. Some families did raise vegetables and fruits, providing much needed vitamins and avoiding the purchase of certain foodstuffs. Citizens, as we have seen, complained of roaming goats and cows menacing such gardens with their foraging. How widespread gardening was, and whether it was universal or predominantly a working class or non-working class practice is, unfortunately, hard to determine.

The manuscript census returns appear, at first glance, to offer a reasonable picture of gardening in urban areas, for, enumerators in 1871 were explicitly reminded not to:

forget that the products recorded in this schedule may be, and often are, raised by families not engaged in carrying on farming - say, on patches of land or gardens attached to tenements, even in the middle of large cities. The facts must, therefore, be ascertained in every case, and entered.⁸¹

⁸¹ Canada, Sessional Papers, 1871, Paper No. 64, "Instructions to Officers", p.137

Unfortunately, at the same time, enumerators were instructed not to record the products of plots of less than a quarter acre, although a few did. Only a minority of the city lots inhabited by working class families exceeded this size. Thus, census data and fragments of other evidence offer only a tentative picture of the extent and importance of gardens within the City. This section is, as a result, rather speculative.

Enumerators made tallies of the amounts produced in each subdistrict of the city's nine wards. While specific yields given should be treated with caution, the totals give some indication of what was being raised in Montreal and where, if not of the amounts. Most crop production was reported in St. Antoine, the ward that stretched up the slopes of Mount Royal from St. Catherine Street, and that still included farms and orchards in its boundaries, as well as the wealthier English families of the city. St. Jacques and Ste. Marie wards followed. Their northern sections remained relatively unpopulated in 1871, while the southern subdistricts were overflowing with newcomers to the city. Some of the gardens and areas where animals could be raised in the northern sections of the central city wards can be seen in the accompanying photograph taken in 1865. The density of the southern parts of the wards is also apparent. Within these wards gardening was apparently concentrated in subdistricts like those in the photo where there were undeveloped areas, large lots and sometimes small farms.

Photo 5.1

The City in 1865

Looking south east from the lower slopes of Mount Royal, this 1865 photograph gives a good idea of the density of housing in the southern parts of the city, compared to the empty spaces that remained in the northern sections of the central wards leaving room to garden or raise animals. The street in the nearest part of the photograph is University Street. St. Jacques ward lay slightly to the left of the center of the picture.

Source: Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.



Potatoes, carrots, mangles, beets and turnips were the major vegetables reported. Apples were the predominant fruit, although some families had pear and plum trees and grape vines.⁸²

The fruits and vegetables reported in St. Jacques ward came from only five of the ten subdistricts. The largest amounts were produced either within the institutions of the area - notably the St. Vincent de Paul Refuge and the Convent of the Sisters of Providence, or by families whose heads listed their occupation as "bourgeois" or farmer. In all under thirty residents of St. Jacques, even fewer in Ste. Anne reported having any land at all on which they grew either vegetables or crops.⁸³ Most of the others were in professional or clerical occupations - lawyers, bank clerks and merchants reporting half to one acre on which they grew beets, beans, carrots or fruit probably for personal family use. Few working class families reported such produce. Those that did had only a quarter acre - recorded erroneously by the census taker, but hinting, perhaps, at a more widespread practice. Exceptional was a French Canadian carpenter's family in St. Jacques which reported raising sixty bushels of oats, thirty bushels of potatoes and 1400 bundles of hay on four to five arpents of land. There is no record of

⁸² Tallies for each subdistrict of each ward, Mss. Census, Montreal, 1871.

⁸³ Many of the manuscript schedules on this topic, are, unfortunately missing for Ste. Anne ward, so this section is particularly speculative.

their having kept any animals, so the products must have been sold for cash, perhaps to local carters or bourgeois families for their horses. In this family the cash supplemented the wages not only of the father, but of the nineteen year old daughter who worked as a seamstress and the sixteen year son, a plasterer. Care of the garden would have fallen to the mother and the three younger children.⁸⁴ Edwige Allard, the thirty-four year old wife of another carpenter, kept a one acre garden from which she produced ten bushels of beans and the same of potatoes, as well as four bushels of other root crops. The garden produce no doubt helped feed her six children and eighty year old father-in-law who lived with them.⁸⁵ Joseph Bleau, a mason and his wife, kept a quarter acre garden which they reported had produced half a bushel of beans, two of carrots and one of beets - not a very significant proportion of a family's annual food. Yet another woman, a Scottish widow with three children aged eight to eleven, complemented the money she made as a washer woman with the ten bushels of potatoes two of beets and three of carrots that she raised on her one-quarter acre Ste.Anne lot.⁸⁶

The census returns for 1871, by ignoring most gardens of a quarter acre or less, clearly underestimated the amount of back garden production in this period. The returns do suggest that large gardens, as would be expected, were concentrated not in the hands of those most

⁸⁴ Mss. Census, St.Jacques, 1871, 4, p.42, line 5.

⁸⁵ Mss. Census St.Jacques, 1871, 8, p.16, line 5.

⁸⁶ Mss. Census, St.Jacques, 1871, 9, p.56, line 8; Ste.Anne, 1871, 11, p.16, line 17.

needing free food, but in the hands of the wealthy who were able to afford the land required. Other factors too would suggest that the working class had less and less access to even small amounts of land on which to garden. For some of the same processes that were eliminating pigs and making other stock less practicable within the city curtailed the possibility of gardening as well. The decreasing size of city lots in working class areas and the elimination of unbuilt space limited access to areas for both gardening and animals.

When the city was rebuilt, after the disastrous fires of 1845 and 1852, tenements or multiple dwellings, replaced the detached houses, and obliterated their gardens. This was also the plan adopted in building the railway workers' houses in Point St. Charles. They were constructed in terraces, the fronts set flush with the street line, and having scarcely more space in the rear than was required for privies, and the community well and wash 'house'.⁸⁷

Prior to the 1860's the houses of Ste. Anne's working class had been built one by one, each on its own lot and separate from its neighbour.⁸⁸ As land speculators and developers became increasingly involved, houses were built in rows, often on both the front and the back of the lot. Little light entered the rooms of most of these apartments. The miniscule courtyards provided neither the space, nor the sun for a vegetable garden. Thus while some working class families may well have kept very small patches of gardens and produced some vegetables during the hot summer months, the lack of space, lack of time and the shortness

⁸⁷ John Cooper, "The Social Structure of Montreal in the 1850's", CHAAR, p.68.

⁸⁸ Suzanne D. Cross, "The Irish in Montreal", pp.200-1.

of the growing season meant that most had little alternative to purchasing the majority of whatever vegetables and fruits they ate.⁸⁹ This conclusion is re-inforced by a contemporary visitor to Montreal who commented that never had he "been in a Canadian city where among the working classes there was so little appearance of comfortable residences in the outskirts with small gardens" as in Montreal.⁹⁰

For any who did raise vegetables for cash as opposed to consumption at home, a growing complex of city regulations would have made it more and more difficult. Selling fresh provisions outside public markets, selling vegetables off markets without a license, like keeping pigs, or allowing cattle to graze in the streets were all illegal by the 1880's.⁹¹ Reformers clearly would not have frowned on the working class holding gardens. Legitimate health concerns lay behind much of the legislation surrounding animals. At the same time, however, the growing regulation of exchange, part of the increasing control of capital over all areas of the economy combined with legislation against animals to minimize ordinary people's access to alternatives to wage labour.

Within the home women could supplement wages or stretch them either by making things that would otherwise have had to be purchased or by

⁸⁹ Jean-Claude Marsan, Montreal in Evolution, pp. 268-9; John Cooper, "The Social Structure of Montreal in the 1850's", p.68.

⁹⁰ Montreal Daily Witness, Letter to the Editor, 4 January 1869.

⁹¹ Annual Reports of ...Prosecutions before the Recorder's court, MAR, 1869-1889.

making goods to sell. In families with a cow or goat, cheese and butter could be made. Bread could be baked rather than bought, clothes made, cloth spun. With the exception of the making of women's and girls' clothes, however, such home production for both use and exchange in Montreal was neither widespread, nor a major component of a family's support by 1871.⁹² Those families where women produced butter or honey, spun or wove were the exceptions not the rule. Working class women seldom had access to the land or the capital necessary to produce butter, wool for spinning or cloth for weaving. Even such a commodity as bread, traditionally baked in the home, was readily available at reasonable prices in commercial bakeries by the 1880's. For instance, the owner of the Montreal Cash Bakery boasted in 1888 that he could sell a four pound loaf four cents cheaper than his more traditional competitors. That year he had eight workers, all "third class hands." He planned to open a new large, highly capitalized factory with one hundred hands, largely women.⁹³ Increasingly, women purchased most needed foodstuffs with their husbands's wages. The outlawing of pigs, the elimination of space in inner working class areas for both gardens and animals and the growing production of goods that were once produced in the home by capitalist enterprises meant that the alternatives to paying out cash for most needed commodities were severely limited. Some

⁹² On the movement out of the home of clothes making see: Mercedes Steadman, "Sex and Skill in the Canadian Needle Trades, 1890-1940", Unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, 1982; Tamara Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, p.204.

⁹³ RCRLC, 1889, Evidence of Edward Pole, pp. 597-9. For more detail on the transformation of production in the baking trade see Ian McKay, "Capital and Labour", Labour/Le Travailleur, 3 (1978), pp.63-108.

space did remain; however, from which extra cash could be squeezed - the actual living space of families - their homes.

Boarders, Boarding and Housesharing.

The taking in of boarders has received more attention from historians than other non-wage aspects of the family economy. Like stock keeping, boarding has been predominantly viewed as a working class strategy to ward off poverty. John Benson has recently argued that such strategies can be viewed as aspects of part time "penny capitalism".⁹⁴ Writing at the turn of the century Margaret Byington described the taking in of lodgers as a deliberate business venture on the part of families to increase inadequate income from men's earnings.⁹⁵ John Modell and Tamara Hareven have also described taking boarders as one strategy used by American families to solve the problem of the imbalance between income and expenditure.⁹⁶ Michael Anderson argued with some caution that in Preston, Lancashire, the poorer occupational groups "may

⁹⁴ John Benson, The Penny-Capitalists: A Study of Nineteenth Century Working Class Entrepreneurial Activity, (Dublin 1983), pp.79-81.

⁹⁵ Margaret Byington, Homestead; Households of a Mill Town (Pittsburgh, 1974 reprint of 1910 edition), cited in Joan M. Jensen, "Cloth, Butter and Boarders", p.20.

⁹⁶ John Modell and Tamara Hareven, "Urbanization and the Malleable Household: An Examination of Boarding and Lodging in American Families", Journal of Marriage and the Family (August 1973), p. 476.

have been rather more likely to take in lodgers".⁹⁷ Research that explicitly compares working class with other families is now beginning to justify his caution. Between the 1850's and 1880's, in American and Canadian cities, the taking in of boarders does not appear to have predominated amongst the semi and unskilled, or the poorest fraction of the population. Michael Haines found that in Philadelphia in 1880 it was not the poorer families which took in boarders in large numbers.⁹⁸ Similarly Michael Katz and Ian Davey reported that between 1851 and 1861 in Hamilton, Ontario boarders did not live most often with those in need of extra income.⁹⁹ In Ste. Anne and St. Jacques, while families of all classes did take in boarders, they were more common in the larger homes of those owning their own enterprises, professionals, and of the more skilled workers than among the less skilled. The semi and unskilled were more likely to double up, sharing living space with other whole families, than to take in boarders. The following sections examine boarding and the sharing of space as strategies used by different fractions of classes.

We have seen how low women's wages were. A woman taking in several boarders could bring as much cash into the home as she could working for wages. Women workers in this period could expect wages of between \$1.50

⁹⁷ Michael Anderson, Family Structure p.46.

⁹⁸ Michael Haines "Poverty, Economic Stress and the Family" p. 244.

⁹⁹ Michael B. Katz and Ian E. Davey, "Youth and Early Industrialization" p.91

and \$5.00 a week. Those sewing clothing or shoes at home made less.¹⁰⁰
In 1882 working class men paid \$3.00 to \$4.00 a week for board.¹⁰¹
Taking in one or two boarders then, offered a woman a source of income comparable to a wage, a valuable source of cash that was probably paid directly to her. It could be used to complement her husband's irregular or low wages. However, boarders also entailed expenditures. They had at least to have a bed, linen and blankets and most probably expected a separate room. And they had to be fed well enough to retain them in the household. A boarder thus represented not only extra work for the woman of the house, but also extra expenditures and space - resources that were lacking in the poorest families. Thus, it is not surprising that it was among the petty-bourgeois and professional families of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards that boarders predominated.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ RCRLC, Evidence of Henry Morton, Bookbinder, p.247; Z. Lapierre, Shoe-manufacturer, p.437; Hollis Shorely, Clothing Manufacturer, p. 285.

¹⁰¹ Canada, Sessional Papers, 1882, Paper No.14, Appendix 3, "Annual Report of the Montreal Immigration Agent".

¹⁰² Boarding, subletting and the doubling up of families to save rent were all common in Montreal. Distinguishing between them on the Canadian Census returns is something of a problem. Boarders in the figures that follow are single individuals or couples whom census takers enumerated as part of a census family. "A family, as understood for the purpose of the Census, may consist of one person living alone, or of any number of persons living together under one roof and having their food provided Together". Boarders, then, as the last listed people in each family, probably ate their meals with the family. Relatives were not included as boarders. "Instructions to Officers", Canada Sessional Papers, 1871, No.64, p.128. The Canadian Census, like the U.S. one prior to 1880 does not identify the relationships of people on the schedules. I have estimated relationships using the the rules set out in Miller(1972). The identification of relatives was verified by cross-checks in the City's parish registers which are especially complete for the Catholic population.

In 1861 over one quarter of all male headed families in the wards shared their residence with people who were neither apprentices, servants or kinfolk. By 1871 and 1881 the proportion had dropped to 14 per cent. This decrease reflects two major factors. Firstly, there was a shortage of housing in Montreal in 1861. The sheer magnitude of population growth in the previous decade had placed tremendous pressure on the housing supply.¹⁰³ So too did the periodic fires that swept through parts of town in the 1850's destroying hundreds of houses at a time. Housing starts could hardly compensate for the lost dwellings let alone provide for the in-migrants as well.¹⁰⁴

The particular demographic characteristics of the city's population development also help explain why more families had boarders in 1861 than in later years. In that year only 41 per cent of females and 40 per cent of men aged fifteen to forty were married compared to 46 and 48 per cent a decade later.¹⁰⁵ More single people thus needed housing; and they constituted the bulk of boarders.

To discern the class differences in patterns of family augmentation the figures for the two wards can be examined combined as there was no significant difference between patterns in the two. In 1861, 40 per

¹⁰³ W.J. Patterson, Report of the Trade and Commerce of the City of Montreal for 1863 (Montreal 1864), p.4.

¹⁰⁴ John C. Weaver and Peter de Lottinville, "The Conflagration and the City: Disaster and Progress in British North America during the Nineteenth Century", Histoire Sociale/Social History, (November 1980), p.418.

¹⁰⁵ Calculated from the Census of Canada, 13, 1861-1881.

cent of professionals' and proprietors' wives took in boarders - another 16 per cent had servants. Skilled workers' wives that year were almost as likely to have boarders - 37 per cent did so. Twenty six per cent of the semi-skilled reported at least one boarder. The wives of men in the injured trades and of the unskilled were the least likely to house extra inmates. Over the next two decades important shifts occurred in the nature of family augmentation. The percentage of all families taking lodgers dropped dramatically. The greatest decrease occurred among skilled workers. By 1871 only 13 per cent had boarders. Professionals and proprietors also rapidly divested themselves of extra non-family members other than servants, so that by 1881 only 18 per cent reported having boarders. Amongst the skilled and unskilled the percentage of families having boarders had dropped in half by 1881. (See Table 5.8). Despite the overall decrease, the taking in of boarders continued to predominate in non-working class families. Before examining the more common working class strategy - house sharing, some other characteristics of those families taking in boarders and of the boarders themselves need to be explored.

Boarders were not an alternative to other survival strategies. Almost half the families keeping pigs and cows also had lodgers. While families were generally more likely to take in boarders when there were no children old enough to work, the strategies were not mutually exclusive. Indeed boarders were only slightly less common among families with one or two children at work than among those with none at

TABLE 5.8
CLASS AND BOARDERS

	1861			1871			1881		
	Number of Families	Boar- ders %	Ser- vants %	Number of Families	Boar- ders %	Ser- vants %	Number of Families	Boar- ders %	Ser- vants %
Professionals & Proprietors	70	40	16	135	19	11	128	18	16
Skilled Workers	155	37	2	193	13	1	240	15	-
Injured Trades	33	18	-	66	8	2	73	15	1
Semi-skilled	54	26	-	47	2	-	67	12	-
Unskilled	127	21	-	160	16	1	193	9	-
Percentage of all Families		29%	4%		14%	4%		14%	3%
Significance			.001		.001			.001	

Source: Random Samples, Male headed families in selected occupational groupings, St. Jacques and Ste. Anne combined.

work. And families with three children at work were as likely to have boarders as those with none.

Nor did cultural and ethnic background make much difference to whether lodgers were taken in or not. (See Table 5.9). Groups that represented a minority in their neighbourhood appear to have been more likely to have boarders than others. This was especially true amongst the French Canadian families living in Ste. Anne in 1861, when they were just beginning to move into this largely Irish enclave. That year 38 per cent of French Canadian families took in one or more boarders, compared to only 19 per cent of the Irish. In St. Jacques, in contrast, the Irish were slightly more likely to have boarders than French Canadians. After 1861 major ethnic differences became minimal in both wards. Here we see, I suspect, the important role that boarding could play for migrants new to the city. In 1861 41 per cent of boarders were born outside Quebec, largely in Ireland. By the 1880's, 80 per cent were native born. The Quebec countryside, rather than

Ireland, Scotland or England, became the major source of both immigrants and boarders.

TABLE 5.9

ETHNICITY AND BOARDERS

<u>Ste. Anne</u>	1861*		1871		1881	
<u>Origins</u>	% with boarders	Total No. in Sample	% with boarders	Total No. in Sample	% with boarders	Total No. in Sample
French Canadian	38%	85	14%	114	13%	134
Irish	19%	162	15%	160	10%	202
English	31%	26	11%	63	7%	55
Others	32%	65	17%	40	7%	54
Total	27%	338	14%	377	10%	445
<u>St. Jacques</u>						
French Canadian	29%	185	13%	279	18%	487
Irish	32%	25	18%	17	16%	19
English	33%	15	12%	25	0	11
Others	25%	16	23%	13	23%	26
Total	30%	241	24%	334	17%	543
Combined Total	28%	579	14%	711	14%	988

* As people's origins were not determined in the 1861 Census the numbers here refer to those born in the respective countries, and to those born in Lower Canada who responded in French.

Families almost always took in people of similar origins and culture to themselves. In Ste. Anne ward in 1861 97 per cent of French Canadian families with boarders had French Canadian ones; 92 per cent of the Irish had fellow Irish men and women. Only the Scots were less

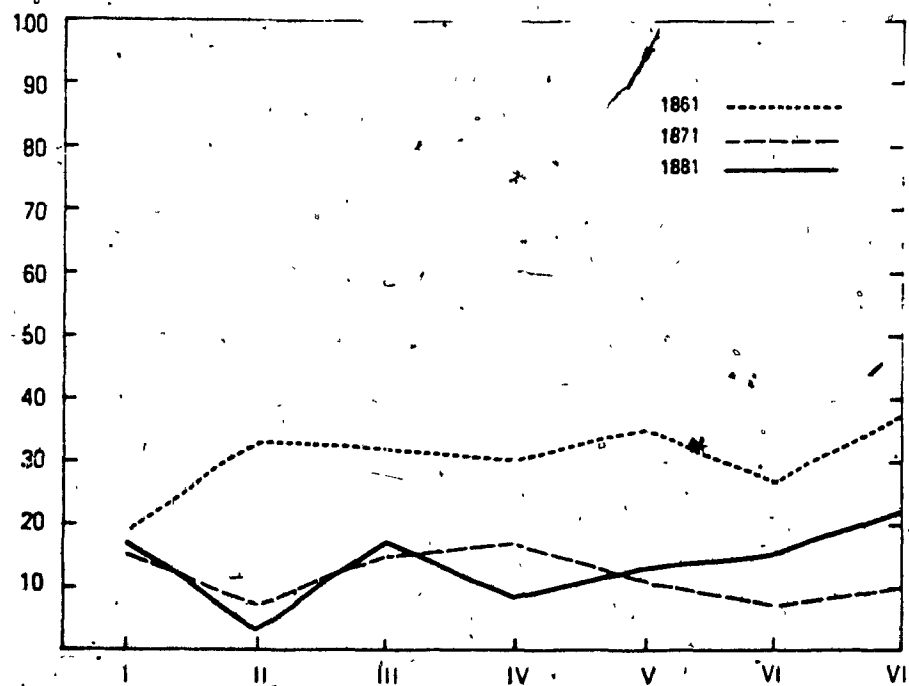
likely to lodge their own countrymen than people of other origins. The workplace too must have been a place of recruitment. One quarter of those Ste. Anne families with boarders in 1861 had people with the same occupations as the household head. There is no way of knowing whether they actually worked together.

Tamara Hareven and John Modell have argued that the "logic of the life cycle" dominated the "economic squeeze" in explaining the phenomenon of lodgers. Michael Katz, in contrast, found that in Hamilton "the presence of boarders and relatives appears to have been largely accidental".¹⁰⁶ In these two Montreal wards a pattern is observable, if not dramatic. (See Figure 5.1). In 1861 when housing was in such short supply nearly one third of all households had boarders throughout the life cycle, except for those without children. In 1871 and 1881 a more specific pattern is evident. Around 16 per cent of young married couples took in boarders. Once a baby arrived, however, mothers appear to have avoided the additional work that boarders represented. As children grew older, but were not yet old enough to work for wages, around 15 per cent again took in boarders. This was the critical stage of the family life cycle, when the ratio between consumers and earners was at its most disadvantageous. Thus we find the proportion rising until some children were old enough to work. The pattern diverges in 1871 and 1881. In 1871 when more jobs were available and young children apparently found work fairly easily, the

¹⁰⁶ John Modell and Tamara Hareven, "Urbanization and the Malleable Household", p.476; Michael B. Katz, The People of Hamilton, p.244.

proportion of women taking in boarders dropped steadily once children reached work age, increasing only after they had all left home. In 1881, in contrast, as children began to leave home, they were replaced by boarders in up to 15 per cent of the households of these wards. Only in that year does the Montreal pattern appear to fit the "social equalization" model suggested by Modell and Hareven, in which economically, if not psychologically, boarders substituted for departed children at the later stages of the family life cycle.¹⁰⁷

Fig. 5.1 Percentage of Families with Boarders at Different Stages of the Life Cycle, 1861-1881



SOURCE: Random Samples, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques combined.
For details of the life cycle stages see Appendix E.

¹⁰⁷ John Modell and Tamara Hareven, "Urbanization and the Malleable Household", p.476.

Boarders were sought in a variety of ways. The wealthy advertised in the newspapers of the day. "Furnished Rooms to Let, for Single Gentlemen, in Private Family", read one of fourteen similar advertisements in the Montreal Daily Witness of 26 March 1873. "Interested gentlemen" were requested to apply at 28 Union Avenue. More often, and especially among the working class, word of mouth must have constituted the main source of information both for those wanting space and those seeking boarders. Newcomers to the city sought out people from their home counties and villages, whether they came from Ireland or Quebec. If they did not have a room, they would always know someone who did.

The boarders themselves shared certain characteristics, apart from their common origin with the host family. The first of these is crucial in understanding why additional non-family members did not predominate among the poorest families. Less than half the apparent "boarders" reported having jobs at the time the census was taken. Perhaps these household members who were neither kin, servants nor apprentices, may not have paid board either. Hence their concentration in the homes of the more wealthy.¹⁰⁸ In addition, boarders were overwhelmingly young. Most were between the ages of 15 and 29. In Ste. Anne in 1861 more were male than female; in St. Jacques the reverse was true. This

¹⁰⁸ Compare this with Sheva Medjuck's research on Moncton, where virtually all boarders had a job. Moncton, New Brunswick's economy offered a majority of male jobs. In 1851 and 1861 boarders there were over 80 per cent male. Sheva Medjuck, "The Importance of Boarding for the Structure of the Household in the Nineteenth Century: Moncton, New Brunswick and Hamilton, Canada West", Histoire Sociale/Social History, 13 (May 1980), pp.210-11.

reflects the different employment opportunities for each sex in each ward. Over the next two decades women dramatically outnumbered men as boarders. By 1881 three-quarters of the boarders of St. Jacques were women. Young girls, hoping to find work, seeking a job or newly arrived in the city, came to constitute the typical boarder. Seamstresses always predominated. They constituted 16 per cent of working boarders in the first two decades. By 1881, they made up nearly 30 per cent of all those listing a job. Some lived in families where they probably helped wives and daughters sewing at home. The other boarders listed a wide variety of occupations. Clerks and construction workers were important in the early period, but less so later.

Boarding, as Michael Katz, John Modell and Tamara Hareven have pointed out was a temporary period in a young person's life.¹⁰⁹ It also appears to have often been a very temporary arrangement for the host family. It is impossible to tell how long people remained in any one household. Clearly the ability of the boarder to pay, the compatibility of boarder and family, even the adequacy of the food and lodging were all important factors. A few glimpses of the potential conflicts that could arise can be gleaned from the evidence of a court case, which quite co-incidentally offered glimpses of boarder-housewife relations. A Madame Gagnon of Montreal reported subletting a room in her house to a Belgian man and his wife, newly arrived in town. The wife appears to have worked as a prostitute. During her residence she convinced her

¹⁰⁹ Michael Katz, The People of Hamilton, p.264; John Modell and Tamara Hareven, "Urbanization and the Malleable Household", p. 474.

landlady that she was not only vulgar, but also not trustworthy enough to be believed, even under oath. That particular arrangement lasted only two months. Madame Gagnon's next boarders were more acceptable. She took in a Madame Belserre whose husband had "done nothing the last six months after breaking both legs". Whether she was paid or not is unclear, but at the time of her testimony these boarders had remained with her for seven months.¹¹⁰

"Doubling up", subletting rooms to other families or renting one to two rooms from landlords who had divided up their dwellings all helped reduce what we have seen was one of a family's major and most fixed of costs - the rent. Qualitative evidence of this practise is widespread. When Dr. Douglas Decrow stated in 1888 that amongst day labourers "two to three" families occupied one house he clearly meant they were sharing a dwelling intended for one family. These houses had three to four rooms only. Whole families slept in a single bedroom, sharing cooking facilities.¹¹¹ "Doubling up" was, he believed, "getting to be the rule with the poorer classes of people who would rent a "large house for sanitary reasons, . . . well knowing at the time they took the house that they would have to relet the rest of it" as a result of "the poverty of the family".¹¹² Five years earlier a reporter for the Montreal Daily Star had highlighted the overcrowding of families in parts of St. Laurent and St. Jacques wards. In the buildings that he

¹¹⁰ Montreal Daily Witness, 28 March 1873.

¹¹¹ RCRLC, p.606.

¹¹² RCRLC, p.609.

visited, families were limited to a room each. Two families, a total of fourteen people, shared a single room in the most depressing case that he described.¹¹³ Yet another seeker out of poverty and squalour, the anonymous author of Montreal By Gaslight, found similar conditions shortly after the Royal Commission of 1888. He described a four-storey stone building in Ste. Anne ward near the market. It had once been a hotel, but had been transformed into a "low lodging house":

—within its four walls and upon its four stories lived at one time no less than twenty-eight families. In the direst of poverty, in abject want, without air, with no appliances for health and decency, in dirt and filth appalling, over one hundred and ten human beings herded like rats in a pit, barely existing from day to day.¹¹⁴

Less sensational evidence of crowding and doubling up is available throughout the Reports of the Sanitary Inspectors and in scattered complaints from city officials, especially assessors, about their not being informed about "how many families are under one roof", or of subtenanting arrangements.¹¹⁵

Such evidence suggests that the sharing of housing took two

¹¹³ Montreal Daily Star, 24 December 1883.

¹¹⁴ Anon, Montreal By Gaslight (Montreal, 1889), p.17.

¹¹⁵ See, for instance, RCRLC, Evidence of John W. Grose, Chairman of the Board of Assessors of the City of Montreal, p.266; Evidence of Pierre Hubert Morin, Assessor, p.552.

distinct forms. Some families rented a house, or in a few cases bought one, then sublet space to one or two other families. In other cases, landlords eager to squeeze as much profit as possible out of their properties, subdivided buildings themselves. It was in the latter situation that one seems to find families confined to a single room.

Determining just how widespread or common either of these practises were is difficult. Ideally, the census enumerators' distinctions between family and household should enable us to discover just how many families were doubled up within a single dwelling unit. Mark Choko, in his study of housing in Montreal concluded that the numbers of lodgings or households enumerated did closely reflect the number of dwelling units and that the discrepancies observable from 1861 to 1881 therefore indicate a fairly important increase in house-sharing.¹¹⁶ Initially I made a similar assumption.¹¹⁷ In their nation wide survey of co-residence in Canada in 1871 Gordon Darroch and Michael D. Ornstein found that in "the urban areas of Quebec and Nova Scotia nearly one quarter of all households had two or more families or marital units."¹¹⁸ If the census definition of family and household does indeed reflect reality, around 30 per cent. of all families not including those living only with kin were sharing housing in these two wards in 1871, as were 37 per cent a decade later. A closer examination of those families that

¹¹⁶ Marc H. Choko, Crises du Logement à Montréal (1860-1939) (Montréal Edition Cooperatives, Albert Saint-Martin, 1980), p.16.

¹¹⁷ Bettina Bradbury, "The Family Economy and Work", pp.92-5.

¹¹⁸ Gordon Darroch and Michael D. Ornstein "Family Co-residence in Canada"; p. 36

appeared to be sharing housing, however, suggests that the census enumerators' distinctions should be treated with some caution. In attempting to match census returns with city directories and evaluation roles, it became clear that some houses that were apparently "shared by families were actually separate tenements, with residents who were independently assessed by the city for water rates and occasionally even given a separate address in the city directory. Without a full scale and highly detailed study tracing the size and layout of every house, it appears difficult to determine exactly which families, or what percentage apparently sharing housing on census day, were actually doing so. Nor is it possible to tell what proportion sublet part of their own dwelling as a survival strategy, and what proportion was forced to crowd together in substandard living conditions as a result of a landlord's subdivision of space. And there is no way of showing how often sharing resulted in extreme overcrowding.

The instructions given to the enumerators were clear. A separate house was "to be counted whenever the entrance from the outside is separate, and there is no direct and constant communication in the inside to make it one."¹¹⁹ Table 5.10 examines the extent of sharing, that would have existed had the census distinction reflected reality. Between 1871 and 1881, the only years when the categories are strictly comparable, workers' families were more likely to live in what were defined as shared houses than were professionals and proprietors. By

¹¹⁹ Canada, Sessional Papers 1871, Paper No.64, "Instructions to Officers", p.133.

1881 perhaps as many as 40 per cent of both semi-skilled and unskilled families compared to 35 per cent of skilled and 30 per cent of the professional and proprietor's families of these wards were apparently sharing premises with other families. A small percentage shared space and took in boarders.

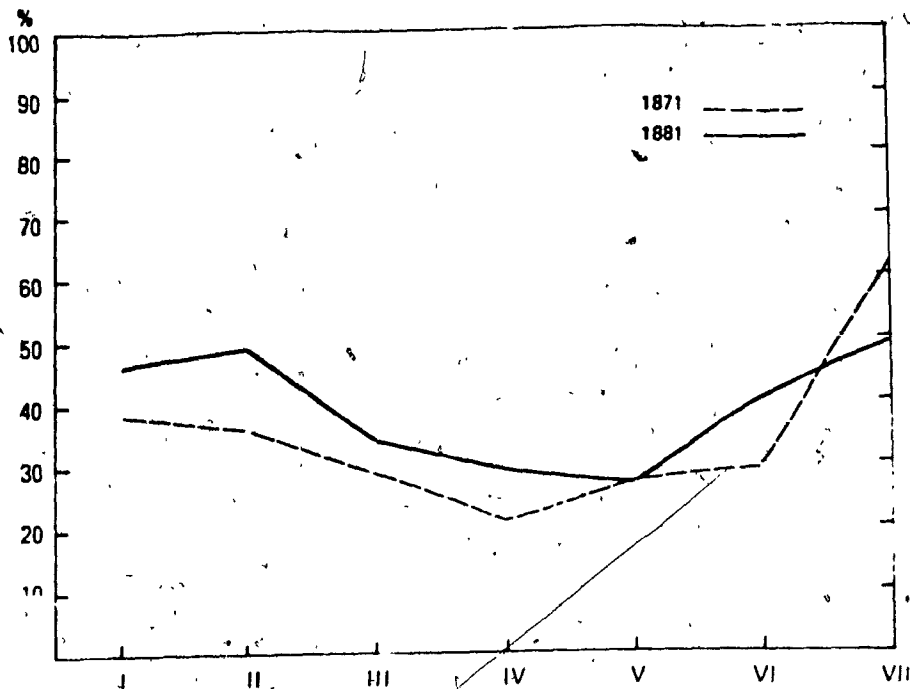
TABLE 5.10
HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURES AMONG FAMILIES IN DIFFERENT CLASS POSITIONS

	Nos	Simple Families.			Families with co-resident kin			Families sharing with Other families		
		No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
		Extras	Boarders	Servants	Extras	Boarders	Servants	Extras	Boarders	Servants
<u>1861</u>		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Non Working Class	95	44	19	11	6	6	4	2	6	1
Skilled	147	47	21	1	12	4	-	3	13	-
Injured Trades	31	68	19	-	10	-	-	3	-	-
Semi-skilled	52	48	15	-	21	4	-	6	6	-
Unskilled	126	59	14	-	17	5	-	4	1	-
<u>1871</u>										
Non Working Class	178	49	11	8	5	4	2	17	3	1
Skilled	188	50	9	-	11	2	-	26	3	-
Injured Trades	66	41	8	1	15	-	-	35	-	-
Semi-skilled	47	57	2	-	9	-	-	32	-	-
Unskilled	159	52	9	1	8	2	-	25	4	-
<u>1881</u>										
Non Working Class	216	43	13	8	4	1	1	26	2	2
Skilled	237	50	8	-	7	-	-	28	7	-
Injured Trades	70	34	7	1	13	1	-	36	5	-
Semi-skilled	64	45	5	-	8	3	-	34	5	-
Unskilled	187	48	6	-	4	-	-	38	3	-

Source: Random Samples, Male headed families reporting an occupation only, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques combined.

While the percentage of families sharing housing is probably inflated by the census enumerator's fuzzy distinctions, the pattern is clear enough. Household structure was closely related not only to class position, but also to the family life cycle in a more obvious way than was the taking in of boarders. (See Figure 5.2). Couples were most likely to share housing when newly married, or after the birth of one child. As children grew older, and as the family's size increased they

Fig. 5.2 Percentages of all Families Sharing Housing at Different Stages of the Life Cycle



SOURCE: Random Samples, Ste. Arne and St. Jacques Wards combined. For details of the life cycle stages see Appendix E.

were more likely to live alone, despite their increased need for extra income. Co-residence of families was not used to compensate for the life cycle squeeze. The strain of sharing cramped quarters appears to have become intolerable for all but the most needy. As children left home, women were again likely to share their living space, or to live in small, crowded quarters with both relatives and strangers.

Perhaps we should not be surprised to learn that it was the overcrowding of houses, largely a result of "doubling up", that came under attack during this period, rather than the taking in of one or two

boarders. By the mid 1870's health inspectors, ever watchful for contagious diseases, especially smallpox, were attempting to keep a record of the number of rooms and of the number of people in them in every house. They were empowered to evict citizens from overcrowded houses. In practise, examination was limited to the working class. "In the case of the poorer classes of tenements", inspectors were specifically warned to "be careful to note the number of inmates occupying each room and to observe whether there is danger of overcrowding".¹²⁰ Reforms aimed to make the city a healthier place, again touched on those very strategies used by the poorer members of the working class to avoid total dependence on wages.

In fact, evictions for overcrowding were not frequent for the health department had insufficient money to pay a large staff. In a typical year, 1886, only three overcrowded tenements were reported by the Sanitary Police, and the "necessary number of occupants compelled to search for other lodgings".¹²¹ Important, however, was the threat of eviction and the power of the local state, through its Sanitary Police, to enter the houses and rooms of the poor to ascertain whether they were living in a suitable manner. The same municipal government that had outlawed pigs and controlled the sale of vegetables, could now move into yet another arena within which the poor could supplement wages - their homes.

¹²⁰ Report Upon the Sanitary State of Montreal, MAR., 1881, p.7; 1886, p.8.

¹²¹ Report Upon the Sanitary State of Montreal, MAR., 1886, p.29.

"Children aren't pigs you know, for they can't pay the rent", went an old Irish ballad.¹²² From the 1870's on, working class families of all origins increased their dependence on wage labour as pig raising, gardening and the production of food and goods at home was curtailed. Children of working age became a source of economic security, the major complement to a father's inadequate and irregular wage. Children could and did pay the rent. Until they were old enough to do so those with low and irregular wages faced a period of poverty. It was at this crucial stage of the life cycle that around half the married women who did report a job worked. And growing numbers at this stage saved on rental expense by clustering together to spread costs. Even this practise, while not outlawed, came under surveillance as inspectors on the lookout for cases of smallpox and other contagious diseases were empowered to evict excessive numbers from houses.

Keeping animals and gardens represented alternate sources of cash, or ways to minimize cash output. They were strategies that complemented wage labour. Both were part of the tradition of rural wage-earning families from Ireland and Quebec. Yet they were also urban traditions. The women who raised pigs and cows in Montreal were not blindly following such traditions. Stock raising represented a rational and important way of supplementing unsteady wages. Pork formed a major component of the diet of both the Irish and the French Canadians. Families ceased to keep animals when the law or lack of space prevented them from doing so.

¹²² Cited in Lynn. H. Lees, Exiles of Erin p.22

City regulations, surveillance and urban growth had a very different impact on families in different class positions. The pig, the working class animal, was outlawed in this period, not the cow. The inner city areas, within access of jobs for workers, became more and more crowded, eliminating garden and animal space. The wealthy, in contrast, could afford homes with sufficient space for gardens, where, if they wished, they could raise both vegetables and cows. They also had the space in their homes to take in boarders when they needed or wanted to. Thus extra residents were more prevalent in the families of professionals, proprietors and even skilled workers, while "doubling up" was most common among the semi and unskilled. While all people were potential victims of smallpox and other infectious diseases it was the homes of the "poorer classes" that were entered and examined.

As new laws and restructured urban spaces curtailed access to subsistence, the ways in which married working class women could contribute to the family's survival were narrowed down and altered. Where once she could make or save some money raising animals, making butter, selling eggs, or vegetables, now her contribution lay in sharing her living and cooking space with other individuals and families, taking in boarders, careful housekeeping or going out occasionally to work for wages herself. Such strategies could help counter periods of unemployment or family illness. Most women, lacking work skills and lengthy work experience, would draw on these strategies if their husband died. It is to the effects of sickness and unemployment and the plight of widows that the final chapter turns.

Chapter Six

Family Strategies in Periods of Illness, Unemployment and Death.

Unemployment, illness and death threatened the equilibrium of the family wage economy, highlighting dependence on an incoming wage. Few but the most skilled of workers saved enough money to cushion even short periods of unemployment or illness, let alone protracted ones. Wage dependency as Barbara Humphries has argued, aggravated such critical life situations.¹ For illness and the unemployment of wage earners cut off the family's major source of support for an indeterminate period. The mother or wife's tasks increased, as we have seen, when caring for the sick was added to her daily rounds of domestic labour. If she became sick or died, an older daughter or the husband had to take on the household work. If wife or husband died, the remaining spouse and children faced a fundamental crisis which had to be dealt with by completely re-organizing the division of labour within the family, remarriage, or by turning to kin or charity for assistance. Even at such times as pregnancy or childbirth the delicate balance of incoming wages and household management could be shattered.

Working class families in mid to late nineteenth century Montreal lived in constant contact with disease, poverty and death. The newborn children of the poor were almost as likely to die as to live. Many families were fragmented by the death of a mother or father. More experienced periods when one or both parents or children were sick,

¹ Barbara Humphreys, "The Working Class Family", p.248.

perhaps hovering on death. The high incidence of disease coupled with the fragility of many a family's earning power presented constant challenges to basic survival and to family coherence and stability. All families changed over their life cycle. Most also went through a series of changes and configurations as parents or children died as a new spouse and sometimes foster children were added, and kin or strangers taken in. The family economy and family structure were fragile, changing over the life cycle, and always subject to sudden and unexpected challenges. Only when both parents survived and several children reached working age was a degree of financial security ensured. Even then lengthy illness, unemployment and death posed severe problems for most working class families. This chapter examines the role of kin, of church and of class based institutions in providing support in such times of crisis.

It begins by reviewing the incidence of sickness and death in Montreal generally and Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards specifically. The extent to which people had kin within the family to call on for help is then examined, as are alternate sources of assistance. The chapter then turns to a consideration of the plight and strategies of working class widows. For widowhood made clear the consequences of working class women's dependent position within the family economy. When a husband and sometimes children earned wages, women's responsibility for domestic labour served the family, the employer and even some women well. At times when the man lost his job, was ill or unemployed, the problem of stretching wages must have taxed many a wife's ingenuity. Little wonder that women took in boarders, shared houses or raised

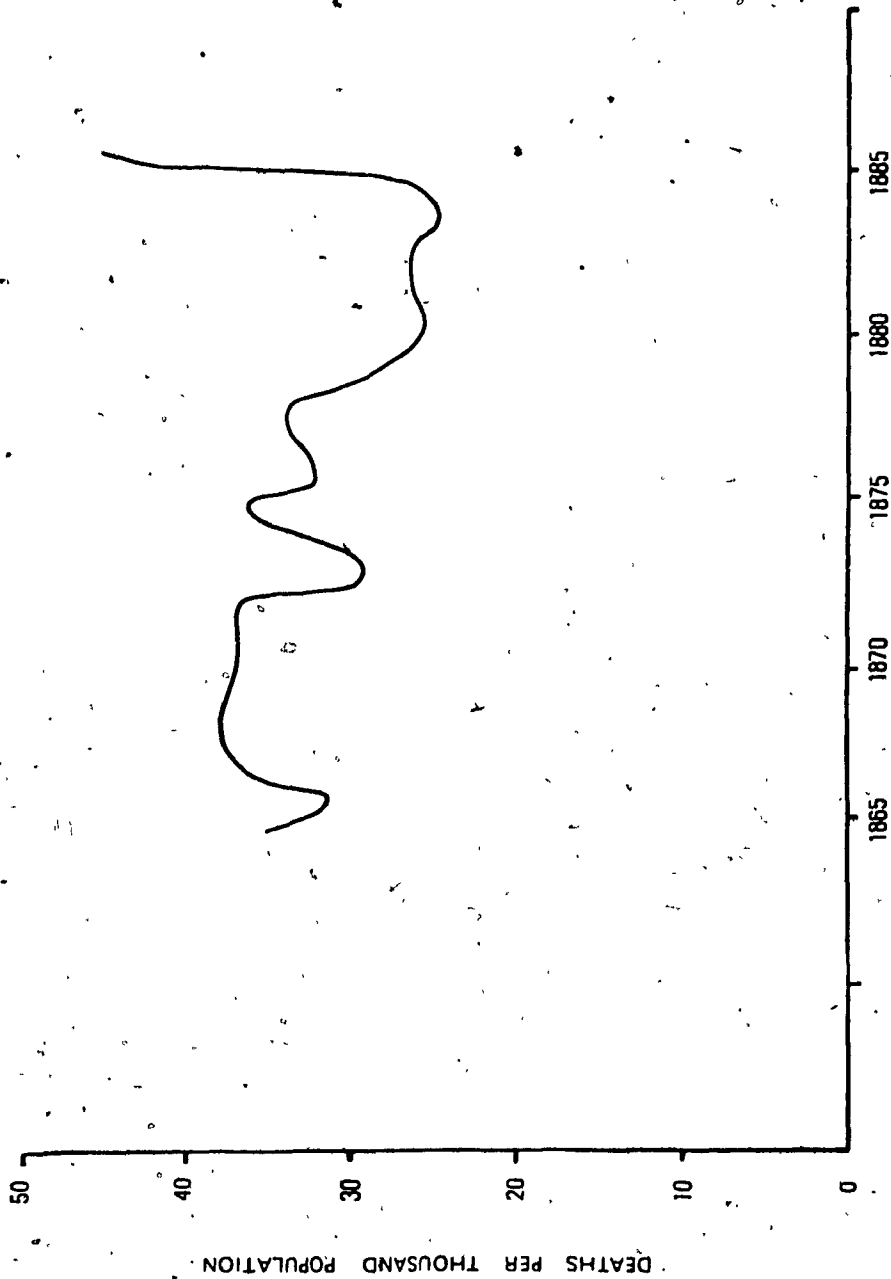
animals or vegetables to ensure a little extra cash. The loss of a husband, however, thrust on a woman's shoulders the burden of new responsibilities. Then she had to ensure that there was cash available on which to live. She had to seek ways to reshape her family's economy in the absence of the major wage earner. An examination of working class widows and their strategies thus serves to highlight two of the main themes of this thesis - the centrality of the wage in setting the parameters for the functioning of the family economy and the consequences of the sexual division of labour within the family that made men and boys the usual wage earners, women and girls the reproducers of that wage.

Illness, Unemployment, Death and the Family Economy.

Until the mid twentieth century, Montreal is said to have had one of the highest death rates in North America.² Between 1861 and 1879 the rate never dropped below 30 per 1.000 - in most years it was nearer 40. For a short period between 1879 and 1885 efforts of the officials of the city's health department to curb the death rate seemed to be bearing fruit. Smallpox, which had replaced cholera as the major killer, appeared to have been brought under control through fairly widespread use of vaccinations and isolation of cases. Death rates dropped pretty steadily down to a low of 25 in 1883. In 1885, however,

² Jean-Claude Robert, "Montreal 1861-1871", p.121.

Fig. 6.1 Crude Death Rates, Montreal - 1865 - 1885



SOURCES Report upon the Sanitary State, Montreal Annual Reports, 1865. P. Carpenter
On some of the Causes of Excessive Mortality of Young Children in the City
of Montreal. Canadian Naturalist and Quarterly Journal of Science, June 1869,
pp. 189-91.

smallpox hit again, killing over 4,500 people and pushing the death rate up dramatically to over 46,³ the highest it had been since the immigrant ships apparently brought cholera into the city in 1849 and 1854.⁴

Like other diseases smallpox hit unequally, primarily killing the children of French Canadian workers but taking their parents, too. Rates were dramatically higher in the eastern, French Canadian, working class wards of Ste. Marie and St. Jacques. In Ste. Marie, the death rate from smallpox alone in 1885 was over 45 per thousand, nearly as high as the death rate of 46.71 for the whole city from all causes (See Table 6.1). St. Jacques' rate was nearly 30. These two wards had had the highest death rates in the city for several decades. Even if smallpox deaths are excluded, the rates in St. Jacques and Ste. Marie were 10 per thousand higher than for most other wards, including Ste. Anne. These rates were partially a result of the young age-structures of such working class residential areas. The high incidence of disease and death from smallpox had additional sources. It was in just these parts of town that resistance to inoculation had always prevailed. When the first new cases broke out in early 1885 the city's vaccination campaign was stepped up. Traditional fears about the ill effects of vaccination were heightened when an unusually high proportion of those treated developed nasty sore arms. Health officials attributed this to "the very low state of public health after a long and severe winter"; perhaps

³ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, MAR, 1865-1885.

⁴ Geoffrey Bilson, A Darkened House. Cholera in Nineteenth Century Canada, pp.6,127-132.

to an "unusually severe epidemic of malignant measles," which had lowered people's resistance to vaccine, and to "inferior vaccine lymph." Whatever the cause, old fears were aroused, and in those parts of town vaccination had to be stopped. People resisted both the imposition of vaccination, and later the placarding and isolation of infected houses.⁵

Despite this resistance, the disease seemed to have been controlled until the early summer. Then huge processions took place in Montreal for the Fête Dieu and the funeral of Bishop Bourget. City officials argued that people from neighbouring municipalities brought smallpox back to the city, infecting the residents. Whatever its source, the mingling of thousands of people and the heat of summer led to a dramatic spread of the disease. From July to October the number dying monthly rose from 46 to 1393. When several vaccinated workers in the eastern part of the city died, people attacked the local branch of the city's health office and took to the streets in several days of riotous protest. This of course helped spread disease further. Vaccination was again enforced; homes were isolated and disinfected and by the early New Year deaths had diminished as dramatically as they had increased.⁶ Resistance to inoculation was strongly condemned by progressive doctors and health officials - yet from the people's point

⁵ Annual Report on the Sanitary State, MAR, 1885, p.70, 22-26, 36.

⁶ Montreal, Annual Report on the Sanitary State, MAR, 1885, p.26; John J. Heagerty, Four Centuries of Medical History in Canada, (Toronto, Macmillan of Canada, 1928) Vol. I pp.91-2; Maude E. Abbott, "Medicine and Surgery in the Province of Quebec," in The Storied Province of Quebec, (Toronto, Dominion Publishing Company, 1931) Vol. II, p.1120.

Table 6.1

CRUDE DEATH RATES FROM ALL DISEASES AND SMALLPOX,MONTREAL WARDS, 1885

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Crude Death Rate</u>	<u>Number of Deaths</u>	<u>Smallpox Death Rate</u>	<u>Rate Excluding Smallpox</u>
Ste. Anne	28.00	314	6.34	21.66
St. Antoine	24.04	569	5.97	18.08
St. Laurent	24.76	251	3.98	20.78
St. Louis	40.75	688	15.75	25.0
St. Jacques	61.49	1162	29.72	31.77
Ste. Marie	82.54	1432	45.09	37.45
Centre	32.46	36	10.47	21.99
Est	32.08	75	11.96	20.12
Ouest	14.4	3		
Hochelaga	43.76	241	21.46	22.3
Montreal Rates	46.71	4771	18.88	27.83

Source: Annual Reports Upon the Sanitary State of the City of Montreal, 1885.

of view its benefits were not so obvious. Not only were the sores left on the arms ugly and uncomfortable, but inoculated people did indeed die. City figures for 1885 show that of 3,658 of those who died, 32 per cent or 1,187 individuals had apparently been vaccinated.⁷

Epidemics hit dramatically, spreading fear along with disease. People shut themselves in their homes. Families kept their children

⁷ Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, MAR, 1885, p.147.

home from school. Those who could afford it moved to the country to escape the terror. Those who might have helped neighbours and relatives in times of pregnancy or mild and uncontagious illness would have hesitated before exposing themselves to smallpox. A huge burden thus fell on the shoulders of charity workers, the nuns and of certain city health officials. Alderman Grey stressed the importance of the work of the ladies of St. Margaret's Home, the Sisters of the General Hospital of the Grey Nuns and the Sisters of Providence in "comforting and nursing the distressed and in distributing the city's bounty" during the smallpox epidemic.⁸

Even in years without epidemics Montreal's particularly high rates of disease and death posed constant challenges to family survival. Low wages and frequent unemployment combined with damp homes, unsanitary conditions, crowding and poor nutrition to create a proletariat only too susceptible to disease. Philip Carpenter estimated in the late 1850's that for every person dying in the city there were twenty eight cases of sickness. Even if the rates were somewhat lower in the 1870's and 1880's, nearly half the people of St. Jacques and at least one third of those of Ste. Anne would have fallen sick each year.⁹ Illness was

⁸ "Chroniques de l'Orphelinat St. Alexis, depuis 1844", July, 1885-86, p.141, ASP Annual Report Upon the Sanitary State, MAR, 1885, p.22.

⁹ P. Carpenter, On the Relative Value of Human Life in Different Parts of Canada, (Montreal, John Lovell, 1859), p.12. These proportions were calculated on the basis of only fifteen cases of illness for each death excluding those caused by smallpox, a lower rate than the 28 suggested by Carpenter.

clearly widespread. Carpenter was referring to major disease, not minor sickness. He continued :

Nor is this the whole of the evil. There is a large amount of general enfeeblement of health, which does not develop into actual disease. This brings misery on the daily life, urges to the use of poisonous stimulants, often leads to recklessness of conduct and works corruption throughout the whole fabric of society.¹⁰

The Health Committee pointed repeatedly and explicitly to the problem of damp, overcrowded, unsanitary houses. Landlords, they explained, did not bother to build on dry ground or to provide proper drainage. Many homes were flooded at the time of the breaking up of the ice. This was especially common in Ste. Anne ward. Yet the proprietors neglected to put them in proper condition once the flood had receded. Such buildings were "generally occupied by poor families who are unable to remedy such defects." Dampness was seen to contribute to high infant mortality and was "for adults, a continual source of ill health."¹¹ Illness in the family increased a mother's work. Extra money was required to pay for medicines and medical attention. Yet if the sick person was a wage earner, income fell or ceased. There was, as we have seen, little flexibility even in a skilled worker's budget to deal with protracted periods of sickness or unemployment. With insufficient wages to feed, shelter and clothe most families given forty weeks work a year, they had to search elsewhere for support. The city

¹⁰ IBID.

¹¹ Report Upon the Sanitary State of Montreal, MAR, 1889, p.97.

of Montreal provided some work for the unemployed, but it was never sufficient.¹² Those dealing with illness faced at least four options. They could struggle alone, selling furniture, building up debts hoping to recover physically and economically. They could turn to kin or friends for physical or financial assistance. Some wealthier workers belonged to a mutual benefit society that would pay sick benefits. Or, they could turn to the charities and other social services run by their particular church. The relative importance of such strategies is impossible to determine. They need not have been either mutually exclusive, or the only possible solutions.

The importance of kin in times of sickness and unemployment has been stressed by most historians who have considered how working class families dealt with such crises. Michael Anderson's discovery that "many, perhaps even a majority, of people" in mid nineteenth century Preston, Lancashire, "did deliberately live near one or more kinsmen" was instrumental in modifying Laslett's assertion that families in western Europe had always been nuclear.¹³ More importantly his findings suggest that kin within households played a different role from boarders or co-residing non-related families. The latter were economic strategies. Maintaining contact with kin and especially taking kin into the family and household involved different motivations, a more complex set of obligations. Anderson concluded that

¹² Mayor's Inaugural Address, MAR, 1875, pp.113-114; IBID., 1877, p.19.

¹³ Michael Anderson, Family Structure, p.61.

the frequency of critical life situations and the almost complete absence of viable alternatives to the kinship system (and to some extent to neighbours) as sources of help in solving the problems which ensued from the crises were... key factors in encouraging members of the Lancashire Victorian working class to make such great efforts to maintain relationships with kin.¹⁴

"Only the family", he argued, "had a framework within which reciprocation could occur which was sufficiently clearly defined to provide an adequate guarantee of assistance in the major crisis situations. It was therefore advisable, or even well-nigh essential, for kinsmen to make every effort to keep in contact with and to enter into reciprocal assistance with kinsmen, if life chances were not to be seriously imperilled.¹⁵

Anderson implies that such assistance stemmed largely from pragmatic economic calculations. Tamara Hareven has also stressed the effectiveness of community and work based kinship ties "in cushioning relatives in critical life situations". Kin, she has argued, were "the very source of security and assistance in all aspects of life". They were essential in coping with insecurities and personal crises such as "unemployment... childbirth, illness and death".¹⁶ She interviewed French Canadian immigrants who had worked in the Amoskeag mills of

¹⁴ IBID, p.160.

¹⁵ IBID., p.137.

¹⁶ Tamara Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, p.101.

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¹⁴ IBID, p.160.

¹⁵ IBID., p.137.

¹⁶ Tamara Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, p.101.

Manchester, New Hampshire in the early twentieth century. Their life histories and descriptions of family attitudes led her to reject Anderson's assertion that such kin ties were based on purely economic calculations. "Certain aspects of kin assistance", she argued, "cannot be entirely explained by economic exchange theory". A "sense of responsibility, affection and familial obligation", was clearly more important among the people she interviewed.¹⁷

In the absence of oral histories for the period under consideration in Montreal, indeed of any qualitative sources shedding light on working class motives, it is difficult to ascertain the importance of factors such as economic calculations or familial obligation in determining people's behaviour. Some assessment of the extent of kin assistance and perhaps hints of the motivations behind it can be made, however, by examining patterns of kin co-residence, its possible relationship to situations of crisis and to the family life cycle.

A decreasing proportion of people over this period had kin within their family or household to whom they could turn for help in times of illness, unemployment or death. In 1861 about 19 per cent of all families were extended to include kin who were not part of the nuclear family. (See Table 6.2) An additional two per cent had kin within the larger household. These proportions dropped over the next decades - a pattern similar to that found in Hamilton between 1851 and 1871 by

¹⁷ IBID, pp.107-8.

Living with kin was most common, in 1861 among the unskilled and non-working class families. A decade later the situation had reversed. Nearly one quarter of the heads of families with skilled jobs or work in the injured trades shared their dwelling with one or more relatives - only 12 to 13 per cent of the unskilled and non-workers did so. By 1881 all groups except those in the injured trades were less likely to live with kin than in 1861 or 1871. Extended families and households continued to be most common, however, among the working class. The importance of extra family members to those working in the injured trades probably lay largely in their ability to contribute wages or labour for homework in sewing or shoemaking. But for them as for other families, the immediate presence of kin also meant some chance of assistance in times of illness, unemployment or death. The extended family could function, in Hans Medick's terms "as a private institution to redistribute the poverty of the nuclear family by way of the kinship system."¹⁹

In the extended working class families of these wards 34 per cent included grandparents; 30 per cent included married children with or

¹⁸ Michael B. Katz, The Origins, p.303.

¹⁹ Hans Medick, "The proto-industrial family economy," Social History, 3 (October 1970) p.295.

Table 6.2
Percentage of Male Headed Families Living with Kin in
the Family or Household

	<u>In Family</u>			<u>In Dwelling</u>		
	1861	1871	1881	1861	1871	1881
Non Manual	20%	9%	10%	20%	13%	12%
Skilled	17%	13%	9%	20%	24%	14%
Injured	17%	9%	15%	17%	25%	23%
Semi & Unskilled	20%	12%	7%	24%	16%	13%
Total All Male Family Heads	465	631	783	457	631	783
Overall	19%	12%	9%	21%	19%	15%

Source: Random Samples, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques combined.

without children of their own; 26 per cent included siblings and the others some combination of all of these forms of extension. Take, for instance, the family of French Canadian butcher Jean-Baptiste Lapointe. In the mid 1850's he took a wife, Julie, and over the next six years they had two surviving daughters, Julie and Ledia. In 1861, the girls were aged six and four. They lived in a one story, wooden house with their parents as well as two of Jean-Baptiste's brothers, his mother and ninety year old grandmother- both widows. One of the brothers worked as a small trader. Together he and Jean-Baptiste earned enough to support their other brother, their mother and grandmother as well as Jean Baptiste's immediate family. Without such family support the position of the two older women, in particular, would have been dismal.²⁰ The second brother may have been sheltering with his relatives in a time of unemployment or illness. The widows probably helped with babysitting and housework, but it is hard to see economic calculations as the major motivation behind such a household structure.

²⁰ Mss. Census, St Jacques, fo. 7769

-Within the working class the French Canadians living in St. Jacques ward were more likely to live with and near kin than the Irish or English. Housing shortages in eastern Montreal, the in-migration of large numbers of relatives and family members and a tradition of family support combined to make more kin available both for support in times of crisis and as a source of orientation for newcomers to the city.²¹ Immigration from the British Isles, in contrast, had slowed down. Kin for the Irish, English and English Canadians of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques would be drawn from a smaller pool of siblings, grandparents and cousins, largely already resident in Canada.

Clearly kin did not have to live in the immediate household to offer support. This has been argued eloquently by Miriam Chaytor in her examination of household and kinship in late 16th and early 17th century England.²² Tamara Hareven has constantly stressed the need to look beyond co-residence to kinship links within neighbourhoods, communities and workplaces. Indeed her research has demonstrated the importance of relatives still living in Quebec for families who had migrated to the milltowns of New England.²³ On the streets of Montreal were clusters of

²¹ For the continued importance of kin helping find work and housing see Phillippe Garigue, La Vie Familiale des Canadiens Français, (Montréal, Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1970), p.57-8.

²² Miranda Chaytor, "Household and Kinship: Ryton in the late 16th and early 17th Centuries", History Workshop, 10 (Autumn 1980). But see also the critique of her argument and evidence, especially Rab Houston and Richard Smith, "A New Approach to Family History?", IBID 14 (Autumn 1982).

²³ Tamara Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, pp.102, 114, 365.

people with the same last names - most linked by some degree of kinship and readily accessible in times of need.

Co-residence and living close together often followed each other. Stays with relatives could be long term or fleeting. They might last a few days, weeks or months after a newcomer's arrival in town, after the marriage of a young couple or birth of a baby, or throughout a more lengthy crisis period. On census day in April 1881, for example, 29 year old shoemaker Augustin Martineau and his wife, Marie, their three year old child and Augustin's parents were all living with his brother, Zephir, a carter, in a house at the rear of 164 Montcalm Street. A few months later in June, when the Lovell's directory was compiled, Augustin and Marie had moved one or two blocks up the street to rent a rear dwelling by themselves. They remained there for at least a year. Living together was thus replaced by living nearby - still close enough to visit and get help looking after the child, as well as to exchange other forms of assistance.²⁴ Similar patterns occurred in other families. On the same census day further up Montcalm street, the census enumerator reported five families sharing number 249. Two may actually have been in the separate rear dwelling. Included among the families were at least two relatives - 24 year old Arthur and 26 year old Ovila La Rose. Each had a wife and new baby. They were thus at a stage when assistance might well be required. When the city directory updated its listings to reflect residential patterns two months later, labourer

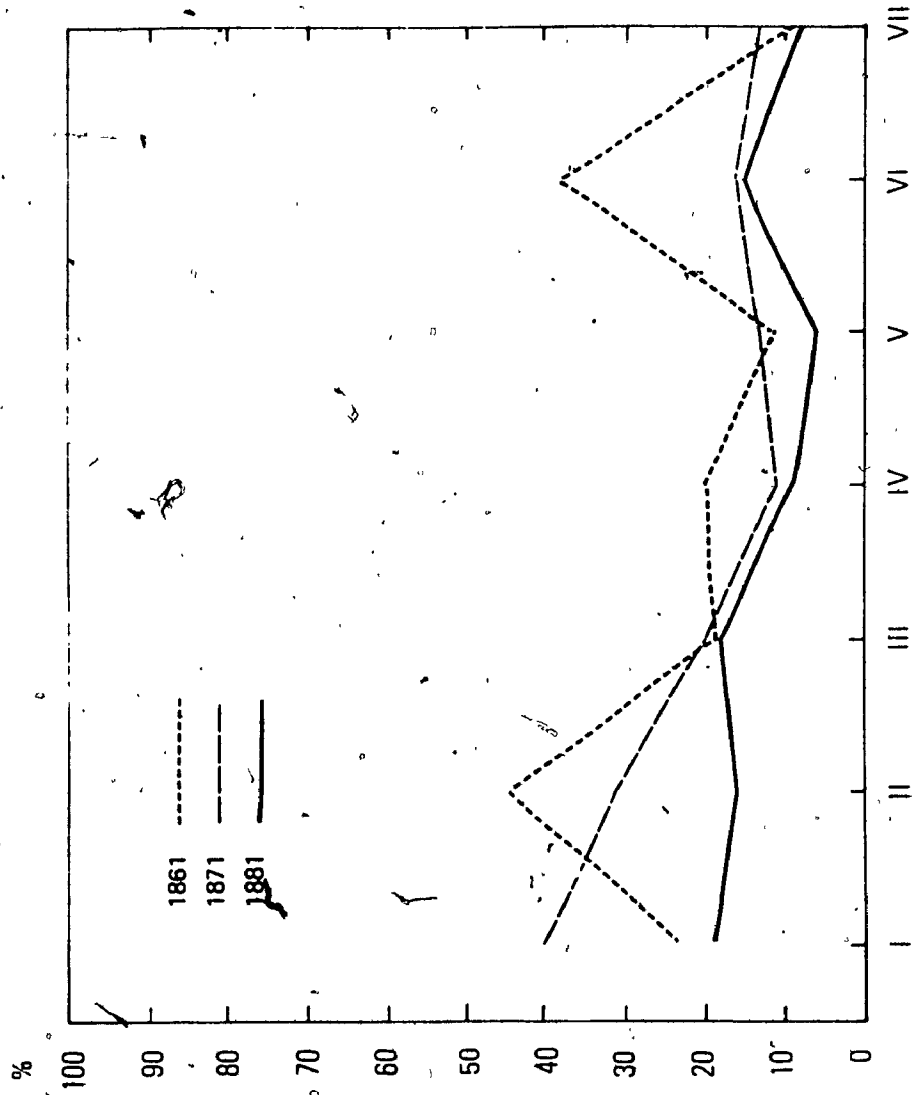
²⁴ Mss. Census, St. Jacques, 1881, 13: 248-344; Lovell's Directory 1881-82, 1882-83.

Arthur had moved with his wife Eulalie and eight month old son to a rear dwelling one block away on Wolfe street.²⁵

Living with relatives might provide needed support, in times of crisis ensuring that someone was available if help was needed. Yet it could also contribute to overcrowding and to unwanted interference in family matters. Just as household sharing was largely limited to the stages of the cycle when families were smallest, so too was sharing with kin. The La Rose's were not alone in living with relatives in the difficult few months after a new child arrived. In 1861 40 per cent of the working class couples which had only a baby also had an additional relative in the household; a few more lived with a related family. (See Figure 6.2) Elderly parents, married or single siblings and cousins might help a mother deal with problems of pregnancy and childcare in the months preceding and following a baby's birth. Domestic labour could be shared, baby care provided. It was at this stage that the difference between boarders and kin folk is most clear. After 1861 women were least likely to have a boarder when they had a young baby, yet likely to have a co-resident relative. While children were still young, and again once some children began to leave home were the usual times when kin actually lived together. At other periods of the life cycle living near rather than with kin was preferable. Help was available without further overcrowding Montreal's small working class apartments. Kin predominated amongst those with only a few children. Nineteen per cent

²⁵ Mss. Census, St. Jacques, 1881, 14:22-42; Lovell's Directory, 1881-82.

Fig. 6.2 : Percentage of Working Class Families that lived with Kin in the family or the dwelling at different life cycle stages, 1861 - 1881



SOURCE : Random samples, Ste. Anne & St. Jacques, working class families only

of those with one or two children had kin in the family or household, compared to 10 per cent of those with three to four children and eight per cent of those with more than four co-resident offspring.²⁶ Consideration about the number of people sharing space thus appear to have dictated patterns of family extension as they did the taking in of boarders and whole families.

Which relatives were taken into the family depended on a subtle interaction between the needs of the host family, the needs of the relatives and the life cycle stage of each. In 1861 newlyweds and those with one young baby, were most likely to take in either siblings or elderly parents. By 1881 the most common form of extension was for those families whose children were all under eleven to share with siblings and/or cousins. Single relatives might bring in extra cash at times when the family head was sick or unemployed, or they could provide help with babysitting and domestic labour, thus freeing others to seek wage labour. By that year, however, only 9 to 13 per cent of families shared their houses or dwellings with relatives. In Montreal, as elsewhere in Canada, North America and western Europe there appears to have been a general shift away from the taking in of both boarders

²⁶ Laurence Glasco found the same pattern in Buffalo, New York in 1885. There whether or not a family took in relatives depended on the presence of children. Only 13 per cent of households with children took in relatives, typically young unmarried sisters and nieces - compared to 29 per cent of households with children. "Migration and Adjustment in the Nineteenth Century City: Occupation, Poverty, and Household Structure of Native Born Whites, Buffalo, New York, 1885", in Tamara Hareven and Maris Vinovskis ed., Family and Population in Nineteenth Century America, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978), p.169.

and relatives in working class and other families.²⁷

Kin were not rejected, rather they were distanced. Most families would continue to take in relatives at some point over the life cycle. Most children would grow up having lived with a grandparent, aunt or uncle for some months, even years. But kin assistance was less and less likely to emerge out of or take the form of co-residence. The distance of kin and the sheer impossibility for those on meagre wages to offer long term financial assistance set the stage for increased reliance on church based charity. Or perhaps the growth of charitable aid in Montreal in this period rendered reliance on kin less necessary.

Michael Katz and his colleagues have argued that the presence or absence of kin may be viewed as "nearly irrelevant" in the argument about whether families became more isolated and nuclear over time. More important to them is the fact that

since the early nineteenth century the state and the quasi-official agencies have invaded the family life of the poor, intruding on the relationship between parents and children, assessing degrees of poverty and moral worth, and exposing their conclusions to the widest possible audience"²⁸

The growing role of the state, and more particularly in Quebec, of the church, in regulating families, in providing social services for critical

²⁷ Michael B. Katz et al, The Social Organization, p.303; Barbara Laslett, "The Family as a Public and Private Institution: An Historical Perspective", Journal of Marriage and the Family, 35 (August 1973) pp.482-6.

²⁸ Michael B.Katz et al., The Social Organization, p.349.

life situations and in attempting to enforce ideological hegemony cannot be denied.²⁹ Yet to stress this point, especially for the nineteenth century, downplays the extent to which working class people used state and church run institutions, including schools, orphanages and material assistance to their own ends. And it denies any importance whatsoever to those institutions that the working class created themselves specifically to deal with such crises. Both the need of the people for assistance and the very real help given is thus trivialized.

Well aware of the danger that illness and death posed to family survival, some skilled workers in Montreal had formed mutual benefit societies earlier in the nineteenth century. By 1863 at least seven associations existed linked to the Catholic church. They provided for about two thousand members. At that date the Association de Bienveillance des Bouchers provided \$2 a week to its sick and infirm. St Patrick's Benevolent Society, the Union St Joseph and Union St Jacques all gave \$3.00 a week. The Montreal Workingman's Mutual Benefit and Widows' and Orphans' Provident Association, begun in 1867, not only paid benefits to sick and disabled members, but also employed a doctor. In 1873, he reported making 300 to 400 visits to sick members, supplying them with medicine when necessary.³⁰

²⁹ On this issue in Quebec see Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Nicole Laurin-Frenette, "Théories de la famille et rapports famille-pouvoirs dans le secteur éducatif au Québec et en France (1850-1960) RHAF, 34 (September 1980) reprinted in Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Micheline Dumont, Maîtresses de Maison, pp.339-361.

³⁰ L. A. Hugué-Latour, Annuaire de Ville Marie. Origine, Utilité et Progrès des Institutions Catholiques de Montréal (Montreal, Senecal, 1863), p.104; Montreal Daily Witness, April 1873.

Some unionized workers had similar funds to draw on. The more conservative reports of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital reported that in nearly all working men's organizations "benevolence forms a prominent part of their work - the caring for the sick and injured, and the providing for the families of deceased members by their insurance departments".³¹ Such institutions created largely by working people for themselves and other members of their class or ethnic group offered help in time of sickness as a right, not something to be begged for. It was a right, however, that was limited largely to skilled workers and amongst them to those who could afford to pay both the \$1.00 to \$5.00 entry fee and the additional .25 to .38 cents required weekly. We have seen that few unskilled workers had sufficient income to do so. In the 1880's one of the requirements of local assemblies of the Knights of Labour was that they establish mutual assurance funds.³² Unskilled workers would surely have benefited. Their effectiveness however remains unstudied. The lack of funds that generally plagued the order probably limited the help that could be offered.

A few companies provided insurance schemes for their employees. Workers for the Grand Trunk, for instance, had between 40 and 78 cents of their monthly wages held back. In return they could get \$3.00 a week if

³¹ Second Report, RCRLC, cited in Greg Kealey, Canada Investigates, p.36.

³² Jacques Martin, "Les chevaliers du travail et le syndicalisme internationale à Montréal", Thèse de MA, Relations Industrielle, Université de Montréal, 1965, p.38.

they were sick, or \$2.50 if they had an accident. Employees testifying before the Royal Commission of 1888 argued that had they been free to invest in a private company they could have received better coverage at a lower price. Workers resented their lack of control over the scheme, and the insufficiency of benefits. The company was alleged to have taken in at least twice as much in premiums between 1885 and 1887 as it paid out in benefits.³³ How many Montreal workers did take out some form of insurance with private companies has not been studied. The proportion able to afford to was probably small.³⁵

For workers injured, even killed on the job there was little guarantee that compensation would be received, or that if offered it would extend over the period of recovery. The anonymous author of Montreal by Gaslight sought out the most squalid aspects of city life, the most desperate cases of poverty. Yet his description of a stonecutter's plight must surely reflect the dilemma that illness and the unemployment that accompanied it posed to many working class families. Near McCord street and the Lachine Canal in Ste. Anne ward he found two families sharing the three rooms of a downstairs apartment.

Upon a bed in the smallest room... covered with dirty and tattered blankets, lies the form of a man. The pale face, sunken eyes, and wasted cheeks need no interpreter. Here sorrow, poverty and hunger speak.... This man until lately a stonemason upon the works for the new Canal, was seriously injured

³³ R.C.R.L.C, Evidence of Richard Powers, p. 458; Jean de Bonville, Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit. pp.96-7.

³⁵ This whole area of forms of mutual support and insurance requires detailed investigation.

by the falling upon him of some heavy stones. At first he deemed his injuries trifling, and was glad to accept a paltry hundred dollars for injuries received while in his employ. But the days moved on, the obstinate flesh refused to heal, days became months, and he was compelled to sell his furniture and move to his present dwelling. His wife earns an occasional dollar, which always goes the way of the saloon, and his three young sons sell papers. In this way they exist.³⁶

The benefits of \$2.00 to \$3.00 weekly provided by mutual benefit associations would not have supported a family. There were limits, too, to the financial assistance that kin or neighbours could offer, particularly in times of depression when unemployment and sickness were widespread. Kin and community resources were quickly depleted and families had to turn to local charites. The rapid expansion of the Catholic church over these decades and the growing number of religious orders providing help to the poor, the elderly, the sick, and the young meant that some form of charity was available locally in most areas. In Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards were housed two of the largest orders of nuns - the Grey Nuns and the Sisters of Providence. Both visited the sick and the poor in their homes. Both ran orphanages for orphaned and needy children. Each order ran depots for the poor in their part of town. They distributed wood, clothing, food and sometimes cash to the poor. Soup kitchens, dispensaries "with remedies of the kind the poor needed" and sometimes visits by doctors were arranged by various religious orders and charities. In the 1860's, the Sulpicians financed the provision of milk and flour to poor families with small children,

³⁶ Anon, Montreal by Gaslight, pp.19-20.

and enabled them to purchase bread at half price. In some cases interest-free loans were given to prevent total ruin. These had to be repayed.³⁷

In these working class neighbourhoods the Sisters of Providence and the Grey Nuns who provided care for the other poor were quick to notice and feel the spread of poverty. In 1875 after one year of depression, children were arriving hungry at the schools and day cares of St. Jacques. The Sisters of Providence reported that two-thirds of the children in the asile in St. Jacques were no longer paying their small monthly contributions. Often they were without nourishment. Several small boys arrived every Monday morning trembling with weakness, saying they were really hungry and that they had nothing at all to eat at home. The sisters fed them and saw to it that the family received food, despairing of what to do for all the other poor who were suffering so terribly from the great financial crisis.³⁸ Two years further into the depression, the Sisters reported that fewer children were attending school or preschool classes. "The lack of work and the resultant poverty were obliging parents to keep their children at home as they could not clothe them adequately to send them to school".³⁹

³⁷ Huguette Lapointe-Roy, "Paupérisme et Assistance Sociale à Montréal, 1832-1865," (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1972), p.108; L'Institut de la Providence, Histoire des Soeurs de la Providence, Vol. VI, p.162.

³⁸ "Notes pour les chroniques de l'Asile St. Vincent", ASP, 1875-76, pp.29-30.

³⁹ IBID, p.41. My translation.

Between 1874 and 1875 the number of loaves of bread given to the poor by the conferences of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in the St. Jacques area jumped from 700 to 2,980 annually. In the latter year 70 gallons of soup were distributed daily.⁴⁰ Protestant charities provided similar services. The Board of Outdoor Relief of the Protestant House of Industry and refuge visited the poor and sick providing firewood, clothing, blankets and provisions. In 1872, during one of the longest and most severe winters experienced, over two hundred families were assisted during the coldest months - a time when firewood had risen to "famine prices" of \$10 to \$15.00 a cord. A total of 3,566 families were helped that winter. In the subsequent years of depression numbers rose dramatically. In 1876 outdoor relief given to families comprised "firewood, tea, bread, sugar, flour, oatmeal, soap, candles, new and cast off clothes, boots, rubbers" and blankets. That year a total of 8,172 resident and immigrant families were reported to have received help in that "trying time" of "lack of employment".⁴¹

The Montreal Diet Dispensary was founded in the late 1870's specifically to provide "the sick with suitable nourishment carefully

⁴⁰ IBID, pp.27,47.

⁴¹ Annual Reports, Montreal Protestant House of Industry and Refuge, 1872, "Report of the United Board of Outdoor Relief", pp.1-12; IBID, 1876. The number of families reported to receive help in the report and figures given each year do not exactly tally. The influence of the depression, is, however, very clear, particularly in the numbers receiving help in January and February. In February 1871 279 families received help. The figures for subsequent years were as follows: 1872,180; 1873,182; 1874,184; 1875,567; 1876,588; 1877,303; 1878,243; 1879,196; 1880,236; 1881,204. Annual Reports, 1872-1881.

prepared." It was principally for the poor of all denominations who could "obtain any necessary article of food free by simply presenting an order from any physician, clergy, or other responsible person known to some member of the committee." Those who were able to enlist such necessary support were visited and given beef, tea, chicken broth, calf's foot jelly or other food deemed appropriate. Medical assistance was provided by the Dispensary's nurse. She described the condition of some families struck by illness.

To give an illustration of the work done, a family came under my notice a few months ago. Husband and wife were down sick, and no one to care for them but a little boy about 10 years of age, he was the oldest of three. It was a very sad case...

In another home:

The husband was out of work, the mother sick with four small children in the house. There was no fuel and only one bed and something which may pass for a couch but no covering which could be called bed covering.⁴²

Visitors from all such charities described the hunger and misery that accompanied illness in most working class families. Over half of

⁴² Annual Report, Montreal Diet Dispensary, 1886, n.p; Miss A.B. Frizzel to the Committee of the Montreal Diet Dispensary, 12 March 1892, Montreal Diet Dispensary Records, Rare Book Room, McGill University.

the food given out by the Diet Dispensary was given free. The nurse made two to three thousand visits to sick families during the 1880's. In the same decade the Sisters of Providence reported visiting anywhere between 3,839 and 22,400 sick people in their homes annually. Between 2,409 and 4,587 meals were distributed annually to both the sick and the poor. The Grey Nuns and St Vincent de Paul Society would have helped many more.⁴³

Help from most church run charities involved careful scrutinizing of a family's worthiness and, when deemed necessary, attempts at moral uplifting and conversion. Montreal's Bishop Bourget was quite explicit about the role that visiting the poor and sick should play. Speaking in 1867 to the lay women who helped the Sisters of Providence raise money and visit the poor, he pointed with evident fear to the rapid population growth in the city and the miseries accompanying it. If charities did not deal with the wretchedness he believed they would be overwhelmed. Evil would recur in even more hideous forms. Home visiting, particularly in the poorest neighbourhoods, would, he argued, prevent demoralization from overwhelming the lower classes.⁴⁴ By visiting the poor, the Sisters and their lay helpers would help to regulate families and keep the peace in households. They could instruct the ignorant, correct vices, suppress scandals, and encourage attendance at the

⁴³ Annual Reports, Montreal Diet Dispensary, 1885-1887; "Notes pour les chroniques de l'Asile St Vincent," 1887-1888, ASP, pp.53, 66, 72, 92, 107, 122, 128.

⁴⁴ Histoire des Soeurs de la Providence, VI, p.168.

sacraments as well as promote industry and economy among the poor.⁴⁵

Here clearly was the church attempting to intervene in family life to reshape and control family members and relationships. In Quebec until well into the century it was the church not the state that in the words of Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Nicole Laurin Frenette "organized the family as a mechanism of regulation and reproduction of capitalist society".⁴⁶ The degree to which the church was successful in establishing ideological hegemony in this period is questionable. Certainly some working class families took advantage of church run institutions to serve their own ends. Analysis of the families of children attending the St. Alexis orphanage, run by the Sisters of Providence in St. Jacques ward, provides an example and illustrates the complexity of interactions between families and institutions.⁴⁷

Over 1,000 girls passed through the St. Alexis orphanage between 1860 and 1889. At first parents from both rural and urban areas sheltered their children there. Increasingly over the period, however, the institution came to serve the people of Montreal and especially the families of the surrounding district of St. Jacques. By the 1880's over 80 per cent of the girls in St. Alexis had parents who lived in

⁴⁵ IBID, VI, p.191.

⁴⁶ Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Nicole Laurin-Frenette, "Theories de la Famille", p.203.

⁴⁷ This following section is drawn partially from my article on this topic. Bettina Bradbury, "The Fragmented Family: Family Strategies in the Face of Death, Illness, and Poverty, Montreal, 1860-1885", in Joy Parr ed., Childhood and Family, pp.109-128.

Montreal.⁴⁸ Yet few of these girls were true orphans. Parents brought them to the orphanage. Parents returned to take them home again. Over half of the girls whose families were traced to the censuses of the St. Jacques area had two living parents at the time they entered St. Alexis. Probably one third had only one parent.⁴⁹ Illness, poverty, unemployment and other family crises must explain the presence of a large number of these girls with living parents. Nearly all came from working class families. Labourers were especially likely to send their daughters to St. Alexis. Other fathers were in the injured trades or other jobs in which the pay was low, the work seasonal and especially vulnerable to cyclical variations in the economy. They were from just those families that we have seen were completely dependent on wages so low that they allowed for no savings against crises.⁵⁰

Parents did not explain their reason for leaving a daughter at St. Alexis. At Montreal's Protestant Infants' Home parents did, and the sickness of mothers was a major reason for children's entry. Its 1895

⁴⁸ "Registre pour les Orphelines de l'Orphelinat Saint Alexis".

⁴⁹ Estimates on how many children had one or two parents are based firstly on families traced to the three censuses, and secondly on scrutiny of the parish registers between 1850 and 1875. The names of both parents of the girl were checked in the death registers. As the name of the spouse was given on death it was easy to be definite about matches. This method obviously missed any parents dying outside Montreal, thus underestimating the numbers with one or two dead parents. The fractions should be viewed, therefore, only as reasonable approximations.

⁵⁰ One hundred parents' occupations were found in the St. Jacques manuscript censuses and in the parish registers. Twenty-three per cent were labourers, 19 per cent shoemakers, 9 per cent carpenters or joiners. Ninety per cent were in working class occupations.

report stated that many of the children's families were "too poor to pay anything - out of work - wife sick - seeking the benefits of the home for the little ones until such time as they can provide a home for them". The impact of sickness among mothers on the family economy and the children is clear. That year 21 per cent of the entrants had sick mothers compared to 2 per cent with sick fathers.⁵¹

At St. Alexis half of the girls came from homes at that most critical stage of the family life cycle when all the children were under the age of eleven. Another one quarter of the families included no children over fifteen. (See Table 6.3) Placing a child in an orphanage for several months, even years was another way in which families could balance incoming wages and the numbers of mouths to feed.

When a father found more steady work, when a sick parent became well, or when a girl reached working age, parents reclaimed their daughters. Eliza Masson, for instance, spent just over four years in the orphanage between the ages of eight and twelve. When she was fifteen the census enumerator found her back with her family. She was working as a seamstress, adding to the shaky wages of her shoemaker father, while her younger sisters went to school. Eliza St. Germain, whose father was a barber, left the orphanage at the age of thirteen and

⁵¹ Protestant Infant's Home, Annual Report, 1895, p.6.

Table 6.3
The Life Cycle Stage of the Families of
Girls sent to the Saint Alexis Orphanage

<u>Life Cycle Stage</u>	<u>Number of Girls</u>			<u>Percentage at</u>
	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>that Stage</u> <u>1861-1881</u>
All Children under 11	9	14	10	50%
Some Children 11-15, the rest under 11	1	8	7	24
Some Children 16-19, the rest under 16	2	-	5	11
Some Children over 20	-	-	1	11
Unascertainable	-	-	3	4
				100%
Total Number of Families traced to the Manuscript census	13	27	26	66

Source: "Registre"; Children who were linked to families, in the manuscript census, St. Jacques ward, 1861, 1871, and 1881.

joined her mother working as a seamstress, probably at home in the crowded building which they shared with three other families.⁵² Of the girls who left St. Alexis to live in St. Jacques ward, one third went to work before they were sixteen, usually as seamstresses or factory workers. Another third went to school after returning home. There they extended the education they had received in the orphanage, kept out of the mothers' way during the day time but were free to help at home at night. Other girls returned home and became their mother's household

⁵² "Registre", No's 278, 464; Mss. Census, St. Jacques; 1871, 5: 309-363; "Registre", 457; Mss. Census, St. Jacques, 5: 27-50.

help, particularly when there were many younger siblings to be looked after.

Protestant working class families could make use of similar orphanages. Both the Protestant Infant's Home and Ladies Benevolent Institution took children with living parents. After studying the admission register of the latter orphanage, Janice Harvey concluded that "the children were not orphans". They were children either:

abandoned by their parents or received from parents unable to care for them. Common situations included widowed or deserted mothers who were sick, often in the hospital, and parents who drank too much or had thrown the children into the street.⁵³

Children probably spent a similar length of time in protestant orphanages as at St. Alexis. Certainly this Catholic orphanage, like the nineteenth century city was a place of great mobility. Children were continually arriving and leaving. Ten per cent of the girls stayed one month or less, half for under one year. Between 1860 and 1885 the length of the girls' stays grew shorter. Increasingly parents seem to have used the orphanage to solve short-term rather than long-term family crises. Thus in the 1860's, only one-third of the girls stayed under one year; in the 1870's 58 per cent did, and between 1880 and 1885 the percentage increased to 65. The mobility of the girls reflected that of their parents. Some were placed with the Sisters while their father or

⁵³ Janice Harvey, "Upper Class Reaction to Poverty in Mid-Nineteenth Century Montreal :A Protestant Example", (M.A Thesis, McGill University, 1978) pp.141, 96. (Hereafter, "Upper Class Reaction to Poverty").

mother sought work away from Montreal. Nineteen per cent returned to families which had moved elsewhere in Quebec, 3 per cent to families in the United States and 1 per cent to households in Ontario. Of those who originally came from Montreal, a quarter did not return there.⁵⁴

Half the girls had sisters in the orphanage. Usually they arrived together, but some parents sent daughter separately and collected them at different dates. Some of the girls came to the orphanage for a second term, a few for a third.

Such orphanages were probably a last resort for those lacking either the money or kin and friends able to assist them to deal otherwise with their problems. At other times kin did help. Eight per cent of the girls left the orphanage to live for a while with an aunt or less often an uncle or grandparent. The pattern was similar at the Ladies Benevolent Institute.⁵⁵

The churches provided such institutions not simply as charities and public services but as places where the omissions and the failings of the family could be countered. When family home situations appeared

⁵⁴ These percentages are derived from the information given in the register on the 538 girls from the Montreal area who entered St. Alexis between 1860 and 1884. The register listed the child's name, her father's name and her mother's maiden name as well as her age at entry, the date of arrival and departure and the person who collected her.

⁵⁵ Forty four of the St. Alexis girls out of the 540 for whom information exists were taken by a relative; Janice Harvey, "Upper Class Reaction to Poverty", pp.98-9,142.

inimical to a Christian and Catholic upbringing the Sisters were only too happy to retain the children. Poor but devoted parents, however, were helped in every way possible. The girls received a solid grounding in Catholicism which the Sisters hoped would last. Orphanages, like other church run institutions, were created to counteract the evils of a rapidly secularizing society. The expansion of charities run by the church over this period, offered Montreal families a growing number of ways of dealing with periods of illness and poverty. Many, like the parents of the girls at St. Alexis, used these institutions as they saw fit. The temporary relinquishment of some or all children offered these families a chance to re-organize or recover. For some widows the temporary placement of their children in an orphanage was the only way they could be free to find work, recover from illness and grief and restructure the family economy. It is to the plight of widows that the following section turns.

Widowhood

Widows were amongst the most favoured of charity seekers. For a widow had clearly not caused her own plight. She fell neatly into the category of "deserving poor". Before looking at charitable support for widows it is important to examine the extent of widowhood and some of the strategies that widows utilized to reshape their family economy after a husband's death so as to avoid charity.

Widowhood was not something confined to a few women. In 1861 Montreal included some 2,674 widows, compared to 974 widowers. By 1881 there were 5,790 widows and 1,753 widowers, a ratio of 3.3 widows for every one widower. At all ages there were over two widows per widower, usually over three. At ages forty one to sixty one 22 to 24 per cent of Montreal women were widows, compared to 6 or 7 per cent of men. In 1871 there were over four widows that age for each widower. (See Table 6.4) Higher male death rates after the age of forty contributed somewhat to this differential. We have seen already that between ages five and forty, women's death rates were slightly higher than men's. At later ages men died at a higher rate. Among those over sixty the male death rate was 73 per one thousand compared to 58 for women.

The discrepancy between the proportions of widows and widowers can, only partially be explained by the higher male death rate - and then only of those over forty.⁵⁶ Women were not more likely to be widows than were men to be widowers because of the death of spouse. Rather they failed or chose not to find a new one. Finding a second wife was clearly simpler than was finding a husband. The dominance of females over males in the city⁵⁷ offered widowers a large pool of potential

⁵⁶ A very rough indication of the possible influence of the death rate can be gained by comparing the ratio of male to female deaths with the rates of widows and widowers. In the averages calculated for 1879-1882 the ratio of male to female deaths was .081 to 1.00 @ ages 20-40; 1.25 to 1.00 at 40-60 and 1.26 to 1.00 at 61 and over. (See Table 4.8) Compare this to the 1881 ratio of 3.10, 3.67 and 3.09 widows per widower at roughly equivalent ages. Differential mortality apparently explains only one third of the difference after age 40 and none before.

⁵⁷ On male-female ratios in Montreal's wards see Suzanne Cross, "The Neglected Majority", p.69.

TABLE 6.4
WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS
MONTREAL, STE. ANNE AND ST. JACQUES WARDS

		MONTRÉAL				STE. ANNE				ST. JACQUES					
		Widows		Widows per One widower		Widowers		Widows per One widower		Widowers		Widows		Widows per One widower	
		No.	%	Ratio	%	No.	%	Ratio	%	No.	%	Ratio	%	No.	%
1861	Total Numbers	2674		2.74	97%	499	19%	2.53	33%	197	33%	2.53	33%	197	33%
	Age Groups	No.	%	Ratio	%	No.	%	Ratio	%	No.	%	Ratio	%	No.	%
	30-40	340	6%	3.06	27%	58	6%	3.86	47%	14	4%	3.86	97%	12	2%
	40-50	573	16%	3.04	57%	118	19%	3.93	42%	30	4%	3.93	23%	30	6%
	50-60	609	27%	2.64	10%	136	37%	2.96	12%	46	12%	2.96	26%	32	11%
	60+	965	30%	2.51	23%	54	5%	2.61	23%	59	23%	2.61	45%	50	22%
1871	Total Numbers	4117		3.57	11%	670	18%	3.60	56%	186	30%	3.60	56%	177	31%
	Age Groups	No.	%	Ratio	%	No.	%	Ratio	%	No.	%	Ratio	%	No.	%
	31-41	639	9%	3.69	3%	*	3%	2.6	3%	*	3%	2.6	3%	*	1%
	41-61	1845	24%	4.12	6%	17%	17%	2.6	6%	6%	6%	2.6	17%	5%	3%
	61+	1346	26%	3.05	22%	50%	50%	2.8	22%	22%	22%	2.8	32%	21%	1%
1881	Total Numbers	5790		3.30	17%	n/a	n/a	4.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.7	n/a	n/a	3.65
	Age Groups	No.	%	Ratio	%	No.	%	Ratio	%	No.	%	Ratio	%	No.	%
	31-41	887	9%	3.10	7%	*	7%	3.0	2%	*	2%	3.0	10%	*	3%
	41-61	2518	22%	3.67	24%	6%	24%	3.6	6%	6%	6%	3.6	21%	7%	3%
	61+	1983	52%	3.09	6%	6%	6%	9.6	12%	12%	12%	9.6	46%	15%	3%

*The percentages widowed at each age were based on the random samples for 1871 and 1901, as the information is not available in the published censuses for that year.
Source: 1861 Census of Canada, Table 5; 1871 Census of Canada, Table IX; 1881 Census of Canada, Tables VIII and X. My calculations.

wives. A widow with several young children would have seemed a poor alternative to a single girl, for young children were a liability in the working class family economy. No systematic study exists of patterns of remarriage in Montreal in this period. Amongst widowed parents sending children to the Saint Alexis orphanage, however, the differential rates are clear. Not one indication of remarriage was found in the city's marriage registers for any of the twenty four widows who placed their children with the Sisters of Providence between 1860 and 1885. At least seven of the twenty-eight identified widowers with daughters there definitely remarried, usually within two years of their wife's death.⁵⁸

The death of a spouse was a very different experience for men and women. For men it meant, indeed necessitated, hasty remarriage, particularly if there were children. For most women, loss of a husband was followed by years of struggle to bring up a family alone.⁵⁹ The nature of that struggle was largely determined by the class position of the family before the husband's death. Whether there were children, and their ages when the father died were also important. Most wives of bankers or industrialists faced widowhood with sufficient money to avoid poverty for themselves and their children. Of these there were few in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards. Most professionals would have saved sufficient money to leave a wife some economic basis for survival. Even the wives of small shopkeepers, innkeepers and independent artisans

⁵⁸ Bettina Bradbury, "The Fragmented Family", pp.119,121.

⁵⁹ IBID, p.119

faced widowhood with the wherewithal to make a living. Up to the 1860's a few widows inherited the trade of their husband on his death. When Emelie Belangers' husband Jean-Baptiste died suddenly of apoplexy, the fifty year old widow continued to supervise the five male workers in his tinsmith's shop paying out the \$39.00 a month's wages to each. Similarly Irish widow Hennessy who lost her husband before she reached thirty was able to continue in his trade as a milkman.⁶⁰ Over the next decades this pre-industrial tradition apparently died out.

Some workers' wives received small pensions or payments from their husbands, employers or from mutual benefit societies. Irish widows whose husbands had paid dues to the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society received \$30.00 toward funeral expenses and \$1.50 a week plus 20 cents for each orphan under twelve. Workers' organizations offered similar support. The Association de Bienveillance des Bouchers, the Union St. Joseph and the Société Canadienne des Charpentiers et Menuisiers all paid out about the same amount to the widows of members.⁶¹

Over these decades the numbers of such organizations increased. Some were church based, others union based. In 1871 the city directory reported that one papally approved Catholic Institution, the "Union of Prayer and Good Works" had 23,130 members in the city. It was aimed:

⁶⁰ Mss. Census, 1861, Ste. Anne, fo.1446 IBID, 1861, Ste. Anne, fo.1662

⁶¹ L-A Huguet-Latour, Annuaire de Ville Marie, pp.105-7, 113-4.

to obtain a happy death and secure a funeral service, the corpse being present in favour of the members, who departs this life without leaving their relatives any means to pay the expenses thereof.

A widow who had seen that 25 cents annually had been paid into this fund would at least have been saved funeral expenses.⁶²

A few of the employer-based insurance schemes provided for workers' widows and families if the death was clearly a result of a work related illness or accident. Montreal's Fire Department was reported not only to pay men fully when sick, but also to provide insurance for the widow or remaining relatives whether a fireman "died naturally or by accident while in service." In the 1880's firemen's widows apparently received \$300.00 for the first three years, then \$100.00 a year until the tenth year, then a lump sum of \$1,000. Furthermore nothing was deducted from the fireman's pay to cover the scheme.⁶³ Perhaps this was just compensation for the very little time firemen ever spent with their families and for their low rate of pay.

Benefits seldom came automatically on the death of a husband. Most widows had to fight to get any compensation from their husband's former employer, even in cases where his death had clearly been work related. Numerous widows of former policemen wrote to request some help from the

⁶² Montreal Directory for 1870-71 (Montreal, John Lovell, 1871), p.510.

⁶³ RCRLC, Evidence of William Patton, Chief of Montreal Fire Brigade, p.675; Evidence of James Doolan, p.697. Why there should have been such a generous scheme in the City's fire department, and virtually no such schemes in other ones - notably the police department warrants examination.

city's Police department. A widow Menard had to write several letters in 1868 before the Police Committee agreed to give her \$100 "in consideration of her late husband's good services." The Finance Committee, however, only gave the money on the condition that the amount be "invested for the benefit of the children in such manner as the Chairman of the Police Committee may deem most advantageous."⁶⁴ Mary Fitzgerald's husband had worked twenty-three years as a city policeman when he died as a result of "injuries received in execution of his duty." She petitioned council for support. Recognizing that she had "several children altogether destitute and without any means of support, she was magnanimously awarded \$100.00. By the mid 70's \$100 was the usual amount given to policemen's widows. Yet they had to write requesting support, and both the policeman's record and the financial state of the widow appear to have been considered before the money was bequeathed.⁶⁵ By the end of the period covered here, after years of receiving requests for help from policemen's widows, the committee of the police department reported in 1888 that it had, that year, been able

to ascertain the serious necessity of providing to the wants of the families of the officers and members of the police force.

Salaries are small and families are generally numerous and the inevitable result of the death of the head of the family is misery or next to it for widows and orphans.

The report concluded that a benefit fund to which the City contributed

⁶⁴ Montreal Minutes, 3 October 1868.

⁶⁵ Montreal Minutes 26 October 1875; 13 January 1876; 7 March 1873.

\$10,000 and policemen paid 3 per cent of their salaries would be better than the existing situation where families were "thrown on the streets without a cent" or with a "ridiculous indemnity".⁶⁶ Few widows could have survived on the meagre amounts granted by the City's police department, or indeed by most mutual benefit associations. Even a fairly generous scheme such as that of the fire department would have sufficed only if the widow had few children.

Recognizing the dilemma that a wage earner's death posed to surviving family members the authors of the first report of the Royal Commission of 1888 made two recommendations. Firstly they suggested that employers should pay compensation to men injured, or if they died, to their heirs, "even in cases where negligence on the part of the employer or his agents, or defects in machinery, has not caused the accident". This was justified because the "owners of machinery benefit by its use". Furthermore the government was advised to "assure workmen by means of a governmental system of payment to the heirs of persons killed by accident".⁶⁷ This, like the other recommendations of the commissioners, was not acted upon.

Pensions, death benefits, or savings may have enabled some widows to set up small businesses after their husband's death. A boarding house, tavern or saloon, even a corner grocery could be opened with a small

⁶⁶ Annual Report of the Chief of Police, MAR, 1888, p.6

⁶⁷ RCRLC., Second Report, cited in Greg Kealey, Canada Investigates, p.17.

amount of capital. In such businesses home and work did not need to be separate. Widows did not have to constantly seek work or rely on wages. Children could be watched, housekeeping done while working. Six to 7 per cent of widows listing an occupation opened up their homes to several strangers, transforming them into boarding houses. Isabelle Fisher was thirty four and a widow in 1861. She had four children aged four to eleven, two of whom attended school. They shared their two story brick house on Wellington Street in Ste. Anne ward with six male and female boarders. Isabelle also kept a pig which she valued at \$8.00.⁶⁸

One quarter of the widows reporting an occupation in St. Anne in 1871 ran such small businesses. They ranged from hotelkeepers, candystore owners and grocers and traders to hucksters and peddlars. The lines between such occupations were, no doubt, often tenuous. These were not the leading jobs held by widows, but the proportion involved in such non-wage based jobs did differentiate the work experiences of widows from that of working wives.

Most working class women faced widowhood with little or no economic security and no capital to launch even the smallest of businesses. The majority had been part of a family economy based on wages. Wages would continue to constitute their major source of survival. Before a

⁶⁸ Mss. Census, Ste. Anne, 1861, fo. 2276

husband's death these wives had managed the incoming wage, stretched it over tight periods, and even perhaps supplemented it at times by working for wages themselves. Now they found themselves responsible for ensuring that there was incoming cash on which to live. Nothing in her previous work background prepared the average woman with several young children to be the sole supporter of a family. When she had had experience with wage labour, it had been brief. It had seldom led to the development of a marketable skill. When she had worked previously she had usually been a second or third wage earner in the family. Now she would need to be the major earner, or provide in other ways. As long as girls were raised as home-makers, as the reproducers of labour power, and wages predicated on this assumption, widows and single women would face this problem.

The age at which a woman lost her husband and the ages of her children largely determined her wage earning strategy. Before the children reached fourteen or fifteen, widows sought work themselves. Later they relied on their children's wages. One fifth of all widows reported to the census in 1861 that they had an occupation. A decade later a quarter did so. In St. Jacques in 1871 nearly one third of all widows reported having a job. Clearly more would have worked sporadically. Those who were widowed in their twenties or thirties were the most likely to have steady work. Thus, in Ste. Anne in 1861, around 40 per cent of those aged twenty to thirty compared to only 6 per cent of widows over sixty reported working. In St. Jacques more worked in their older years, especially in the sewing trades. (See Table 6.5)

Table 6.5
PERCENTAGE OF WIDOWS REPORTING AN OCCUPATION
AT DIFFERENT AGES, 1861 ONLY

<u>Age Group</u>		<u>20-29</u>	<u>30-39</u>	<u>40-49</u>	<u>50-59</u>	<u>60+</u>
<u>Ste. Anne</u>						
Number reporting an occupation		13	24	21	26	9
Percentage of that age group reporting an occupation		41%	40%	16%	18%	6.4%
<u>St. Jacques</u>						
Number reporting an occupation		5	13	24	11	15
Percentage of that age group reporting an occupation		19%	22%	24%	16%	18%
Percentage reporting an occupation in the two wards combined		31%	32%	21%	18%	10%

Source: All widows reporting an occupation in the mss. census as a proportion of the total number that age listed in the published census. 1861 Census of the Canadas, Table V.

Widows were involved in a depressingly limited number of occupations. They took on jobs that used the skills they had developed in the home. Working as seamstress, dressmaker or milliner was the most common job. (See Table 6.6). The sewing trades involved around 40 per cent of St. Jacques' widows in 1861 and 1871, 27 per cent of those of Ste. Anne in 1861, but only 17 per cent a decade later. Sewing at home offered the same benefits to widows as to working wives. Children could be watched, necessary housework done. Mother and daughters could work together. Fifty seven year old widow, Marie Aubrey, for instance, sewed for a living as did her thirty three and twenty one year old daughters. One son aged twenty reported working as a tailor, another as a

Table 6.6

NUMBERS OF WIDOWS REPORTING AN OCCUPATION, 1861 - 1871

	1861		1871	
	Ste. Anne	St. Jacques	Ste. Anne	St. Jacques
I TRADES & FACTORY WORK				
Sewing Trades	25 27%	28 42%	23 17%	65 38%
Confectioner	1	-	-	-
Shoebinder or shoemaker	1	-	-	1
Leatherworker	-	1	-	-
Tabacco work	-	-	1 1%	3
"Factory woman"	-	-	1 1%	-
<u>Subtotal</u>	27 30%	29 44%	25 19%	69 40%
II GENERAL				
Labourer-Unspec.	17 18%	6 8%	8 6%	13 8%
III SMALL SHOPS & TRADES				
a) Boarding House Keeper	6 6%	4 6%	9 7%	1
Innkeeper	3	-	-	-
Hotelkeeper	1	-	-	-
Saloon keeper	-	-	1 1%	1
Tavern keeper	-	3 5%	-	-
b) Grocer	1	1	1 1%	3
Trader	2	5 8%	10 7%	16 9%
Store Shopkeeper	1	-	3 2%	1
Candy store	-	-	1 1%	1
Fish seller	1	-	-	-
Market Woman	2	-	1 1%	3
Fruit or apple dealer	1	-	2 1%	-
Huckster	-	-	2 1%	-
Peddler	-	-	4 3%	-
Tinsmith	1	-	-	-
<u>Subtotal</u>	19 19%	13 20%	34 25%	25 15%
IV PRIVATE SERVICE				
Servant	7 8%	5 8%	11 8%	11 6%
Washerwoman	20 22%	5 8%	35 26%	22 13%
Charwoman	-	1	12 9%	5 3%
Cook	-	2	1 1%	1
Housekeeper	-	-	1 1%	-
Midwife	-	1	1	5 3%
<u>Subtotal</u>	27 29%	14 23%	61 46%	44 26%

Table 6.6 (continued)

	1861		1871	
	Sté. Anne	St. Jacques	Sté. Anne	St. Jacques
Midwife		1	1	5
Schoolteacher		1	1	3
Music teacher			1	1
Salesperson		1		
Florist		2		
Restaurant		1		1
Nurse		1	2	1
<u>Subtotal</u>		6 9%	5 4%	10 6%
VI COMMERCE				
Bookkeeper				1
Dry goods				2
Furrier				1
VII OTHER				
"Rentiere"				11
Cows and milk	2			
Cowherd			1	
Carter			1	
Beggar		1		1
Illegible		1		1
Total	93	66	134	172
Total Number of Widows	499	333	670	565
% of Widows Listing a Job	19%	20%	20%	30%
% in the Two Wards Combined		19%		25%

Source: All widows listing an occupation in the Mss. Censuses of 1861-1871. Total figures are from the published Censys.

shoemaker.⁶⁹ Adelaide Hebert, aged fifty five had four daughters aged sixteen to twenty two who, like her were seamstresses.⁷⁰

Acting as servant, washerwoman, charwoman, cook, nurse or housekeeper for others was the next most important area of employment for widows. Some moved in alone with wealthy families. Others took their children with them. More provided services by the day. In the 1870's the relatively good economic times seem to have led to an increase in people using others to do their washing and cleaning. This was most dramatic in Ste. Anne ward, where over one quarter of widows worked as washerwomen that year, and another 9 per cent as charwomen. A few listing such jobs may, in fact, have worked in public laundries. For, as capitalists entered new sectors, producing commodities or providing services that had once been the sole preserve of domestic labour, work in such places as bakeries and steam laundries rendered old jobs available in new settings for both girls and widows. By the late 1880's Montreal had at least one steam laundry in which most work was done by machines. Women were employed to wash flannels and silks and to do ironing. Manager Thomas Henry Love reported that there was "no poorer class of help hired than I hire, and I pay them good wages. I hire poor widow women when they come around".⁷¹ Women in his laundry could earn between \$8.00 and \$10.00 a week as ironers. The average pay,

⁶⁹ Mss. Census, St. Jacques, 1871:6-202:330

⁷⁰ Mss. Census, St. Jacques, 1871:8-115:152.

⁷¹ RCRLC, p.690.

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Table 6.7
Widows Household Position and
the Percentages Working

Percentage of Widows That Reported Job.	1861		1871		1881	
	Total No.	% at Work	Total No.	% at Work	Total No.	% at Work
- Family Heads	70	26%	56	52%	115	29%
- Living with Parents	3	66%	-	-	1	100%
- Living with Children	10	0%	20	5%	16	0
- Living with other Relatives & Boarding	26	3%	14	14%	34	68%
Total	109	21%	90	36%	167	27%
 % of Widows Heading Their Own Household		64%		62%		69%

Source: Widows falling into the random samples, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques Wards combined.

however, was only \$4.50.⁷²

General labouring jobs were found by six to eighteen per cent of widows. Together labouring, washing, servant and dressmaking accounted for around 70 per cent of all widow's reported occupations. A small minority held jobs that called on skills they probably had been acquired prior to marriage. Several school teachers, music teachers, nurses and midwives fell into this category. Others reported miscellaneous occupations requiring little or no skill such as "factory woman",

⁷² RCRLC, p.690.

"tobacco work" or "cowherd". One honest widow, Marie Paquette, a seventy seven year old illiterate French Canadian, candidly reported her occupation as beggar.⁷³

For most of these widows wage work outside or inside the home was truly an extension of their domestic labour. Few of the jobs offered secure, steady paying work. Few offered consistent hours daily. Most were ones in which children could accompany them if necessary. These factors were both their attraction and their disadvantage. The washerwomen and charwomen would be the first to find themselves without work in times of economic crises as slightly better off women took on their own washing to save money.

Sixty to seventy per cent of widows headed their own families. (See Table 6.7) Of these 26 per cent in 1861, 52 per cent in 1871 and 29 per cent in 1881 had jobs themselves. Once children reached working age they were a widow's major resource. Co-resident children formed a much more important component of the family economy of widows than in male headed families. Between 1861 and 1881 female headed families averaged almost twice as many children at work as did male headed ones. (See Table 6.8) Widows were more likely than two-parent households to rely on two or more wage earners. Given the low wages that children and the widows themselves could make this is not surprising. "When we are not rich", a widow explained to the commissioners examining the relations

⁷³ Mss. Census, St. Jacques, 1871, 10: 287-328.

between Labour and Capital in 1888, "we need the help of our children's work. I have been a widow these four years".⁷⁴

Despite their desperate need for money to live on, widows were not significantly more reliant on the work of children under fifteen than other families. (See Table 6.9) Such young children may have begged, sold newspapers, shone shoes or been involved in any of the other street trades so seldom reported to census takers. Widows were, however, much more likely to need the wages of teenage and adult children. It was in their greater reliance on their wages that widows differed most from other family heads. By 1881 22 per cent of widows compared to 14 per cent of male headed families reported one or more teenagers at work. Twenty-eight per cent reported children over twenty one at home and working compared to 12 per cent of male headed households. Differences were not simply a result of widows being older and having more children of working age. Amongst men over the age of sixty, 25 per cent had co-resident, working adult children while 46 per cent of widows did.

Older widows appear to have exercised a powerful influence over their grown children. At least some of the sons and daughters of widows remained single and at home long after their peers from two parent families had married. Bridget Drew, for instance, was seventy years old when the census was taken in 1881. She was still listed as the head of

⁷⁴ RCRLC., Evidence of Widow Dame Rose DeLima Lavoie, p.73.

Table 6.8

NUMBER OF WORKERS AND RESIDENT CHILDREN AT WORK
IN FAMILIES HEADED BY MALES AND FEMALES

STE. ANNE AND ST. JACQUES COMBINED
1861 - 1881

a) Average Numbers of Workers

	ALL WORKERS		CHILDREN RESIDENT AT HOME	
	Male Head	Female Head	Male Head	Female Head
1861	1.33	.99	.23	.43
1871	1.53	1.61	.46	.74
1881	1.5	1.31	.49	.83

b) Numbers of Workers

	ALL WORKERS						RESIDENT CHILDREN					
	Male Head			Female Head			Male Head			Female Head		
	0	1	2+	0	1	2+	0	1	2+	0	1	2+
1861	4%	73%	23%	43%	32%	25%	85%	9%	6%	76%	12%	12%
1871	2%	68%	30%	25%	38%	38%	75%	12%	13%	64%	16%	20%
1881	4%	66%	30%	32%	31%	37%	76%	11%	13%	57%	17%	26%

Source, Random Samples.

her household and had four children living with her. They were aged twenty six to thirty six. The oldest girl, Mary, was married. She and her two children lived with her mother, but no husband was present. Mary worked as a clerk. Bridget would have been able to look after the ten and thirteen year old grandchildren when they were home from school. For the thirty four year old son, John Drew, the benefits of

Table 6.9

A Comparison of the Percentage of Male and Female Headed
Households having Young, Teen and Adult Workers

Ste. Anne and St. Jacques combined

<u>Number</u> <u>of</u> <u>Workers</u>	<u>1861</u>		<u>1871</u>		<u>1881</u>	
	<u>Male</u> <u>Head</u>	<u>Female</u> <u>Head</u>	<u>Male</u> <u>Head</u>	<u>Female</u> <u>Head</u>	<u>Male</u> <u>Head</u>	<u>Female</u> <u>Head</u>
<u>a) Children Under 15 listing an Occupation</u>						
	%	%	%	%	%	%
0	97	100	94	93	95	94
1	*	0	5	6	4	5
2+	*	0	1	1	1	1
<u>b) Children Aged 15 - 20 listing an Occupation</u>						
	%	%	%	%	%	%
0	90	87	86	84	86	78
1	7	12	11	10	11	15
2	3	0	3	6	3	6
3+	*	1	*	0	*	1
<u>c) Children Over 21 at Home and listing an Occupation</u>						
	%	%	%	%	%	%
0	92	80	89	87	88	73
1	8	13	8	10	8	19
2	*	7	2	3	3	6
3+	*	0	1	0	1	3

Source: Random Samples, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques combined, Male and Female headed households with co-resident children in each age group.

* Under 0.5%

continuing to live at home are more difficult to ascertain. Yet he was one of many such older sons and daughters of widows whose lives were reshaped because they had lost a father. Certainly his boilermaker's wages were vital to the support of this particular household with its five adults and two growing children.⁷⁵ A strong sense of their mother's dependence, accompanied perhaps by strong moral pressure and cajoling effectively removed some widows' children from the marriage market. Labourer John Shea was still living with his seventy year old mother when he was fifty himself. He had not married, though whether he had always lived with his mother is unknown. He and his widowed mother boarded with another Irish labourer, his wife and three children.⁷⁶

The expansion of wage labour that accompanied transformations in production over this period enabled widows to find work more easily for their children. In particular there were more jobs which, unlike domestic service, meant that their daughters and sons could continue to reside with them at home. The percentage with offspring working increased from 24 in 1861 to 43 two decades later. Important as children's wages were for some widows, many headed families in which there were no workers at all. In 1861 fully 43 per cent reported no workers compared to only 4 per cent of male family heads. The percentage dropped to 25 in 1871, rising again to nearly one third in 1881. In such households alternative sources of survival had to be

⁷⁵ Mss. Census, Ste. Anne, 1881, 3:42-51.

⁷⁶ Mss. Census, Ste. Anne, 1881, 6:177-189.

sought.

Widows drew on diverse skills, on families, friends and on charity to reshape the contours of the family economy after a husband's death. In addition to seeking work for themselves and their children they adopted new household arrangements, turned to non wage means of survival and to charity. Most women became the head of the family following their husband's death. At each census date between 62 and 69 per cent were family heads. (See Table 6.10) Of the others the majority either lived with married children or with a working son who was designated family head(9 to 20 per cent), or boarded with apparently unrelated families(16 to 19 per cent). In 1861 a small minority returned to their parents' home, or lived with other relatives. This practice appears to have become less common.

Although most widows headed their own families, they were apparently less and less likely to head the sole family in the house. In both 1871 and 1881 almost half the families headed by widows were either living with one or more relative or sharing with apparently unrelated families. Co-residence offered a buffer against poverty and a potential support system. When "widow McGrath" lost her husband she was left with three children aged four to nine. She took in two other widows, one with an eleven year old child. Two of them worked as washerwomen. One sold goods at market. Between them they kept five pigs, probably eating some, and raising cash by selling others.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Mss Census, 1861, Ste.Anne, fo.3160.

Table 6.10
Widows' Patterns of Residence

	<u>1861</u>		<u>1871</u>		<u>1881</u>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
i) <u>Position in Family</u>						
a) heads own household	56%	61	46%	41	46%	77
b) heads second of third family in household	8	9	17	15	23	38
Subtotal: Percentage heading own family	64%	70	63%	56	69%	115
c) lives with parents	3	3	-	-	1	1
d) lives with children	9	10	22	20	10	16
e) lives with other relatives	6	6	-	-	1	1
f) lives as boarder	18	20	16	14	19	31
g) lives as live in servant	0	0	0	0	1	2
Total Number of widows in sample		109		90		167
ii) <u>The Structure of Widows' Families</u>						
a) Solitary Widow	7%	5	18%	10	19%	21
b) widow & non-relatives	7	5	5	3	1	1
c) widow and child/ren	76	53	63	35	77	87
d) widow, children & other relatives	10	7	14	8	4	4
e) unclear	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total		70		56		115
iii) <u>The Structure of Widow' headed Households</u>						
a) single family household*	70%	49	55%	31	56%	64
b) extended family household	13	9	11	6	4	5
c) extended plus another family	3	2	9	5	3	4
d) multiple family household	14	10	25	14	37	42
Total		70		56		115

*includes solitaries and non-related individuals forming a residential group.

Source: All widows falling into the random sample, Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards combined.

As widows grew older their residential patterns changed. After age sixty the proportion heading their own family dropped. Living either in their children's families or as boarders became more common. (See Table 6.11). The plight of the 20 to 30 per cent of widows over the age of

Table 6.11

Older Widows' Family Status at Different

Ages, 1861-1881

Age	<u>Head of Any Type of Family</u>	<u>Parent, with own Child as Head</u>	<u>Boarder</u>	<u>With Other Relatives</u>	<u>All Widows</u>	
					<u>No.</u>	<u>% of females that Age who were Widowed</u>
<u>40-49</u>						
1861	74%	4%	17%	4%	23	21%
1871	83%	9%	9%	*	23	26%
1881	80%	*	20%	*	49	18%
<u>50-59</u>						
1861	77%	17%	7%	*	30	28%
1871	58%	26%	16%	*	19	21%
1881	81%	*	16%	*	32	12%
<u>60+</u>						
1861	46%	15%	31%	8%	26	24%
1871	36%	39%	24%	*	33	37%
1881	53%	26%	20%	*	61	22%

* Under 1%

Source: All widows falling into the random sample, ~~St. Anne~~ and St. Jacques combined.

sixty who boarded with strangers or even friends must have often been grim. Some no doubt maintained contact and shared services with their children. Certainly co-residence was not a pre-requisite for either assistance or continued contact. When the enumerator called at one residence in St. Jacques in 1861, the seventy year old widow, normally resident there was absent. She had gone to spend the night with her daughter elsewhere in Montreal.⁷⁸ For some widows any independence that they had struggled to maintain for years evaporated when the last child left home. For yet other women, widowhood came suddenly in their fifties or sixties, leaving them without any resources and little chance

⁷⁸ Mss. Census, 1861, St. Jacques, fo. 7027.

of finding work. Such aged widows were the initial concern of Emelie Gamelin's Sisters of Providence. Their institution to offer shelter to around one hundred widows and elderly women from the 1860's

Most Montreal charitable societies offered widows some means of support in times of need. The Ladies Benevolent Society took in widows and their children in the 1850's and 60's, giving both shelter and instruction. The Protestant Home for Friendless Women aimed specifically at providing shelter for destitute women. Amongst those admitted were "widows who have sold all they possessed to support the dying husband and father and helpless little ones."⁸⁰

After the early 1860's there was a shift away from such institutional aid toward care in the home amongst both Protestant and Catholic charities. By 1861 the Montreal Home and School of Industry run by the same Ladies Benevolent Society had several workrooms in which day work was provided to unemployed widows.⁸¹ In the 1870's the benevolent ladies running the Protestant House of Industry and Refuge gave out sewing to between eighty and one hundred women annually. In many instances they were "the sole support of their family." Contracts and orders were taken from city firms engaged in shirt-making, flour bag

⁷⁹ L.A. Huguet-Latour, Annuaire de Ville Marie, p.71.

⁸⁰ Janice Harvey, "Upper Class Reaction to Poverty", pp.101-2; Second Annual Report of the Protestant Home for Friendless Women, 1877 (Montreal, Lovell, 1877), p.6.

⁸¹ Janice Harvey, "Upper Class Reaction to Poverty", p.103.

making, and other branches of the clothing trade. The mothers came to collect the sewing, sometimes also taking a class to improve their skills. A week later they returned with the finished article. Charity intersected with the putting out system. The eighty women reported as receiving work weekly in 1874 would have averaged just under \$50 for the whole year, clearly insufficient to live on without additional assistance.⁸²

Help for widows living in their own homes was similar to the charity available to the poor and sick generally. Food, clothing, fuel and sometimes cash were given to the deserving poor after scrutinizing visits by the St. Vincent de Paul Society, various religious orders and the Protestant charities. The plight of one widow was graphically described by a visiting Sister of Providence. The Sister had gone to help

a poor woman, a widow, and mother of seven children whose brain had been affected by fever and who was in the direst of poverty. The oldest of her offspring begged for bread from door to door, arriving home utterly frozen with cold.

"Nothing could be more miserable", she concluded, than the poor shack, "without furniture and often without heat in the depths of winter".⁸³

Some widows were able to shoulder their most difficult crises by

⁸² Protestant House of Industry and Refuge, Annual Report, 1874, p.11; 1875, p.11.

⁸³ "Chroniques de l'Asile St. Vincent", 1879, ASP, My translation.

using the city's orphanages to care for their children. At least 14 per cent, (22 women) of the mothers of girls attending the St. Alexis Orphanage in St. Jacques ward were widows at the time they brought in their daughters. Another two lost their husbands shortly after, suggesting that temporary shelter had been initially sought while women nursed their sick husbands.⁸⁴ It was not the loss of their husband that led mothers to part with their daughters. Most of these widows did not place their girls in the orphanage immediately after the father's death. Rather, the death of a husband made survival more difficult. Most widows using St. Alexis had looked after their children for some time following their husband's death, struggling to survive as best they could. Of the ten widows whose spouses' deaths were located in the city death registers only three took their daughters to the orphanage within a month of his death. Three placed them between one month and a year later, while four only used the orphanage a year or more after losing their husband.

Most widows returned for their children. Indeed widows' daughters stayed in the orphanage for less time and were more likely to be reclaimed than the girls of the orphanage as a whole. Their mothers needed both their company and their assistance. Widowers, in contrast,

⁸⁴ Estimates on how many children had one or two parents are based firstly on the families found in the three censuses, and secondly on scrutiny of the parish registers between 1850 and 1875. The names of both parents of the girl were checked in the death registers. As the name of the spouse was given on death it was easy to be definite about matches. This method obviously missed any parents dying outside Montreal, thus underestimating the numbers with one or two dead parents. The fractions should be viewed only as reasonable approximations.

were less likely to return for their daughters than were either widows or couples.

How two widows used the orphanage is illustrated in the histories of Josephine Brousseau and Angélique Fauteux. Josephine lived on Amherst Street in St. Jacques ward. She shared a dwelling with a couple, a twenty four year old widower and his one year old child. Josephine worked as a washerwoman. In 1868 she placed her eight year old Clara in the orphanage for a year. By the time Clara was twelve she was home again and working with her ten and fourteen year old brothers in a tobacco factory.⁸⁵ Angélique Fauteux's husband Jacques, a sometime lamplighter and labourer died between 1874 and 1875. They had three daughters. In 1875, Angélique took the oldest, nine year old Emelie, to the Sisters. Around that time she moved with the two younger daughters into a small rear dwelling at 21 Wolfe Street. Twelve months after Emelie had entered the orphanage, Angélique brought her home, but left the younger sister Eugénie there. Eugénie, in turn returned home twice, then went back to the orphanage, the second time with the youngest girl, Victoria. Finally in 1881, when Eugénie was thirteen and Victoria eleven, all the girls were again together at home. By then they were old enough to work, or to provide vital help around the home.⁸⁶ While the particular crises or the motivation that led Josephine to take successive daughters to the orphanage cannot be ascertained, her use of

⁸⁵ "Registre", 455; Mss. Census, St. Jacques, 1871, 6:265-446.

⁸⁶ "Registre", No's 736, 774, 812, 921, 922; Lovell's City Directory, 1871-2; 73-4.

the institution as a temporary source of relief is apparent.

Not all widows kept their families together after their husband's death. Philomène Riendeau had married a sixty two year old widower and labourer in 1859. They had at least two daughters, Lucie and Philomène. Six days after Jean Baptiste Riendeau died in April 1875 Philomène took her young daughter Lucie to the orphanage. Twelve year old Philomène remained home another nine months, joining her sister the following January. Within five months young Lucie had gone to the Hotel Dieu, where she either joined the Sisters or possibly died. Philomène returned to her mother.⁸⁷ When Adeline Desjardin's carpenter husband, Touissant, fell ill in May 1870, she took two of her daughters, aged four and two to the orphanage, keeping her five month old baby, Eugénie at home. Touissant died two weeks after the girls entered the orphanage. Less than two weeks later the two year old died in the orphanage. Widow Adeline was unable to cope and brought the baby to the Sisters. The little girl remained in there until she reached nearly five years old when she died of scarlet fever. The oldest girl was eventually placed with the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame.⁸⁸ In such tragic family histories as these the human impact of death and disease on the people of Montreal in this period is clear.

Sickness, death, unemployment and poverty led some families to

⁸⁷ "Registre", No's 702,740; Death Register Notre Dame parish.

⁸⁸ "Registre", No's 512,513,521; Death Register, Notre Dame Parish.

readjust their standard of living, their residential arrangements and, at times, the number of family members. In the absence of any organized system of municipal or provincial relief, people devised their own strategies of survival, drawing on diverse resources, and turning to kin, neighbours and friends. The charity provided by Catholic and Protestant institutions was indispensable, at times. Families used whatever institutions and services existed to their own ends. Obviously not all working class families placed their children temporarily or permanently in orphanages. Highly skilled workers generally earned enough to support their families adequately unless they fell ill. Some families managed better on meagre incomes than did others. Some had friends and relatives more affluent than themselves to whom they could turn. Not all working class families experienced the loss of a parent while the children were young, extreme illness or sustained periods of poverty. All of these crises were, however, more common among the poorer fractions of the working class where morbidity and mortality were highest. Their plight in this period highlights the fragility of a family economy that was based largely on wages in the absence of other organized support systems. The difficulties faced by widows underline the problem of women's economic dependence in the family. The strategies devised by widows and families in times of crisis show both the desperation and the flexibility of a people faced with new and changing ways of working and living.

Conclusion

In 1867 Canada was created out of the colonies of British North America. That same year Montreal workers united briefly to form a Grand Association linking labourers, shoemakers, carters and diverse other skilled and unskilled workers.¹ Their public demonstration to stress the need for higher wages highlights the centrality of wages as the major source of survival for a growing proportion of Montrealers. Their leader, Médéric Lanctôt, claimed that the result of the demonstration was a 50 per cent increase in wages and hence more bread, better clothes and less worry for the workers of Montreal.² The history of wage rates in Montreal unfortunately does not support his claim. The need for higher wages and the importance of the wage in shaping the working class family economy are, however, clear. By focussing on wages as the over-riding fact of working class life, this thesis has elucidated how wage labour and the level of wages earned framed the parameters of most other aspects of the family economy and family life confirming that "wages and the access of family members to wage earning" were indeed "powerful organising" principles of family life as Louise Tilly has suggested.³ Wages were the basic necessity, the "first form of the proletarian's means of subsistence."⁴ And their importance increased

¹ For a list of some of the groups involved see Jacques Rouillard, "Répertoire des Syndicats au Québec (1827-1900)", in Noël Bélanger et. al., Les Travailleurs Québécois, 1851-1896, pp.203-21.

² Médéric Lanctôt, Association du Capital et du Travail, 1872, p.46.

³ Louise A. Tilly, "The Family Wage Economy", p.381.

⁴ Wally Secombe, "Domestic Labour and the Working Class Household", p.43.

over this period as alternate non wage forms of survival, like pig keeping, were made illegal. Wage differentials within the working class were a product of skill levels, of workers' struggles and of transformations of production. They constituted the basis of important differences in the likelihood of children and wives working, of alternative subsistence arrangements and in family and household structures. The need for wages and the amount earned also conditioned more personal aspects of working class life. The age people would marry, the number of children they would bear and have survive, the life course and chances of those children and the daily work of the wife were all influenced in some way by the over-riding fact of wage labour.

Medéric Lanctot's concern for the workers' cause, for the poorly paid whom he recognized were always a short step away from poverty, led him to assert in 1872 that wage labour constituted "moral and physical slavery". With wages, he argued, "the social equality predetermined by the creator is impossible". His solution was to eliminate most work for wages by outlawing it in organized workshops and by forcing capitalists to share profits with the workers.⁵

Others posed more radical solutions. "As long as there is a class who buy labor and another class who sell labor these two classes will have hostile interests and be at war, the one class seeking to buy the greatest amount of labour at the cheapest price, the other seeking to

⁵ Médéric Lanctôt, L'Association du Capital et du Travail, pp.26,41.

get the highest price possible", wrote one Montrealer in the The Montreal Northern Journal that same year. The only way to eliminate class conflict was "to do away with this distinction of classes".⁶ Montreal workers did come together again in 1872 to fight with colleagues across Canada for a nine hour day. They joined the Knights of Labour in thousands in the 1880's and 1890's seeking to improve their working conditions and their pay. Within individual unions and in such broader associations they sought to "get the highest price" and to resist their loss of control in the workplace. Behind these struggles lay more than just the workplace concerns which have been the focus to date of most labour historians. For as we have seen, the hours of work, the conditions of labour and the level of the wage had direct influence on men's home life. In this thesis I have attempted to broaden our knowledge of the condition and struggles of the working class by examining the family economy and not the wage earners alone. I have tried to follow the worker home, tracing the links between work and family and focussing on the wage which constituted the most important bridge between the two.

Wage earning had long been the major source of survival for some Montrealers. What changed between the 1850's and 1890's was the proportion of the population dependent on wages and the nature of the work performed in the majority of workplaces. The growth of factories, the increased use of steam power, and the re-organization of production

⁶ Quoted in the Ontario Workman, 25 July 1872, cited by Michael B. Katz et. al., The Social Organization, p.23.

were all part of a long and uneven process of change that had been underway for decades. Between 1861 and 1888 a growing proportion of the city's population had to deal with the effects of these changes.

Between 1861 and 1881 in Montreal, industrial capitalists' demands for workers interacted with families' needs for additional wage earners. In the process the contours of working class youth were reshaped. Work replaced idleness and casual street trades for many children as they were drawn into the workshops and factories of the city. And work competed with schooling, especially among the boys and young men of these working class districts. Wage labour, largely outside the home, came to constitute a more significant part of both boys' and girls' lives. The wage labour of children became more important within the working class family economy. The effects of work place transformations are most obvious in the increasing numbers of wage earning children in the families of men in those trades undergoing most rapid change - what I have termed the injured trades.

The fact that the proletariat expanded by drawing on secondary family workers as well as immigrants and in-migrants from rural areas, in turn had repercussions on the wider economy. Those sectors characterized by especially low wages - most notably clothing, shoemaking and tobacco working could keep wages low just because such a high proportion of their employees were secondary family workers resident at home.

As boys and some girls reached fourteen or so their wage labour

offered working class families the chance for relative security after years of struggle to survive on an inadequate single wage. The pressure to keep earning children at home would have been strong and led, at times, to conflict and misunderstanding. The success of parents and perhaps the inability of young workers to afford alternatives is reflected in the marked increase in the time children lived at home with their parents. Over these years it became much less common for children to experience a stage of semi-autonomy, residing as boarders, servants or apprentices in someone else's home. Previously, finding a daughter a position as a domestic servant or placing a son in an apprenticeship had relieved families of the costs of supporting them. As jobs became more widely available children's wages were clearly a powerful incentive to keep them at home.

Studies based on textile towns have made it appear that the widespread employment of whole families, of children and of married women was typical of early industrial capitalism. After surveying such mills in England, Marx concluded that capitalism was erasing all distinctions of age and gender and destroying the working class family in the process. Yet the fact that most of the classic studies on the relationship between industrial development and the family have taken place in textile towns has downplayed the importance of gender in determining children's work roles. The evidence in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards supports findings in Philadelphia, Hamilton and other

non-textile based communities.⁷ Despite the significance of industries employing predominantly women and children in Montreal's economy, the course of children's work lives was framed by their gender. Men and women, boys and girls played very different roles both in the family and in the process of industrial development. Male and female wage differentials in the labour market re-inforced gender distinctions within the family - making it logical for men and boys to be the wage-earners, women and girls the domestic labourers. Girls were less likely to work for wages than their brothers even in the families of those in greatest need of extra cash - labourers. And while girls certainly did report jobs in growing numbers over these years, particularly in the sewing trades, domestic labour, tobacco work and unskilled factory tasks, the variety of jobs they held remained more limited than for boys. So too was the period of their lives in which they worked. This major difference in the timing of workforce involvement of boys and girls is not clear in studies that only utilize figures on the numbers of employees reported by manufacturers. Even in 1871 when women and children constituted one third of reported workers in production the average woman worked for only a few years before marriage.

To send boys who could soon earn more out to work made sense in the context of wage differentials based on gender. Role definitions were thus initiated and reproduced in the family within the particular

⁷ Claudia Goldin, "Family Strategies"; Michael B. Katz et. al. The Social Organization, p.346.

economic context. In family, homes, schools and workplace alike gender differences were re-inforced and perpetuated. These differences were highlighted by the geographical separation of home and work that accompanied the spread of wage labour. "Monetary value was attached to labour outside the home, while, as a corollary, the importance of non-waged domestic labour was downplayed.

By building up an analysis of the family economy based on the respective contributions and roles of men, women and children, I have tried to integrate women's history into family history, to "uncover" rather than "obscure" the actual historical experience of women as well as the forces determining the limits of their lives".⁸ Analysis of home and work have thus been linked, production and reproduction brought together, and the inter-relationships between these spheres addressed. Wage labour and domestic labour were equally vital to proletarian survival. It was women's work in the home that ensured that whatever wages they had access to were transformed into food, clothing and the other necessities of daily life. Purchasing such necessities was a new responsibility for most married women. Their growing importance as the family's wage manager was recognized in the revised Civil Code of 1866. For the first time married women could legally make household purchases, and pay taxes and rents. This role as head consumer would increase further in subsequent years as more industrially-produced commodities became accessible to working class families. Between 1861 and 1888 the challenge for most wives, however, lay in stretching wages to cover even

⁸ Ellen Ross, "Examining Family History", p. 182.

the most basic purchases of food, clothing and fuel. No major decrease in the cost of the basic necessities of working class life made this task any easier over these years. For, the budgets of all but the most skilled of workers would seldom cover the purchase of even shoes and clothing, commodities that were dropping in price. Indeed, the rise in rents, the least flexible of budget items, must have made stretching the rest of the wage even more difficult, for there is little evidence of any major increase in most wages.

Nor did the conditions under which women worked improve. Working class housing in Montreal remained characterized by unsanitary sewage systems, poor drainage, outdoor privies and poor construction methods. Overcrowding increased as families shared space to save on rental costs. Diseases spread in these crowded, damp and dismal homes, making women under forty somewhat more subject to death and disease than men. A drop in fertility reduced the average number of children that most women had to care for, infant mortality reduced family size further. Perhaps women's load was lightened in this respect. Yet the span of years in which they would have children to care for remained unchanged. Other evidence suggests that women's position within the family may have worsened in this period. Peter and Patricia Ward have recently argued that among the working poor of Montreal nutritional standards fell dramatically between 1851 and 1905. The fall in the birth weights of babies born to poor English speaking women using the University Lying in Hospital over these years indicates malnutrition effects comparable with

those recorded elsewhere in periods of famine.⁹ Such evidence suggests that the brunt of low standards of living may well have been born largely by married women and those offspring whose future life chances were largely determined before they were born. Gender combined with class position apparently made working class women, particularly married women, the least well fed and unhealthiest of Montreal's citizens.

Within the constraints imposed by wages earned, women's work in the home could make a major difference to families' standards of living. Sometimes the only area of elasticity lay in what she herself consumed. Hence the malnutrition of those poor married women who used the Lying in Hospital and no doubt of numerous others. In feeding and clothing working family members, women ensured their survival and fulfilled the needs of capital for wage earners sufficiently fed, clothed and rested to perform their daily tasks. In bearing and rearing children, women produced future workers who might support them or add much needed wages to the family economy. At the same time they provided capitalists with another generation of workers.

Their need to balance wages and costs led women to turn to a variety of strategies to increase income or decrease expenditures. Working occasionally for wages themselves, taking odd jobs, raising vegetables or animals, or sharing their homes helped some to come closer to balancing family budgets. Strategies involving major outputs of cash were not available to poorer families. Taking in boarders and raising

⁹ Peter and Patricia Ward, "Infant Birth Weight".

cows were more common among the non-working class and skilled workers' families simply because poorer women could not afford the initial investments involved. Pig raising, or sharing housing were cheaper and hence more common among the unskilled. The keeping of animals by an urban proletariat represented a rational survival strategy in the context of dependence on the unsteady and seasonal wage labour of early industrial capitalism. The practise was eliminated over this period, not because urban workers' ideas were modernized, but because reformers finally induced city councils to outlaw certain animals and urban developers eliminated the space necessary to raise them.

Clearly family members co-operated, dividing up tasks within the family in response to current needs and past traditions. Tension and conflict no doubt erupted between husbands and wives and parents and children for equilibrium and economic security were achieved at a cost. They were based not simply on the sexual division of labour but also on women's legal and economic dependence. Women's subordination within the family became only too clear if she lost a husband through desertion, or as was more common, death. Loss of a spouse modified aspects of a wife's legal dependence. But it made her economic dependence starkly clear. Most widows lacked more than several years of job experience. When they found work they were paid at a rate that assumed that all women were secondary family earners. Their ghettoization in such jobs as washerwoman, sewing and service, highlights the survival problems they faced. Widows' continued dependence on someone else's wages is clear in the greater number of workers in their families and in the extended co-residence of their grown up children.

Wage survival was precarious, characterized in Montreal, as elsewhere, by "insecurity and irregularity".¹⁰ Low wages, unemployment and underemployment, illness and death were constant threats to most working class families in Montreal in this period. In response to such challenges families drew on a wide variety of strategies. Households were re-arranged, cheaper housing sought, extra families taken in. Relatives provided help, though families were less and less likely in this period to actually live with kin. The vast array of social institutions erected by the increasingly powerful Catholic Church to aid, succour, educate and incorporate the poor of Montreal provided an invaluable service to families. Church run charities and schools were widely used. Children were sent to orphanages for short or long periods until crises had passed. Some families no doubt absorbed the ideology that went with much assistance. Others used such institutions as they wished. Working people also turned to each other, setting up mutual benefit associations and raising money on the job for fellow worker's funerals.

In their resourcefulness and flexibility, working class families and individuals appear to have been resilient in the face of real constraints, but the greater their dependence on wages was, the less leeway they had. In good years like 1871 the working class could exercise greater choice about when to marry, who would work, who would attend school. In years of depression mere survival conditioned and

¹⁰ Michael B. Katz et. al., The Social Organization p.6.

limited the areas of choice. In these bad years especially, the poorer working class families carried the costs of industrial development in poor nutrition, terrible housing conditions and high infant and adult death rates. This was no golden age for Montreal's working class. The poverty that Terry Copp has described as continuing in the city in the prosperous years between 1897 and 1929 had its roots in the earlier stages of industrial capitalism described here. English studies have shown that few working class families were permanently free of poverty in such a period.¹¹ Among the Irish living in London the only families with one wage earner and several children who could have afforded to live at the level of Rowntree's meagre diet were those headed by "steadily employed male artisans".¹² The same was true for the Irish, French Canadian and other families of Montreal. Amongst the labourers' and shoemakers' families of Ste. Anne ward in 1881, 45 per cent would have failed to meet even the most minimal of costs when half their children were under fifteen unless the father earned over \$240 annually. Even at \$300.00 annually over one quarter of these families would have fallen below the poverty line. All but the best paid of skilled workers would have experienced some periods of severe deprivation at critical periods of the family life cycle and in times of sickness and unemployment. In this they seem to have been little better off than workers in England.

¹¹ Michael Anderson, Family Structure, p.31; John Foster, Class Struggle, p.96; Lynn H. Lees, Exiles of Erin, p. 105.

¹² Lynn H. Lees, Exiles of Erin, p.105

In other ways too, the families whose life experiences have been recreated here paralleled those studied elsewhere in Canada, the United States and western Europe at similar periods. The children in urban Hamilton and rural Peel County, Ontario resided longer with their parents in 1871 than in 1851. More children, particularly girls, in these two areas attended school as was the case in Montreal.¹³ Women in Peel County, like those in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards, married later on the average in 1871 than they had previously. In both Peel and Hamilton women bore fewer children over these years. What, then, was particular to Montreal families and what part of a general trend?

Some trends appear to have transcended rural and urban distinctions, even local economic differences and national boundaries. Women in most parts of the western world, particularly in urban areas were, on the average, bearing fewer children. The growing tendency of children to remain at home with their parents appears also to have been common throughout the western world.¹⁴ The timing and the impetus for departure, however, varied. For working class families the access of children to wage labour was the trigger. It was the expansion of wage labour, notably between 1861 and 1871 that precipitated sudden change in these wards. In Montreal the particularly low wages that most children could earn ensured that the majority would comply with parental pressure

¹³ Michael B. Katz, The Social Organization, pp. 244-254; David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers, pp. 77-8

¹⁴ Louise A. Tilly, "The Family Wage Economy", pp. 383, 389-90; Michael Anderson, Family Structure pp. 83-6; Michael B. Katz, The People of Hamilton, pp. 297-303; Michael B. Katz et. al., The Social Organization p. 312.

to remain home.

The involvement of growing proportions of Montreal children in wage labour also reflected a more general trend, although the proportions of boys and girls working and the age they began varied dramatically from place to place with differences in the process of development. The proportions of children under fifteen who reported having jobs in Montreal was much lower than in English towns or in the textile towns of the United States

Families in the United States, in Hamilton, Peel County and diverse English towns also divested themselves of boarders in roughly the same period.¹⁵ And the least well paid families in towns studied in England, like those of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques shared space to cut down on rental costs.¹⁶

Each individual and every family responded to a specific set of historical options, to a particular economic structure. In so doing they both drew on and reshaped old traditions and cultural habits. Their actions at any time were influenced by the particular life cycle stage of the family, the age and sex of the children, as well as the work that the father did. The similarity of the broad trends occurring in diverse places suggests inevitable patterns and predetermined paths.

¹⁵ David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers, p. 63.

¹⁶ Michael Anderson, Family Structure, p.49 John Foster, Class Struggle, p. 97.

Yet local characteristics were different and demanded divergent strategies. Within Canada, Montreal's particularly low wage rate compared to most other North American cities made survival especially difficult for that growing proportion of families who were wholly dependent on wage labour. Their responses to this situation have been captured in this thesis. The particular nature of land and property development in Montreal meant too that greater proportions of the working class rented homes than in most other Canadian cities. They were, as a result, subjected to the diseases that spread in the unsanitary, poorly constructed dwellings that the city's landlords offered at rising prices. The cost is evident in the dramatically high mortality rates of working class areas.

In Montreal as in a growing number of towns of New England, French Canadians and Irish constituted the majority of the working class. In Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards they were concentrated in different sectors of the economy and different fractions of the working class. The Irish or of Montreal, like their compatriots in the cities of England and America dominated unskilled labour.¹⁷

French Canadians in these wards were to be found in those trades which, like shoemaking, were undergoing the most rapid change and in

¹⁷ Myfanwy Morgan and Hilda H. Golden, "Immigrant Families in an Industrial City: A Study of Households in Holyoke, 1880", Journal of Family History, 4 (Spring 1979), p.61 Daniel J. Walkowitz, "Working Class Women in the Gilded Age: Factory, Community and Family Life", Journal of Social History, 5 (Summer 1972), (p. 471 Lynn Lees, Exiles of Erin, p. 92.

highly seasonal skilled jobs in construction and woodworking. English and Scots, in contrast, were concentrated in those types of skilled work that were products of the industrial revolution - a pattern that again duplicates that of many North American communities. This ethnic division of labour persisted throughout the period. In people's behaviour, however, class position rather than ethnic background appears to have become increasingly important over these decades. This shift in the relative significance of ethnicity and class requires examination and recapitulation. It was not a phenomenon that was limited to Montreal. Michael Katz and Ian Davey have noted the same pattern in Hamilton, Ontario. They suggest that "ethnicity lost much of its clear association with class during early industrialization . . . the independent influence of ethnicity had become muted." Class and ethnicity were increasingly dissociated.¹⁸

This dissociation of class and ethnicity occurred in three of the major facets of the family economy - marriage and family size, labour allocation and residence patterns.¹⁹ In 1861 French Canadian males had married early at an average age of twenty five. The Irish married later at twenty seven and a half and the English and Scots still later at nearly thirty. These patterns reflected divergent cultural traditions, forged in specific historical and economic contexts. Different economic realities, related largely to men's work and the particular conjuncture

¹⁸ Michael B. Katz and Ian E. Davey, "Youth and Early Industrialization", p. 5107.

¹⁹ Louise A. Tilly, "The Family Wage Economy", p. 383.

in Montreal in this period, modified these traditions. By 1881 men in all three ethnic groupings married, on the average, at around twenty six, although variations in timing remained. Differences among fractions of the working class increased over the period, reflecting the divergent work situations of men in skilled, injured and unskilled trades. In 1861, the major difference was between non working class men and the working class as a whole. Over the next two decades the effects of economic booms, depressions and of work restructuring combined to alter the age at which most men married. All but the semi and unskilled took advantage of the good times of the late sixties and early seventies to marry earlier. A decade later, following years of depression, the proportions of twenty to twenty four year olds married had dropped dramatically among all but the semi and unskilled. The average age at marriage of the skilled had risen by over three years, that of those in the injured trades by over one year. In Montreal, the ages that people of different origins married changed in response to local conditions, world depression and the individual's particular place in the division of labour. There was no simple and sudden lowering in the age of marriage as a result of "the availability of work" - a pattern described by Lynn Lees and John Modell among the Irish of Philadelphia and London.²⁰ Fluctuations in the city's labour market and the general economic climate combined to make the imperatives surrounding work more important than inherited norms regarding an appropriate age to marry.

²⁰ John Modell and Lynn Lees, "The Irish Countryman Urbanized", p. 352.

In the average numbers of co-resident children too, the most significant differences were between ethnic groups in 1861. By 1881, however, class was second only to age as a predictor of the number of children men would have. Non working class families had, on the average, decreased slightly, those of men in the semi and unskilled trades had decreased more, while the superior position of skilled workers within the working class was apparently reflected in larger families. These differences reflect fertility changes, the impact of infant mortality, as well as differing abilities or desires to retain older children at home. They are interesting for the class differences contrast with patterns elsewhere. In Hamilton, Ontario, middle class families had fewer children between 1851 and 1861 as in these wards, yet working class couples had more.²¹

The pattern of smaller middle class families and larger working class ones was duplicated in many American communities, although the particular local ethnic structure made a difference. In the Massachusetts communities studied by Jerry Wilcox and Hilda Golden, the families of semi and unskilled workers tended to be larger than those of skilled craftsmen and white collar workers. It was among the predominantly non working class native Americans that fertility dwindled most between 1850 and 1880, making ethnicity combined with occupation a

²¹ Michael B. Katz et al., The Social Organization, p. 337.

highly significant predictor of family size by the latter date.²² In Ste. Anne and St. Jacques the reduction apparent in the average number of children in non working class families fits this widespread pattern. The distinctions within the working class do not. The reduction in family size among the semi and unskilled must reflect the differential impact of infant mortality, combined perhaps with declining fertility among the Irish who predominated in this group. The skilled, in contrast, were better able to feed and shelter their young. More appear to have survived.

The average number of individuals who worked for wages was likewise increasingly determined by the family head's occupation. In 1861, French Canadians averaged significantly more workers than other groups. The English and Scots had the least. By 1881 the slightly greater average number of workers in French Canadian families was no longer significant, but class differences were. This was most noticeable in the numbers of children at work. Those with children over the age of eleven averaged 1.51 at work among the injured trades, 1.34 among the unskilled and 1.39 among the skilled. All working class groups succeeded in retaining growing numbers of adult, working children at home over these decades. In this the skilled and injured appear to have been more successful than the unskilled, perhaps because most could offer children better housing and food.

Changes in the numbers of co-resident children and working children

²² Jerry Wilcox and Hilda Golden, "Profilic Immigrants", pp.265,274.

were not the only areas in which class differences became more important than ethnic ones in influencing residential patterns. In 1861 the French Canadians of Ste. Anne ward had been much more likely to lodge boarders than other groups. By 1881, they were only slightly more likely to do so than the Irish. Boarders by then had decreased in all families, but were concentrated among the non working class

In these three areas - marriage patterns and numbers of children, family labour commitment and residential arrangements class position apparently overrode ethnicity as a major determinant of Montreal families' strategies and actions. People modified old traditions forged in a different context and responded pragmatically to the new realities within which they lived and worked. The over-riding reality for a majority of Montrealers had become the size and regularity of the wage or wages that family members could earn.

This thesis has captured working class families at a particular period of history before the state had been forced to assume greater control over aspects of work, education and social security. In subsequent years the existing legislation regarding the labour of young children would eventually be enforced. Despite the lack of legal compulsion in Quebec, parents would send more children to school for longer periods. Aspects of public health would be dealt with more scientifically. Gradually the contours of the family economy would change, reshaped in interaction with the changing needs of a more complex and mature form of capitalism and the policies of an increasingly interventionist state. The lines between childhood and

adulthood and the timing of transitions into and out of school would harden. Wives and mothers would replace children as the most usual second wage earner in a family. Single and divorced mothers would replace widows as the most usual female family heads. Even working class women would find their domestic labour lightened as hot and cold running water and electrical lighting and appliances eliminated the dirtiest and heaviest physical labour of housework. And women's fight against their legal and economic subordination within the family and society would slowly open up new possibilities, softening the hard edges of gender based role definitions and of class based life chances. The inequalities of class and gender so apparent in this period of early industrial capitalism would not disappear. They would simply become more muted and less transparent.

Appendix A

The Random Samples

Manuscripts exist for the censuses taken in Montreal in 1825, 1841 and 1861, 1871 and 1881. Unfortunately the 1851 manuscripts for most of the Montreal area were destroyed in a fire. The 1871 and 1881 censuses are of fairly even quality. Furthermore, the data collected were the same in each of those years.¹ In 1861 the schedules were left for people to fill out themselves. Where they were illiterate the enumerator usually did so. Often aggregate responses were given for certain columns, notably on children at school. Assessments of the value of property seem to have been highly uneven, with such dramatic variations in the assessments of the value of livestock and other property that I have not used them. On the other hand data in 1861 on the type of housing lived in, and on whether couples were newly married that year is useful, apparently carefully filled in, and, unfortunately not available in the subsequent enumerations.

Both the 1861 and 1871 schedules make it possible to determine roughly what types of property people held. Owners of workshops can be identified, and this was invaluable in distinguishing between artisans

¹ On some of the shortcomings of Canadian manuscript and aggregate censuses see Alan Brookes, "Doing the best I can" and David Gagan, "Enumerators Instructions for the Census of Canada 1852 and 1861", Histoire Sociale/Social History 7 (1974).

who were proprietors and those with similar occupational titles who were wage labourers. It was also possible to determine whether families had pigs, cows or other stock. This could not be done for 1881 as all that remains of the manuscripts of that census is a microfilm copy of the personal schedules. Furthermore the schedules for certain districts on that microfilm are virtually illegible. All three censuses recorded the names, ages, occupations, birthplaces and religion of each household member. In 1871 and 1881 people were asked about their origins in addition to their birthplace. In 1871 in Montreal addresses were given for most households which proved useful in tracing them to city directories or evaluation roles to clarify occupations or residential arrangements. Reconstruction of the data in these manuscripts enabled analysis of who lived with whom, who lived near whom, and the age at which people began school, or work, married or left home. Combined at times with information in parish registers and city directories and other sources it was possible to build up a picture of the family economy and the family as a residential unit.

A ten per cent random sample of households was taken from the manuscript censuses for Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards in 1861, 1871 and 1881. The choice of a 10 per cent sample was made on several grounds. Most importantly, it provided a total sample large enough to answer most of the questions required, but small enough to be manageable for a single researcher. Similar sized samples have been successfully used by other researchers. Michael Anderson has argued that a one in ten sample is the "usual method", in studying families from census material, but points out that "the possibility of further sampling of groups of

particular interest...should be borne in mind".²

The 10 per cent sample did not provide sufficient numbers to deal with three factors in which I was particularly interested - the reported occupations of married women, of widows and the keeping of animals and gardens. All families with these characteristics were therefore studied. The sections dealing with these topics are based not on a sample but on the total population of working wives, working widows and raisers of stock and gardens.

The samples included a total of 2,884 individuals in 1861, 3,546 in 1871 and 4,537 in 1881 - overall 10,967 people. (For further details see Table A.1) They lived in 1,855 households comprising 2,274 "families" as defined by the census takers. To choose the households at random, the total number of households in each subdistrict was ascertained from the consecutive numbers assigned by the enumerator. Sufficient random numbers to constitute 10 per cent of that total were then chosen from a standard table of random numbers. The sample is thus stratified by geographic subdistrict, with 10 per cent of households in each census subdistrict in the two wards represented.

A comparison was made of the birthplaces, origins, sex, marital status and religion of the sample population with that of the total population as reported in the published census. (See Table A.2) With

² Michael Anderson, "The Study of Family Structure", in E.A. Wrigely, ed., Nineteenth Century Society, p.55.

the exception of the marital status of people in the St. Jacques sample for 1861, all sample distributions were less than 5 per cent different from the published figures, most were closer. The discrepancy in 1861 results, I think, from the exclusion from the sample of institutions housing nuns and priests, as well as of children residing in boarding schools, orphanages or other institutions. The consistent over-representation of males by about 2 per cent in 1871 and 1881 in St. Jacques would also result from the exclusion of nuns - especially of the large numbers of Sisters of Providence resident in that ward. The samples should thus be considered as representative of the families rather than the individuals of the two wards.

The families that fell into the sample were coded to render the material readable by the computer. Coding was checked several times, as was keypunching. Then data were analyzed using the standard statistical package, SPSS. Each individual family member's personal characteristics - age, sex, schooling, occupation etc., were coded. On the cards of family and household heads and mothers additional relevant information was coded, including the life cycle stage of the family, the numbers of children of different ages, family structure, household structure, the number of workers of different ages, and for 1861, property held. The cards of family and household heads were given a special code so as to identify them for analysis based on those units.

TABLE A.1
THE RANDOM SAMPLES

	<u>1861</u>		<u>1871</u>		<u>1881</u>	
	<u>No. in Sample</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>No. in Sample</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>No. in Sample</u>	<u>Total Population</u>
<u>St. Anne</u>						
Individuals	1,672	16,200	1,898	18,639	2,006	20,443
Census Families	338	3,419	374	3,703	442	4,368
Census Households	312	2,846	318	3,143	364	3,617
<u>St. Jacques</u>						
Individuals	1,212	13,104	1,648	17,680	2,531	25,398
Census Families	241	3,854	348	3,519	531	5,207
Census Households	205	1,915	265	2,604	391	3,791
<u>Combined Totals</u>						
Individuals	2,884		3,546		4,537	10,967
Census Families	579		722		973	2,274
Census Households	517		583		755	1,855

How the aggregators of the 1861 census reached this figure is unclear. There was no evidence in the manuscript returns of this many families.

Source: Census of Canada, 1861 - 1881 and Random Samples.

TABLE A.2
ASSESSMENT OF THE REPRESENTIVITY
OF THE RANDOM SAMPLES

<u>Birthplace</u>	<u>Ste. Anne</u>		<u>St. Jacques</u>	
	<u>% in Sample</u>	<u>% in Population</u>	<u>% in Sample</u>	<u>% in Population</u>
<u>1861</u>				
Quebec	56.4	55.9	86.2	83.0
Ontario	1.7	n/a	1.1	n/a
Ireland	26.9	30.0	4.8	10.0
England	4.6	5.6	2.3	3.8
Scotland	6.9	5.3	0.9	1.1
Europe	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.8
Other	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.6
Number	1672	16,200	1212	13,104
<u>1871</u>				
Quebec	66.5	65.0	92.4	92.0
Ontario	1.6	2.0	0.4	1.0
Ireland	18.5	20.0	2.4	3.6
England	6.6	5.7	2.2	1.8
Scotland	3.1	3.8	0.8	0.6
Europe	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.5
United States	1.8	1.6	0.9	0.9
Other	0.2	1.5	0.0	0.0
Number	1897	18,634	1648	17,680
<u>1881</u>				
Quebec	70.3	69.0	94.5	93.5
Ontario	2.8	2.0	0.4	1.0
Ireland	15.9	16.0	1.3	2.0
England	4.6	5.2	0.8	0.4
Scotland	3.5	3.2	0.8	0.4
Europe	0.1	0.6	1.2	1.1
United States	2.0	2.0	0.7	1.5
Other	0.9	2.0	0.1	0.2
Number	2006	20,443	2528	25,398
<u>Origins</u>				
<u>1871</u>				
French Canadian	29.7	26.0	83.1	82.0
Irish	44.5	50.0	6.5	6.0
English/Scot	24.1	22.0	7.8	8.0
Other	1.7	2.0	2.5	2.0
<u>1881</u>				
French Canadian	29.7	28.0	90.8	87.0
Irish	46.3	48.0	2.8	6.0
English/Scot	23.0	22.0	3.8	5.0
Other	1.0	2.0	2.5	2.0

Religion	Ste. Anne		St. Jacques	
	% in Sample	% in Population	% in Sample	% in Population
<u>1861</u>				
Roman Catholic	68.4	70.1	89.3	85.0
Church of England	11.1	10.6	5.4	6.3
Presbyterian	14.4	12.2	1.3	2.7
Methodist	4.4	4.8	3.5	3.8
Baptist	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.2
Prot. - Other	1.6	1.1	0.4	1.0
Jewish	0.0	.1	0.0	0.4
Other	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.6

<u>1871</u>				
Roman Catholic	70.3	70.0	89.3	90.3
Church of England	11.7	11.5	6.3	5.9
Presbyterian	9.4	10.8	1.0	1.8
Methodist	6.1	6.0	1.7	1.5
Baptist	1.2	0.7	0.3	0.2
Prot. - Other	0.3	0.8	0.5	0.1
Jewish	0.0	0.1	0.9	0.1
Other	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.1

<u>1881</u>				
Roman Catholic	73.0	71.5	95.7	93.8
Church of England	11.0	11.3	1.8	2.3
Presbyterian	11.3	9.1	1.0	1.3
Methodist	2.5	1.4	0.9	1.1
Baptist	1.4	00.8	0.2	0.1
Prot. - Other	0.3	0.8	0.4	1.1
Jewish	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1
Other	0.3	3.9	0.0	0.2

Marital Status

<u>1861</u>				
Single	62.1	62.8	61.9	69.7
Married	33.6	33.1	32.3	26.7
Widow	3.2	3.1	4.6	2.6
Widower	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.0

<u>1871</u>				
Single	61.4	61.0	59.8	61.5
Married	34.9	34.5	36.8	34.3
Widow	2.7	3.6	2.4	3.2
Widower	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0

<u>1881</u>				
Single	61.5	60.6	60.1	60.2
Married	33.8	34.4	35.4	34.7
Widow	3.8	3.8	3.6	4.0
Widower	0.8	1.2	0.9	1.1

Gender

<u>1861</u>				
Male	52.5	50.5	46.8	49.4
Female	47.5	49.5	53.2	50.5

<u>1871</u>				
Male	48.9	49.8	48.5	46.4
Female	51.1	50.4	51.5	53.5

<u>1881</u>				
Male	49.0	49.3	47.3	45.7
Female	51.0	50.7	52.7	54.3

Appendix B

The Classification of Occupations

To study working class families it is necessary to determine who belonged to the working class. This is at once a theoretical and an empirical question, and one that raises a host of ambiguities, pitfalls and problems at both levels. When historians first attempted to classify the occupational or social structures of past societies they borrowed twentieth century schemes from sociologists or departments of statistics. It soon became clear that the wages, status and job content of jobs in the nineteenth century differed so dramatically as to call into question schemes based on twentieth century assessments.¹ This was particularly important in North America where historians' interest in social mobility necessitated a realistic ranking of past occupations. Less ahistorical schema were developed. The stress on social mobility in American historiography led to an emphasis on the relative ranking of positions, though often as Katz has carefully pointed out, hierarchical and functional divisions were confused.² Predominantly hierarchical, the schemes were based largely on the perceived status of positions in the past and particularly on the broad division between manual and

¹ For a critique of this argument see Gérard Bouchard's "Occupational Ranking Schemes", Unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, 1983. He argues that one contemporary ranking system is as adequate as those derived by historians. I remain unconvinced.

² Michael Katz, "Occupational Classification".

non-manual labour. Thus, the Philadelphia History Project, the largest and best known of research groups, distinguished between "high white collar and professional occupations" and "low white collar and propriety" ones and between skilled and unskilled workers. Why professionals would have ranked higher than proprietary occupations in that period is unclear. They made more detailed distinctions between Professionals, Proprietors, Manufacturers and Workers in Commerce in a separate designation.³ Michael Katz and four American historians developed a similar scheme based on divisions between high ranking professionals and commercial proprietors and lower ranking proprietors, professionals and commercial employees, then between those in trades, the unskilled with job titles and the unskilled without - e.g. labourers.⁴ A similar division was made by Katz in his own study of Hamilton, although he used at least three additional measures of inequality - ethnicity, wealth and property ownership.⁵

Historians involved in developing and applying such systems of occupational stratification encountered major problems. Individuals, it was found, frequently listed different occupations in the census than in assessment rolls. Sometimes these reflected a job change,⁶ but more

³ Theodore Hershberg and Robert Dockhorn, "Occupational Classification".

⁴ Stuart Blumin, Laurence Glasco, Clyde Griffin, Theodore Hershberg and Michael Katz, "Occupation and Ethnicity in Five Nineteenth Century Cities: A Collaborative Inquiry", Historical Methods Newsletter, 7 (June 1973) (Hereafter "Occupation in Five Cities").

⁵ Michael Katz, The People of Hamilton.

⁶ Take for instance a William Wallace, resident in Ste. Anne in 1881. He told the census enumerator that his job was "coffins". In the

often simply a different choice of title that might change their position on the scale.⁷ Rankings by reported wealth seldom coincided with the hierarchical rankings. Wages clearly varied not only between skilled workers in different crafts, but between workers in different sized firms.⁸

For historians interested in the class structure of society, as opposed to individual mobility such schemes raise several problems. Few of the ranking schemes distinguish explicitly between the owners of capital and the means of production and those who work for capital, the wage earners. Yet in terms of day to day existence, the family economy, and economic security this was a crucial division in the nineteenth century. Michael Katz's first category includes all types of merchants, the clergy and certain professionalsthush masking the divisions between those owning their own businesses and people with other very different kinds of jobs. The vertical scale of the Philadelphia Social History Project includes proprietors of businesses along with "low ranking" white collar workers in its second category. Within the trades and crafts categories of both groups there is no way of distinguishing between shoemakers or blacksmiths who owned their own shop and those

city directory of that year he was listed as a fireman, a year later as a customs clerk.

⁷ Michael Katz, "Occupational Classification History", Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 3 (Summer 1972), p.61. Katz found that only 61 of people listed the same occupation on the census and the assessment role.

⁸ Bruce Laurie, Theodore Hershberg and George Alter, "Immigrants and Industry".

working for wages in the factories or workshops of others. This lack of distinction may partially explain the broad spread of wealth in many occupations reported by Katz in Hamilton.

Labour historians have documented the vast and dramatic changes that occurred in nineteenth century workplaces, as well as the varied reactions of workers in different trades. For historians interested in the transformation of work and its effect on workers, their families and their daily lives, most occupational ranking systems offer no way of determining which particular trades were most subject to re-organization and the skill dilution that accompanied it.

In ordering and classifying people's occupations for this study I wanted a scheme that would differentiate as much as possible between the owners of capital - the bourgeoisie and the workers. This was not to be an examination of "vertical movements within social space,"⁹ although such movements undoubtedly were important in many families. My concern was to identify people's positions within the overall division of labour, and to reflect, as accurately as possible, the particular relationship of those classified to the means of production at that particular moment of their lives. The basic principal behind the scheme used here then, is the identification of owners and proprietors of all kinds, and the distinction of workers according to the type of capitalists for whom they worked. A second principal was based on the

⁹ Michael Katz, "Occupational Classification", p.63

desire to go beyond simple skilled/unskilled dichotomies and attempt to grapple somehow with the changing nature of production in the nineteenth century that was altering both the content and wage level of various occupations and changing the kinds of jobs that people would take up.

This was the very dimension that historians of social mobility had left out. "How to adjust the vertical categories at different points in time to account for the re-ordering of occupations resulting from industrialization remains undetermined", reported Hershberg in 1976.¹⁰ That so little attention should have been paid to one of the crucial aspects of change in a period of industrialization is one of the major weaknesses of social mobility studies. Clyde Griffin is an exception and has pointed to this very problem. He has stressed the need to be aware of the work of labour historians. After reading Hobsbawm, Gutman and others he came "away skeptical about how accurately any classificatory scheme can represent the marked variations in the progress of specialization within traditional crafts".¹¹

To begin to identify workers in the trades that were most subject to re-organization and skill dilution I have borrowed Griffin's category of "Injured Trades". Amongst the workers whom he studied in Poughkeepsie, New York in 1871, skill dilution was most evident amongst

¹⁰ Theodore Hershberg and Robert Dockhorn, "Occupational Classification", p.67.

¹¹ Clyde Griffin, "Occupational Mobility", p.311.

shoemakers, coopers and others in the wood trades.¹² Clearly complete identification of such trades in Montreal would require detailed study of the work processes and wages in a vast number of different local industries. Such an examination could only be reliable to the extent that individual workers' specific occupations within a factory were known - something that is generally impossible from Canadian census returns. This problem led Griffin to question skill distinctions made in "any American city in the nineteenth century ... based on census or directory data".¹³ While individual workers' job conditions and wage rates cannot be determined, it is possible to identify some industries and trades that were most subject to changes that led to a deterioration of work conditions and rates of pay. Research by labour historians and evidence given at the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital suggests that shoemakers, cigarmakers, moulders, coopers and seamstresses all fall into this category in this period.¹⁴ Ideally such a category would change over time to reflect historical modifications. I have simply identified those major trades and used them throughout the period. Further research will reveal more such "injured trades", and would modify and refine such a category. Here, hopefully, the major ones have been identified.

The classification scheme used in this work distinguishes nine

¹² IBID, p.320.

¹³ IBID, p.316.

¹⁴ RCRLC, Quebec Evidence, 1889; Fernand Harvey, Révolution Industrielle et Travailleurs, pp. 102-112; 115-126; Gregory S. Kealey, Toronto Workers Respond, Ian McKay, "Labour and Capital".

major groups: Proprietors, which includes all those owning their own businesses or workshop, however small or large, Professionals, those employed in commerce, State employees and others involved broadly in public service, those in private or other areas of personal service make up the non working class. Craftsmen and skilled workers not owning their own workshop, those in the injured trades, the semi-skilled and the unskilled have been defined as the working class. If required proprietors can be divided into those in commerce, in production or other areas. Had this been a study of the bourgeoisie in Montreal, or even of wealthier wards, it would have been desirable to make further distinctions between small owners - the traditional petty bourgeoisie, artisans and commercial and industrial capitalists. In these two predominantly working class wards, however, few families fell in the two latter categories. As the study is primarily concerned with working class families such fine distinctions were not made. In the sphere of production shoemakers, builders, coopers etc. were designated as proprietors only if there was evidence to indicate that they owned their own workshop or factory. In 1861 and 1871 this was ascertained by matching the industrial and personal manuscript census returns. For each of the years all craftsmen were checked in the city directories for the year of the census and the two years preceding and following it to see whether there was any indication of their being an owner.

The category of commercial employees simply included those working in commerce, but not evidently owning their own business. The public service category included all those working for different levels of government and a few others performing "public" services. "Private

service" comprised those employed in individual households as well as those offering personal type services - e.g. washerwoman, nurse, servant.

The four final categories comprise the working class as defined in this study. Skilled workers are similar to those identified by Michael Katz and the Philadelphia History Project except that I have separated out those trades that were most obviously "injured". (See Table B.1). The semi-skilled category is the most ambiguous and least useful. It includes a variety of occupational titles, most in transportation. Where carters, the dominant occupation in this category, clearly owned their own horse and cart they were identified as proprietors. Such a category needs rethinking. Carters, in particular may not have all earned wages. The ambiguity of the category was reflected in patterns of behaviour that appeared different from the rest of the working class. The only advantage of the semi skilled category as used here is that it does parallel that used by other historians and it does not include those owning their own businesses. The Unskilled category is dominated by general, day labourers. It also includes those performing single, repetitive tasks in factories and others involved in irregular or very low paid work requiring minimal skills.

All the categories are only as specific as the titles volunteered by respondents. They capture a person's occupation at one point of time and only in the broadest sense. American census takers were instructed by 1870 to be very specific about the title of people's jobs and to give details on place of work as well. No such details were ever gathered in

Canada. We have no idea whether a particular seamstress worked in the clothing or shoemaking trade. We can only guess from the clustering of such occupations among mothers and daughters that many worked together at home. Nor do we know whether a blacksmith worked in a small workshop or in a factory or whether a packer worked in trade or industry.

The classification of occupations then is by no means perfect, but the principles are useful, and in general this scheme seems to reflect the class structure of society better than models deriving from social mobility studies. The patterns of differences evident among non working class, skilled injured and unskilled families seem clear enough to confirm that these divisions did reflect reality in Montreal in this period. There is plenty of room for debate about where specific occupational titles should fall. To determine that satisfactorily would constitute a thesis topic in and of itself and would lead to the postponement of research and writing that has already taken too long. One has to agree with Theodore Hershberg when he argues that it is important to "face the fact that, rather than developing an ideal measure, we may have to settle for an inadequate measure in preference to inadequate or no measures at all".¹⁵

¹⁵ Hershberg and Docken, "Occupational Classification", p.67.

TABLE B.1

Occupations and Their Classification

U.1 Proprietors and Others Representing them or living off Capital

A) Commercial

Banker	Grocer
Bookseller	Importer
Candystore-owner	Merchant
Chemist/Druggist	Second Hand Dealer
Dealer/Trader	Tobacconist
Dry Goods Merchant	Peddler

B) Production

Baker	Hatter
Basketmaker	Jeweller
Blacksmith	Milkman
Brushmaker	Miller
Builder	Nailmaker
Butcher	Photographer
Cabinetmaker	Plasterer
Chandler	Shoemaker
Coffinmaker	Soap and Candle Maker
Confectioner	Tailor
Contractor	Tinsmith
Cooper	Umbrella Maker

C) Service

Boarding House Keeper	Tavern Keeper
Housekeeper	Undertaker
Innkeeper	

D) Transport Related

Boatman	Livery Stable Owner
Cabman	Transport Co. Owner
Carter-Master	

E) Supervisory Positions*

Bridgmaster	Foreman - Telegraph
Captain	Officer - Boat
Foreman - Unspecified	Timekeeper
Foreman - Gasworks	

* Where such supervisory workers should fit in the nineteenth century is clearly a matter of much debate!

F) Retired, Apparently Living off Capital or Savings

Bourgeois	Pensioner
Gentleman	"Rentner"
Landlord	Retired

II Professionals

Architect	Journalist
Army - high ranks	Legal Profession
Artist	Musician
Clergy - Roman Catholic	Nun
- Protestant	Vetsurgeon
Dentist	Nun
Doctor	

III Commercial Employees - Those Working for Commercial Capitalists

Accountant	Florist
Agent	Forwarding Agent
Agent - collector	Office Boy
Bookkeeper	Office Girl
Broker	Photographer
Checker	Salesperson
Chemist	Seller at Market
Clerk	Storeman
Commercial Traveller	Tobacconist - non owner
Copyiste	Usher
Courier	"Work in shop"
Estate Manager	

IV State Employees/Public Service

Bailiff
Church Employee
Customs Officer
Court Officer
Fireman
Government Employee
Inspector - Unspecified

Lockmaster
Police
Post Office Inspector
Public Weigher
Steamboat Inspector
Teacher - Female
- Male

V Private Service/Other Service

Barber
Charwoman
Cook
Employe - apparently servant
Gardener
Hospital Attendant
Housekeeper
Laundress

Livery
Midwife
Nurse
Servant - Female
- Male
Waiter
Waitress
Washerwoman

VI Crafts/Skilled Workers

Artisan - Unspecified
Baker³
Basketmaker³
Beltmaker
Blacksmith³
Boilermaker¹
Bookbinder³
Brakeman¹
Brassmoulder
Brewer - non owner²
Bricklayer³
Brickmaker¹
Brush and Broom Maker³
Butcher¹
Cabinetmaker³

Carpenter³
Carriage Maker¹
Chandler - non owner³
Confectioner³
Coppersmith³
Cutter²
Decorator
Distiller - non owner¹
Draftsman¹
Dyer³
Engine Driver¹
Engine Man
Engineer³
Engraver and Lithographer³
Finisher³

Fitter - Unspecified ¹	Railroad - skilled
- Gas ¹	Roofer ²
- Steam	Ropemaker ³
- Stove ¹	Saddler ³
Form Maker	Safemaker ¹
Furrier	Sailmaker ³
Gilder ²	Sausage Maker ¹
Goldsmith ³	Sawyer ³
Hatter ³	Sawmaker
Horseshoer	Sculptor
Japanner ¹	Soapmaker ¹
Jeweller ³	Spoonmaker ¹
Knifegrinder	Springmaker ¹
Lithographer ³	Statue Maker
Machinemaker	Stonecutter ¹
Machinist ³	Stonemason ²
Mantua Maker	Tackmaker
Marble Cutter ³	Tailor ³
Mechanic ¹	Tinsmith ³
Navigator	Trunkmaker ³
Painter ³	Turner ³
Paper Ruler	Typesetter ¹
Pattern Maker ³	Umbrella Maker ³
Piano Maker ³	Upholsterer ³
Plasterer ³	Varnish Maker ²
Plumber ³	Watchmaker ³
Polisher - Unspecified ³	Wheelwright ³
Printer ³	Window glass Maker
	Wool Carder

1. Assigned to a similar category by Michael Katz, The People of Hamilton, Appendix II.
2. Assigned to a similar category by Theodore Hershberg and Robert Dockhorn in "Occupational Classification", pp.90-98.
3. Assigned to skilled trades by both of the above.

VII Injured Trades⁴

Cigarmaker
Cooper
Dressmaker
Foundryman

Moulder
Seamstress
Shoecutter
Shoemaker
Tanner

VIII Semi-Skilled

Cabman²
Carman²
Carter³
Conductor
Courier
Driver³
Guardkeeper
Letter Carrier²
Lumberman¹
Messenger¹

Porter³
Spamaker
Station Agent
Stevedore³
Weigher
Woodsman

IX Unskilled

Boatman - non owner³
Collar Factory Worker
Collarmaker
Dresshand
Employee - Unspecified (doesn't look like servant)
Factory Worker³
Hatbander
Helper
Paperboxmaker
Pin Factory²

Knifegrinder
Labourer¹
Leathercutter
Leather Dresser
Leather Worker
Nailer
Packer²
Shunter
Soapboiler

4. Until we have better knowledge of the process of change and its effects in a wide variety of trades we cannot ascertain with certainty which trades were subject to skill dilution. The trades isolated above are merely the most obvious ones.

Railway - Unspecified
Sailor²
Sewingmachine Operator
Shoe Factory

Strawworker
Tobacco Worker
Typecaster

Appendix C

Classifying Families, Households and Individuals' Relationships

Defining the family or household is at once more simple and more complex than defining class. It involves less of the emotionally charged debate that surrounds the issue of class, yet such a definition also raises complex issues. Is biology or co-residence the proper basis for assessing family boundaries.¹ Was "the family" a biologically determined structure, or a socially defined institution? How far beyond the home should one seek kin to argue that extended families provided valuable material or emotional support?² Clearly to understand the functions of kin in the nineteenth century it is necessary to consider more than simple co-residence. A major limitation of the census as a source is that it sheds light only on kin living actually with or near each other. Grandparents in rural areas may have subsidized urban families' survival with gifts of eggs, chickens, meat or vegetables. Relatives living nearby may have provided baby sitting services allowing a mother to earn wages. Grown children residing in another city may have sent home part of their wages, forming a vital, but absent component of the family economy. Such practices are, unfortunately largely hidden in analysis based on census returns. Their existence can only be hinted at. It was, however, the co-resident family kin grouping that formed the basis of the family economy and it is the major focus

¹ Rayna Rapp, et. al., "Examining Family History".

² Ibid; Miranda Chaytor, "Household and Kinship".

here. Absent relatives may have provided moral and some economic support, but it was those living together from day to day who really had to co-operate to survive. My definition of "family" has thus been based on co-residence, so that family as used in the thesis refers to that group of kin who lived and ate together and depended on each other for survival. The "family" may have been a mother and child, a nuclear family of parents and children, or a family extended by the presence of other relatives. It is assumed that in the latter case they contributed in one way or another to each other's survival. Each family might also include boarders, apprentices or servants. This definition of family has the advantage of co-inciding with the boundaries of the family as defined by the census enumerators in 1871 and 1881, and pretty well with each schedule filled out in 1861.³

Some families resided in a single household, others shared with additional families. The distinction between family and household is important, because the sharing of dwelling space was one way of cutting down on rental and heating costs and for some families, of making money.⁴

In 1871 the census enumerators were instructed to use the following

³ In rural areas in 1861, in contrast, no indicators separated families or households from each other, so that defining the boundaries of each was a more complex operation. See David Gagan, "Enumerators Instructions".

⁴ Gordon Darroch and Michael D. Ornstein, "Family Co-residence in Canada in 1871", p.25.

definition of a family.

A family, as understood for the purposes of the census, may consist of one person living alone, or of any number of persons living together under one roof and having their food provided together. For example: one man, say a shopkeeper, or one woman, say a seamstress, living alone in a separate house, or in a distinctly separate part of a house, would constitute a census family; but any number of persons living together in a boarding-house, several of them being parents, having children and servants, would only constitute one census family, provided they have no home elsewhere.⁵

Each family thus identified was assigned a consecutive number by the enumerator.

Families were distinguished from households.

There may be several families in the same house; but the house would, nevertheless, only constitute one house, as shown in the specimen schedule. A separate house is to be counted, whenever the entrance from the outside is separate, and there is no direct and constant communication in the inside, to make it one.⁶

The instructions of 1871 and 1881 thus make what appears to be a clear distinction between a family and a house. "Having their food provided together" - or common consumption was the major differentiating factor. Those cooking their own food were to constitute a separate family within

⁵ Canada, Sessional Papers, 1871, No. 64, "Instructions to Officers", p.128.

⁶ IBID, p.133.

a household. But how did enumerators determine just who ate together? No question on the census asked whether people had their own separate range for cooking. Qualitative evidence suggests families shared cooking facilities. Were they then one "family" for census purposes? In practise the family boundary was usually drawn around a conjugal family incorporating additional co-resident kin and other individuals. Occasionally the "family" included additional conjugal units. Usually they were designated as separate families within the household.

In 1861, in contrast, no such distinction between family and household was made on the schedules. In Montreal, each family was apparently left a schedule, although it is nowhere specified whether in fact it was each family or each household. Generally those listed included a conjugal family unit and additional boarders or servants. Less often there was an additional entire family - probably boarders. Column 34 also asked how many families resided in the house. As the answer given seldom agreed with the listing, this was clearly perceived as meaning within the whole dwelling unit. Nor did adjacent schedules have the same reply, as would be expected had the schedules of families within one dwelling been collected one after another. Either schedules were randomly collected, or answers to the question about families were wrong. Definitions based on the 1861 census, then, are clearly ambiguous. I opted for the most conservative one - i.e. the one that would minimize the number of extended and multiple families found. Each schedule was treated as representing a household. Where there were extra families within that household they were assumed to be sharing space. The result, then, is probably an under estimation of the extent

of household sharing in 1861.

The definitions of family and household structure used in the thesis are based with reservations on the census distinctions of 1871 and 1881. In the case of families I have also identified each separate family head and spouse in order to count the number of children they had, and their patterns of schooling and work. The definition of household boundaries appears more problematic in practise than that of the family. A close examination of those families that appeared to be sharing housing suggests that the census enumerators were not always very careful in drawing boundaries. In attempting to match census returns with both city directories and evaluation roles, it became clear that some houses that were apparently "shared" by families were actually separate tenements whose residents were independently assessed by the city for water rates and occasionally even given a separate address in the city directory. Without a full scale and highly detailed study tracing the size and layout of every house, it is impossible to determine exactly which families, or what percentage apparently sharing housing on census day, were actually doing so. Housing in Montreal was complex and changing. Landlords rented out separate rooms within a house and converted single houses to duplexes and duplexes to triplexes. Many distinct upstairs apartments had only internal doorways to the different residential units. Where census enumerators decided to draw the line in such complex situations is unclear. Analyzing the meaning of household structures based on such data is, as Nancy Fitch has pointed out, "fraught with problems". She suggests:

The debate about the meaning of pre-industrial household structures in England is sufficient to caution the historian of the industrial period about jumping to hasty conclusions from the boundaries defined by census takers. In the industrial period the problem is compounded, as duplexes, triplexes, subdivided houses all come to constitute major housing forms.⁷

Such cautions are well taken. The particularly high rates of household sharing that I initially outlined for 1871.⁸ or found by Darroch and Ornstein for urban Quebec and New Brunswick in the same year may simply result from the particular kinds of duplexes and triplexes characteristic of urban housing in those provinces.⁹ Further study is clearly called for. In the meantime I have used the distinctions with caution, in some cases altering the census definition where evaluation roles or a city directory unambiguously suggested the boundary had been incorrectly designated.¹⁰ A household, as used here, is a group of

⁷ Nancy Fitch, "The Household and the Computer: A Review", Historical Methods Newsletter, 13 (Spring 1980).

⁸ Bettina Bradbury, "The Family Economy and Work in an Industrialising City, Montreal, 1871", CHA, Historical Papers, 1979.

⁹ "Family Co-residence in Canada in 1871", Table I. They found that 16.2 of Quebec urban households were shared compared to under 10 in Ontario.

¹⁰ Investigation of the evaluation roles and city directories suggest that such sharing may have referred to three different situations. Firstly where people rented large houses - at over \$60 annually for instance, and subdivided to spread costs. Secondly where tenements did not have separate entrances and addresses and were treated as one household. Thirdly where landlords subdivided buildings creating separate "flats" of as little as one room each and charged \$18 to \$30 a year rental. This would account for some of the multiple family houses with four or five co-resident families. The prevalence of each of these situations would have to be assessed

people, related or unrelated, in families or as individuals who apparently shared a common dwelling unit.

Distinctions between types of family and household structures assume that the relationships between individuals in the listing are known. In the Canadian census no relationship is given. Enumerators were instructed to list the household head first, and this was usually the husband. He was followed by the wife, and then the children, usually in chronological order. Sometimes, especially in 1861, boys were listed before the girls. Other residents followed. I have assumed that a man and woman, following each other on a schedule, having the same surname, and both listed as married were man and wife. In 1861 the wife's maiden name was often given - but again placement, age and marital status usually made it clear that this was the wife. A woman had to be at least 15 and no more than 45 years older than co-resident children to be coded as their mother, unless they were apparently the children from a husband's previous marriage. Where this was a possibility, a check in the parish register cleared up most cases. Additional co-residents were defined as orphans if they were under eleven and had a different surname, as parents of the head or spouse if they had the same surname as either and were fifteen to forty five years older, as other relatives if they had the same surname but did not fit the preceding category, and as apprentices or servants if this was given

using housing plans as well as the other types of sources if crowding and sharing were to be correctly measured.

as their occupation. Anyone else was assumed to be a boarder.¹¹

In 1861 the identification of relatives was made simpler because the wife's maiden name was almost always given. For 1871, I attempted to better assess relationships and hence family and household structures by determining the maiden name of wives from the Montreal parish registers. Of the 72 checks made for St. Jacques ward, no information was found in 26 cases; information was found but no relationship established in 17 and in 29 cases, or 40 the check resulted in the recoding of a person's relationship and hence of the family and/or household structure. In Ste. Anne ward 91 cases were examined. No information was found on 39; no relationship determined for 34 and relatives positively identified for 18 or 20. For 1881 it was harder to determine people's relationships as the parish registers after 1885 are less accessible. There is, thus, an underestimation of the co-residence of relatives that year.

Having determined people's relationships as accurately as possible, family and household structures were defined based largely on Laslett's categories but making a distinction between family and household based on the census that corresponds more to his distinction between

¹¹ These distinctions were based on those developed by Buffington Clay Miller for the American censuses prior to the 1890's when they began to ask about people's relationships in the family and household. "A Computerized Method of Determining Family Structure From Mid Nineteenth Century Census Data", M.A. Thesis, Computer and Information Sciences, Moore School of Electrical Engineering, University of Pennsylvania, 1972.

households and dwellings¹² and allows for the incorporation of inmates in the analysis. (See Table C.1)

Often the boundaries of family and household were coterminous, so each was coded the same. For any shared households, however, the boundaries were clearly different and needed to be assessed to understand the extent of doubling up. The additional categories of multiple family households, with and without relatives present were, therefore added. (See Table C.2).

Gordon Darroch and Micael D. Ornstein made a different distinction in their cross-Canadian study of Family and Household. They distinguished between "stem-like" households, where an "ever married son and one or both of his inferred parents" co-reside and "other one surname households which include unmarried children and any other kin". Multiple family households were categorized as two surname households or three or more surname households. The latter may or may not include relatives. The scheme reflects their focus on "family (surname) complexity and generational depth of households."¹³ Mine, in contrast, aimed first of all to identify those living with kin in the family and in the household or nearby and secondly like Darroch and Ornstein, to distinguish those households with more than one resident family, related

¹² Peter Laslett, "Introduction", Household and Family, p.34

¹³ Gordon Darroch and Michael D. Ornstein, "Regional Economics, Family and Household in Nineteenth Century Canada", Unpublished paper presented to the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, 1982, p.8.

or otherwise. I adopted the dual scheme - with family and household definitions partly because I was not sure that the distinctions between the two made by the census takers were always as clear as they appeared, and partly so that the two could be analysed separately where required.

Clearly the question of boundaries becomes problematic only in the light of the need to answer specific questions. To investigate how widespread overcrowding was would require information on household size and the numbers of residents. A family of seven occupying one two room dwelling would be more crowded than three couples in a three or four room dwelling. I have attempted to use the census information on households largely to answer the question of who lived near whom, although the temptation to use it as a proxy for the study of overcrowding proved too tempting at times.

TABLE C.1
FAMILY STRUCTURES
DEFINED FOR EACH CENSUS "FAMILY".

<u>Type</u>	<u>Distinction</u>	<u>Inmates</u>
<u>1 Solitary</u>	1 Widowed 2 Single or unknown	0 No Boarders 1 One Boarder 2 2 or more boarders
<u>2 No Family</u>	1 Co-resident siblings 2 Co-resident relatives of other kinds 3 Persons not evidently related	3 Servant or housekeeper 4 Servants 5 Own apprentices 6 Apprentices -different occupation 7 Servant and boarders
<u>3 Conjugal Units</u>	1 Married Couple alone 2 Married Couple with children 3 Widow with children 4 Widower with children 5 Lone female parent with children - not a widow 6 Lone male parent with children - not a widower	8 Servants and boarders 9 Apparent Orphans
<u>4 Extended Family - within the Census "family".</u>	1 Extended "up" - parent(s) present 2 Extended "down" - married child(ren) present, with or without spouse 3 Extended "down" for two generations - grandchildren present 4 Extended "laterally" - cousins, siblings present 5 A combination of any of 1 to 4.	

TABLE C.2
HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURES
DEFINED FOR EACH CENSUS HOUSEHOLD

<u>Type</u>	<u>Distinction</u>
1-4 (As in Table C.1)	
5 <u>Multiple Family Household -Related.</u> (Two census families with relatives in at least one).	1 Extended up either within one family or by the relationship with the second family. 2 Extended down. 3 Extended down two generations. 4 Extended laterally. 5 Combination of the above.
6 <u>Multiple Family Household - No</u> <u>relatives identified.</u>	1 2 couples, no children 2 2 couples, or single parent, one with children 3 2 couples, both with children 4 3 couples, no children 5 3 families, some or all with children 6 4 couples, none with children 7 4 couples, some with children 8 5 couples, some with children 9 Mixture of couples, families and solitaries

Appendix D

Assessing the Cost of Living

An Explanation of Figure 2.2

The costs portrayed in Figure 2.2 represent a minimum possible budget for families in Montreal in 1882 based only on estimated food requirements, clothing needs, rents and water rates and fuel costs. Obviously families had other expenses - notably cleaning materials, furniture, cutlery and lighting equipment. Often they had to pay for medicine and medical assistance. Schooling in Quebec was not compulsory, nor was it free except where religious orders exempted the children of the poor from payment. Most parents would have paid some fee for their children. Tobacco and alcohol were not allowed for in the estimates, despite their importance to many a workingman. The estimates set out, then, represent an absolutely minimal budget, and one that could not be followed indefinitely.

Food requirements, as explained in the text, were based on the minimum diet set out by Rowntree, but modified following Foster to include some meat rather than cheese. The proportionate weightings for males and females of different ages were developed by A. Bowley and also used by Foster. They were applied to the members of six hypothetical families of different sizes and life cycle stages to show

the changing nature of a family's budget over time.¹ The weightings and Montreal costs of the diet in 1882 are set out in Table D.1. Prices for 1882 were used as those reported by the Montreal immigration agent that year constituted the first detailed list of prices that I could find for a time when there were also wage data available. For the full list of prices and wages see Table D.2.

Clothing costs were also based on Rowntree's diet. He allowed 13 per cent of food costs for clothing. I have allowed between 13 and 14 per cent. Again, this represents an underestimate, given the high costs of clothing suitable for a Canadian winter. A winter overcoat and one pair of trousers, for instance, would have used up the annual clothing allowance for a couple who had one baby.

The fuel figure is arbitrary. One worker argued that it took four tons of coal "working very carefully" to heat an average house.² I have allowed \$6.00 a ton, one price quoted in the 1880's. In 1882 the Montreal immigration agent cited \$ 7.00.³ Clearly prices fluctuated dramatically, compounding the problem of balancing wages and costs. Rentals are based on the mean amounts paid by labourers (\$39.00), shoemakers (\$45.00) and machinists (\$72.00) respectively.⁴

¹ John Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, p. 256.

² RCRLC, Evidence of Thomas Gratorex, Labourer, p. 87.

³ Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers 1882 - 1884, Annual Reports of the Montreal Immigration Agent.

⁴ David Hanna and Sherry Olson, "Métier, Loyers et bouts de rue", p. 260.

The food, clothing, rent and fuel costs are set out in Figure 2.2. The actual figures and family characteristics are explained in Table D.3. Overall, the major criticism of the estimated cost of living set out here would be that it is much too low and that few families could have survived on the amounts allowed. This is counterbalanced somewhat by the fact that only forty week's work a year was utilized in estimating annual wages, a figure that for skilled workers in particular may have been too little.

Table 2.5 - Further explanation.

Families of the following compositions and life cycle stages would have failed to meet the most basic food, fuel, rental and clothing costs:

All Children Under 11: Families with 1 worker and 4 or more children could not manage on \$240.00 those with 7 or more would not have managed on \$300.00.

Half Children Under 15: Families with 1 worker and 3 or more children could not manage on \$240 those with 4 or more could not manage on \$300. If one child worked, earning \$120.00 annually, any families with 6 or more children would not have managed.

Half Children 15 and Over: Families with only 1 worker and only 2 children could not cover expenses at \$240.00 those with 3 or more could not manage at \$300.00. An additional child earner would not have brought sufficient to support 4 or more children.

All Children over 15: Families with 1 worker could not manage with more than 1 child on \$240.00 given the greater food costs of older children. Those with 2 to 3 children would have had trouble surviving on \$300.00. By this stage the children working would probably have earned more. And most families had the majority of their sons, in particular, at work.

TABLE D.1

Weightings and the Prices of Rowntree's Diet
in Montreal, 1882

<u>Weighting</u>	<u>Cost per week in 1882</u>
100 for a man over 18	.91c
.85 for a boy over 14	.77c
.80 for a woman over 16	.73c
.70 for a girl 14-15	.63c
.50 for a child 5-13	.46c
.33 for a child under 5	.30c
.60 for all over 60	.42c

TABLE D.2

List of Retail Prices of Ordinary Articles of
Food and Raiment required by the Working
Classes at Montreal Agency

1882 - 1884

	<u>1882</u>		<u>1883</u>		<u>1884</u>	
	\$	¢	\$	¢	\$	¢
a) <u>Food</u>						
Bacon - lb	.18		.15		.15	
Bread - best white - 4 lbs	.18		.20		.20	
- brown - 6 lbs	.20		.20		.20	
Butter - salt - 1 lb	.25		.25		.25	
- fresh	.30		?		.26	
Beef - lb	.12		.12		.12	
Mutton - lb	.8		.10		.10	
Veal - lb	.12		.12		.12	
Pork - lb	.13		.11		.10	
Beer - quart	.10		.10		.10	
Candles - lb	.10		.10		.8	
Cheese - lb	.16		.16		.15	
Coffee - lb	.30		.25		.30	
Corn Meal - 100 lbs	3.50		3.50		3.50	
Eggs - dozen	.25		.30		.30	
Flour - barrel 1st quality	6.40		5.75		5.50	
- barrel 2nd quality	6.00		5.00		5.00	
- buckwheat - 100 lbs	2.50		2.50		2.50	
Fish - dry or green cod, cwt	8.00		7.50		7.00	
Firewood - cord	7.00		6.50		7.00	
Ham - lb	.15		.15		.15	
- shoulder	.13		.15		.14	
Herrings - barrel	6.00		4.50		4.50	
Mustard - lb	.20		.20		.20	
Milk - quart	.7		.8		.8	
Oatmeal - 100 lbs	3.50		3.50		3.50	

TABLE D.2 (Continued)

	1882		1883		1884	
	\$	¢	\$	¢	\$	¢
Pepper	.15		.20		.20	
Potatoes - bushel	.60		.60		.35	
Rice - lb	.5		.5		.5	
Soap - yellow	.7		.7		.7	
Sugar - brown, lb	.9		.9		.7	
Salt - bushel	.25		.25		.25	
Tea - black, lb	.60		.50		.50	
- green	.50		.50		.45	
Tobacco	.50		.50		.50	

b) Clothing

Coats, undertweed	6.00		5.00		5.00	
overtweed	\$8.00-\$10.00		\$8.00-\$12.00		\$8.00-\$12.00	
Trousers	3.50		3.50		3.50	
Vests	\$1.00-\$1.50		\$1.00-\$2.00		\$1.00-\$2.00	
Shirts - flannel	2.00		\$1.50-\$2.00		\$1.50-\$2.00	
- cotton	1.00		1.00		1.00	
- under "wove"	1.00		.75		.75	
Drawers - wool wove	1.00		.75		.75	
Hat - felt	2.50		2.50		\$1.00-\$2.00	
Socks - worsted, pair	.25		.30		.30	
cotton, pair	.20		.25		.20	
Blankets - pair	4.50		4.00		\$3.00-\$5.00	
Rugs	1.50		1.50		1.50	
Flannel - yard	.30¢-.50¢		.30¢-.50¢		.30¢-.50¢	
Cotton shirting	.10¢-.12¢		.10¢-.12¢		.10¢-.12¢	
Sheeting - yard	.10		.20		.20	
C Cloth - yard	.50		.50		.50	
Shoes - mens	2.50		2.50		2.50	
- wome	2.00		2.00		2.00	
Boots - mens	3.50		3.50		3.50	
- womens	2.50		2.50		2.50	

TABLE D.2 (Continued)

	<u>1882</u>		<u>1883</u>		<u>1884</u>	
	\$	¢	\$	¢	\$	¢
Indian Rubber overshoes - mens		.60		.75		.75
- womens		.50		.70		.60
Board Per Week	\$3.00-\$4.00		\$3.00-\$4.00		\$3.00-\$4.00	
Rent for Labourers and Mechanics (Per month - houses)	\$6.00-\$8.00					

Source: Canada, Parliament, Sessional Papers, 1882, 1883, 1884, "Annual Report of the Montreal Immigration Agent", in "Annual Report of the Minister of Agriculture".

TABLE D.3

Hypothetical Families and Minimum Estimated Costs Utilized for Figure 2.2

	<u>Hypothetical Families</u>	<u>Estimated Minimum Costs</u>				<u>Total</u>
		<u>Food</u>	<u>Clothing</u>	<u>Rent and Water Tax</u>	<u>Fuel</u>	
I	<u>Family of Three, One Child Under One</u>	\$100.88	\$13.52	\$39.00	\$24.00	\$177.40
II	<u>Family of Five, All Children Under 11</u> Parents, boys 4,1 and girl 2.	\$132.08	\$17.68	\$39.00	\$24.00	\$212.76
III	<u>Family of Five - Half Under 15</u> Parents, boy 16, girls 14 and B.	\$182.52	\$25.22	\$39.00	\$24.00	\$270.74
IV	<u>Family of Five - Half 15 and Over</u> Parents, boys 18 and 13, girl 17	\$194.48	\$26.26	\$45.00	\$24.00	\$289.74
V	<u>Family of Seven - Half 15 and Over</u> Parents, boys 19,15, girls 16,11,9	\$258.44	\$35.56	\$72.00	\$26.00	\$391.80
VI	<u>Family of Seven - All Over 15</u> Parents, boys 21,19,17,16, girl 16	\$297.96	\$40.56	\$72.00	\$26.00	\$436.52

Appendix E
Life Cycle Stages

Except for in the cost of living discussion, where specific family sizes were utilized (See Table D.3), life cycle stages for each family head and mother were defined as follows:

- 0 No Family
- I Wife Under 45, No children
- II Wife Under 45, One child under 1
- III All children under 11
- IV Half the Children Under 15
- V Half the children 15 and over
- VI All children over 15

These stages were based on those utilized by Michael Anderson. His stage 3 included families with children at home, but none in employment, Stage 4 included those with children at home, but under half in employment. And his stage 5 covered those families with children at

home, and half or over half in employment.¹ I avoided including whether children worked in the definition of life cycle stages as the wage labour of children was one of the variables that I hoped to measure in relationship to the life cycle as well as to other variables. My stages divide the life cycle roughly into periods when children were unlikely to work (under 11); not very likely to work (under 15) and likely to work (over 15).

¹ Michael Anderson, Family Structure, p.202.

Appendix F

The Use of Statistics

The majority of tables in the thesis are simple crosstabulations presenting the percentage of individuals with certain characteristics falling into each category. They thus require little explanation. Where the data allowed it and such a measure elucidated what was being studied a simple chi 2 test was utilized to test the significance of the variance between the variables presented. In these cases the significance level, or the probability that the variation apparent was not due to chance has been indicated. A significance level of .001 is highly acceptable, indicating that there is only 1 chance in 1,000 that the variation apparent was due to chance. Most social scientists will accept levels down to .05 as significant.

Certain tables are more complex. In Tables 2.11 and 3.5 to 3.9, Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) was used to control for the influence of variables on each other. MCA generates means for each independent variable as well as portraying what the mean would have been had all other independent variables been constant.

Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) is a form of regression analysis with dummy variables which expresses results in terms of adjusted deviations from the grand mean of the dependent variable associated with the various classes of predictor variables.1

It is particularly easy to use and is useful for historians "especially when using censuses" because the independent "variables can be interval, dichotomous ("dummy"), or categorical ("nominal"). The dependent variable can be either interval or dichotomous".²

In tables 3.5 - 3.8 MCA enables analysis of the extent to which variations in the mean number of workers per family was a result of the age, the occupation, the religious background or the number of children that a family head had. MCA provides estimates of the "net change in mean responses within categories that would occur if the population of any category represented the entire population". It also provides explicit tests of the "nature and significance of the relationship between each, and all, of the categories of predictors and the dependent variable."³ The levels of significance presented in these tables refers to the probability that variations between categories of each variable occurred by chance. Again, levels of .05 or over may be accepted as significant.

I have not presented the cumbersome tables that MCA produces in the text, a practise that appears to be becoming common in some publications, but that means little to the average reader. Rather, I

¹ Carl F. Kaestle and Maris A. Vinovskis, "From Fireside to Factory: School Entry and School Leaving in Nineteenth Century Massachusetts", in Tamara K. Hareven ed., Transitions, p. 181.

² Richard Jensen, "New Press for Old Grapes: Multiple Classification Analysis", Historical Methods Newsletter, 11 (Fall 1978), p. 174.

³ David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers, p. 167.

have limited the data presented to the means and the adjusted means, and limited use of the analysis to interval type dependent variables...e.g. mean numbers of workers, mean numbers of co-resident children. Where specific independent variables were significant predictors the level of significance was presented.

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