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The Family Economy and Work in an Industrializing City: Montreal in the 1870s

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Article abstract

Durant les années 1870, Montréal est une ville en transition ; depuis deux décennies déjà, elle se fabrique un nouveau profil géographique et on assiste à une réorganisation du monde du travail qui va modifier les bases mêmes de la vie familiale. Cet article se propose d'examiner l'économie familiale dans deux quartiers distincts de la ville — Sainte-Anne qui est déjà fortement industrialisé et Saint-Jacques qui est demeuré beaucoup plus artisanal — dans le but de mieux cerner la relation qui existe entre la famille et l'organisation des moyens de production.

Selon l'auteur, cette relation est complexe et bi-dimensionnelle. D'une part, la nature du travail disponible va déterminer quels membres de la famille sont plus susceptibles de travailler et ceci peut varier d'un quartier à l'autre ; d'autre part, la démographie et les attitudes culturelles des familles montréalaises vont tout également influencer les moyens de production. Ainsi, parce qu'il y a un grand nombre de femmes et d'enfants disponibles, les industries du textile et de la chaussure atteignent une place de choix dans l'économie de la ville ; par contre, le fait que tant de femmes et d'enfants travaillent dans ces industries fait baisser le salaire et nuit à la main-d'oeuvre spécialisée.

Dans la plupart des familles ouvrières, l'insuffisance des salaires, le chômage saisonnier et le surplus de main-d'oeuvre vont faire en sorte qu'il faudra plus d'un travailleur par famille pour assurer la subsistance. Règle générale, on semble avoir préféré mettre les garçons au travail plutôt que les femmes et les filles ; dans le quartier Sainte-Anne, il n'y a que les veuves et les femmes seules qui ont un emploi alors que dans Saint-Jacques, les femmes qui travaillent le font à la maison de par le système du travail au noir. Il arrive également, dans le cas des familles qui n'ont encore que de très jeunes enfants, qu'on tente de boucler le budget en prenant des pensionnaires ou en logeant avec la parenté. En somme, dans la ville qui s'industrialise, le cycle de la vie familiale, la disponibilité du travail et les valeurs culturelles ont, tour à tour, contribué à façonner tant la structure de la maisonnée que le modèle du travail familial.

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*The Family Economy and Work in an Industrializing City: Montreal in the 1870s**

BETTINA BRADBURY

Introduction

The impact of industrial capitalism on the structure, size, and nature of the family has recently been attracting the interest of historians, demographers, sociologists, and anthropologists.[1] The topic has produced some lively debates between feminists and family historians, between historians and sociologists, and between marxists and liberals.[2] Did industrialization lead to the emergence of the nuclear family as early sociologists believed?[3] Was the separation of home and workplace and the creation of

*Research for this paper was made easier by a Doctoral Fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

1 For reviews of recent historical literature on the family and industrialization, see especially Lutz K. Berkner, "Recent Research on the History of the Family in Western Europe", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, XXXV (August 1973); Elizabeth Pleck, "Two Worlds in One — Work and Family", *Journal of Social History*, (Winter 1976); and Lise Vogel, "The Contested Domain: A Note on the Family in the Transition to Capitalism", *Marxist Perspectives*, I (Spring 1978). For books dealing explicitly with the topic, see Michael Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire* (Cambridge: University Press, 1971); William Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963); Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, *Household and Family Formation in An Age of Nascent Capitalism* (New York: Academic Press, 1977); Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1975); and Neil J. Smelser, *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959).

2 For a feminist rejoinder to Shorter's work, see Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, "Women's Work and the Family in Nineteenth Century Europe", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, XVII (1975); and Louise Tilly, Joan Scott and Miriam Cohen, "Women's Work and European Fertility Patterns", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, VI (Winter 1976). For Shorter's rejoinder to the earlier article, see "Women's Work: What Difference Did Capitalism Make?", *Theory and Society*, III (Winter 1976). For Marxist critiques, see Veronica Beechy, "Some Notes on Female Wage Labour in Capitalist Production", *Capital and Class*, III (Autumn 1977); Jane Humphries, "The Working Class Family, Women's Liberation, and Class Struggle: The Case of Nineteenth Century British History", *The Review of Radical Political Economics*, IX (Fall 1977); Jane Humphries, "Class Struggle and the Persistence of the Working Class Family", *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, I (1978); and Lise Vogel, "The Contested Domain".

3 Talcott Parsons, "The Social Structure of the Family", S.M. Farber et. al., *The Family's Search for Survival* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965). For sociologists questioning this view, see especially Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (1963), and Laslett and Wall, *Household and Family in Past Time* (1972).

a separate sphere in the home a result of industrialization?[4] Was the family a passive agent automatically adjusting its size and structure to economic change?[5] Was the advent of capitalism or industrialization the important factor?[6]

This paper aims to cast light on some of these broad questions. It examines how class position, cultural values, and changes in the nature of production influenced the family economy in the period of early industrial capitalism. It attempts to relate the work of family members to the particular nature of industrialization in one place at one time—Montreal in the 1870s. The aim is to see what data from the manuscript census reveals about the family economy in a period of transition, and to examine beyond the figures of census-based material the interaction between the family as an institution and the economy. The link between the two, here, is in the paid work of family members. Other important aspects of the family economy and family life—unpaid work at home, socialization, reproduction—are not dealt with in this paper.

To illustrate the inter-relationships and relative importance of class, cultural tradition, and the nature of production, five topics are studied. The first section briefly examines major aspects of Montreal's industrialization. The following three sections examine aspects of the family economy: the relationship between the number of workers per family and the father's occupation, the prevalence and nature of work by young children, and the work of wives and mothers. Finally, household structure is examined to see whether sharing housing offered an alternative survival strategy for families.

The major sources for the study are random samples taken of households resident in two Montreal wards, Sainte Anne and Saint Jacques, in 1871.[7] This data is complemented by a complete survey of all working wives in these two areas and of the manuscript returns of the industrial census.[8] Thus, while much of what is argued is

4 Pleck, "Two Worlds in One".

5 Humphries, "The Working Class Family"; and "Class Struggle and the Persistence of the Working Class Family"; Tamara Hareven, "Cycles, Courses and Cohorts: Reflections on Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to the Historical Study of Family Development", *Journal of Social History*, XII (Fall 1978); Virginia Yans McLaughlin, "Patterns of Work and Family Organization: Buffalo's Italians", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, II (Autumn 1971); and "A Flexible Tradition: South Italian Immigrants Confront a New Work Experience", *Journal of Social History*, VII (Summer 1976).

6 Berkner, "Recent Research"; and Vogel, "The Contested Domain".

7 A 5 per cent random sample was taken of households enumerated in Ste. Anne ward in 1871, using a standard table of random numbers and taking one household in twenty at random from within each census subdivision, thus ensuring geographical coverage. In St. Jacques the same process was followed, except a 10 per cent sample was taken. The latter proved more adequate, as at times the numbers involved in Ste. Anne proved too small for some analyses. The samples taken approximated published material on the two wards as regards place of birth, origins, and age and sex structure.

8 Because of the small number of working wives in the two samples, I skimmed the returns for the two wards pulling out all working wives, resident with their husbands. All institutions enumerated by the 1871 Industrial Census takers in these two wards were studied. It should be noted that industrial returns for Subdistrict 8 of Ste. Anne ward are missing, so that the amount of industry in that ward is consistently underestimated by about 10 per cent. Public Archives of Canada, Manuscript Census, 1871, Schedule 6, Microfilm Reels Numbers 10041, 10042, 10044, 10045.

relevant to all of Montreal in this period, the data is specifically focused on the immigrant, industrial, working class suburb of Ste. Anne and the predominantly French-Canadian and more artisanal suburb of St. Jacques. Ideally, families and industrial change should be traced over several decades at least. However, even a static examination of one period begins to show important patterns.[9]

Industrialization

Families living in Montreal in 1871 were part of a city in transition. For two to three decades industrial capital had unevenly but persistently been reshaping the geography of the city, the organization of production, and the nature of work.[10] The rhythm of people's lives and the bases of family life were radically altered. In trades like shoemaking, carpentry, and tailoring, old forms of production and apprenticeship had largely disappeared. Most workers were collected together under the control of one master, often manufacturing only a single part of a whole commodity.[11] Artisans had not been eliminated in most trades, but were increasingly confined to certain lines of luxury production, to repair work, and to the less industrial parts of town. The transition from mercantile to industrial city involved both the growth of large-scale industries and the proliferation of small-scale ones. Highly mechanized factory production co-existed with small workshops and artisanal production. Machine work in many cases multiplied the amount of hand work that had to be done.[12]

The city became increasingly differentiated by function. The residential areas of the bourgeoisie were concentrated together, separate from the homes of workers and from commerce and industry. Commerce was still centered largely in the old city, but retail merchants were beginning to move their shops up the hill toward Ste. Catherine Street. In the west of the city, Canada's first major concentration of industry was clustered around the basins and locks of the Lachine Canal, which the government had developed to produce water power for the emerging industrial bourgeoisie. Stretching along both sides of the canal among and beyond the factories was Ste. Anne, the first industrial working class suburb. Within its boundaries was Griffintown, the Irish immigrant area. Here were housed what remained of those people H.C. Pentland has

9 On the importance of longitudinal family studies, see Tamara Hareven, "The Family as Process: The Historical Study of the Family Cycle", *Journal of Social History*, VII (Spring 1974). In my doctoral thesis I hope to be able to trace families from 1861 to 1881. This paper represents an initial attempt to sort out some elements of the relationship between families and industrialization from the information in the 1871 manuscript census.

10 For an excellent description of the unevenness of industrial change and the co-existence of highly mechanized and very labour intensive industries in the 1850s and 1860s in Great Britain, see Raphael Samuels, "The Workshop of the World: Steam Power and Hand Technology in Mid-Victorian Britain", *History Workshop*, III (Spring 1977). On early industrial development in Montreal, see especially Gerald J.J. Tulchinsky, *The River Barons: Montreal Businessmen and the Growth of Industry and Transportation, 1837-1853*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), especially chapter 12.

11 Joanne Burgess, "L'industrie de la chaussure à Montréal: 1840-1870—Le passage de l'artisanat à la fabrique", *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française*, XXXI (September 1977), p. 198.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 204; and *Manuscript Census*, Industrial Schedules 1861 and 1871.

identified as forming Canada's early proletariat two decades earlier.[13] Now they were supplemented by their children and by an influx of French Canadians and newer immigrant families from Ireland, England, and Scotland.

On the eastern boundary of Montreal, Ste. Marie was beginning to emerge as the major French-Canadian industrial suburb.[14] Between it and St. Laurent ward lay St. Jacques. It and Ste. Anne were like two different worlds in 1871. The first was definitely an immigrant suburb, a mixture of Irish, English, Scots, and French Canadians. Ste. Anne was Montreal's industrial area, whereas in St. Jacques production was largely artisanal or at a handicraft stage. The most common enterprise there was a small workshop, with between one and four employees—often the craftsman, an apprentice, and members of the family. The crafts that predominated were woodworking ones, especially carpentry and joiners shops; food processing, including small bakers and butchers with stalls at the local markets; and shoemaking and dressmaking.

The contrast between Ste. Anne and St. Jacques clearly illustrated three major aspects of Montreal's industrialization. First, the scale of enterprises was growing steadily. More and more workers were involved in large factories. Work processes were constantly being modified, old skills were rendered obsolete, and new ones created. Machinery, especially powered by steam or water, was increasingly being used.[15] Mechanization and the application of power to one part of the labour process usually created the need for additional and often tedious hand work in unchanged parts. Some of this was done in departments of the factories. In shoemaking and clothing, much was "put out", especially to women and children working at home. It was into this kind of work that the women and children of St. Jacques were drawn in large numbers.

Secondly, despite the overall increase in scale, industrial capitalist and pre-industrial forms continued to co-exist for a long period of time. In Ste. Anne, the presence of a few, large, mechanized, primary processing plants for flour and sugar seemed to have spurred the growth of small baking and confectionery establishments in the neighbourhood. Coopers and blacksmiths continued to run their shops, despite the fact that most of the large foundries and factories had coopering and blacksmith departments. The whole ward of St. Jacques existed as an almost pre-industrial, artisanal enclave in the changing city. Two-thirds of its productive establishments employed under five workers. Yet, even there, one large tobacco factory and two tanneries employed nearly half the ward's enumerated "industrial" workers.[16]

A third feature of Montreal's industrialization, and one most important for its families, was the heavy reliance on child and female labour. As work processes were

13 H. Clare Pentland, "The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market in Canada", *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, XXV (1956), p. 456.

14 C. Goucy-Roy, "Le Quartier Sainte-Marie à Montréal, 1850-1900", (M.A. Thesis, Université de Québec à Montréal, 1977).

15 Just over one-third of Ste. Anne's manufacturing and industrial enterprises reported the use of steam or water power in 1871. In St. Jacques, in contrast, under 5 per cent used any kind of motor power.

16 Manuscript Census, 1871, Schedule 6, St. Jacques ward.

cut down into their component parts, women and children were drawn into sections of the production process. In the city's type foundry, for example, a complex machine cast type "so rapidly that 200 small type could be cast in a minute." However, a small "jet" remained on the type. These were broken off by young boys. Then

> the type is next given over to a number of girls, who sit around a circular stone table. These young women rapidly pick up a type each and rub it upon the table ... to smooth the surface. The dexterity ... is astonishing.[17]

Or, in Lyman's chemical plant, where most of the workers were men, and waterpowered machinery operated powerful presses and complicated cutting systems, women were "kept constantly employed in the washing of bottles."[18] Similarly, in De Witt's Buckskin Glove Factory on the Lachine Canal:

> A machine at one stroke takes out pieces the shape of the thumb and fingers of the human hand. ... In an adjacent room a number of young women, operating on sewing machines stitched them together with great rapidity.[19]

In shoemaking, cigarmaking, and confectionery, the story was the same. A cigar maker complained in 1889 that

> in 1863 there was a mould invented. ... Before that time we did not know what it was to have a lot of apprentices in the shops. The system of making cigars by moulds caused a great many children to go to work at the trade. Manufacturers found they could get cigars more cheaply by children.[20]

Women and children thus came to constitute a vital element of Montreal's industrial labour force.[21] In 1871 three types of production dominated in Montreal: leather, boots, and shoe manufacture; clothing manufactures; and metal work and transportation related industry. In the first two, the proportion of women and children was 50 per cent and 80 per cent, respectively. Overall, women and children made up nearly 42 per cent of the industrial workforce reported in the 1871 census. Montreal's industries appear to have employed significantly more women and children than did Toronto's where the proportion was 33 per cent.[22] Thus, although the employment of large numbers of women and children appears to have been a general characteristic of early industrial capitalism everywhere, the proportions involved varied immensely. In a mill town like Lowell, Massachussetts, for instance, women constituted 56 per cent of the workforce, compared to Montreal's 33 per cent. In Preston, Lancashire,

17 *The Montreal Gazette*, 19 July, 1864, p. 4; and *Montreal Business Sketches ... with a description of the city of Montreal, its Public Buildings and Places of Interest*, (Montreal: M. Longmoore and Co., 1865), pp. 18-19.

18 *Montreal Business Sketches*, p. 13.

19 *Ibid.*

20 Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital, *Quebec Evidence*, 1889, p. 369. (Hereafter RCRLC, 1889, *Quebec Evidence*).

21 For women's role in the Montreal economy from 1871 to 1891, see Suzanne Cross, "The Neglected Majority: The Changing Role of Women in 19th Century Montreal", Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice, eds., *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977).

22 Greg Kealey, *Hogtown: Working Class Toronto at the Turn of the Century* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1974), p. 4.

England, by the time boys were fourteen, 88 per cent of them were working. In Montreal around 25 per cent of boys eleven to fifteen years old worked.[23] Obviously, the different opportunities for work for family members in any one locale conditioned the particular nature of the impact of industrialization of the family.

The Family Economy: Average Numbers of Family Workers

Montreal's labour market was characterized by seasonal and cyclical unemployment and by low wages. In the winter many workers were without jobs. The Port, which in summer fed both commerce and industry, was open only seven to eight months a year. 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 1880s, "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."[24]

While winter wages dropped, living expenses usually soared. The winter of 1871-72 was exceptionally severe and fuel costs rose to what was reported as "famine prices" of between ten and fifteen dollars a cord.[25] Obviously a labourer earning between one and two dollars a week could not afford to pay such a price, when a cord of wood would heat the home for only a week.[26]

Given the need for extra money in the winter for fuel, clothing, and food, and the low wages that prevailed in most jobs, it is not surprising that it was fairly generally accepted that many working class families needed more than one worker if they were to survive adequately. Employers and charity workers alike agreed on this a decade later before the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital. Some, while arguing that young children should not work, admitted that "many are necessitated to do so from the fact that their parents probably earn very little, not sufficient to keep a large family unless the little fellows are sent to work at tender years."[27] Employers pleaded pressure from widows and poverty-stricken parents as the reason for hiring very young children.[28]

23 The Lowell figure is from a personal communication from Francie Early. Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire*, p. 75.

24 RCRLC, 1889, *Quebec Evidence*, p. 313.

25 "Report of the United Board of Outdoor Relief for Winter 1871-72", *Ninth Annual Report of the Montreal Protestant House of Industry and Refuge*, (1872), p. 1.

26 The Montreal Council of Social Agencies estimated that a family required one cord of hard, best wood per week, and one cord of soft wood and coal and coal oil. See Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal 1897-1929* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), Appendix A. On the variable availability and price of fuel, see Huguette Lapointe Roy, "Paupérisme et assistance sociale à Montréal, 1832-1865", (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1972).

27 RCRLC, 1889, *Quebec Evidence*, p. 290.

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 4 and 18.

In 1871 families in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques averaged 1.6 workers each. Averages, however, are generally deceptive, masking more than they show. The father's occupation was crucial in influencing the work of other family members. In the few Ste. Anne families that were headed by proprietors, the average number of workers was only 1.2. In both wards, semi-skilled and unskilled workers in contrast averaged 1.8 workers each. Skilled workers averaged only 1.5. The one divergence between the wards interestingly reflected the fundamental difference in the nature of production in the two wards. St. Jacques' proprietors averaged more workers per family than did local skilled workers or "white collar workers" (see Table I). The reason lay in the nature of their enterprises. For these artisans and small shopkeepers, their business was often a family undertaking. Few employed large numbers of workers. Most were helped by apprentices, sons, daughters, or wives.[29]

Table I - Average Number of Workers in Families Classified by the Father's Occupational Group, 1871[30]

	Ste. Anne	St. Jacques
Professionals	1.0	1.3
Proprietors	1.2	1.6
"White collar" workers	1.2	1.4
Skilled workers	1.5	1.5
Semi and unskilled workers	1.8	1.8

If the apparent strong relationship between class and the number of family workers is examined further, to see actual rather than average numbers of workers, roughly 40 per cent of unskilled families in St. Jacques had more than one worker compared to 30 per cent of skilled and 20 to 25 per cent of white collar and professional families.

The Family Economy: Working Children

Both St. Jacques and Ste. Anne were working class wards, with 60 to 80 per cent of their residents involved in manual wage labour, skilled or otherwise. French Canadians predominated in skilled trades in both wards, while the Irish of Ste. Anne clustered significantly in unskilled positions, especially as labourers and carters. Small

29 Evidence from matching personal and industrial returns.

30 The figures presented in Table I and in all following tables are derived from the random samples of personal returns for each ward. The classification of occupations is based on that in Michael Katz, "Occupational Classification in History", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, III (Summer 1972), Table II, modified taking into account the work of the Philadelphia Social History Project, *Historical Methods Newsletter*, IX (March-June, 1976). In this table public service, private service, and commercial employee have been arbitrarily collapsed to form the "white collar" category.

proprietors, artisans and shop owners, were much more prevalent among St. Jacques' workers, especially within the small non-French-Canadian population (see Table II).

It was definitely the norm in families of all classes and backgrounds for the husband to be the primary breadwinner. Two-thirds of all workers in both wards were the male heads of their family. Virtually all husbands listed an occupation in the 1871 census, although this did not imply that they had steady work or were currently employed. Nor did it mean that the occupation listed was their only one. "Certain establishments", the writer of the 1871 census monograph explained,

> 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.[31]

The few husbands not listing a job were either retired and living with one of their adult children, or they were newly married and living, together with their bride, with one of the families of origin.

Older sons still resident at home were the most usual second wage earner. Almost all sons over twenty worked, while only half the daughters of that age did. About 75 per cent of sixteen to twenty year old sons had jobs, while only around 40 per cent of daughters did. If there were boys in the family, the older girls were likely to remain at home to help with housework and care of younger children. At all ages sons were much more likely to work than daughters (see Table III).

More interesting is the number of children between the ages of eleven and fifteen who worked. It was the work of children of these ages in factories and sweatshops that was to capture the imagination and elicit the horror of reformers a decade or so later. Newspapers, Royal Commissions, and labour unions would all proclaim the evils of child labour. Laws would be passed attempting to control it, not always with great success. In 1871, however, there was no legislation to prevent the work of young children and there was little public outcry compared to the reforming voices of subsequent decades.[32] Graphic descriptions of the hours and conditions of child labour exist, but little real idea of how widespread it was, of what families it occurred in, of the role that it played in the economy of businesses and families, and of what parents thought about their young children being involved in wage labour.

Around 25 per cent of boys aged between eleven and fifteen reported an occupation to the 1871 Census taker, while about 10 per cent of girls did so (see Table III). Focusing on those families which had these youngsters at work, the following section will attempt to describe the work they were doing and some of the factors that determined whether or not children of this age would work in any particular family.

First, it should be reiterated that a demand for child labour existed in Montreal. A large proportion of the city's major industries were dependent on children's cheap labour. With industrialization Montreal appears to have developed a variety of jobs

31 Canada, *Census of 1870-1871*, Vol. III, p. 5.

32 On subsequent legislation and its supplementation, see Roger Chartier, "L'inspection des établissements industriels, 1885-1900", *Relations Industrielles*, XVII (January 1962).

Table II - Occupational Groups by Origins: Ste. Anne and St. Jacques Wards Compared 1871[33]

Ste. Anne

	French-Canadian		Irish		Other		Overall
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%
Professional	1	1.1					.3
Proprietor	3	3.3	8	6.2	8	9.9	5.0
Commercial Employee	1	1.1	10	7.7	8	9.9	6.3
Public Service			2	1.5	1	1.2	1.0
Service	2	2.2	5	3.8	4	4.9	3.6
Skilled	58	63.7	43	33.1	41	50.7	48.3
Semi & Unskilled	26	28.6	60	46.2	18	22.2	34.5
Other			2	1.5	1	1.2	1.0
	91	100.0	130	100.0	81	100.0	100.0
% of Total Population		26.5		50.0		23.5	

St. Jacques

	French-Canadian		Other		Overall
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Professional	16	3.2	10	11.0	4.4
Proprietor	43	8.6	20	22.0	10.5
Commercial Employee	45	9.0	11	12.1	9.5
Public Service	9	1.8	1	1.1	1.7
Service	18	3.6	13	14.3	5.3
Skilled	241	48.3	15	16.5	43.5
Semi & Unskilled	97	19.4	17	18.7	19.3
Other	30	6.0	4	4.3	5.8
	499	100.0	91	100.0	
% of Total Population		82.5		17.5	

33 See footnote 30. The percentage of the total population is from Canada, *Census of 1870-1871*, Table III, Origins of the People, pp. 288-9.

Table III - Children, Work, and School Attendance, 1871[34]

Ste. Anne

	Work	School	Neither	
Sons	**No(%)**	**No(%)**	**No(%)**	**Total No.**
0 - 5		6(8%)	67(92%)	73
6 - 10	1(2%)	38(67%)	18(31%)	57
11 - 15	9(24%)	22(58%)	7(18%)	38
16 - 20	40(75.5%)	1(2%)	12(22.5%)	53
Daughters				
0 - 5		4(5%)	74(95%)	78
6 - 10		48(76%)	15(24%)	63
11 - 15	5(7%)	32(48%)	33(47%)	70
16 - 20	21(40%)	4(7.5%)	28(52.5%)	53

St. Jacques

	Work	School	Neither	Total No.
Sons				
0 - 5		8(6%)	124(94%)	132
6 - 10	2(2%)	48(54%)	39(44%)	89
11 - 15	25(26%)	43(45%)	28(29%)	96
16 - 20	61(75%)	5(6%)	15(19%)	81
Daughters				
0 - 5		8(6%)	132(94%)	140
6 - 10		54(60%)	46(40%)	90
11 - 15	12(13%)	39(42%)	47(45%)	92
16 - 20	41(40%)	1(1%)	60(59%)	102

that were age specific, which children did for a while until they became too old or too experienced to be paid such cheap wages.

Most of Ste. Anne's young worked in factory jobs—in the local cotton mill or tobacco factories, or as typecasters or nailers. A Ste. Anne cotton mill reported twenty-four workers aged under sixteen to the 1871 Census taker, although there may well have been more. Two-thirds of the employees were female.[35] Young children in the mill were confined to specific tasks such as carrying thread and hose or working in the mule and spinning rooms as "doffers". Most of the women and children were French Canadians. Several of the working families had been brought from the rural

34 This table refers to all children resident in the two wards, not just those resident with their parents.

35 Manuscript Census, 1871, Schedule 6, Ste. Anne, Subdistrict 9, p. 2.

Saguenay country as cheaper "green" labour. Many children in the mill also had brothers and sisters there and sometimes fathers or widowed mothers as well.[36]

Fines in cotton mills were high and a daily experience, especially for the children. As a result the pay they took home was often drastically reduced.[37] Fines were also the standard method of disciplining youngsters in the tobacco factories of both wards. There, too, children tended to work on specific jobs, often separate from the skilled tradesmen who might have taught them the trade. While some were technically employed as apprentices, indentureship for most children did not guarantee induction into the mysteries of a trade. Most "apprentices" in cigar-making spent their time watching a machine or only rolling cigars. In St. Jacques ward in 1871, there were still some children who appear to have been apprenticed to a small master running his own shop, some to their father. They worked in trades such as tinsmithing, not in cigar-making or shoemaking, both of which had radically altered over the decades.

It was from the semi- and unskilled Irish and French-Canadian families of Ste. Anne, St. Jacques, and other areas of Montreal that the bulk of the city's young workers were drawn. These families were more than twice as likely to have children under sixteen at work as were skilled families. Such children worked in around 30 per cent of unskilled families compared to 12 per cent of skilled. In Ste. Anne, the children of non-manual workers seldom had jobs, whereas St. Jacques' artisans and entrepreneurs did put their children to work at an early age (see Table IV). Family work for the latter was part of an old tradition, but was also necessary because of the increasing competition they were experiencing from industrial production.

Table IV - Percentage of Non-Manual, Skilled, and Unskilled Families with Working Children under Sixteen[38]

	Ste. Anne, 1871	St. Jacques, 1871
	11 - 15	*11 - 15*
Non-Manual	0%	22.5%
Skilled	11.8%	13.6%
Unskilled	33.3%	29.0%

In large families, especially those with an unskilled father, it was much more common for young children to be sent out to work. In families of four (that is, with two children) only 5.5 per cent had eleven to fifteen year olds at work, while 30 per cent of families of eight did so. The presence of older siblings does not seem to have mitigated

36 RCRLC, 1889, *Quebec Evidence*, pp. 281, 315, 318, 348, 393. Evidence of Ste. Anne cotton mill workers.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 279, 280, 317, 392.

38 Here the categories Professional, Proprietor, Commercial Employee, and Service, Public and Private, are collapsed to create the non-manual category.

against a younger child also being sent out to work. Indeed, the opposite seemed true. Where older brothers or sisters worked, children between eleven and fifteen were more likely to also work than those who had older siblings who did not. Certainly, the wages of one working child were not high enough to give much of a boost to family income in large families. The larger a family, the more likely a young child would be sent out to work.

French Canadians appear to have been somewhat more likely to send their younger children to work than other groups. In St. Jacques, nearly 25 per cent of French-Canadian families with children aged between eleven and fifteen had at least one of them at work in 1871, compared to only 13 per cent of non-French Canadians. More French-Canadian families had children of all ages at work than other groups. Studies of families from Quebec in the United States have shown similar patterns. In Cohoes, New York, during the 1880s for instance, 27.3 per cent of female French-Canadian workers in textile plants were under fourteen compared to 13.5 per cent of English and 15.6 per cent of Irish workers.[39] Similarly in Manchester, New Hampshire, in the early twentieth century, Tamara Hareven found that French Canadians had more textile workers per family than other groups. She argues that the

> basic tradition of family work and of the economic role of each member . . . was carried over from the agricultural background. The important continuity was in the perception and experience of the family as a work unit, even when the location of the job and the work processes were different.[40]

Cultural attitudes to work and to the idea of the role of children certainly seemed to have supported child labour in French-Canadian families. However, the relationship between ethnicity and the work of young children should not be overstressed. Class was still more important than ethnic background. In Ste. Anne, where the Irish constituted most of the unskilled workers, more of their families had children at work than did French Canadians—even unskilled French Canadians. The family economy had been part of rural Irish life too, although most of Ste. Anne's residents with young children were second generation immigrants, brought up far from the land. For families of all backgrounds, basic need arising from the insecurities of a father's work was as important as cultural values and tradition, so that for all groups unskilled families were more likely to have their children at work than other families (see Table V).

Finding work for these children appeared to have been a family responsibility. In the textile industry especially, capitalists preferred to hire whole families. Indeed, they advertised for families in the newspapers, specifying that young children would be welcomed.[41] And they recruited whole families of "green labour" from the rural

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39 Daniel J. Walkowitz, "Working Class Women in the Guilded Age: Factory, Community and Family Life Among Cohoes, New York, Cotton Workers", *Journal of Social History*, V (Summer 1972), p. 474.

40 Tamara Hareven, "Family Time and Industrial Time: Family and Work in a Planned Corporation Town, 1900-1924", *Journal of Urban History*, I (May 1975), p. 371.

41 *Le Canadien*, 27 July 1889, cited in Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, *Histoire économique du Québec, 1851-1896* (Montreal: Fides, 1971), p. 307.

Table V - Ethnicity and Working Children

The percentage of families with children over age eleven who have at least one child at work.

	Ste. Anne		St. Jacques	
	French-Canadian	**Other**	**French-Canadian**	**Other**
Non-Manual	0%	0%	55%	38%
Skilled	80%	82%	58%	25%
Unskilled	86%	94%	77%	50%

areas. Manufacturers saw it as a distinct advantage to hire whole families and by the 1880s were providing "cottages, so as to give the employees of the mill nice comfortable homes." Girls working in such factories were assumed to be living with their parents. They "would not undertake the work otherwise", an employer pointed out.[42] For parents, it was desirable to have their young children in the same workplace. It enabled mothers to work. Traditional ties between children and parents could be maintained, even though the family as a unit of production which had once worked their land together had been transformed. Employers often argued that the hiring of very young children resulted from parental pressure. A mill overseer explained:

> . . . a man will be working at the mill, and his daughter working there also, and he may have a small child, whom he desires to have there, for instance, in the spooling room. Often you don't want to take the child, but if you do not, he and his daughter will go out, and they will go to some mill where the whole three will be employed.[43]

It was apparently common for mothers to seek work for their daughters and sons and to act as go-betweens. For instance, when Madame Sara Fontaine's two daughters were dismissed, first from the Ste. Anne Mill and then from the Hudon Mill at Hochelaga, it was she who went to the "boss" asking "Why did you dismiss my daughters? I have need of their assistance to live."[44] The manager explained that when girls came to the mill their "mothers often come with them, and beg the chance of getting them on to work."

> For instance, there was a mother brought a girl the other day. I said she was small. The mother replied: 'I went into the mill about that age'. I told her . . . at first she would get very little pay. She replied that she understood that.[45]

The relationship between young working children, their employer, and the parent or parents was complex. 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

42 RCRLC, 1889, *Quebec Evidence*, p. 380, 397.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 394.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 641.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 397.

discipline over their children. The whole family could thus be moulded to the demands of industrial work with minimum friction. However, family employment appeared to have been largely limited to the textile trade. Elsewhere, fathers and sons, or several siblings, frequently worked in the same plant. Mothers and daughters often worked at home as sewing girls. In the situations where children worked alone, parents appeared to have endowed the employer with the patriarchal and disciplinary powers usually attributed to the father. In the 1880s, Mr. Fortier, Montreal's infamous exploiter and abuser of child labour, claimed that parents asked him to discipline their children. When "apprentices" in his factory failed to turn up on time, they first notified the parents, then "had the child arrested. We have had parents come to us over and over again", he argued, "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 the children." Still others sent the children home to their parents when they did wrong.[46]

Obviously children needed discipline to conform to the demands of factory routine. Adults too had to learn the punctuality and application that these new work processes demanded. However, in the relationship between children, employer, and parents, the latter apparently assumed that employers performed the same role as masters of apprentices had done in former times. Yet most employers 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 money. This, the employer appeared to have considered a family responsibilty. Fines, one employer explained, were imposed

> in order that the parents may see it marked on the envelope, that it may thus attract the parent's attention—they see 10c 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.[47]

How parents felt about sending their young children to work in factories and workshops is hard to determine. Certainly French Canadians and Irish immigrants from rural backgrounds were used to labouring together as a family. Many children had meant many hands to work the land. The farm economy had been a family economy. Even where children had left the land to work elsewhere, it was apparently common for French-Canadian children to return much of their earnings to their father. Fathers, in return, had been responsible for finding land, employment, or dowries for those children who would not inherit.[48]

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46 *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 140.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 392.

48 Attempts to describe traditional family economies may be found in Gauldrée-Boileau, *Le Paysan de Saint-Irénée* (1861), cited in Léon Gerin, "The French-Canadian Family — Its Strengths and Weaknesses", M. Rioux and Y. Martin, eds., *French-Canadian Society* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), p. 34. On the family economy in twentieth century rural Quebec, see Gerald Fortin, "Socio-Cultural Changes in an Agricultural Parish", Rioux and Martin, eds., *French-Canadian Society*, p. 94; Everett Hughes, *French Canada in Transition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943, 1964), p. 172; and Horace Miner, *St. Denis: A French-Canadian Parish* (Chicago: Phoenix, 1939), p. 64

In the city this family economy was fundamentally undermined, but did not disappear totally. For most families production and ownership were no longer linked. Now they had only their labour to sell, at whatever price the capitalists were offering. Only those with sufficient capital or skills could set up small family businesses or artisanal shops, and the latter were increasingly suffering from the competition of industrial capital. However, the old values of family work may well have continued to function. They served well in a situation where many fathers could not earn enough to support a family. Need and tradition seemed to have combined to maintain the idea of family work and the fact of child labour within the growing and changing city.

Until reformers reacted against child labour and legislation was passed to control it in the 1880s and 1890s, the work of many family members continued to be a feature of the urban family economy. "The working family" continued to "suffer generally from lack of means, and there is 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 handwork of children under 14."[49] Until well organized unions began to push for a working wage adequate to nurture a whole family, child labour would continue to be vital to family survival. What the parents thought about it in private could have no influence until they had the means to express their wishes.

Research on attitudes about the family and children in English Canada suggests that ideas about childhood may have undergone a fundamental transformation in the years following the 1870s. Whether similar changes occurred in Quebec remains to be studied. Before the 1890s English Canadians generally showed little awareness of children as individual persons with an emotional life of their own. Children were viewed by many as partially formed, potential adults.[50] Or, for men like Egerton Ryerson, as small men differing from adults in the need for greater restraint. Work was seen as crucial to the formation of character, as one of the best forms of education. Childhood and education were part of a brief, passing phase which, to the dismay of educators, many parents expected to be quickly finished so that children could "enter the working world".[51]

The widespread practice of child labour in Montreal suggests that attitudes there were similar. Whatever the ideal was, the labour of children was obviously vital to the economy of many of the city's families. Many children did not work, however. Despite the fact that there were no compulsory school laws in Montreal, around one-half of the boys and girls between the ages of eleven and fifteen reported attending school in 1871. Once boys reached sixteen, "the working world" was the major educating agent, while for girls the home was more important. At all ages large numbers of children neither worked nor went to school (see Table III). Some of them may have had jobs that were not reported to the census taker. Others may have swelled the ranks of the "Arabs of the street" who worried contemporary middle class observers. Some of these street children were reported to earn "a few pence by

49 RCRLC, 1889, *Quebec Evidence*, p. 4.

50 Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: Univerity of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 6, 10-1.

51 Alison Prentice, *The School Promoters, Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), p. 35-6.

retailing newspapers or, as is sometimes the case, supplement the labour of begging by the sale of daily journals", forming an "irregular squad of urchins who may be seen around the printing offices at the hour of publication." Others, observers believed, were "thrust forth this morning from a comfortless home" to beg or to steal.[52]

The Family Economy: Working Wives

Not all families could rely on the work of their children to prop up the family income, as many had no children old enough to work. In both Ste. Anne and St. Jacques over two-thirds of the families were dependent on the wages of only one worker at the time the 1871 census was taken. Of these, 75 per cent of Ste. Anne's and 65 per cent of St. Jacques' families were at the stage of their life cycle when all children were under eleven years old. This was a period in the process of family formation when a steady income was more needed than ever, but when children were too young to help supplement it. Where the income of the father was insufficient, alternative survival strategies had to be followed. Either the wife and mother could go to work, or housing could be shared with friends, relatives, or boarders to cut down on rental and heating costs.

A few wives took on steady jobs and reported an occupation to the census taker. Still more probably worked occasionally, taking in washing, ironing, sewing, mending, or babysitting for neighbours, relatives, or friends. Their work, and the day to day labour of women in the home, is absent from the statistics and from most of the observations of the period. Likely even steady work for wages by married women was under-enumerated by census takers.[53] Yet even if under-enumeration was common, the wife was clearly the one family member least likely to have a paid job at any period of her married life. Only 2.5 per cent of all wives resident with their husbands reported an occupation.[54] Despite its relative infrequency, the work of these women is worth examining in some depth, as it clearly illustrated the way family economies were both influenced by, and interacted with, the particular nature of industrialization in any area.

Working wives were clustered in the poorer sections of both wards. Virtually all had husbands with unskilled or skilled jobs. Nearly 25 per cent were married to labourers. Shoemakers in St. Jacques (21 per cent) and factory workers (25 per cent) in Ste. Anne were the next most common occupation of husbands. Sixty per cent of the wives worked as seamstresses (73 per cent in St. Jacques and 53 per cent in Ste. Anne), another 11 per cent as chars and washerwomen, and 5 per cent as labourers of an unspecified nature. A few wives in both wards worked as grocers or traders and in other small corner businesses, often helping their husbands.

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52 *The Saturday Reader*, Montreal, IV (1867), p. 22.

53 On this problem see Sally Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-1850", Juliett Mitchell and Ann Oakley, eds., *The Rights and Wrongs of Women* (England: Penguin Books, Ltd, 1976), pp. 63-6.

54 The following section is based on analysis of all working wives in the two wards. They numbered seventy-five in St. Jacques and seventy-eight in Ste. Anne.

Fairly similar patterns of occupations in the two wards masked a basic difference in the relationship between the work of mothers and their families. While dressmaking and sewing occupations predominated in both wards, they were more prevalent and of a different nature in St. Jacques. There, sewing at home appears to have been part of the putting out system, so basic to Montreal's clothing industry. While in Ste. Anne only two of the wives worked as dressmakers along with their children or other relatives, in St. Jacques 31 per cent of the women had other members of the family who listed the same occupation. Work at home was a family enterprise enabling the mothers to keep an eye on their young children while working and to work with their daughters. The former was important as 20 per cent of the women who worked had children under the age of two and 45 per cent had children under five.

In the clothing trade, mechanization revolutionized production both in and outside the growing number of factories. In a trade that was particularly unstable in the years before the initiation of the National Policy's tariffs, capitalists sought ways to keep costs as low as possible.[55] "Putting out", "sweating", or "homework" saved on overhead rental, machinery costs, and labour costs. As the old craft of the tailor or seamstress was deskilled, as immigrants from the countryside and abroad were drawn into the city, homework especially for women and children multiplied. Thus, labour that resulted directly from the mechanization of some parts of the labour process brought to these women no separation of work and home, but rather the increased likelihood of work for wages at home.

Most employees in the clothing trade worked outside the factory. Work was shipped both to families in the city and as far as twenty or thirty miles away to St. Jerome, St. Hyacinthe, and Ste. Rose, where there were reported to be "hundreds of hands".[56] Employers often knew little of what went on outside their factory. "We don't know how many hands work at it", explained one Montreal clothier who employed seventy to one hundred people preparing the work to go out. "We only know one woman, but don't know how many she employs." He believed that in 1874 he probably employed a total of seven hundred to one thousand people including the hundred or so "inside".[57]

Mr. Muir, a Montreal clothier, explained the relationship between factory work and home work. In his factory there was

> a 15 horsepower 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.

In homes around Montreal the next stage was carried out:

> We employ a large number of women who live in their own homes. These women sit down when their breakfasts, dinner and supper is over, and make a garment, but are not exclusively employed at this work all day.[58]

55 *Report: Select Committee on the Manufacturing Interests of the Dominion*, Journals, House of Commons, Appendix III, 1874, pp. 8, 22. (Hereafter, *Report: Manufacturing Interests*, 1874).

56 RCRLC, 1889, *Quebec Evidence*, pp. 284, 295.

57 Report: Manufacturing Interests, 1874, p. 23.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

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. They could thus justify the extraordinarily low wages paid. "Those people who work in their own homes work very cheap", Mr. Muir explained, "and they will earn comparatively little" compared even to unskilled factory hands who were earning only $1.50 to $2.00 a week in his factory. He told the 1874 Select Committee that "most of them are wives and daughters of mechanics, who earn enough to keep the house." The women were, he argued, earning enough money which enabled them "to buy finery . . . which they would not be able to buy but for this industry."[59]

The working wives of St. Jacques and most of those of Ste. Anne were certainly not in this position. The majority of their husbands listed their occupations as labourers, workers in the building trade, factory workers, or shoemakers. The first two had always been highly seasonal and precarious jobs. The latter had been rendered precarious by technological and organizational change.[60] Work by wives thus appears to have been much more the result of necessity than of the desire or need for extra finery.

Homework brought minimal pay, with wages almost always paid by the piece. The more people who could work, therefore, the better for the family. In one-third of the families in St. Jacques where the mother was a seamstress, daughters worked with her. 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 Aliron family, for instance, Demithilde and her four daughters aged fourteen to nineteen worked as sewing girls, while the father worked as a saddlemaker.[61] In some families daughters but not the mothers worked. Thus, in the Moisan family four daughters all worked as sewing girls, the wife did not work, and the father worked when he could as a labourer.[62] For widows, work at home offered both a means of support and a way to remain with their children.

The clothing industry was thus a vital part of the life of many St. Jacques' families. Not surprisingly, seamstress was the ward's leading occupation, ranking even above labourer. It was definitely women's work, and employers were able to take advantage of the large numbers of families desperately needing work for their members. Virtually all those involved were French Canadian, as was typical in the industry. "Your labour supply is chiefly French?", clothier Muir was asked by the 1874 committee:

> It was 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. . . . Irish women, for instance, if they come to this country and do not get the wages they want, will emigrate.[63]

59 *Ibid.*

60 See Burgess, "L'industrie de la chaussure".

61 Manuscript Census, 1871, Personal Returns, St. Jacques, Subdistrict 6, Household 137.

62 *Ibid.*, Subdistrict 2, Family 53.

63 *Report: Manufacturing Interests*, 1874, p. 38.

The demography of the Quebec family, the exhaustion of easily available good land in the Province, and the tradition of family work thus combined to enable capitalists in clothing and other trades to count on a steady supply of cheap labour.

Families working at home were not only involved in handwork. By 1872 advertisements in the newspapers for sewing machines for family use were common.[64] A journalist for the *Montreal Daily Witness* explained how families were contacted by sewing machine salesmen:

> A set of canvassers are first sent out in order to induce workingmen's wives to buy a machine. In reality they do not buy the machine, but are induced to sign a form of lease by the terms of which, without the intervention of a lawyer, this machine can be taken back again within any period of time, if the entire amount cannot be paid. If, therefore, by sickness or death . . . the poor woman is unable to pay the installment when due, she loses all that she has paid upon the machine.[65]

How many of the women listing themselves as dressmakers had sewing machines is had to tell. Definitely in this category were two sisters in Ste. Anne, Philomène and Aurelie Leduc. They each reported ownership of a sewing machine valued at sixty-five dollars to the industrial census taker. Working on "cloth etc. furnished by merchants", they produced around four hundred and three hundred dollars worth of coats, pants, and vests each. Unlike most St. Jacques women, these sisters appear to have employed one extra woman each, to whom they paid a total of $276 in wages annually.[66]

Probably some of Ste. Anne's working wives 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 too may have worked in one of the large clothing or hat-making factories. Only three of the married women dressmakers of Ste. Anne ran establishments of their own that were reported to the industrial census taker. Of these one reported an annual production of fifty dollars worth of dresses, the other two three hundred dollars.[67] Not one of St. Jacques' women was reported as proprietor of her own establishment. The six hundred to nine hundred dollars capital mustered by the three Ste. Anne women was probably well beyond most of their saving abilities. Homework for them would continue to be the piecework of the putting out system.

Why these married women worked and how they viewed their participation in wage labour can only be surmised. Some of those who had no children may have worked because they wanted to, because they enjoyed their work, or to help save up money for the future. Most probably worked, however, because they needed to. That married St. Jacques women took the opportunity offered by homework suggested the

64 *La Minerve*, any day in April. 1872, for example, 20 April, p. 1. "George Harvey, marchand de toutes espèces de Machines à coudres de première classe à point nué pour familles et manufactures". In the same paper he advertised for a bilingual agent collector with good references.

65 RCRLC, 1889, *Quebec Evidence*, pp. 603-4.

66 Manuscript Census, 1871, Schedule 6, Ste. Anne, Subdistrict 5, p. 1.

67 Manuscript Census, 1871, Personal Returns and Schedule 6, matched, Subdistrict 3, Households 105, 128, and 156.

importance placed on being near growing children. Many of the other women's occupations—charwoman, housekeepers, and small traders—were the ones that did not require a full time absence from the family and home. Some of the sewing women may have worked in factories, although not one listed an easily identifiable factory occupation. Such work would have meant a full day away from the home.

Most importantly, the work of wives provided a supplement or stabilizer to the father's income at those stages of the life cycle when children were too young to work (see Table VI). In Ste. Anne, most wives appear to have stopped work once their children were old enough to find jobs. There, under 20 per cent of the wives had working children. In St. Jacques, in contrast, most working wives did have children old enough to work. They continued to work largely because they could do so at home sewing.

Table VI - The Life Cycle Stage of Working Wives[68]

	Ste. Anne		Ste. Jacques	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
No children	21	27	13	17
Children 1 and under only	15	19	14	18
Children all 10 and under	12	15	5	7
Some children 11-15, none older	19	25	11	15
Some children over 16	11	14	32	43
Total	78		75	

The Family Life Cycle and Household Structure

Both Michael Anderson and John Foster, in studies on mid-nineteenth century, English working class families, have stressed that few were permanently free of poverty. Work by several family members there, as in Montreal, could ensure a less precarious survival. However, for those families who only had children too young to work, over one-half fell below the poverty line.[69] No poverty line has as yet been established for Montreal in this period. Clearly, however, large numbers of Montreal families were vulnerable to poverty at this stage. Certainly, until children were old enough to work, most families relied on one worker (see Table VII).

Some may have turned to charity to survive. Figures from Protestant and Catholic organizations attest to vast numbers of families who were visited in their homes and given relief, especially during the winters. In February of 1872, 279 families received firewood, clothing, blankets, and provisions from the Board of Outdoor Relief of the Protestant House of Industry and Refuge alone.[70] The Grey

68 This table based on *all* working wives, not a sample.

69 Anderson, *Family Structure*, p. 37; John Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns* (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1974), p. 96.

70 *Ninth Annual Report of the Protestant House of Industry and Refuge*, 1872, p. 1.

Table VII - Average Number of Workers at Different Stages of the Family Life Cycle[71]

	Ste. Anne		St. Jacques	
	Average No. of Workers	**No. of Families**	**Average No. of Workers**	**No. of Families**
1. Wife under 45, no children	1	13	1.1	50
2. 1 child under 1	1	12	1	19
3. All children 10 and under	1.03	55	1.03	94
4. Half or more 15 and under	1.83	36	1.7	67
5. Half or more over 15	3.05	19	3.2	34
6. All over 15	2.5	13	2.3	28
7. Over 45, no children at home	1	5	.8	24
Single Parents				
1. Half children under 15	2.0	2	.75	4
2. Half children over 15	2.5	2	2.75	10

Nuns and Sisters of Providence probably visited and provided help to three times that number of needy Catholic families.[72] Others, especially in St. Jacques, shared their living space with other families or relatives, or took in boarders.

Michael Katz has argued that in Hamilton in 1861 the "presence of boarders and relatives in any given household appears to have been largely accidental."[73] This was not so in Montreal in 1871. There, household structure was closely related to the family life cycle.

71 This table is based on the samples of families. This explains why the average number of workers at stage 2 can be one, while in the previous table some working wives had children under one. The stages of the life cycle are based on those developed in Anderson, *Family Structure*, p. 202, modified so that whether children work or not is not defined within the life cycle.

72 On their work in the previous decade, see Roy, "Paupérisme et assistance sociale", pp. 115-6. Between 1856 and 1863 she reports that the Grey Nuns helped an average of 225 families in their own homes annually. The Sisters of Providence helped as many as five hundred.

73 Michael B. Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City* (Harvard: University Press, 1975), p. 244.

Over one-half the couples in Ste. Anne and St. Jacques began their married lives sharing their household, especially with unrelated families and couples. As children were born and grew older and as the family's size grew they were more likely to live alone. Seventy-five to 80 per cent of families lived alone when half their children were fifteen and under. For most families this was a crucial and difficult stage. Most children were too young to work and families were at their largest. As families grew, the strain of sharing cramped quarters appears to have become intolerable for all but the most needy. While only 20 per cent of families shared with relatives or other families at this stage, more took in boarders. Boarders provided some income without extreme overcrowding. As children left home families were once again likely to share living space, especially with relatives — often their married children (see Table VIII).

At all stages of the life cycle it was the unskilled families who were least likely to live alone. Only 47 per cent of St. Jacques' unskilled families, compared to 66 per cent of professional families, lived in a simple nuclear household (see Table IX). People were sharing houses not because they wanted to, but because they needed to. A contemporary citizen observed that "under the present state of things, overcrowding is inevitable and only the cheapest and most inferior class of rookeries can be paid for out of the current rate of wages." He stressed the double and linked need for "better dwellings for the working classes and increased income for all wage earners of the city."[74]

The percentage of nuclear families classified as occupying a whole household in both St. Jacques and, to a lesser extent, Ste. Anne was much lower than that found in other studies in Canada or elsewhere in the western world. It is also much lower than the 76 per cent found by Louise Dechêne in Montreal two centuries earlier in 1681.[75] In Hamilton, Upper Canada, Katz found that nearly 80 per cent of households contained only a simple nuclear family in 1851 and 1861.[77] This compares with 56.4 per cent in St. Jacques and 63 per cent in Ste. Anne in 1871. Anderson's work on Lancashire led him to suggest that industrialization, rather than leading to the decline of the nuclear family as early sociologists had posited, led to an increase in the importance of kinship. Kin, he argued, chose to live both with and near each other, helped each other find jobs, and provided essential support in critical situations. Yet, even there, 72 per cent of married couples occupied a whole house, 15 per cent shared with non-relatives, 5 per cent shared with kin, and 8 per cent lived as lodgers.[78] Thus,

74 RCRLC, 1889, *Quebec Evidence*, p. 732.

75 Louise Dechêne, *Habitants et Marchands de Montréal au XVII Siècle*, (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1974), p. 416.

76 The categories of household structure are derived from those of Peter Laslett, "Introduction: The History of the Family", Laslett and Wall, *Household and Family in Past Times*, p. 31.

77 Katz, *The People of Hamilton*, p. 223.

78 Anderson, *Family Structure*, p. 49

Table VIII - The Family Life Cycle and Household Structure[76]

Ste. Anne	Simple Family	Extended Family	Multiple Some Related	Multiple Not Related	Total No. of Families
I. No Children	46.7%			53.3%	15
2. 1 under 1	75.0%	8.3%		16.7%	12
3. All under 11	71.4%	5.4%	3.6%	19.6%	56
4. Half under 15	81.1%	8.1%	2.7%	8.1%	37
5. Half over 15	85.0%	0	0	15.0%	20
6. All over 15	60.0%	6.7%	26.7%		15
7. No Children	66.7%			33.3%	6
Overall Household Structure	71.9%	5.4%	2.4%	20.4%	167
with Boarder(s)	16.6%	11.1%	25.0%	20.6%	18.4%
St. Jacques					
I. No Children	40.8%	4.1%	14.3%	40.8%	49
2. 1 under 1	36.8%	5.3%	15.8%	42.1%	19
3. All under 11	63.4%	8.6%	5.4%	22.6%	93
4. Half under 15	74.6%	4.5%	0	19.4%	67
5. Half over 15	50.0%	8.8%	2.9%	38.2%	34
6. All over 15	57.1%	14.3%	17.9%	10.7%	28
7. No Children	33.3%	0	8.3%	58.3%	24
Overall Household Structure	56.4%	6.7%	7.3%	29.3%	328
with Boarder(s)	17.2%	16.0%	22.2%	11.7%	15.7%

Table IX - St. Jacques, 1871 - Household Structure and the Occupation of the Father

	Professional & Proprietor		Service		Skilled		Unskilled		Other	
No family	1	2%	1	3%	1	1%	1	1%	1	14%
Simple family	40	66%	19	59%	78	53%	40	47%	3	44%
Extended family	4	6%	1	3%	10	7%	7	8%	1	14%
Multiple - Some related	4	6%	1	3%	14	10%	5	6%	1	14%
Multiple - None related	12	20%	10	32%	43	29%	32	38%	1	14%
Total no. of Families	61	100%	32	100%	146	100%	85	100%	7	100%

the high proportion of Montreal families sharing dwelling space with other couples, families, and boarders appears to have been peculiar to that city.[79]

There are several possible explanations. First, French-Canadian family-oriented values were probably very important in leading to the sharing of households by relatives. As an example, in St. Jacques, the French-Canadian suburb, the percentage of families sharing with relatives was double that of Ste. Anne. Furthermore, the residents of Ste. Anne, like those of Preston, Lancashire, and Hamilton, were largely immigrants who were less likely to have large numbers of kin near at hand. French Canadians in Montreal, in contrast, would have constantly been augmented by kin from the rural areas. Certainly in both wards, French Canadians were less likely to live as a single nuclear family than the Irish or other groups (see Table X). Yet there were differences too in the extent of sharing. All St. Jacques families were more likely to double up with others than were those of Ste. Anne. This may have been a result of the nature of housing in the two areas. Or it may have reflected the fewer work opportunities near the St. Jacques area.

Table X - French-Canadian and Others' Household Structure Compared

	Ste. Anne				St. Jacques			
	French Canadian		Other		French Canadian		Other	
Solitaires					2	1%	3	5%
Simple family	37	69%	78	76%	145	53%	35	61%
Extended family	1	2%	6	6%	20	7%	2	4%
Multiple - Some related	4	7%			23	8%	3	5%
Multiple - Not related	12	22%	19	18%	84	31%	14	25%
Totals	54	100%	103	100%	274	100%	57	100%

Secondly, it is possible that the high percentage of families sharing households was not a real phenomenon at all, but the result of fuzzy definitions of households on the part of the census takers, who may have called all people resident in one dwelling, with separate apartments, a "household". This does not, however, appear to have been the case.[80] Qualitative evidence of overcrowding lends support to the statistical

79 Taking in boarders was not unique to Montreal. Tamara Hareven has suggested that "at any particular point in time" the proportion of households in American cities having lodgers was between 15 and 20 per cent. "Urbanization and the Malleable Household: An Examination of Boarding and Lodging in American Families", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, (August 1973), p. 460. What was apparently unique to Montreal was the high percentage of families sharing houses.

80 Generally the census takers appear to have been careful to make the distinction between a shared address (building) and a shared household.

data. Fifteen years later "doubling up" was described as common and did not appear to be viewed as a recent phenomenon, although increased migration to the city as well as the effects of the Depression may well have exacerbated it. A doctor testifying before the Commission on the Relations between Labor and Capital suggested then that the average labourer's tenement would have three to four rooms and would be occupied by

> two to three families, or sometimes two families using one stove between them, and 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.

An even greater number of families would share the same water closet or privy outside.[81] The same doctor reported finding as many as "seventeen or eighteen souls residing in a house of five or six rooms."[82]

Conclusion

Class position, the stage of the family life cycle, and cultural values thus combined to condition not only the number of workers in any family and the age at which the children would be sent to work, but also the very composition of the households within which they would grow up. Many of the children in the families of Montreal's unskilled workers, at least those of Ste. Anne and St. Jacques wards, were likely to go to work before they were fifteen and to grow up in families that at some point of their life shared living space with large numbers of other people. Children in such families were also less likely than others to spend much of their life in school.

In what Pollard has referred to as the transformation of a "society of peasants, craftsmen and versatile labourers" into "modern industrial workers", the family played an important role.[83] The hiring of whole families in the textile trade, the continued use of outmoded apprenticeship contracts, systems of fining children, the putting out arrangement, and, indeed, the very employment of children: all drew on old ideas and familial traditions within a new context. Families thus served as a medium of socialization to new and strange work habits.

Montreal in 1871 appears to have been in a phase common to most nineteenth-century communities undergoing an "industrial revolution". Labour was viewed as a commodity to be bought as cheaply as possible. Workers' families were not seen by producers as potential units of consumption. There was thus little impetus to raise individual worker's wages to the level necessary to properly support a family. Low wages, the changing organization of production, and the large numbers of jobs opened up to women and children combined to make the work of several family members both possible and necessary in all but the best paid of skilled working class families.

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81 RCRLC, 1889, *Quebec Evidence*, p. 606.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 609.

83 Sydney Pollard, *Genesis of Modern Management* (London: Edward Arnold, 1965), pp. 160, 208.

The desire of capitalists for cheap female and child labour coincided with the need of families with children old enough to send them out to work. The surplus of such unskilled labour helped in turn to keep wages down. Thus for a while the needs and values of working class families and of capitalists coincided to shape both the family economy and some of the characteristics of industrial production.

Résumé

Durant les années 1870, Montréal est une ville en transition; depuis deux décennies déjà, elle se fabrique un nouveau profil géographique et on assiste à une réorganisation du monde du travail qui va modifier les bases mêmes de la vie familiale. Cet article se propose d'examiner l'économie familiale dans deux quartiers distincts de la ville — Sainte-Anne qui est déjà fortement industrialisé et Saint-Jacques qui est demeuré beaucoup plus artisanal — dans le but de mieux cerner la relation qui existe entre la famille et l'organisation des moyens de production.

Selon l'auteur, cette relation est complexe et bi-dimensionnelle. D'une part, la nature du travail disponible va déterminer quels membres de la famille sont plus susceptibles de travailler et ceci peut varier d'un quartier à l'autre; d'autre part, la démographie et les attitudes culturelles des familles montréalaises vont tout également influencer les moyens de production. Ainsi, parce qu'il y a un grand nombre de femmes et d'enfants disponibles, les industries du textile et de la chaussure atteignent une place de choix dans l'économie de la ville; par contre, le fait que tant de femmes et d'enfants travaillent dans ces industries fait baisser le salaire et nuit à la main-d'oeuvre spécialisée.

Dans la plupart des familles ouvrières, l'insuffisance des salaires, le chômage saisonnier et le surplus de main-d'oeuvre vont faire en sorte qu'il faudra plus d'un travailleur par famille pour assurer la subsistance. Règle générale, on semble avoir préféré mettre les garçons au travail plutôt que les femmes et les filles; dans le quartier Sainte-Anne, il n'y a que les veuves et les femmes seules qui ont un emploi alors que dans Saint-Jacques, les femmes qui travaillent le font à la maison de par le système du travail au noir. Il arrive également, dans le cas des familles qui n'ont encore que de très jeunes enfants, qu'on tente de boucler le budget en prenant des pensionnaires ou en logeant avec la parenté. En somme, dans la ville qui s'industrialise, le cycle de la vie familiale, la disponibilité du travail et les valeurs culturelles ont, tour à tour, contribué à façonner tant la structure de la maisonnée que le modèle du travail familial.