

# She's No Lady: The Experience and Expression of Gender among Halifax Women Taxi Drivers since World War II

Kimberly Berry

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Article abstract

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## **Abstract:**

*"She's No Lady" explores the complex relationship between gender identity and work culture as experienced by women taxi drivers in Halifax. Working in a traditionally male industry, women taxi drivers often attract the attention of the press and the public as an amusing novelty or a scandalous disgrace. These reactions are, in part, the result of the popular perception that masculine and feminine domain are mutually exclusive, restricted to men and women separately and respectively. Furthermore, characterized as highly competitive, independent operators in a dangerous industry, taxi drivers embody a popular image of masculinity. While the place of women is generally considered to be outside of masculine culture, women taxi drivers demonstrate the fluidity of gender cultures as they adeptly navigate the contested terrain of their masculine work-culture. Despite the routine comments and questions from passengers and colleagues alike, most women drivers find a considerable degree of membership within the larger community of drivers, and in this sense become "one of the men"; seen first as taxi drivers and then women.*

## **Résumé:**

*« Ce n'est pas une femme » étudie la relation complexe entre l'identité sexuelle et la culture de travail chez les chauffeuses de taxi de Halifax. Travaillant dans un secteur habituellement réservé aux hommes, les chauffeuses de taxi attirent souvent l'attention de la presse et du public qui les voient comme une nouveauté amusante ou un véritable scandale. On peut en partie attribuer ces réactions à l'opinion généralement admise qu'il existe des domaines exclusivement réservés les uns aux hommes et les autres aux femmes. En outre, étant des entrepreneurs indépendants dans une industrie dangereuse et extrêmement compétitive, les chauffeurs de taxi représentent, pour le commun des mortels, l'image même de la masculinité. Même si on considère en général que la femme n'a pas sa place dans la culture réservée aux hommes, les chauffeuses de taxi, qui naviguent avec brio sur les « eaux territoriales masculines », font la preuve de la fluidité de la culture des sexes. En dépit des habituels commentaires des collègues de travail et des questions répétitives de leurs passagers, la plupart des femmes qui ont embrassé ce métier éprouvent un véritable sentiment d'appartenance à la grande confrérie des chauffeurs. En ce sens, elles sont considérées d'abord comme « des gars de la gang » et ensuite comme des femmes.*

*Taxi driver.* This job title conjures up two powerful sets of images: of mean streets and urban alienation, and of independent, macho males, a sort of urban "cowboy". These images emerge in popular culture portrayals of taxi drivers, such as Harry Chapin's 1972 song, "Taxi", and the 1976 film "Taxi

Driver", starring Robert Di Niro. Given the very early and powerful gender-typing of the automobile itself as a "masculine" machine,<sup>1</sup> taxi driving has long seemed a quintessentially "male" occupation. Yet this job consists of low-paid service work. Is that not women's traditional lot in Canadian society? Should it be surprising, then, that this "masculine" trade has long had women workers? There were female cab drivers in Europe's metropolises before 1910, and by World War I they were popping up in Canadian cities as well, typically as jitney drivers.<sup>2</sup> The 1931 Canadian census records 12 women "chauffeurs and bus drivers", a category which likely includes taxi drivers. The 1941 census documents 42 women "chauffeurs and taxi drivers".<sup>3</sup> Recent estimates of women taxi drivers in Montreal and Toronto indicate that the percentage of women drivers remains small. Montreal's Bureau de Taxi estimates 400 women with taxi permits. The Metropolitan Licensing commission of Toronto estimates 30 women cab drivers.<sup>4</sup> A survey of the names of Halifax taxi drivers licensed in 1994 indicates that less than 3% were women.<sup>5</sup> Canada's women cab drivers have not, however, found their historian. This is unsurprising, given how little has been written about Canadian taxis and their drivers, as well as the paucity of written records.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, to write the history of those Canadian women who took up taxi-work, it is essential to use oral history.<sup>7</sup>

This paper is based largely on the information gathered through oral interviews. Twenty five Halifax taxi drivers have been interviewed.<sup>8</sup> Among them, there are twelve women drivers. The drivers interviewed include David "Darky" MacInnes who drove taxi from 1941 until the mid 1990s; however, most of the women interviewed began driving during the 1970s and 1980s. Inevitably, the story here is most accurate for the 1980s, but the written record shows that Halifax's taxi business has changed little since the 1940's. The number of company cars has declined, and fewer drivers now work on commission than was the case in the immediate postwar era. Renting on a percentage basis was more common in the 1950's and 1960's, as were "Company cars" owned by the brokers. However, the industry in Halifax has been moving increasingly since the 1960's toward the owner-operator model that is predominate in the 1980s and 1990s, but otherwise the industry has stayed in the same groove. Similarly, despite some variation in the structural nature of the industry, the fundamental occupational experience and work culture is similar in all Canadian cities. Therefore, many of the insights provided by these drivers can be applied to the entire postwar era.

The experience of women cab drivers in Halifax during the postwar period offers a valuable insight into the gendered nature of the taxi business. How drivers have been seen as within the context of the masculine car culture. How women have successfully navigated the gendered terrain of their work culture and managed to fit within the masculine culture of taxi drivers. Their experience offers insight into why the numbers of women drivers have remained consistently low by illustrating some of the overt and subtle methods of sex discrimination encountered

within the industry and illustrates some of the methods that women have used to overcome the barriers of a gendered work culture and make their way inside as accepted and valued members of the group.

There have been several ways in which Halifax taximen regarded their trade as masculine. First of all, they worked for themselves, choosing their hours of work and — to a surprising degree for the second half of the 20th century — conditions of employment. [They are in effect sub-contractors, especially those who rent out their own cab.] Second, they considered their trade to be a skilled craft. Third, their job required physical courage and endurance. Finally, it required a man to subordinate his own comfort to the good of his family.

For taxi drivers in Halifax the association with the image of the manly provider has been strengthened by the method of remuneration. In Halifax, the industry consists of predominantly owner-operator vehicles; therefore, most of the taxi drivers in the city owned their own car and operate in conjunction with a broker who owns the two-way radios and dispatch equipment. The owner-operator pays a flat rate “stand” or “office” rent to the broker on weekly basis for the dispatch and radio service provided and carries the name of the broker’s taxi on his or her rooftop. While dispatchers are employed by the broker and work eight hour shifts at an hourly wage, drivers are considered neither employees nor assigned any specific work hours. Therefore, the driver comes out to work when he or she chooses to and may choose between working with the radio, waiting on the taxi stands, or playing the street. However, during busier times and at some offices, drivers are discouraged from playing the street in order to ensure more prompt service for radio customers. Generally speaking, drivers come to work at the hour which they choose and proceed to the taxi stand of their choice, usually the closest one, and wait there to be sent by dispatch to the nearest passenger. The owner-operator driver collects the money from each taxi fare, radio call or pick up, and from the total pays a flat rate to the broker or office<sup>9</sup> and divides the rest among his or her other expenses such as gas, maintenance, insurance, licensing and registration fees etc. The drivers that rent cars generally operate on a similar basis, paying a flat rate to the owner for the use of the car, which may or may not include the office rent, and paying for the gas used during the shift, the remaining portion of the fares collected are the driver’s to keep.

While a general description of the taxi driver’s routine may not appear gender specific, it is unquestionably considered to be the “man’s job”. Because of the predominant owner-operator system the image of the masculine breadwinner is emphasized. Although drivers, unlike many craftsmen, do not produce a tangible product in their work, there is a strong association between masculinity and the role of the provider. The success of the driver is often measured in how much money he is able to generate for his family, yet as one retired driver observes, the role of provider can be a barrier to more important family relationships.

I would work generally from 7 in the morning, I'd come home 4 in the afternoon. I'd stay home until 6, then I'd go out again [at] 6 and I'd work until 11. then I'd come home. Fridays, ... now I had two young daughters and we decided that because of the hours I was working ... I gave my family everything, except what they really needed and that was myself.<sup>10</sup>

Effort and skill is measured in the amount of money they earn and the skill with which they ply their trade. Speaking of the generation of drivers before him, one driver asserts:

these guys were cab drivers. I mean they went out — I know my father-in-law was out at 5:30 in the morning. Now he came home at 8:00 at night. He used to come home for lunch, and he'd come home for supper about 4:00 and then he'd go back to work at 4:30. Now my father-in-law raised 7 kids, paid for a house, pushing cab.<sup>11</sup>

Clearly the ability to provide for a family and the endurance and determination to work the long hours necessary to survive the taxi industry are respected as a mark of manly success. It should also be noted that given the long hours “pushing Cab” Robb’s father-in-law was not likely the primary care-giver for his seven children, however, he is respectfully credited with providing for their care through many long hours of work.

The physical risk to taxi drivers has long been a recognized characteristic of the occupation and commonly associated with masculine bravery. As one veteran driver aptly phrased it “you can always get hit over the head.”<sup>12</sup> A recent study on the victimization of, and policing by taxi drivers supports what many drivers have long understood instinctively; taxi driving is a dangerous business. A study by criminologist Philip Stenning examined the experience of taxi drivers in Halifax, Winnipeg, and Vancouver.<sup>13</sup> Stenning concluded that taxi drivers are a “highly victimized occupational group in Canada [and] their victimization while at work may be as high as twenty times that of Canadians generally.”<sup>14</sup> Although the term victimization encompasses offenses such as “fare-jumping”, which generally does not involve physical danger to the driver, or a significant degree of income loss, Stenning also concludes that taxi drivers “face a disturbingly high rate of occupational homicide”. While inadequate information prevents accurate calculations, homicide data released by statistics Canada for the early years of this decade indicate that the rate of occupational homicide may be as much as four or five times higher for taxi drivers than it is for police officers.<sup>15</sup> During the four-year period from 1991 to 1995 twenty-four Canadian taxi drivers were murdered while on duty. Of these drivers, six were killed in Montreal, three in Toronto and Edmonton, two each in Vancouver and Quebec City, and one each in Ottawa-Hull, Halifax, and Thunder Bay. The remaining five victims worked outside of Canada’s twenty-five major metropolitan areas. During the same period ten police officers were murdered while on duty in Canada.<sup>16</sup> A precise compari-

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son of the rates of on-duty homicide in these two occupational groups can not be made because it is not known how many taxi drivers were operating in Canada during this period.<sup>17</sup> Even without accurate figures of homicide rates among taxi drivers the image of the independent driver, working alone in a dangerous environment has long been a part of the taxiing.

The bottom line is that you're on your own. Out in the middle of nowhere, in the middle of the night. Outnumbered.<sup>18</sup>

Partially in response to the issue of danger there is a sense of fraternity and community among taxi drivers. Again, the expression and experience of camaraderie among drivers often takes on a masculine character. When drivers are in serious trouble the aid of fellow drivers is expected and delivered. Speaking of a time when there was an open radio system in the cars one male driver describes the willingness of others to fly to the aid of a driver in danger:

All the cars could hear you and all you had to do was give out your location and everyone would know where you were and then it was like the marines were coming. The boys would come. Because we always did, we always stuck together when a guy was in trouble.<sup>19</sup>

Clearly the cooperative effort among drivers, particularly in the face of danger, is perceived as part of the masculine nature of the drivers and the job. The notion of the manly provider, independent worker and the camaraderie associated with being a member of the taxi community all play a role in creating a clearly masculine work culture.

How have women fitted into this masculine world? It appears they have not generated a significant reaction on the part of either regulators or male drivers.<sup>20</sup> Women drivers have found more connection than conflict with their colleagues. There has been little evidence of conflict between the sexes within the industry and women have been at the centre of the united efforts by drivers to challenge the regulators. Women have been both members of and leaders in organizations, associations, and societies designed to represent the interests of the community of drivers. However, it was not always this way. There was active discrimination against women drivers in Halifax immediately after WWII, as elsewhere in Canada, the general policy being to limit entry into the postwar industry to returning soldiers. Although the Halifax records do not document it, it is likely that Halifax women faced comparable discrimination during the job-shortages of the 1930s.<sup>21</sup>

During the war, women entered the taxi trade across Canada as the men were exposed to military conscription (Figure 1). In October 1942 the Dominion government bore "down on the taxicab industry to ... use women drivers in place of men wherever possible."<sup>22</sup> The Halifax City Council responded on October 15

with its first regulation concerning a gender-specific dress code for women drivers.

Every female driver of a licensed vehicle when engaged in the operation of the same for hire shall at all times wear a peaked cap, a shirt or military type blouse which shall be neatly adjusted at the neck, and trousers, breeches or a skirt of dark coloured material.<sup>23</sup>

It is likely that hiring of women drivers began immediately. While there are no city records on this, veteran driver "Darky" MacInnes, who drove with the Halifax Wartime Taxi Association recalls that there were a number of women driving taxi during the war "maybe eight or ten women" and that they "did just as well as the men". Although they were "not supposed to drive at night" MacInnes recalls that some women did and "nobody said nothing".<sup>24</sup> The absence of discussion surrounding women taxi drivers in the City Council Minutes also indicates that if restrictions on women drivers were being ignored, no one was concerned enough to take the matter to Council or ask that restrictions be created or enforced.<sup>25</sup>

While the recommendation for the dress code regulation indicates that female drivers were already present in the industry, it is not clear how long women had been operating taxis prior to 1942. Similarly, it is not clear whether or not women drivers



*Figure 1: This photo of a woman taxi driver, Pearl Woolett, was taken in Edmonton Alberta in 1943. World War II witnessed an unprecedented demand for women in traditionally male jobs. Source: National Archives of Canada.*

were considered a temporary measure to meet wartime demand for labour.

It was common for women to assume 'male' positions during wartime, particularly in jobs where there was a scarcity of labour due to the absence of male workers. Accordingly, the first reference to women drivers is not characterized by debate, agitation, concern, or conflict. The lack of conflict surrounding the entrance of women into the taxi industry should be understood within the context of wartime standards for women and work. As Ruth Roach Pierson suggests in *'They're Still Women After All': The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood*, the wartime marked a more liberal approach to the role of women in the workforce; however, the presence of women within traditionally male industries during wartime more appropriately reflects the prevalent attitudes toward the wartime demand for labour rather than evolving attitudes toward the appropriate role of women.

Both the assumption of great gains made by women during World War II and the bewilderment over the post-war reversals rest on an inadequate examination of the context of women's wartime employment and an inaccurate assessment of the degree to which attitudes toward women's proper role in society changed during the war. Canada's war effort, rather than any consideration of women's right to work, determined the recruitment of women was part of a large-scale intervention by government into the labour market to control allocation of labour for effective prosecution of the war.<sup>26</sup>

The 1942 regulations indicate that clothing was the most perceptible difference between male and female drivers. However, by 1947 the notion that women were less fit for service in the taxi industry begins to show in regulations designed to prevent young women from obtaining a taxi licence.

By 1947 Ordinance No. 13 has acquired an age limit for female applicants for taxi licenses. "No license shall be issued to any female driver who is under twenty-five years of age."<sup>27</sup> This regulation is reflective of the obvious moral panic — the feeling that young taxi drivers may be an enticement to either sexual adventure or attack. The more tenuous position of women taxi drivers was also demonstrated in 1947 with the proposal that no woman should be granted a taxi license in the City of Halifax. In 1947 City Council introduced an amendment to section 13 of the City Ordinance No. 13 for the purpose of eliminating women taxi drivers. The amendment read:

... no such [taxi drivers'] licence shall be issued to any male person under twenty-one years of age or to any female person or to any person in the judgment of the Board not a fit and proper person to be a driver.<sup>28</sup>

While the early presence of women taxi drivers was regulated according to notions of appropriate dress and restricted to

women over twenty-five, presumably to protect more innocent 'girls' the post-war regulators categorize women and boys among the "unfit" and the 'improper', reaffirming the manly character necessary to be a taxi driver in the postwar port city. It is interesting to note that this amendment was submitted after women drivers had already entered the industry and were recognized in the regulations.

It is unclear from the records whether women protested the 1947 ban. Also unclear is the date of their re-entry into the trade. However, it is clear that the women were active in the industry in the late 1960s and early 1970s when Allie Parsons appeared before the City Council on behalf of the Halifax Taxi Association.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, six of the twelve women drivers interviewed entered the industry, between 1968 and 1975.<sup>30</sup> This is a time when the sexual barriers to full employment were collapsing across Canada as a result of the booming economy and the equal rights movement of the "Sixties".

Among the most active lobbyists for Halifax taxi drivers was Allie Parsons, Public Relations Officer of the Taxi Association of Halifax.<sup>31</sup> The Halifax Taxi Association was established in 1957 and represents the first recorded voluntary trade association in the industry.<sup>32</sup> Throughout the 1950s and 1960s it was active and visible in its efforts to gain licence limitation for drivers and to influence rate schedules. Although it is not clear whether Parsons held a taxi license, she clearly had an interest in the industry. She frequently addressed City Council on behalf of the Association and asserted its interests. Although Parsons's activity with the Taxi Association may have originated because of familial connections to the industry it should not be dismissed on this account. Whether a driver, or the wife of a driver, Parsons clearly served the interests of the Association membership. Similarly, the focus of her efforts in front of Council were not for the specific interests of women drivers but the interests of taxi drivers generally. This is typical of the behaviour of women drivers active within the industry. While women do not appear particularly active until well after World War II, when they do emerge, they are clearly members of the driver community, not a peculiar nor separate group.

The 1970s was a particularly active time for community initiatives among drivers, and women drivers were no exception. By 1974 a small group of drivers initiated a cooperative taxi company, Union Taxi. Established in an attempt to improve their position at work and increase worker autonomy a number of drivers bought into Union Taxi and became part owners of their own company.<sup>33</sup> Among the members of Union Taxi there was at least one woman driver, Glenna Forgeron.<sup>34</sup>

The 1970s also saw an attempt by many drivers to establish a union,<sup>35</sup> while others lobbied individually and collectively for access to hotel stands monopolized by Yellow Cab, rate increases, and license limitation.<sup>36</sup> Although women drivers do not necessarily take a leading role in these collective initiatives, they were often equally aware of, and involved in such actions. However, it was with the establishment of the Halifax Taxi

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Bureau Society in the 1980s that women's involvement and leadership came to the forefront in the Halifax taxi industry.

### ***Halifax Taxi Bureau Society***

Women taxi drivers such as Shirley Comeau, Linda Hyland, and Sharon Lantz, were highly visible as early members of the Bureau and played key roles contributing to the growth and success of the Society. For example, Hyland assumed the role of secretary of the Bureau's Constitution and Bylaws Committee and Comeau worked in cooperation with Anciel Hartlen to generate new memberships for the fledgling Society early in the 1980.<sup>37</sup> These women were also frequent contributors to the Society's newsletter, *The Rooflight*.<sup>38</sup> By the first anniversary issue of *The Rooflight* in 1984, Comeau held position of treasurer and both Comeau and Lantz were co-editors of the industry's only newsletter. Their contributions speak strongly to the level and nature of their involvement with the grass-roots trade organization. Hyland's first article in the newsletter was a critique of the newly formed Taxi Commission and called for responsible representation on the Commission.<sup>39</sup> Hyland was clearly aware of the nature and the condition of the Taxi Commission as a body of municipal regulation, and in her attempt to educate other drivers she assumed a leadership role within the industry. Comeau's first substantial piece in the newsletter challenges drivers to become involved in the movement to improve the industry:

this type of organization takes commitment of not just a day, a month or a year — but many years. This is our future, our livelihood. We are professionals and it is time we acted like it. It is time we showed the public and ourselves that we are a good and important part of this community.<sup>40</sup>

The Taxi Bureau's executive election in 1987 brought Sharon Lantz to the helm as the new president and the long hours of work and commitment of Lantz and Comeau are reflected in the pages of *The Rooflight* which they continued to edit cooperatively. While women may appear seemingly absent from the early public record of the taxi industry, they become increasingly visible as active members and leaders in the industry and the struggle to improve the public perception and work and conditions of the drivers.

One explanation for the women's initial invisibility within the industry may lie in their ability to fit well within a male-dominated industry rather than standing out from it. Clearly, despite the near absence of public records of women taxi drivers, women not only entered the occupation, managed to negotiate a place within a predominantly male industry, but also assumed an active role in fighting for an improved occupational status for themselves and their fellow drivers. These women and their activities demonstrate that although women taxi drivers remain in the minority they are not as marginalised as they may first appear. Despite being consistently few in number women drivers have managed to adapt successfully within the industry.

One noteworthy method of adaptation employed by women taxi drivers is their ability to adopt attitudes that are generally considered masculine, displaying many of the same characteristics that male drivers have valued in themselves and associated with membership in their work culture.

When asked about women's culture or "behaviours that you associate with women" many women drivers respond by indicating that there is little room for "femininity" if you are going to survive within a masculine work culture. One woman driver, a veteran who entered the industry in 1968 said:

You have to put it [femininity] in the background, right, you have to become one of the men. You have to become one of the guys. You have to listen to their dirty jokes. You don't have to but it's there, right, and they're going to come out with all this crap and you humour them and you let them believe ha ha ha this is funny, right.<sup>41</sup>

Similarly, another driver with approximately seven years experience in the late 1980s and 1990s, observes the importance of being considered as a driver rather than a girlfriend:

If you've got the respect of a driver, you might have to push it a little bit harder, but I figure right now I'm just out there with the rest of them. I'd rather be one of the guys, than one of the girls you can lay. ... I'd rather be one of the guys cause I mean that way if you're in trouble they're there to help you. You know, if you need a car for the night, whatever, it's much better than being one of the girlfriends. It don't count.<sup>42</sup>

The willingness to fit into the masculine culture of the taxi industry is a crucial part of the occupational experience of women taxi drivers.

Despite this ability to fit within the masculine domain of their work environment, women drivers have had to endure a gender-specific experience. Sexual assault remains among the most contentious issues that illustrate the gender division within the industry. After Shirley Comeau was sexually assaulted by one of her passengers she became conscious of the attitudes of the other drivers.

A lot of women taxi drivers ... [would] say we [are] sorry [about] what happened to you Shirley, and then behind [my] back [I would] hear the stories ... she couldn't have fought very hard, and stuff like this. Women themselves say this, and they [say] 'oh, I'd know what to do' [or] 'it must be a bad girl or she must have been dressed sexy or teasing or something'.<sup>43</sup>

A number of women drivers in Halifax have expressed their attitudes toward the responsibility of the woman driver to eliminate or control violent customers.



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It depends on the person [the driver]. If she wears makeup or low cut dresses, well, what do you expect?<sup>44</sup>

I had [men] taxi drivers tell me to stop wearing skirts 'cause I would invite unwelcome attention.<sup>45</sup>

While some drivers credit "loose" or "inviting" behaviour as the cause of sexual assaults, others assert that an appropriate response to the threat of assault can prevent it from happening. In either case it is the responsibility of the woman driver to either invite or repel unwelcome advances.

... I find it all depends on how you [act]. If you want to act like you're easy and I mean there used to be a lawyer I knew years ago and they always told me that rape was an act of violence. Nine times out of ten if you said yeah go right ahead, they're going to turn around and walk away anyway cause all the fun's gone out of it.<sup>46</sup>

Although there is no evidence of strong protest among Halifax taxi drivers regarding safety issues, in other cities where the taxi cabs are owned and controlled by the office there has been considerable conflict surrounding driver protection. In Oakland, California a rash of assaults on a number of male drivers and the rape of one woman driver in early 1974, led to a union meeting which degenerated to a face-off between the women drivers and the men. During the meeting the union, the company, and most of the male drivers were openly hostile to women's concerns for safety. One driver contended that "if [women drivers] don't like being raped [they] should find other jobs".<sup>47</sup> While all taxi drivers in Oakland were threatened by the assaults taking place there was marked division between men and women drivers surrounding the issue of rape.<sup>48</sup>

There also appears to be a marked difference between the attitudes of the women drivers in Halifax and the behaviour of the women drivers in California concerning the responsibility for protecting drivers against sexual assault. While the women in Oakland looked to the company owners and the union to take action to prevent more violent assaults against drivers, the women in Halifax place more responsibility for prevention and protection on the individual driver. The difference between the women drivers in Oakland and Halifax may be attributed to historical context. For example, the reaction of the women drivers in Oakland occurred during the early 1970s during the peak of the women's movement in the United States. Similarly, others may superficially attribute the difference to the regional stereotypes crediting Halifax drivers with conservative attitudes toward women and rape and suggesting that California women taxi drivers are naturally more radical. The difference may also be attributed to the size of the respective cities and the rates of violent assault. Arguably, however, a crucial factor distinguishing these two groups of drivers is the industrial structure within which they are operating.

The drivers in O'Connell's article work for Yellow Cab. They are hired by the company and paid on a commission basis. The company owns the cars and dictates the drivers' shifts. The drivers are clearly categorized as employees. The nature of the employment relationship is further illustrated by mandatory membership in the Teamsters Union.

Taxi drivers in Halifax are not employed by the brokers — for the most part they own their own cars — therefore, it is considerably more difficult for Halifax drivers to demand from the company owners more adequate measures of protection. Halifax drivers are categorized as independent contractors rather than employees; therefore, their occupational experience is characterized by more freedom and independence than the "employees" at Yellow Cab in Oakland. However, the sense of independence and freedom enjoyed by Halifax drivers is accompanied by the knowledge that they are individually solely responsible for their own safety and protection. In part, it is the absence of an employee/employer relationship that encourages the attitude that the individual driver controls her own fate in terms of assault.

A study of women drivers in St. John's, Newfoundland reveals attitudes that are similar to those of Halifax drivers. Cynthia Boyd's paper, "Just like one of the Boys: Tactics of Women taxi drivers", examines methods employed by women taxi drivers in St. John's to deal with unwanted sexual comments and advances.<sup>49</sup> Boyd concludes from her interviews with women taxi drivers in St. John's that:

[the women taxi drivers] did not define [threatening situations] as sexual harassment, they considered them to be a part of the territory of the job<sup>50</sup>

The drivers interviewed by Boyd described tactics such as driving in populated areas of the city, keeping their two-way radio mike accessible and ready to use, and asking for the assistance of other drivers when dealing with situations they consider dangerous.

Similarly, avoiding feminine attire and behaviour is often employed. Boyd's Choice of title "just one of the boys" suggests that, in fact, encouraging others to see them as a member of the masculine culture in another tactic that is used.

You have to put in [femininity] in the background ... you have to become one of the men. You have to become one of the guys.<sup>51</sup>

Women drivers also applied the rhetoric of manliness through bravery and violence and de-emphasized feminine attributes as part of their strategy for fitting into a masculine work culture. When confronted with difficult or dangerous customers women drivers often assume the stance of bravery and independence:

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You're in the business and if you have a problem you gotta get yourself out of the problem ... you gotta do your own think'n. You can't depend on some man to come throw him out of the car. You gotta throw him out of the car.<sup>52</sup>

If [the passenger is] drunk or going to start giving you a tough time you know right from the start, and you better know how to handle that, [how to] kick them out or whatever you're going to do with them.<sup>53</sup>

If he [the passenger] were mouthy, I even throw on the brakes and tell [him] to get out and ... I'm not afraid to stand up for myself.<sup>54</sup>

I always gave everybody a warning, and if they didn't listen, fine, then their butt was out of my car. You know, and if it meant that I'd have to get out and physically throw them out, they were going out.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to adopting an attitude of the "independent driver" who can physically throw unwanted trouble-makers from the car, the women also adhere to codes of masculine camaraderie. One woman adds, however, that this was sometimes surprising to men drivers who perhaps expected women to be less willing to come to a man's aid, whether the situation be dangerous or simply mechanical:

When some of the men are in a pickle, you know, like a driver has trouble ... they used to be amazed [that] I'd be one of the first drivers to show up<sup>56</sup>

This woman driver is clearly willing to adopt the standard of practice of the taxi work culture, even if the behaviour is strongly associated with masculine bravery or mechanical skill. The ability of women to fit within this work culture can also be measured by the degree of acceptance demonstrated by the male drivers. One example involves a driver implying that social conduct in the presence of a female taxi driver need not apply to the rules generally adhered to in the presence of a woman. After driving taxi for twenty-eight years one woman says:

now these guys will say anything in front of [me]. I was in a garage one day, and somebody said something and the younger fellow says don't say that, there's a woman standing there, and the driver turns around and says she's been driving cab for as long as you've been on this earth.<sup>57</sup>

Clearly the implication is that after almost three decades in the taxi industry the woman driver is chiefly identified as a driver not a woman. In this sense, she is accepted into a work culture that is influenced by and reinforces working-class images of anliness including rough language, camaraderie, violence and bravery.

The absence of workplace sex segregation may be one element facilitating the women's ability to adopt a clearly masculine work culture. Women taxi drivers are not segregated within their workplace and, therefore, experience a very different marriage of gender and work culture. In part, it may be this pattern of side by side and similar workplace activities that encourage women taxi drivers adopt a work culture that is more reflective of their male colleagues than it is of a woman's culture. Although taxi drivers are physically separated as individuals in different cars, and at times, linked by two-way radios to different companies they are not separated or segregated according to sex. Men and women operate their cabs at the same taxi stands, in the same areas of town at the same time of the day and night. Furthermore, they take their coffee breaks and eat their meals at the same coffee shops and restaurants. This close interaction between workers of both sexes is crucial to the development of a shared work-culture identity.

The presence of women drivers in taxi-driver associations and societies, and their adoption of the masculine ideals of independence, bravery and camaraderie indicate that women have assumed membership in the taxi community, marking a sharp contrast with the traditional feminine identity associated with women's culture. Clearly the assumption of the masculine work culture can serve more than one purpose. While it indicates belonging to a particular work group, it also serves as protection against others in that group and against members of the public. The fact that women can fit within the boundaries of the masculine work culture, indicates the degree to which manliness is a social construct. Relying heavily on codes of conduct and social discourse, a masculine culture can be shared, at times, even by those who have represented the opposite of manliness. In addition to the influence of historical and political change, masculine identity has been moulded by those on the margins to assert their place within the larger society or a specific work culture.

While regulatory records and oral interviews do not indicate protracted or prolonged conflict surrounding the presence of women taxi drivers in Halifax, it is important not to overstate the integrated nature of gender within this industry. Women drivers have always been aware that their presence and performance is often judged unfavourably by fellow drivers, regulators, passengers, friends, and family. A number of the women interviewed recall the attitudes and the comments encountered as they entered the business.

I said to the person I was going out with, that I should drive a cab. Of course these people, a typical man, he said no I don't think you should do that and that [was] all [that] I needed to hear.<sup>58</sup>

Well nobody else thought I was going [to pass the taxi licence exam] ... one of my sons [or] somebody in the house got theirs and they said I'd never make it [be]cause they didn't think I'd make it. And they tried two or three times and



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I went down and got mine the first time. Come home stick'n my chest out that day.<sup>59</sup>

Well, it's like when you first go into business, I mean it's like, oh yea, she got her own car, wait [un]til she has the first little bit of trouble — right. But I stuck it out.<sup>60</sup>

While a considerable number of women drivers in Halifax have joined the ranks of veteran drivers, their presence behind the wheel has not lost its novelty for many passengers. At times people have reacted to women taxi drivers as though they were a circus freak show.

I felt like Yogi Bear in Jelly Stone Park, you know. You pull up to a red light and they're going 'look at the woman cab driver.'<sup>61</sup>

Similarly, passengers question women drivers about their working hours, job skills, and personal character. Many of these inquiries are characteristic of either paternalistic or chivalrous attitudes, often expressing concern for the safety of the woman taxi driver.

That [attitude] comes from generation to generation ... even young people that are in their twenties, twenty-five to forty age bracket, you know, I have [heard] comment[s] [like] 'what are you doing out there at this hour of the morning.'<sup>62</sup>

One woman driver recalls that comments from passengers concerned for her safety reached disturbing proportions after the murder of Halifax taxi driver, Ronald Henderson in 1986.

Do you remember when ... Ronnie Henderson [was murdered] ... being a female driver was like ... it was like being in kind of a movie or something. I got so much pressure from the public, there was so much pressure from men and women alike ... that by noontime ... I used to have to come home. I couldn't stand it, I [would have] a headache [from] grind[ing] my teeth because every woman, every person, that came in the car had something to say about that. 'You shouldn't be out here. It's not safe. You shouldn't drive nights' ... 'Well, what does your husband think about it? ... do you have any kids?' I think if there were a thousand questions on a sheet of paper, they must have asked every one of them.<sup>63</sup>

Other comments that reveal popular notions about the importance of protecting women from physically dangerous or challenging work are frequently encountered. In the course of operating a cab, drivers are often called upon to assist their passengers with items like groceries and luggage. However, for women drivers delivering this type of service can reveal

passengers' attitudes toward the appropriate behaviour of women.

People take the luggage in for you and they don't think anything of it. And a lot of times I'll say 'I'll take that' especially if it's salty or it's dirty out and my car is full of salt or something [so the passenger doesn't] lean against the car. [Sometimes they say] 'Well it's quite heavy' and I say well, I've been driving for a long time, I know it's quite heavy but I'll get it in.<sup>64</sup>

One day when I got a call and the passenger [had groceries] ... when I got out of the car and help him with the groceries he said 'are you a cab driver? ... I expected a big person, a lot bigger than you are.' ... well I try to do my job, I like to help them but they say '[it's] okay, I [will] do it.'<sup>65</sup>

While these drivers prefer to conduct their business as taxi drivers without the interference of traditional gender codes that prevent women from lifting heavy luggage, other women drivers prefer to use gender as a guideline for performing certain duties. Reddick-Simmonds has a clear gender code to help her determine whether or not to help passengers with groceries and luggage.

If it is a woman I'd help. If it was a man he's on his own. No way ... and they took it really good.<sup>66</sup>

Similarly, some male taxi drivers express concern over women drivers having to perform such tasks as changing a tire. Sharon Lantz remembers that one driver who was particularly adamant about this issue.

I got a flat tire down by the VG [general hospital] one day and called for another driver to come get my passenger and [another driver] came along, and by [that] time I got the trunk open, I've got my tire half out of the trunk ... I figure, if I'm gonna drive the car, I better be able to do some of the basic things and he said where's the driver who [took your passengers?], how long ago did your passengers get picked up? and I told him. He said that blankety, blankety, blankety, blank didn't come back to help you change this tire after he took your passengers? There's no need of a woman in this office ever changing a tire ... he gave me almighty, the almighty devil for going to change my own tire. But I had, I've had things like that happen ... that the men ... don't want to let me change a tire.<sup>67</sup>

This story is particularly interesting because of the dramatic difference in the attitude of the two men taxi drivers toward their woman colleague. Many drivers would expect that the first driver, merely as a gesture of good will, would return and assist the fellow driver with the flat tire. However, the second driver clearly expresses that in addition to any code of community sup-

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port, women drivers should not have to perform a task so clearly within the masculine realm. Although traditional notions of gender can create protective or chivalrous attitudes among some, others are unable to take women taxi drivers seriously.

I [have] had three customers ... that would not drive with me because I was a woman ... One, he was physically [ill] ... I've never seen a man turn white, but he turned white, he was so ill, I had to stop at the Armdale Rotary at Armdale Taxi and let him get into another cab. He apologized and everything ... he said 'you're a good driver, it's just me' ... [It would have been the same thing with] any woman [driver] ... it [didn't] matter [that] I was a taxi driver ... he couldn't drive with a woman. Figure that one out ... I'd been in [the business] long enough to ... know [that] there [are] assholes ... he wasn't being an asshole, he was truly ... terrified.<sup>68</sup>

On another occasion the same driver had a male passenger who became violent and abusive.

I was taking [the passenger] over to Dartmouth, when we got in the middle of the bridge he [said to me] 'give me one good reason why I shouldn't get my fucking shot gun when you get me home ... and blow your brains out ... all women cab drivers are sluts ... this [was] a really old man ... he was really ranting and raving ... and he was the old red neck type ... he just went on and on about if you drove a cab you were a slut — if you were a woman [cabdriver].'<sup>69</sup>

It is interesting to note that the passengers making comments and asking questions are not distinguishable either by age or by gender. While many women drivers have encountered the negative response from male passengers toward women, Sharon Lantz contends that women passengers can be the most difficult to deal with.

Middle- [and] upper-class females are your worst enemies because, we [women taxi drivers, are] the personification of all freedom and they're stuck home with their 2.8 children, hubby, two-car garage, right.<sup>70</sup>

As an example Lantz offers the story of two women passengers that she refused to serve because of their attitude toward women taxi drivers.

[It was in] March, [and the] NATO fleet [was] in. [It was] just before [the ] Misty Moon moved off Gottingen Street. I [came] up there and all that's there was men and two women. I stopped for the women, and the men all were nice ... they made a point of putting the women into the car, right, so that's fine. I got as far as Ahearn Manor and the one said 'see Babbs, I told you there was a woman driving cab at night'. And the other one said 'well, I didn't doubt it but you

know who would think' and [then] they started this whole question period where I didn't get a chance to [give] any answers ... the first one said, 'well you must be a women's libber'. And before I could answer the question the other said 'well, of course she is', ... and then the other one said, 'well, you must be, you can't be,' she said, 'are you married? No you can't be married, no decent married women would drive a cab at night'. Now Shirley would have ... reached around the seat and smacked [them] across ... the face, right ... and then it proceeded to 'well, you know what any woman who works at night is, you know, she's nothing but a whore'. That did it. I pulled over to the side of the road. By this time I'm approximately to the corner of Uniacke and Gottingen and I said 'excuse me ... Now you have two choices here, one, you get out or two, you shut your mouth' ... [one of them said] 'You can't put us out' [those were] key words ... well they got out.<sup>71</sup>

Regardless of who is posing the interrogating questions, or whether or not they are being paternalistic, abusive, or simply frightened at the thought of a woman driver, the women must navigate a course around the misconceptions and stereotypes that they are labelled with. Mary MacKay expresses the frustration that women drivers experience because of the consistent barrage of questions and comments.

And as far as any female driver, which you know we are in the minority, there's been many, many Questions and many, many statements made over the years and too Goddamn much flak.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to the concern and curiosity expressed about women drivers, many passengers have also shown a preference for taxis operated by women. The existence of taxi services run by women for women indicates that there is some truth to the notion that woman passengers prefer women drivers. In his article on jitney operations in North America, Donald F. Davis observes the emergence of jitney services "operated by women for 'women and children only'".<sup>73</sup> Similarly, a report in *Kinesis* in 1982 announced the establishment of a London fleet of "feminist cabbies" called Labyris, consisting of twenty cars. The Labyris service was only extended to men who were accompanied by women.<sup>74</sup> More recently, in 1988 one of Taiwan's women taxi drivers said that "passengers tend to trust a female driver more than a male one, and in many cases boys like to entrust their girlfriends with [her]."<sup>75</sup>

Similarly, Jordan's first woman taxi driver says that she finds advantages to working in a

male-dominated society [because] many devout Muslim men don't want their wives and daughters alone with male cabbies — so they call to ask for her by name.<sup>76</sup>

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While one Halifax driver has observed the tendency for women passengers to prefer women drivers, she expressed very strong feelings about encouraging it. Speaking of special requests for women drivers Hyland said:

I got the request the other night for that, [a woman driver] and it was a young girl, I think she was probably babysitting and somebody decided that she would be more comfortable going home with a female driver. I did the request.<sup>77</sup>

Although Hyland is willing to cooperate with these special requests she is not willing to actively promote it.

If I was totally a business woman, I'd say there's [an] opportunity to go out and set up a business just catered to women who are afraid to get into cabs with men and I refuse to do that. I don't think that that's doing anything to improve our society. I think that that's catering to fears that are largely unfounded and I do have really strong opinions on this in terms of women being victims and I think a lot of victimization is here and I'm not denying that there are real threats of physical violence in our society but I think that those apply to men and women and I think ... that for society to move on and to improve for all people ... that men and women have to work together at improving things.<sup>78</sup>

Among the most interesting stereotypes that women taxi drivers encounter is their reputation for being sexually promiscuous. A number of passengers have the perception that, given the right offer, any woman cab driver will gladly render sexual services for hire.

On a single incident where a male customer assumed because I was a female taxi driver, that I would be prepared to take money for other services than transportation and I dealt with that very quickly. He was a charge customer and I told him that I would call his wife.<sup>79</sup>

I had to answer [to a sex for hire proposition] once ... but I didn't do it ... he said I'll give you the money instead of driving around [looking for a prostitute]. I said, no thanks.<sup>80</sup>

[On one occasion] there [were] three [male passengers], [and] we [found] two girls on the corner, so they're [the passengers are asking to proceed] to the hotel and I'm saying, hey, there's three of them and there's only two girls, but there's three girls in the car, so they're thinking [that I am the third woman prostitute], I said no, I stopped the cab, I said 'excuse me, they need a third girl'. They said no, no, [and] they're looking at me like I'm going up those stairs, I said forget it, I said listen, I drive a cab, I do not solicit, I said tell [them] they need another girl.<sup>81</sup>

More commonly, the propositions from passengers do not exclude the element of sex for hire; however, the assumption remains that the woman taxi driver is willing, if not eager, to have sex with her passengers.

You know, women cab drivers are supposed to be easy, I mean there are some that are, they're noted for [it], you know, but I don't happen to be one of them<sup>82</sup>

[I've been propositioned] more so ... back in the earlier days and they'd always bring it across like it was a joke. You know, like, want to come in for a drink? or you know, I'll be here later, come on down and you know, or we're having a party, come on in, you know, it's happened.<sup>83</sup>

[Usually] it's like, do you want to come have a drink with us, carrying on type of thing, but this [one] guy was like 'busy tonight?', Well, to me it's never busy. I've always just come out no matter what ... 'If you're not busy, he named a number, come up to my apartment for awhile and I wasn't hearing, you know, I'm not hearing this right ... I said disappointment [and] AIDS all in one evening, I don't think I could handle that.<sup>84</sup>

I say I'm married, so I don't go out with other [men] even if they say just supper or just talk and I say sorry I have to work. One day the man he's not living here, he's living in Ottawa and he [was] here for business and he, I [did not] ask where he came from but he look[ed] like he came from China because he [had] black hair, he asked me.<sup>85</sup>

This perception of the "loose" woman is not limited to the passengers, in fact, many male taxi drivers have been known to promulgate stories of their female colleagues' sexual exploits.

They all think cab drivers are loose. They don't so much today as they did back then. They just figured that women cab drivers are easy targets, not only other cab drivers but the passengers, and they weren't, and the other category was you're a lesbian. It all depends on who's talking. If you don't go out with the guy, you're a lesbian. If you go out with more than one guy, you're a slut.<sup>86</sup>

Some of the drivers, well they started stories around, they said that I was down, now if you can picture thin, in my white Dodge, at the Vocational Centre on Trollope Street there, that's well named, I was in that in the evening, with my roof-light on, it was from the early evening I guess, before it got dark, I was there for two or three hours I guess, I must of tore off — my feet were out the window, I was laid out in the front seat of the car screwing. I couldn't sit in the front seat of the car with a man to screw if I wanted to, and I'm going to do it right there at the Vocational School with my legs out the win-

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dow. I said, now you can't believe this ... but they spread that stuff around. They said that I screwed everything in sight and then when they figured that I didn't, then they said I was a lesbian, so you go through that stage too. And then as you get older, well, you see, now I'm too old, so then they go to the younger female taxi drivers.<sup>87</sup>

In the case of women taxi drivers, the popular focus on sexuality and promiscuity does not develop in a vacuum. In fact, the image of the automobile has a time-honoured connection to images of the sexual female. Scharff discusses the association between the automobile and sexuality. Since the automobile was first introduced as a leisure pursuit of the American upper-class there has been a strong association between the power of driving and sexual prowess. Before women took the wheel themselves, travelling as passengers in their automobiles, they were "sexually suspect" as creatures "vulnerable to the erotic power of the driver".<sup>88</sup>

The American public was titillated and alarmed by the question of what kind of relationship rich women had with their chauffeurs, servants whose sexual power as men (particularly as working-class men) complicated a job that required physical intimacy with leisure-class women.<sup>89</sup>

As the automobile became more accessible to all classes it was often categorized with movies and dance halls as a "triumvirate of hell" for American youth.<sup>90</sup> That people were using the automobile as a new space for courtship and sex was no secret.

The pleasures of motoring raged, after all, from a few minutes away from mundane responsibilities, to a stolen kiss away from prying eyes, to the utter abandonment of family and reputation in the name of love or adventure.<sup>91</sup>

Considering this time-honoured association between the auto culture and sexuality, coupled with the working-class image of sexual prowess, the fact that working-class women taxi drivers have been bestowed with an image of sexual excess is neither a coincidence nor a surprise.

There is a considerable difference, however, between the questions and curiosity expressed by so many passengers and the attitude of fellow drivers. While no amount of experience will eliminate the gender-specific comments from passengers, most women drivers find that a degree of acceptance and belonging can be achieved among the other drivers. However, it often takes many years behind the wheel before women drivers graduate from rookie status and take their place among the seasoned veterans of the industry. Women drivers describe the struggle to gain acceptance among their male colleagues.

male cab drivers, ninety percent of them never thought a female was any good for anything anyway, some of those

macho [men] ... when I first started ... working in this industry, I always thought or I thought at that time that I had [to] work twice as hard to be half as good, but I don't have that problem with that any more, because I've been out there twice as long as half of the drivers they have at Casino taxi. So I no longer have to ... work twice as hard to prove that I [am] half as good as the men.<sup>92</sup>

When I first started driving cab they said, oh, she'll never last three months, then they said she'll never last six months, and then they [have] come up, after a few years, and told me this, but it was only after I was in a few years that I got to be, sort of, one of the boys, this was after about ten years ... I only got accepted as a taxi driver by some of them after I'd been in for about twenty years. It's like when you move to a neighbourhood, especially an ethnic neighbourhood, they'll never consider you one of them until you've lived there sometimes all your life ... it's the same thing in the taxi industry.<sup>93</sup>

Again, it is important to recognize that to "be one of the boys" is crucial to being accepted as a taxi driver, rather than just someone who drives a taxi.

Women have made remarkable inroads in a number of traditionally male-dominated occupations. The results of these inroads are often the topic of interest and debate as scholars question how the presence of women has changed the arenas they have entered. In the case of women taxi drivers, this presence has not necessarily reshaped the industry in a gender-specific manner; however, the ability of women taxi drivers to stake a claim within the masculine occupational culture of taxi drivers prompts questions about how the taxi arena changes popular concepts of gender identity and experience.

The presence of veteran women drivers in the taxi industry illustrates that women can undoubtedly survive within an industry that is characterized by its image of rough and ready, street-smart men. Furthermore, the prominence of women such as Shirley Comeau, Sharon Lantz, and Linda Hyland in the initiation and organization of the Halifax Taxi Bureau Society indicates that women drivers constitute a powerful presence within the taxi community. Women drivers have become leaders in the effort to represent drivers with a united voice.

Despite their ability to adapt to their work environment and the work culture there are clearly some conflicts between the images of the feminine woman and the able taxi driver. The patriarchal attitudes of both passengers and fellow drivers frequently leave women drivers labelled as either vulnerable women, victims in a dangerous and unfriendly workplace or as morally corrupt, promiscuous vamps. While many women drivers struggle against the tides of traditional gender codes some operate within them even as they ply their trade as public chauffeurs.

In most cases, however, these conflicts are more paradoxical than real. As a social construct, the notion of gender relies on

codes of conduct, social discourse, and the construction of the "Other". Similarly, as a social construct, the masculine culture of the taxi industry can be and is adopted by women drivers. Meeting the demands of masculine ideals of independence, bravery, and camaraderie, women drivers are able to negotiate a place within the taxi culture, often identifying themselves first as taxi drivers and then, as women. Essentialist theories of gender experience that view masculine and feminine as mutually exclusive and biologically determined understate the complex, textured nature of gender culture and ignore the ability of individuals to negotiate their way into, and adapt within these cultures.

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### **Notes**

- For discussion on the gendered nature of the automobile see: Martin Wachs "Men, Women and Urban Travel: the persistence of separate spheres" in *The City and the Car*, Martin Wachs and Margaret Crawford eds. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992); Clay McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path: The Automobile and the American City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (Toronto: The Free Press, 1991).
- Donald F. Davis, "Competition's Moment: The Jitney-Bus and Corporate Capitalism in the Canadian City, 1914-1929", *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine* 18 (1989): 102-120.
- Census of Canada 1931 vol. VII Occupations and Industries, 438; Census of Canada 1941 vol. VII Occupations and Industries, 762. The 12 women drivers in the 1931 census represent .07% of Canada's total 15,400 chauffeurs and bus drivers. In 1941, the 42 female chauffeurs and taxi drivers represent .44% of the total 9596.
- Adelia Cellini "Women Drivers" *Montreal Gazette*, 6 August 1996, A6. The Montreal numbers estimate that women drivers represent 10% of the 42,000 cabs in the city; however, those in the industry estimate there are only about 40 women drivers or 1%, and only 20 of those work regularly.
- Kimberly Berry "The Last Cowboy: the community and culture of Halifax taxi drivers" (unpublished honours paper, Dalhousie University 1995), 21.
- The limited number of academic studies on taxis includes a handful of American sociological studies, almost half of which are unpublished theses and dissertations including: Charles Morris, "Some Characteristics of Occupational Choice and Adjustment in A Sample of New York City Taxi Drivers" (diss., Columbia University, 1951); James Henslin, "The Cab Driver: An Interactional Analysis of an Occupational Culture" (diss., Washington University, 1967); Richard Schlosberg, "A Descriptive Analysis of the New York City Taxi Industry" (unpublished masters thesis Hunter College, The City University of New York, 1975); Richard Schlosberg, "Taxi Driving: A Study of Occupational Tension" (diss., The City University of New York, 1980). Canadian studies have largely focussed on the regulation of the industry: Benoit-Mario Papillon, *The Taxi Industry Regulation In Canada Working Paper No. 30* (Ottawa: Economic Council of Canada, 1982); Donald F. Davis "Competition's Moment": *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine* 18(2) 1989: 102-120; Emmet Sinnott and Paul Tennant, "The Origins of Taxicab Limitation in Vancouver City (or 'Good Try Anyway, Stanley Anderson')," *B.C. Studies* 49 (Spring 1981), 40-53.
- The value of oral history has been actively debated among scholars, for a recent collection and examination of oral history see Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson *The Oral History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1998). For a discussion of how the very weaknesses inherent in oral sources can be seen as their strength see Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: SUNY Press 1991), 2.
- A total of 34 people were interviewed; 15 male taxi drivers, including one from Truro Nova Scotia, 12 women drivers, including one who worked in Lockport Nova Scotia and one limousine driver. The seven remaining interviews include non-drivers who have been involved in the industry, such as, a retired police officer and former member of the Halifax Taxi Commission, a previous owner of Yellow Cab, and an office manager.
- By 1995 most Halifax taxi offices were charging over \$80/week for office rent.
- Interview with Gordon Robb, retired Halifax taxi driver, 6 March 1995, 7.
- Ibid.*, 7.
- Interview with Matthew O'Toole, retired Halifax taxi driver, 7 March 1995.
- Philip Stenning, "Fare Game, Fare Cop: Victimization of, and Policing by Taxi Drivers in Three Canadian Cities," (unpublished report of a preliminary study jointly funded by the Research and Statistics Section, Department of Justice Canada and the University of Toronto, 1996).
- Ibid.*, 65.
- Ibid.*, 66.
- Ibid.*, 3.
- The available statistics from Statistics Canada indicate that in 1994 there were 56,000 serving police officers in Canada in 1994 and 32,000 "taxi drivers and chauffeurs" in Canada in 1991. While not an accurate comparison, these figures suggest that the homicide rate among taxi drivers is disturbingly high. Stenning, "Fare Game, Fare Cop," 3.
- Interview with Bruce Chisholm, Halifax taxi driver, 11 April 1995.
- Ibid.*, 3.
- An examination of municipal records indicates that women taxi drivers have been anomalous. The predominance of men drivers is reflected in the generally noninclusive language of the relevant material. Municipal records reveal virtually no direct references to women drivers in the Board of Control, City Council, and the Taxi Commission Minutes.
- An example of the challenges that women taxi drivers confronted during the Great Depression can be found in Winnipeg's more ample records. In 1932 the Transportation Employee's Association expressed its concern over advertising by several large taxicab firms for women drivers. There concerns were echoed by the Board of Police Commissioners, the Sub-Committee on Taxicabs, the Committee on Health and a bylaw was created which effectively prohibited the licensing of women taxi drivers. Winnipeg City Archives and Records Centre, Committee on Health, City Council, File 1061.
- NAC, RG 28, Dept of Munitions and Supply, War Industries Control Board, vol. 268, File 196-17-1, George S. Gray, Transit Controller, to Henry Borden, Coordinator of Controls, Oct. 13, 1942.
- H.C.R.L. Halifax City Council Minutes 1942-1943, 15 October 1942, 205.
- Interview with Mr. David "Darcy" MacInnes, Halifax taxi driver, 11 March 1995. Mr. MacInnes has since passed away.
- Donald F. Davis and Barbara Lorenzkowski, "A Platform for Gender Tensions: Women Working and Riding on Canadian Urban Public Transit in the 1940s", *The Canadian Historical Review*, 79 (1998): 431-465.
- Ruth Roach Pierson *"They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto, 1986) 22.
- H.C.R.L. Halifax City Council Minutes, 17 April 1947, 273.
- H.C.R.L., Halifax City Council Minutes, October 16, 1947, 703.
- H.C.C.O., Taxi Commission files, Special Committee on Taxis, 13 November 1969, 5 and 6; Halifax City Clerks Office, Taxi Commission files, Council Min-

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- utes 12 November 1970, 650; Halifax City Clerks Office, Taxi Commission files, Taxi Commission Minutes 4 February 1971, 1 and 3.
30. Mary Sheppard, 1968; Shirley Comeau, 1973; Mary Mackay, 1974; Sharon Cormier, 1975; Sharon Lantz and Annie Reddick-Simmonds, also in the "early 1970s".
  31. Halifax City Clerks Office (H.C.C.O.), Taxi Commission Files 1971, submission from the Taxi Association dated February 4 1971, 3.
  32. H.C.R.L., Halifax City Council Minutes 1957, 14 March 1957, 204.
  33. "Union Taxi: 40 cab drivers succeed in bucking the system," *The 4th Estate*, 11 February 1976, 4.
  34. Glenna Forgeron recently retired from Casino Taxi in 1997.
  35. The Halifax Taxi Union was unable to obtain union recognition in 1975 because the Labour Relations Board determined that drivers were not employees and, therefore, ineligible to vote. See H.C.C.O., Taxi Commission files, minutes from public meeting held 17 May 1976.
  36. H.C.C.O., Taxi Commission Files, 17 May 1976 to 9 June 1976.
  37. Provincial Archives of Nova Scotia (P.A.N.S.), *The Rooflight*, HD 5634 A1 R776, vol.1 (2): 3; vol. 1(3): 2.
  38. P.A.N.S., HD 5634 A1 R776, *The Rooflight*, see for example, vol. 1(2): 2 and 3; vol. 1(3): 1.
  39. P.A.N.S., HD 5634 A1 R776, *The Rooflight*, vol.1(2): 2 and 3.
  40. P.A.N.S., *The Rooflight* vol 1(3): 1.
  41. Interview with Mary Sheppard, Halifax taxi driver, 16 January 1996, 11.
  42. Interview with Marilyn "Ginger" Protonentis, Halifax taxi driver, 13 February 1996, 6-7.
  43. Interview with Shirley Comeau, Halifax taxi driver, 23 October 1995, 30.
  44. Interview with Sharon Cormier, taxi driver, Halifax 24 January 1996, 8.
  45. Interview with Sharon Lantz, Halifax taxi driver, 20 February 1996, 5.
  46. Interview with Debbie Awalt, former Halifax taxi driver, 19 November 1996, 21.
  47. Jeanette O'Connell "Yellow Cab Blues" *Women: A Journal of Liberation*, 4(2) 1975: 52-55.
  48. Similar attitudes toward the women drivers who are the victims of rape can be seen in "Capitalism at work" *Kinesis* August 1979, 16.
  49. Cynthia Boyd "'Just like one of the Boys': Tactics of Women Taxi Drivers" Pauline Greenhill and Diane Tye eds. *Undisciplined Women: Tradition and Culture in Canada*, (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1997) 213-222.
  50. *Ibid.*, 7.
  51. Interview with Sheppard.
  52. *Ibid.*, 15.
  53. *Ibid.*, 14.
  54. Interview with Awalt.
  55. Interview with Lantz.
  56. *Ibid.*, 7.
  57. Interview with Sheppard.
  58. *Ibid.*, 1.
  59. Interview with Annie Reddick-Simmonds, retired Halifax taxi driver, 17 February 1997, 16-17.
  60. Interview with Protonentis.
  61. Interview with Sheppard.
  62. Interview with Mary MacKay, retired Halifax taxi driver, 5 February 1996, 14.
  63. *Ibid.*, 12.
  64. Interview with Sheppard.
  65. Interview with Thu Tran, Halifax taxi driver, 14 February 1997, 4.
  66. Interview with Reddick-Simmonds.
  67. Interview with Lantz.
  68. Interview with Comeau.
  69. *Ibid.*, 7-8.
  70. Interview with Lantz.
  71. *Ibid.*, 21-23.
  72. Interview with MacKay.
  73. Davis, "Competition's Moment" 112.
  74. "Labyris makes women's safety its business" *Kinesis* February 1982, 7.
  75. Tseng Li-Ling, "Women Can Hack It" *Free China Review* June 1988, 14.
  76. "Jordan's first female taxi driver says beware man in trunk" *Mail Star* 19 February 1997, B6.
  77. Interview with Linda Hyland, Halifax taxi driver, 21 June 1996, 25.
  78. *Ibid.*, 25-26.
  79. *Ibid.*, 10.
  80. Interview with Cormier.
  81. Interview with Comeau.
  82. Interview with Protonentis.
  83. Interview with Sheppard.
  84. Interview with Protonentis.
  85. Interview with Tran.
  86. Interview with Sheppard.
  87. Interview with Comeau.
  88. Scharff, *Taking the Wheel*, 20.
  89. *Ibid.*, 20.
  90. *Ibid.*, 138.
  91. *Ibid.* 138.
  92. Interview with MacKay.
  93. Interview with Comeau.