

Produce and Protection: Covent Garden Market, the Socioeconomic Elite, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843–1915

Sean Gouglas

Volume 25, Number 1, October 1996

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1016093ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1016093ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (print)

1918-5138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Gouglas, S. (1996). Produce and Protection: Covent Garden Market, the Socioeconomic Elite, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843–1915. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 25(1), 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1016093ar>

Article abstract

This article evaluates the historical significance of the farmers' market in London, Ontario, the centre-piece of the city's booster activity. The author uses a systematic analysis of mercantile credit reports, city directories, and assessment rolls, combined with anecdotal evidence from local newspapers, diaries, and council records. The paper argues that Covent Garden Market initiated and entrenched economic and social patterns of development that privileged a minority of the city's merchants. Capitalizing on their initial advantage of location, these merchants and councillors maintained their hold on the market's monopoly of place by rigorously enforcing and tightening market regulations, maintaining a constant police presence, and petitioning the town for a rigid enforcement of the market by-laws. The market enhanced the economic influence of this elite under the pretense of protecting the general populace from unscrupulous vendors. The market proved a social and economic arena, a centre of urban and rural relations, outside of which economic failure proved a real possibility.

Produce and Protection: Covent Garden Market, the Socioeconomic Elite, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843–1915¹

Sean Gouglas

Abstract:

This article evaluates the historical significance of the farmers' market in London, Ontario, the centre-piece of the city's booster activity. The author uses a systematic analysis of mercantile credit reports, city directories, and assessment rolls, combined with anecdotal evidence from local newspapers, diaries, and council records. The paper argues that Covent Garden Market initiated and entrenched economic and social patterns of development that privileged a minority of the city's merchants. Capitalizing on their initial advantage of location, these merchants and councillors maintained their hold on the market's monopoly of place by rigorously enforcing and tightening market regulations, maintaining a constant police presence, and petitioning the town for a rigid enforcement of the market by-laws. The market enhanced the economic influence of this elite under the pretense of protecting the general populace from unscrupulous vendors. The market proved a social and economic arena, a centre of urban and rural relations, outside of which economic failure proved a real possibility.

Résumé

Le présent article évalue l'importance historique du marché public, pivot de l'activité en ébullition de la ville de London (Ontario). Pour ce faire, l'auteur fait une analyse systématique des rapports de solvabilité commerciale, des annuaires de la ville et des rôles d'évaluation. Cette analyse se base également sur des témoignages anecdotiques tirés des journaux locaux, de journaux personnels et des dossiers du conseil de ville. Le document soutient que le marché de Covent Garden a initié et implanté des modèles de développement économique et social qui privilégiaient une minorité de marchands de la ville. Tirant profit de l'avantage initial que leur procurait l'emplacement qu'ils occupaient au marché, ces marchands y ont conservé, grâce à l'aide de conseillers municipaux, le monopole de l'espace. À cette fin, ils ont fait rigoureusement appliquer et renforcer les règlements régissant le marché; ils ont également demandé à la ville d'assurer une constante présence policière au marché et d'appliquer systématiquement les arrêtés municipaux s'y rapportant. Prétendant qu'elle cherchait à protéger la population de vendeurs peu scrupuleux, cette élite s'est servie du marché pour accroître son influence économique. Le marché s'est avéré une scène sociale et économique, un centre de relations urbaines et rurales à l'extérieur duquel la faillite économique était une réelle menace.

Within the arena of a 19th century public market, country and town collided and interacted. The market served as a spatial focus for these complementary activities. In 1835, to aid the economic development of the Western District, the government of Upper Canada granted London the right to such a market. In implementing the rules and regulations that governed this fair, the town council sought the creation of a safe, fair trading centre around which an economically strong, vibrant regional centre would grow. These regulations governed all aspects of the buying and selling of farm produce and created a complex social and economic system that stimulated development of the city's merchant community. Farmers and patrons solidified this intricate system when they combined market-centred commerce with other activities, such as buying new shoes, stocking up on dry goods, eating at local restaurants, fixing broken equipment, or financing mortgages. Covent Garden, a centre for business and retail transaction, conjoined urban and rural life.² The first two sections of this study will describe the rhythms and routines of country and town that market exchange harmonized.

Contrary to the booster rhetoric of London's ruling elite, the economic stimulus that resulted from these transactions did not benefit the majority of the city's merchants. Early town fathers intentionally implemented a centralizing process that concentrated economic exchange within one city block. Other municipal and regional developments, like the electrified street railway, downtown sidewalks and street lighting, and the Great Western Railway, also centralized economic activity, but the market house, a beacon of Victorian notions of fair and controlled commerce, best represented the authority vested in London's civic and mercantile elite. The market regulations served to enhance the economic power of this elite under the pretense of protecting the general populace from a variety of unscrupulous vendors. Thomas Matthews has argued that Upper Canadian market regulations "rationalized economic activity, concentrated trade and commerce in the town centres, and generally helped to promote the development strategy supported by the civic elite."³ This privileged group, Matthews argued, consisting of merchants and manufacturers turned councillors, centralized the buying and selling of produce, concentrating it in a small downtown location. In London, this monopoly of place, that prevented the sale of fruit, vegetables, and meat anywhere else in the city, served to promote the initial advantages of location held by a minority of the town's merchants. By controlling rural-urban exchange within the market place, town fathers consolidated their advantage. An examination of London's assessment rolls, city directories, and mercantile agency reports indicate that merchants in and around the market square survived longer, had greater access to credit, were more likely to be involved in large-item manufacturing endeavours, and possessed a higher assessed value than businesses located away from the market, even if only on the opposite side of the block.⁴ Through the strict regulation of vending

Covent Garden Market, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843–1915

activities, the maintenance of a police presence on the square in the form of the market clerk, and regular petitions to town and city councils, the market became an instrument by which the local socioeconomic elite maintained a conspicuous presence and reaped the benefits of urban growth.

The Market

The first farmers' market in London operated on the courthouse square. The square proved insufficient for the town's growing needs and so council moved the market to its present location in 1843 (Figure 1).⁵ In August 1844, the Board of Police, hoping to facilitate the development of the New Survey in the eastern section of London, moved the market out of the city centre.⁶ The New Survey Market might have remained London's only market except for the dissatisfaction of merchants located near the old site. Disturbed by the loss of pedestrian traffic that normally flowed in front of their own businesses, thirteen individuals donated land to the town for the construction of a new market building.⁷ After some legal rumblings, two official markets operated in London between 1846 and 1848, but by 1848, council restored the monopoly of the downtown site, making Covent Garden the official farmers' market.

In 1853, the town council commissioned the construction of an impressive new structure. Covent Garden Market House, a one-and-one-half story building made of white brick, rested in the middle of a block bounded by Dundas, Richmond, Talbot, and King streets (Figure 2). The bell-tower that rang the opening and closing of the market day crowned one of two doorways that opened onto the main floor of the market. Eighteen butcher stalls filled the ground level of the building. Many different vendors occupied the stalls in the 1840s and 50s, but by the end of the century five or six families rented all of the stalls. Beef, pork, lamb, and poultry hung from the rafters to the floor and dominated both sight and smell. Butchers stored unsold produce in dry compartments located above the first floor.⁸ The basement of the market building had 19 stalls, occupied principally by fruit and vegetable dealers. Some butchers, who required cooler storage facilities, relocated to basement stalls. Scattered among the produce tenants were a few lunch counters that served the workers and clients which came to the market each day.

Changes to the physical layout of the market occurred quite regularly. In the 1850s, council built the fish market building, a small brick structure located to the east of the market house. It had four stalls and two archways that ran through the building, giving access to the market square. On average, three fish retailers occupied the building, offering a wide variety of fish, including lake trout, white fish, pike, mullet, various types of bass, and numerous kinds of pickled fish.⁹ It was demolished in 1909 and replaced by an auctioneer's corner.¹⁰ The weigh-scales building, located on the north-east corner of Talbot and King Street, possessed two sets of scales, one for very large items like hay and wood, and another for smaller items. On a Saturday night, the Market Bazaar, situated between the Fish

Market and the Market House, beckoned the citizenry.¹¹ Vendors rented space from the city and modeled the stalls to their own needs. The individualized stalls created a carnival atmosphere hosting a wide variety of demonstrations and sales. In 1902, council ordered the stalls demolished to make way for the Egg, Butter, and Poultry building, which was, in turn, torn down in 1917 to make way for the Market Gardeners' Pavilion.¹²

The market vendors adapted to the changing seasons in order to maintain pedestrian traffic year-round. Farmers and market gardeners could deliver a variety of fruits and vegetables each season at the market by storing crops in cellars. Hardy produce like potatoes, turnips, beets, carrots, and apples survived the cold weather in storage and parsnips could survive in the ground to be harvested after winter. By using the stored produce of the local agricultural community, importing some goods, selling beef, poultry, and pork products, and vending hay and firewood, the market was able to maintain clientele throughout the year. Covent Garden was especially active during the holiday season, as noted by the London Free Press: "the Market House has always been a gala spot at Christmas with its display of meats of all kinds, big porkers and sides of beef, not to mention the annual display of turkeys and geese and ducks to weigh down holiday tables."¹³

The market not only provided a stable source of fresh produce for the city, it also fulfilled a social and political function for the

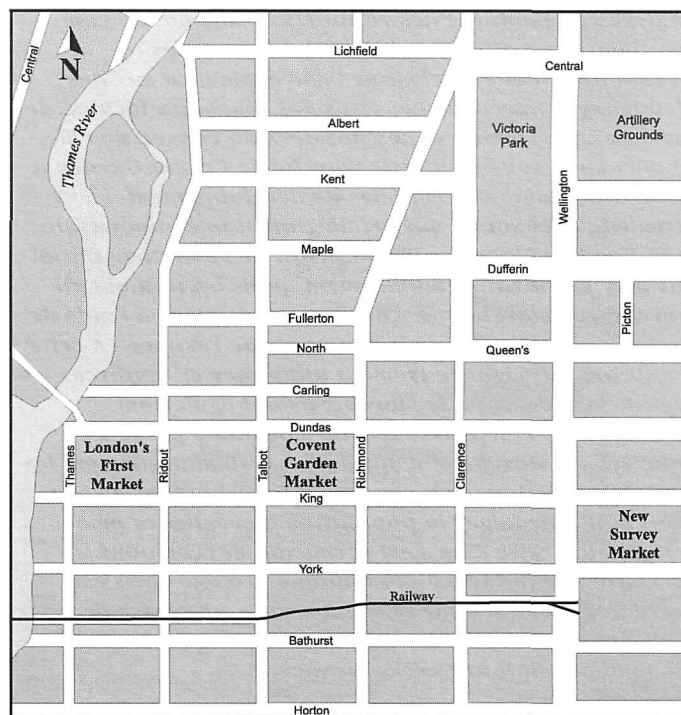


Figure 1: Map of London, Ontario, adapted from the 1888 Fire Insurance Plan, showing the location of the various farmers' markets.



Figure 2: Canadian artist Paul Peel (1860-1891) painted Covent Garden Market in 1883. The market house, located on the right, was built in 1853. The belltower crowned one of two arches that opened onto the square. On market days, farmers from the region sold their fruits and vegetables from wagons on the square, while permanent vendors conducted business from leased stalls in one of the market buildings. Note the entrance to the basement level stalls below the steps of the main entrance. Covent Garden was rarely as tranquil as Peel depicted here [Covent Garden Market, London, Ontario (1883), oil on canvas, 69.9 x 93.9 cm. London Regional Art and Historical Museums. Gift to the City of London by Mrs. Marjorie Barlow, London, 1969].

agricultural community. Although the trip to London could be “tedious and long ... over bad roads, long distances, [with] great loads of produce being drawn by horses or oxen,”¹⁴ a day at Covent Garden helped alleviate the stressful routines of farming. The public square and surrounding amenities provided an opportunity to catch up on local news, vote in municipal elections, or see new farming techniques demonstrated on the square. Additionally, a farmer who came to market could arrange high school examinations for his or her children, visit sick friends in the hospital, see the departure and arrival of friends and relatives at the train station, purchase subscriptions to the local newspaper, run errands for sick friends, oversee the installation of the new officers at the London Division Grange,

or, once a year, visit the Western Fair to see the newest in agricultural implements, prize livestock, and new produce.¹⁵

On Saturday nights, the market illuminated the downtown and served as a social hub for the region. Farmers, merchants and the general populace witnessed a variety of political enthusiasts, boisterous auctioneers, and vendors of dubious wares.¹⁶ The market also served as a soapbox for the pious. It was not uncommon to see “three or four little religious sects holding forth at once, on a Saturday night, occasionally merging into debate when the spokesmen fe[lt] the impulse of combat.”¹⁷ Alternatively, the Salvation Army Band and the Ladies Choir performed every Saturday night before and after their one hour

Covent Garden Market, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843–1915

open air service on the square. Public ceremonies included an assortment of secular events. In March 1843, Lawrence Lawra-son, chairman of the elections committee, conducted the general elections for the Board of Police and the local magistrates on the market square. Whether attending a free holiday festival, watching a military demonstration, or participating in Saturday night festivities, the urban and rural communities came to view the market as more than simply a place for business and pleasure; it was a regional commercial centre around which stretched economic services commonly associated with a rising urban community. More than helping to shape 'the forest city,' the market fashioned a connection between country and city life. Indeed, while the market was an urban institution, it transcended such a localized description.¹⁸

The Cycles of Commerce

The market created a network of social and economic relations that tied rural and urban communities together. The activities that shaped this development began before dawn on small farms around the city:

long processions of heavily laden wagons could be seen on the road to London; the journey was broken by rest for man and beast at the roadside inns which were found at intervals on the way. Long after midnight and in early mornings, the crack of the whip and the voice of the driver could be heard urging on their horses.¹⁹

A wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and meats could be found bundled, bagged and boxed within these wagons. The farmers in the London area brought, among other things, hay, corn, potatoes, squash, apples, berries, beef, pork, poultry, and eggs to sell at market either in stalls rented monthly or from spaces on the open square rented daily.²⁰ Throughout the square, vendors displayed with care their produce on poles or their home-crafts from hampers. Young boys and girls tried to peddle a new litter of puppies or a basket of freshly picked lilies and members of the aboriginal community sold their work.²¹ The arrival of these country people created a hive of activity that lasted from dawn until the early afternoon (Figure 3). By the turn of the century, an average of four thousand people wandered amongst the stalls, tables, buildings and neighbouring businesses each day.²²

An intricate, mutually dependent relationship developed between farmers, patrons, the peripheral businesses, and the local financial institutions. Farmers that came to London to sell their produce also came to buy. This pattern exists in the diary of James Glenn, a Westminster Township farmer from 1866 to 1924. Each trip to London, Glenn sold his produce on the market square and then purchased goods he needed for the farm. In 1871, he recorded that he "went to London. Sold eggs 42¢. Bought corn 38½¢, drygoods 65¢, hardware 48¢, groceries \$1.00, and sugar 80¢."²³ On a trip to London in December of 1898, Glenn "sold chickens \$2.40, eggs \$1.83. Bought Whiskey drum 95¢, shoes mending 25¢, drugs 5¢, dry goods for Maria

\$2.00, groceries 78¢."²⁴ This cycle continued until the last year of his life, at the age of seventy-eight: "Took to London twenty-three dozen and nine eggs got \$8.64. Expenses \$2.40."²⁵ These trips occurred at least once a week, more often in early autumn during the harvest.

When purchasing goods and services, farmers rarely strayed from shops located on the market square or facing streetscapes. For example, after selling eggs and potatoes on the market one day in 1855, John Beach, a farmer from Westminster Township, purchased a pair of glasses from Raymond and Rowland, a hatter and furrier located across the market on Dundas Street.²⁶ Another day in the same year, Beach purchased £22 5s worth of candles, port wine, brooms, allspice, sugar, and mustard from A. G. and J. B. Smyth, a general store across the market also on Dundas.²⁷ Wesley Charlton, another local farmer, bought some wire, a rake, and a pitchfork from Westman's Hardware located at 111 Dundas Street after he sold a load of oats. In other journal entries, Charlton mentioned shopping at Kingsmills Dry Goods, Mara's Fabrics, J. A. Brownlee's Hardware, William Wyatt and Sons' Stoves, and William Robson's Produce.²⁸ These stores all conducted business within sight of Covent Garden. Almost all goods and services could be purchased from stores that conducted business in and around the market: the Darches on Talbot provided saddles and harnesses for the numerous horses that journeyed to and from market; John Campbell's shop on Dundas sold carriages and wagons; hardware and dry good stores were plentiful; clothing and shoe stores dotted the streetscapes around the market, and numerous hotels and taverns provided travelers, market-goers, and farmers with sustenance and lodging. In turn, the merchants purchased produce for their own domestic consumption from the same farmers, replenishing the supplies of the local taverns, restaurants, and hotels. A system of barter between farmer and merchant emphasized mutual dependence. Finley Perrin, a London area farmer, stated that "most trade was by barter, the farmer receiving tea and sugar and salt and other commodities in exchange for his own products...[with] little money passing on either side."²⁹

The commercial success of businesses surrounding Covent Garden became inextricably entwined with the economic prosperity of the market. From occasional events like J. A. Brownlee's hardware store on Talbot Street winning the tender to fix the market roof, to daily events like the exchange of currency for produce, a mutual dependence between farmers, patrons and local businesses evolved.³⁰ In 1877, the *London Weekly Free Press* noted the economic improvement in the general community when sales at the market improved:

The weather is most delightful for maturing the fall crops of roots and fruits and for outside fall work generally. The receipts of grains and other classes of produce have come forward more liberally the past week—all of which met with good demand and fair prices...Business of all kinds is improv-

Covent Garden Market, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843–1915



Figure 3: The long-exposure time required for this photograph, circa 1905, created the illusion of motion as market patrons walked in and amongst the farmers' wagons. The small peaked roof of the fish market building is visible just in front of the market house on the left side of the picture. Courtesy of the J. J. Talman Regional Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, The University of Western Ontario.

ing and a more active and healthier spirit is pervading all departments of trade.³¹

Market patrons, retailers, wholesalers, and local merchants associated the agricultural prosperity of Covent Garden with the general prosperity of London. The developing agricultural community expanded to serve the growing victual needs of the city.³²

The revenues generated by these agricultural and mercantile endeavours attracted numerous financial institutions to the market area. Throughout the 19th century, banks solicited the

investments of all market patrons and producers. In the 1830s and 40s, the original banking centre in London appeared on Ridout Street opposite the courthouse square, the site of London's first market. When the market relocated to its present site, the financial centre moved with it. Farmers combined the buying and selling of produce and merchandise with trips to financial institutions to pay off mortgages and deposit savings. Charlton, in April 1893, noted:

Ed and I went to London. Sold wheat to Saurely [?] for \$1.10 = \$14.35. Paid \$14.35 on Darch [a saddler on Dundas Street]



Figure 4: *G. F. Morris Butchers, located inside the market house, displayed a wide variety of meats obtained from local farmers. This day's selection came mostly from Westminster Township, including R. Pincombe's prize 2150 pound steer. Originally, many different individuals leased the eighteen stalls located on the ground level of the building, but by 1890 only five or six businesses controlled the stalls. Courtesy of the Regional Collection, U.W.O.*

account. \$5.00 still due. Sold 940 lbs oats to Bilton[?] for \$1.10 = \$10.34. Paid interest on mortgage to date \$36.50. to Ontario Loan [and Debenture Society, located on market square]. Refusal to take any principal on the \$600.00 mortgage without six months notice. Gave six months notice to pay the whole amount.³³

By the early 1920s, the management of the Molson's Bank, which fronted onto Dundas Street, thought the market to be such an important source of clientele that they opened a rear entrance onto Covent Garden market.³⁴ Financial institutions realized the opportunity for mortgages and savings that farmers and patrons presented: "the business of the farmer is appreci-

ated today, it is deliberately sought and some of the busiest bank branches in the city are those which are about the square."³⁵

Assessing Success

Out of the daily disarray created by the buying and selling of produce came long-term stability and growth in the surrounding mercantile businesses. The initial and cumulative advantage of proximity to the downtown core, which centred on Covent Garden Market, created a core of businesses that possessed economic advantages over other London stores.³⁶ The Mercantile Agency Credit Reports illustrated a pattern of business longevity and greater minimum pecuniary strength for businesses located within one block of the market over others in the rest of

Covent Garden Market, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843–1915

the city.³⁷ Clearly, proximity to the market square mattered. For example, seven of the 14 carriage, saddler, and harness manufacturers that existed in 1880 within one block of the market were still in business after 35 years compared to only one of the nine manufacturers that worked away from the market. In total, carriage, saddler, and harness manufacturers that operated within one block of the market averaged an 18 percent higher five-year survival rate than their competitors in the rest of the city between 1865 and 1915 (Figure 6). In addition to increased longevity, near-market businesses had access to greater amounts of credit. In 1880, businesses close to the market averaged a minimum pecuniary strength of \$3,357 compared to only \$1,111 for the manufacturers that conducted business away from the market; less than one third of their rivals (Figure 7). This increased monetary assessment allowed stores near the market greater access to credit.³⁸

Similar patterns of business longevity and a greater minimum pecuniary strength for near-market businesses existed for other

types of companies. For example, of the 12 stove, tin, and hardware stores that appeared in the mercantile agency reports in 1880 and operated within one block of the market, ten remained in business five years later. In contrast, only two of ten similar stores that operated more than a block from the market remained in business after the same time. Between 1865 and 1915, stove, tin, and hardware stores that operated within one block of Covent Garden averaged a 29 percent higher five-year survival rate (Figure 8). Furthermore, these same near-market stores possessed an average minimum pecuniary strength of \$16 900, thirteen thousand more than their away-from-market competitors (Figure 7). Locating their business near the market served to enhance shoe and boot stores as well. Between 1865 and 1915, stores specializing in footwear that conducted business near the market averaged a 16 percent higher five-year survival rate compared to their competition (Figure 9). Similarly, shoe and boot stores possessed an average minimum pecuniary strength nine times higher than their non-market peers (Figure 7).³⁹



Figure 5: Businesses on the Talbot streetscape, located in the background, benefitted immensely from their close proximity to the market. While one farmer sold their produce on the square, a partner could easily cross the street to O'Dell & Bennett's hardware store or the Darch's harness and carriage shop. Jane Darch felt so confident in the success that the market brought her business that, in 1903, she commissioned London's first 'skyscraper,' the six-story structure pictured here, circa 1905. Courtesy of the Regional Collection, U.W.O.

An even more telling example of the market's impact on business success can be found in an examination of the drygoods stores that appear in the Mercantile Agency Report for 1880. Of the 21 stores that appeared in this review, 20 conducted business within one block of Covent Garden. Some of these companies had an extraordinary lifespan. One example is Robinson, Little & Co. which, in one form or another, conducted business near the market for over 50 years. This company began with a minimum pecuniary strength of only \$2,000, but by 1915 had accumulated a minimum pecuniary strength of over \$750,000 and had branched into other cities.⁴⁰

The city's street directories and assessment rolls from 1881 to 1915 indicated that the pattern of success for near-market businesses was even more localized than that suggested by the Mercantile Agency records. For the remainder of this study, businesses classified as 'On Market Square' included the streetscapes bounded by Dundas, Richmond, King, and Talbot Streets. The buildings classified as 'In Line of Vision of Market' comprised the streetscapes that faced the market square. The buildings classified as 'Away from Market' included the streetscapes on the west side of Ridout Street and the east side of Clarence Street between Dundas and King and the north side of North Street and the south side of York Street between Richmond and Talbot (Figure 10).⁴¹ The economic stimulus of the market did not penetrate much beyond the facing streetscapes. Farmers and market patrons generally purchased goods from stores only visible from the market square. These fronting stores survived longer, possessed a higher assessed value, and participated in larger and more 'capital-intense' manufacturing endeavours than businesses located on adjacent blocks.

The centralization of the farmers' market helped businesses located 'On Market Square' and 'In Line of Vision of the Market' to survive much longer than those 'Away from Market'. For example, 65 percent of the businesses located on the market square in 1885 remained in operation after five years, compared to only 16 percent of those businesses located away from the market (Figure 11). Similarly, in 1905, shops located 'In Line of Vision of Market' had a 61 percent likelihood of remaining in business compared to only a 23 percent chance for those located farther afield. Overall, between 1881 and 1915, shops close to the market had a cumulative 36 percent greater chance of remaining in business for five years as compared to those 'Away from Market'. Covent Garden provided a consistent flow of pedestrians to the surrounding businesses, aiding their longevity.⁴²

In addition to surviving longer than those businesses away from the market, the average and total assessed value for shops located 'On Market Square' and 'In Line of Vision of Market' were substantially higher than their 'Away from Market' counterparts (Figures 12 and 13). For example, the average assessed value of a business on the market square in 1865 was approximately \$891, compared to only \$256 for the average business 'Away from Market'. The total assessed value for all the businesses 'In Line of Vision of Market' in the same year was approximately \$100,850, compared to only \$14,400 for businesses away from the

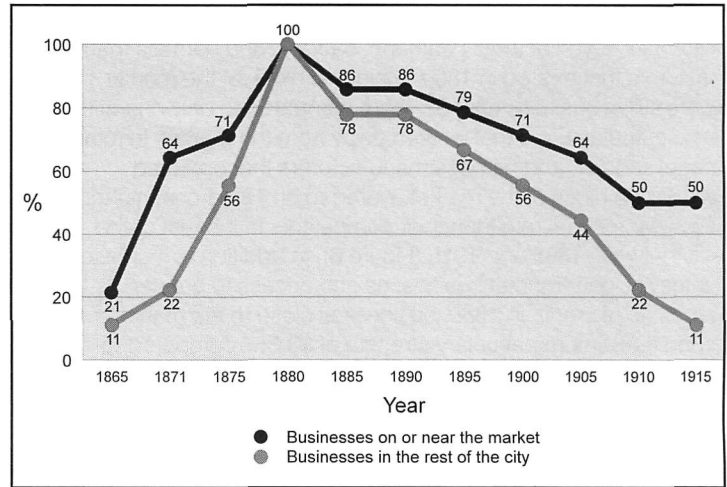


Figure 6: Percentage of Carriage, Saddler, and Harness Stores Remaining in Business from 1865 to 1915 (Base Year 1880)

Source: Dun & Wiman Mercantile Agency Reference Book 1865–1915 and London Street Directories 1865–1915

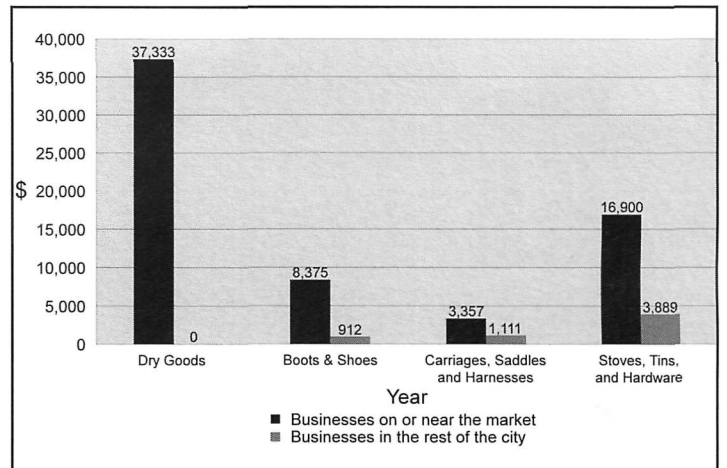


Figure 7: Average Pecuniary Strength of Business Based on Type and Proximity to Market, 1880

Source: Dun & Wiman Mercantile Agency Reference Book 1865–1915 and London Street Directories 1865–1915

market. Between 1861 and 1915, the typical business located on the market or facing the market possessed a cumulative average assessed value more than three times the assessed value of the average shop located away from the market. The total average assessed value for the businesses either on the market or in sight of the market was almost six times that of the businesses located farther away. The market provided an initial and cumulative advantage to peripheral businesses.⁴³

Covent Garden Market, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843–1915

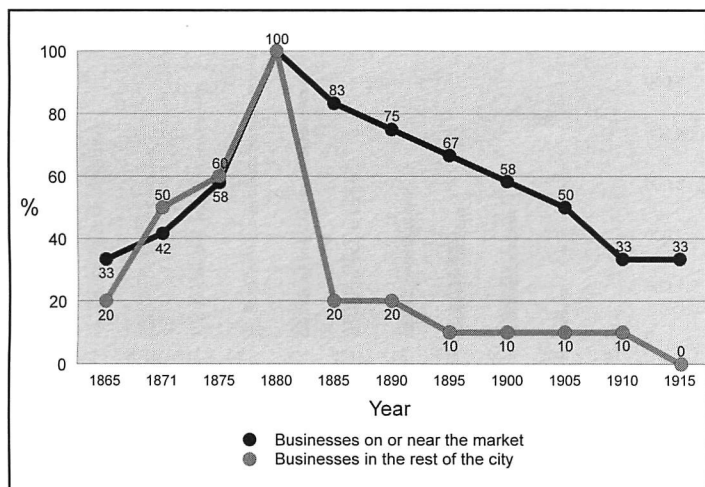


Figure 8: Percentage of Stove, Tin, and Hardware Stores Remaining in Business from 1865 to 1915 (Base Year 1880)

Source: Dun & Wiman Mercantile Agency Reference Book 1865–1915 and London Street Directories 1865–1915

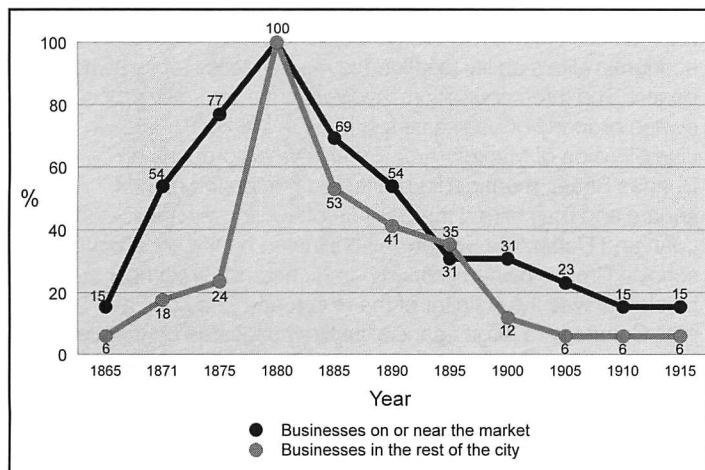


Figure 9: Percentage of Shoe and Boot Stores Remaining in Business from 1865 to 1915 (Base Year 1880)

Source: Dun & Wiman Mercantile Agency Reference Book 1865–1915 and London Street Directories 1865–1915

As Covent Garden elevated the assessed value of surrounding properties with a corresponding increase in municipal taxes, the market economy limited ill-conceived or struggling businesses from operating near the market. Although small-item manufacturing and retail stores comprised the majority of operations in the entire study area, businesses that appeared 'On Market Square' and 'In Line of Vision of Market' contained almost all of the financial, professional, and large-item retail and manufacturing enterprises (Figure 14).⁴⁴ These businesses

appreciated the opportunity created by the mass of people that attended the market. For example, when construction of the Masonic Temple began, the builders and backers petitioned the city council with a \$3500 bond for the privilege of having the new building face the market square instead of King or Richmond Street.⁴⁵ The market established a commercially viable centre for business that attracted large companies to the area and enticed others to expand their existing operations. Large-item manufacturing companies like Jane Darch's Harness and Saddle Company grew with confidence, building London's first skyscraper, a six-story building on Talbot Street in 1903, directly across from the market.

In contrast, residences, restaurants, and small service-oriented endeavours occupied buildings that appeared on streets 'Away from Market'. The economic benefits of Covent Garden, so apparent in the streetscapes facing the market, could not penetrate beyond the fronting businesses and so did not aid the majority of London shopkeepers. The stores away from the market assumed a supporting role, developing ancillary services to accommodate the flow of people and product. For example, a number of liveries appeared in the 'Away from Market' area, capitalizing on the need to shelter the horses that came to market each day.⁴⁶ On Ridout Street, opposite the Courthouse, a number of residential dwellings appeared that helped accommodate the workers, professionals, retailers, and merchants that came to market.

Protecting the Prize

The relationships between farmer, market patron, business, and bank created a small, commercially viable and financially stable core that benefited London's socioeconomic elite. Certainly, the 13 individuals who donated land to the town in 1846 for the creation of Covent Garden Market realized the immense opportunity a public market would provide for the businesses in its immediate vicinity. Most of these individuals, including John Darch, Elizabeth Coombs, and Benjamin Dixon, owned other lands and businesses in the immediate vicinity of the Covent Garden.⁴⁷ In ceding land to the town to create a farmers' market, they ensured a constant flow of pedestrian traffic in front of their stores. A heavy handed program of market regulation and enforcement instigated by the city's socioeconomic elite enhanced the initial advantage of location.

The individuals comprising this favoured group consisted mostly of successful merchants and manufacturers who also sat on the municipal council, Chamber of Commerce, and Board of Trade. The majority of these men owned businesses near the market and benefited personally from its presence. For example, George Goodhue and John Balkwill, early presidents of the village council, owned land or operated businesses in the immediate vicinity of the Market, as did Edward Adams, mayor of the town from 1852–53. Many mayors of London also owned property close to the market, including William McBride (1859), John Cambell (1872, 1880–81), Andrew McCormick (1873) who also donated land to the city for the creation of the market, and James Cowan (1887–1888).⁴⁸ The main interest group for local

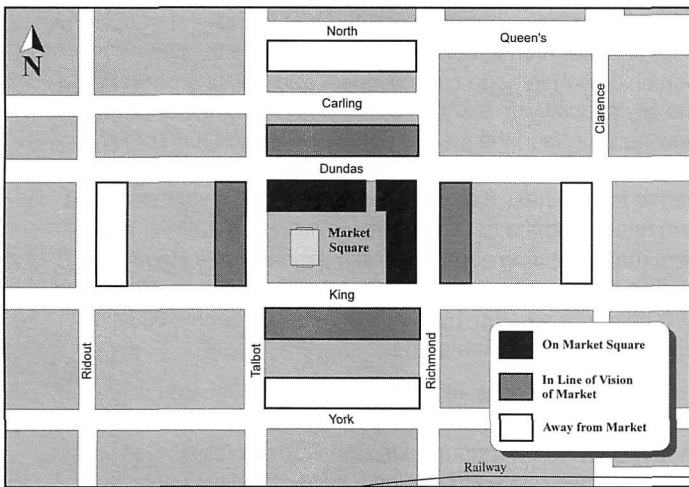


Figure 10: The businesses for this comparative study are grouped according to their proximity to Covent Garden. The black sections represent shops located 'On Market Square', the grey sections represent shops 'In Line of Vision of Market', and the white sections represent shops located 'Away from Market'.

Source: London Street Directories 1860–1915 and Assessment Rolls for the City of London 1861–1915.

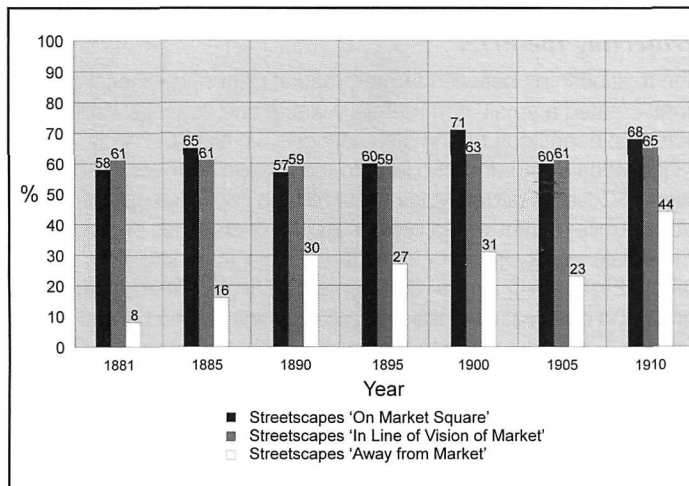


Figure 11: Percentage of Businesses that Remained in Operation after Five Years within Study Area by Proximity to Market, 1881–1910

Source: Assessment Rolls for the City of London 1861–1915 and London Street Directories 1865–1915

business, the Chamber of Commerce, met on market square above the arcade near the hardware store of former mayor James Cowan.⁴⁹ In fact, most of the members responsible for the creation of the Chamber in 1875, such as A. Powell, E. Hyman, George Robinson, and John Marshall, possessed property and businesses near Covent Garden.

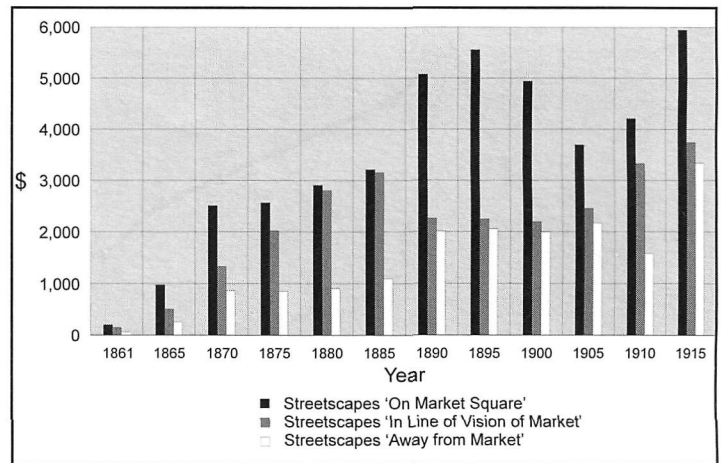


Figure 12: Average Assessed Value of Streets within Study Area by Proximity to Market, 1861–1915

Source: Assessment Rolls for the City of London 1861–1915 and London Street Directories 1865–1915

The ties between council, merchants, and the market were direct and self-promoting. The successful 110-foot expansion of the market in 1879 provided an excellent example of the socio-economic elite's ability to influence market policy for its own benefit. The three councillors involved in the approval process owned property or businesses either 'On Market Square' or 'In Line of Vision of Market': A. S. Emery owned property on Dundas Street, managed a brokerage firm on the market square and maintained the position of auditor with the Ontario Loan and Debenture Society, also situated on the square; Verschoyle Cronyn owned property on Richmond Street near the block and was the solicitor of the Huron and Erie Loan and Savings Company, a large financial institution located on the block; and finally, George G. Magee was Chairman of the Board of Finance and owned property on Talbot Street near the market.⁵⁰ These men associated closely the growth of the market with their own economic interests, as did most of the mercantile elite of London. Their businesses succeeded at the expense of other merchants and retailers who either did not get in at the ground floor or who, later, could not afford the high cost or rents of property in and around the market.

Under a veil of consumer protection, the London elite obtained and maintained the economic advantages offered by a downtown market.⁵¹ The town and city councils codified the various market regulations that governed the buying and selling of produce on the square into one set of by-laws by 1846. These by-laws accomplished two goals. First, they regulated the quality and accuracy of trade, ensuring the public received good measure. These regulations set specific rules for the sale of butter, eggs, poultry, fish, and vegetables within the town of London, with meat drawing the particular attention of council. The by-law allowed only licensed butchers to sell meat on the market

Covent Garden Market, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843–1915

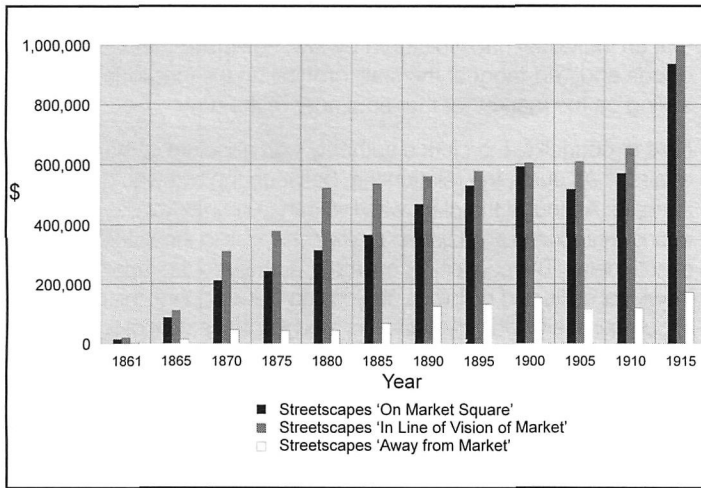


Figure 13: Total Assessed Value of Streets within Study Area by Proximity to Market, 1861–1915

Source: Assessment Rolls for the City of London 1861–1915 and London Street Directories 1865–1915

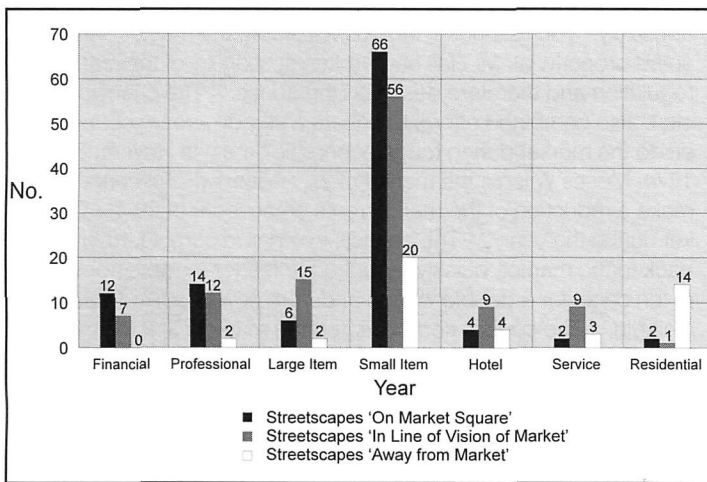


Figure 14: Total Number and Type of Business or Residence by Street within Study Area by Proximity to Market, 1881

Source: Assessment Rolls for the City of London 1861–1915 and London Street Directories 1865–1915

square in quantities of less than one quarter of an animal. Council prohibited butchers from

selling or exposing for sale ... any unwholesome, blown, tainted, stuffed or measly butcher's meat or any unwholesome provisions shall forfeit twenty shillings for each offense and the clerk of the market shall inspect such butcher's meat, fish, or other provisions and shall, under the direction of the President ... proceed to seize and destroy the same.⁵²

In addition, if an individual felt the butcher had under-weighted or over-charged the produce, he or she could have the market clerk examine the transaction for accuracy. If the butcher had misrepresented his produce, he was fined and his stall closed for the day. The by-law also strictly regulated bread. Council determined the price for each type of loaf based on the cost of individual grains; for example, in 1916, council determined that ten large loaves of Baker's Bread should weigh 15 pounds.⁵³ Similar limitations existed for other produce: potatoes had to be two and one quarter inches in diameter after September 15; apples had to be bigger than two and one quarter inches in diameter; and grade 'A' large eggs had to weigh more than two ounces.

The second goal of the market by-laws provided Covent Garden vendors with exclusive rights over the sale of produce within the city limits. This monopoly of place prevented individuals from selling produce anywhere in the city except at the market at the appropriate time.⁵⁴ Specifically, the market regulations sought to prevent "the forestalling, regrative, or monopoly of market grains, meats, fish, fruit, and roots and vegetables ... within the city of London."⁵⁵ Subsequent market regulations maintained these strict controls and changed only to tighten the wording of the law to prevent miscreants from clever evasions. By September, council tightened the by-law to read "within the city of London or within one mile of the outer limits."⁵⁶ Other regulations prevented licensed vendors from similar activities. For example, no butcher or anyone in the employ of a butcher could approach a farmer and purchase meat with the intent of reselling it the same day before one o'clock.⁵⁷ This enforced centralization did provide some benefits to the consumer, as the quality of produce could be more easily ensured, but this advantage was compromised as the market by-law essentially forced the London citizenry to purchase all their produce at one centralized location. It funneled consumers and producers into the midst of certain privileged retailers and service providers, to the immediate benefit of businesses located on the periphery of the market.

The reaction of the London community to the market regulations was mixed. Some comments in the local paper approved of the consumer safeguards that the market by-laws provided, praising the Board of Police for their "many judicious and liberal arrangements"⁵⁸ in regulating trade in the city. They asserted that those who detested the market regulations were more willing to promote their own interests and were quite willing to sacrifice the public good.⁵⁹ Others disagreed. The by-laws, which specifically benefited merchants and retailers around the market, disadvantaged others. This situation provoked the hostility of some London residents, who identified the conflict of interest inherent in this centralization. For example, one individual took issue with the board's plan to concentrate the exchange of produce at the New Survey Market:

This extreme conduct must now arouse the inhabitants from a state of lethargy, and they will see that there is a secret and damning conspiracy in existence which has for its primary

Covent Garden Market, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843–1915

object the formation of a clique—a *trio junto in uno*—to carry into effect certain expensive and unnecessary improvements in the town for the immediate aggrandizement of that clique at the expense of the public.⁶⁰

However, the potential for vendor impropriety provided council with sufficient justification to centralize and regulate the selling of produce in London. While this legislative monopolization helped limit unscrupulous vending practices at Covent Garden, these policies also worked to assist the mercantile success of market-fronting businesses.

The enforcement of market regulations fell to the market clerk, who served as the town and city council's representative at Covent Garden. A sworn constable of the London Police force with his own distinctive uniform, he managed the market's daily affairs, prosecuted offences, and, by 1891, could summon witnesses to trial.⁶¹ The position of market clerk provided an opportunity to glean social standing and influence, as well as a satisfactory wage. Joseph Wilson, market clerk from 1882 to 1900, was considered "one of the county's prominent and enterprising men."⁶² The clerk worked hand-in-hand with council to maintain the quality of produce at the market. Violations of the market regulations accounted for many appearances before the police magistrate. Convictions, fines, and jail sentences were quite common. The earliest surviving record of a successful conviction for violating the forestalling and huckstering by-laws was in 1844. The clerk fined John Sholfield ten shillings and eight shillings cost for "buying a pig which had not been taken into the public square."⁶³ By 1855, the *London Free Press* stated that the market clerk had prosecuted over 20 violations of the market by-law, with no fine exceeding £5.⁶⁴ In 1859, Michael Tookey was convicted of a misdemeanor for selling wholesale meat outside the market.⁶⁵ The court fined him £10 plus cost and sentenced him to jail until he could pay the fine.

The produce and meat inspectors of Middlesex County aided the market clerk in the enforcement of the market by-laws. The council charged these individuals with the responsibility of inspecting all produce on the market to ensure that it met provincial guidelines. The inspectors possessed the authority to seize the produce if it failed to meet specifications; for example, on June 5, 1916, the bread inspector reported his findings to council:

I weighed ten loaves of Brighton's bread...ten loaves of R. Willis & Son's bread, and ten loaves of B. F. Brighton's. Also weighed one hundred and forty loaves of Johnstone's Bros.' bread at Laphron's Grocery Store ... which I seized and sent to the Victoria Hospital, the bread all being underweight.⁶⁶

Prosecuting violations of the market by-law sometimes proved difficult. The market clerk had a rough time demonstrating that a particular food had been tainted prior to the alleged offense

being prosecuted.⁶⁷ However, when the market clerk decided that an individual had violated a by-law, he seized the offending goods and 'red-tagged' the stall, prohibiting the individual from selling on the market for the remainder of the day.

Next to council's, the clerk's authority was absolute in market affairs.⁶⁸ As such, the relationship between the two was quite intricate. Although the clerk was the prince on market day, the council authorized all major and minor changes to the market in minute detail. The council, for example, authorized the repairing of individual stalls and buildings, the paving of the square, the granting of licenses to individual retailers, and the placement of lighting equipment around the market.⁶⁹ With each repair, addition, or improvement to the market, the council, under the clerk's administration, reinvested municipal funds into the city centre and enhanced the economic advantages of adjacent businesses.

As much of the city's mercantile community was interwoven with the success of the market, the council invariably supported the clerk when confrontations arose over the market guidelines. When Thomas Hall, a London retailer, attempted to sell baskets on the market without paying proper fees, the market clerk, Joseph Wilson, forcibly removed him and his property from the square. Hall petitioned the city council for punitive damages on account of being "ordered off the market unceremoniously and abusively."⁷⁰ In response, the council stated the market clerk acted properly, as Mr Hall had broken section 11 of the market regulation and therefore deserved the abuse.⁷¹ The council and clerk also combined efforts to ensure a steady stream of farmers to the market during tough economic times. In November 1874, Moses Wilson, the market clerk, petitioned "the council to make a reduction of the market rents on account of the bad market during the year."⁷² The council, in order to attract farmers back to the market, quickly reduced the fee for farmers from 13 to ten cents for a double wagon and from seven to five cents for a single.⁷³ The council compensated the market clerk for lost revenues whenever improvements or additions to the market occurred. When a drain opened in the market square in October 1874, the council paid Moses Wilson \$200 in lost revenues.⁷⁴ The complementary relationship between clerk and council ensured a well ordered, law-abiding market centre that encouraged trade and development. This security provided consumers with confidence to shop at the market, and subsequently, to support the mercantile community of peripheral businesses.

When pressures arose to curtail or eliminate the market's monopoly of place, the substantial lobby of the market area's merchants and retailers ensured, through direct petitions to council, the continuation of the monopoly of produce in the downtown core. For example, in March 1898, Elijah Sutton, on behalf of the Retail Grocers Association, petitioned the city council against the placement of permanent businesses in the market building and on the market square.⁷⁵ The association attempted to curtail a movement of away-from-market merchants. Alderman Campbell questioned the validity of the market policies: "should the city maintain such a building and rent stalls at very low figures to men in direct competition with other



Figure 15: A wide variety of businesses operated within sight of the square, satisfying most of the farmers's and patrons' shopping needs. Some of London's most prominent merchants served as town and city councillors, like Mayor James Cowan (1887-88), whose hardware store is visible in the centre of this postcard, circa 1895. The ability of these men to influence council policy ensured the market's monopoly of place. Courtesy of the Regional Collection, U.W.O.

citizens?"⁷⁶ However, retailers in the market house (like the Andersons and the Morrises) and around the market square (like the Darches and the Campbells) had amassed economic and political influence over the years. The majority of town councillors supported their own mercantile interests by maintaining the strict rules and regulations of the market tradition. The council sided with the market retailers and wholesalers and continued to support the established mercantile interests in London by prohibiting the establishment of private businesses on the market square. While local farmers probably benefited from the continuation of the market's monopoly, the big winners continued to be the peripheral businesses around the square and the large retailers in the market buildings.

Although the market's monopoly of place forced citizens to buy their produce at the market, the regulations helped create a centre where, it was hoped, the consumer would wish to shop. Merchants petitioned council to ensure that the market clerk rigidly enforced the market regulations in order to ensure the pub-

lic perception that the market was safe from unscrupulous vendors.⁷⁷ Confident of regulated trade, quality merchandise, balanced weight scales, and competitive prices, citizens could buy goods on market square without fear of chicanery. A strict adherence to market regulations created a centre of consumer confidence, benefiting the surrounding shops and businesses. This desire to protect and assist patrons was secondary to centralization. Certainly, consumers would have benefited more from regulated, trade that was conveniently located throughout the city.

To London's town fathers, Covent Garden represented the regulated, 'civilized' (not necessarily fair) competition that they cherished and protected. The market house was the centre-piece of numerous civic booster activities undertaken by this socio-economic elite in the 19th century, activities that included the promotion of a steamboat company, the establishment of the Western Fair Grounds, and the construction of an electrified railway which ran past the market. This clique bestowed upon the

market square some of the first street lights and proper sidewalks in the city. The ability of members of the socioeconomic elite to influence civic policy in London resulted in a concentration of mercantile power in and around the market. The guiding merchants and manufacturers saw their own financial success in the economic success of the city. The market house became a symbol of that concurrent prosperity. When in disrepair, the building was unworthy of a city of London's stature. In 1903, the *Free Press* stated that "tis generally conceded that the building is by no means creditable to a city of London's standing. Compared with a modern market house, it would look like Noah's Ark set beside the most improved ocean greyhounds. It has seen its best days."⁷⁸ However, when newly renovated, the market served as "a monument [to] the men who held the destiny of London in their hands."⁷⁹

Conclusions

An analysis of Covent Garden Market in London, Ontario, revealed a number of socioeconomic patterns in this urbanizing Victorian town. An intricate relationship of trade developed between the farmers in the market and the owners of the surrounding businesses. The retailers and merchants in the market provided fresh produce, including eggs, meat, fish, and grain, for the numerous restaurants that surrounded the market. Almost everyday, the chef of the Talbot Inn could walk across the street to purchase the Inn's daily requirement and be reasonably guaranteed fresh food at fair prices. With a lack of proper refrigeration, the taverns and hotels that populated the market area, like the City Hotel, Hodgins House, the John Fraser Hotel, and the William Rowell Hotel, required daily replenishment of food supplies.⁸⁰ The farmers who came to the market for profit and diversion helped support the local business community. When in need of a new harness or saddle, a farmer may have crossed Talbot Street to Jane Darch's harness and saddle shop. When in need of wine, liquor or tea, they may have crossed Dundas Street and purchased their goods from Francis Smith, a wholesale grocer. Both farmer and merchant benefited from their close proximity.

The regulation of this trade by London's political elite served certain citizens well. The market, for over 100 years, stabilized and solidified this financial and commercial centre. An analysis of business types, owner occupancy rates, average assessed street values, business longevity, and pecuniary strength indicated that London's socioeconomic elite created a viable downtown core that benefited the businesses and shops that fronted the market. The success enjoyed by merchants and manufacturers immediately around Covent Garden solidified and enhanced their initial advantage of location, suggesting continuity in London's economic development.⁸¹ From the inception of the market, a minority of London's merchants maintained an economic advantage over their competitors. This socioeconomic elite maintained its hold on the market's monopoly by rigorously enforcing and tightening the market regulations, maintaining a 'police' presence at the market at all times in the form of the market clerk, and directly petitioning the city council

when needed. Perhaps to the detriment of other merchants in London, the surrounding businesses prospered, feeding on the appetites of market patrons. The market became a spatial focus, a principal node of reciprocal relations, outside of which economic failure proved a real possibility. The market, a symbol of Victorian commerce, proved a useful tool to a minority of merchants and manufacturers who secured and protected their initial and cumulative advantage.

Notes

1. After 1915, the introduction of the automobile altered considerably the spatial and socioeconomic dynamics of the market.
2. William Cronon emphasized the unified system of town and country in *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991. Douglas McCalla emphasized the importance of local, internal markets, like Covent Garden, to the developing economy of Upper Canada as a whole in *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784–1870*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.
3. W. Thomas Matthews, *Local Government and the Regulation of the Public Market in Upper Canada, 1800–1869: The Moral Economy of the Poor?*, *Ontario History*, Vol. LXXIX, Number 4, December 1987, p. 298. An end date of 1915 was chosen because the car, which would drastically change the market, had not yet made a significant impact.
4. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book 1865–1915*. Montreal: Dun, Wiman & Co. These reports are published under a number of different but similar titles. *Assessment Rolls for the City of London, 1880–1921*; *Street Directories for the City of London, 1880–1920*. All of the primary documentation for this paper can be found at the Regional Collections, D. B. Weldon Library, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.
5. *The History of the County of Middlesex*, Toronto: 1889, p. 282.
6. *Middlesex*, p. 282.
7. *London Free Press*, December 10, 1853.
8. *City of London Treasurer Rolls, 1907–1954*, London. For example, the George F. Morris butchery occupied stall 14–18 for at least 48 years
9. *Canadian Free Press*, April 28, 1865, p.3.
10. *London Free Press*, May 6, 1922. When the building was demolished, the retailers either moved off market like F. S. Onn who opened a fish store on Dundas Street or leased a stall in another section of the market.
11. *London Free Press*, May 6, 1922. The social importance of the market will be discussed later.
12. *London City Council Minutes*, April 7, 1902; *London City Council Minutes*, October 13, 1879; *London City Council Minutes*, October 6, 1902
13. *London Free Press*, May 6, 1922.
14. *London Free Press*, April 19, 1924.
15. A farmer would try to have at least two people travel to London, so that while one sold the produce on the square, the other could take care of all the errands that needed attention; Sophie Adams, "Diary," Sophie Adams Collection, daughter of a Farmer—Westminster Township, 1880–1900, Regional Collections, The University of Western Ontario, 1890–1900, December 21, 1887 and March 12, 1887; Wesley Phelps Charlton, "Diary," The Wesley Phelps Charlton Collection, Farmer—London Township, 1889–1938, Regional Collections, The University of Western Ontario, December 6, 1895; February 25, 1995; December 16, 1891; and January 8, 1892; James Glenn, "Diary," The James Glenn Collection, London, Regional Collections, The University of Western Ontario, March 18, 1871.
16. *London Free Press*, April 19, 1924. By 1892, market hours had been lengthened to four o'clock each day and to ten o'clock on Saturdays.
17. *London Free Press*, May 6, 1922.

Covent Garden Market, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843–1915

18. *London Free Press*, April 21, 1923; *London Free Press*, February 28, 1956; *London Herald*, March 11, 1843; *Council Minutes*, September 30, 1901. The city hall, located beside the market until 1920, could be used by citizens. Many events, like holiday celebrations, spilled onto the market square.; *Council Minutes*, September 3, 1901.
19. *London Free Press*, March 22, 1913.
20. Bain, "Diary," March 20, 1890.
21. *London Free Press*, May 6, 1922. This article was a recollection of times at the market.
22. *City of London Municipal Year Book, 1907*.
23. James Glenn, "Diary of James Glenn." *The James Glenn Collection, Farmer Westminster Township, 1866–1924*, London, Regional Collections, The University of Western Ontario, June 30, 1871.
24. Glenn, "Diary," December 3, 1898.
25. Glenn, "Diary," August 28, 1924.
26. John Beach, "Diary of John Beach," *The John Beach Collection, Farmer Westminster Township*, (London, Regional Collections, The University of Western Ontario), May 25, 1855.
27. Beach, "Diary," January 17, 1855.
28. Charlton, "Diary," July 1, 1892; Charlton, "Diary," November 16, 1895; Charlton, "Diary," January 14, 1896. These stores were located at 130 Dundas Street, 134 Dundas Street, 385 Talbot Street, 2 Market Square, and 6 Market Lane respectively.
29. *London Free Press*, January 1, 1920. This excerpt is from the recollections of Perrin, who lived in southwestern Ontario from the 1840s to the 1920s. Perrin stated that the barter system was more prevalent in the early days of the market.
30. *London City Council Minutes*, October 1, 1923. Admittedly, this reference is slightly outside of this study's time period, but I believe it reflected long-held practices.
31. *London Weekly Free Press*, September 20, 1877.
32. The growth of the region's hinterland during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is difficult to assess accurately. Certainly, more and more farmers benefited from London's continued growth. Better roads and improved agricultural railways and railcars brought more farmland into London's sphere of influence. Additionally, intensive farming, made possible by a variety of improved husbandry practices (superior seeds, supplementary fertilizers, a host of new hybrids, and more suitable crop rotation schemes) made better use of local lands, especially after the bumper crops associated with virgin farmland had dissipated. However, in the absence of detailed nineteenth century market rolls, it is difficult to see if more farmers came to Covent Garden, if individual farmers brought more to the market, or both. Further study in this area is needed.
33. Charlton, Wesley Phelps, "Diary of Wesley Phelps Charlton," *The Wesley Phelps Charlton Collection, Farmer, London Township, 1889–1938*, Regional Collections, The University of Western Ontario, London, April 18, 1893.
34. *London Free Press*, April 21, 1923.
35. *London Free Press*, April 19, 1924.
36. As stated previously, the market was not the only municipal or regional development project that drew people into the city centre, but it was commercially and symbolically the most important.
37. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book 1865–1915*. Montreal: Dun, Wiman & Co. These reports are published under a number of different but similar titles. They provide a sample of London businesses, each of which possessed a quantifiable level of mercantile activity. With 1880 as a base year, specific types of businesses were traced forward and backward in five year increments to see if they remained in operation. The importance of a merchant's access to credit cannot be overstated. For a better understanding the role of credit played in the mercantile efforts of a city's socioeconomic elite, see Michael Doucet and John Weaver's "Town Fathers and Urban Continuity: The Roots of Community Power and Physical Form in Hamilton, Upper Canada in the 1830s," *Urban History Review*, Vol. XIII, No. 2, pp. 75–90.
38. *Mercantile Agency 1865–1915*.
39. *Mercantile Agency 1865–1915*.
40. *Mercantile Agency 1865–1915*.
41. *Assessment Rolls for the City of London, 1861–1921*; *Street Directories for the City of London, 1880–1920*.
42. *Assessment Rolls, 1880–1921*; *Street Directories, 1880–1920*. This statistic was calculated by noting whether businesses in the study area were still in business five years later by examining the city's assessment rolls and street directories in five year increments (a business that had moved was still considered to have survived).
43. The assessed values were garnered from the *City of London Assessment Rolls* in the years 1861 and in five year increments from 1865 to 1915. In calculating the average assessed value for each street, all decimals were rounded to the nearest whole number, with all fractions equaling one-half rounded up. The assessed value for each individual apartment or building was averaged for each street in the study group. The average of the streets accommodated for the various lengths of the streets in the study area and also accommodated the various number of streets that comprised each focal area.
44. Establishments in the study area fell into seven categories: financial, professionals, high-value retail and manufacturing, low-value retail and manufacturing, restaurants and taverns, services, and residential. The placing of businesses into these categories was a combination of type, assessed value, and personal judgment. A greater percentage of financial, professional, and high value retail and manufacturing businesses in a central district was judged to be more economically sound and more indicative of a mature streetscape. A greater percentage of service and residential buildings on a particular street was considered less commercially 'mature'. For further reading see Martyn J. Bowden, "Growth of the Central Districts in Large Cities," *The New Urban History*, Princeton, 1975.
45. *London City Council Minutes*, September 20, 1880. The petition was accepted.
46. *City of London Fire Plans, 1881* and the *London City Directories, 1875, 1880–81, and 1890*.
47. *London Free Press*, December 10, 1853. Andrew McCormick's name does not appear on the bond that donated land to the Board of Police, but his name appears in this newspaper article.
48. *Middlesex*, p. 231–233. *Assessment Rolls, 1845–1888*.
49. *Middlesex*, p. 365.
50. *City of London Assessment Rolls, 1880*; *City of London Directory, 1880–81*; *Middlesex*, p. 1072.
51. Matthews, "Government," p. 320.
52. "Rules and Regulations for the Public Markets of the Town of London," *London Times*, March 13, 1846, p. 3.
53. *London City Council Minutes*, June 5, 1916.
54. A huckster was an individual who either peddled goods throughout the city or one who set up a small stall outside of the market in the hope of avoiding the market fees. A forestaller was an individual who intercepted the farmers on their way to the market and offered a lower price for their goods in order to resell them at a higher price at the market. The advantage to the farmer was that he would not have to spend his entire day at the market and would avoid the market fees.
55. *London City Council Minutes*, May 20, 1861.
56. *London City Council Minutes*, September 1, 1861. The change in the by-law prevented forestallers from buying goods just outside the city limits.
57. *London Times*, March 13, 1846, p.3; *London Free Press*, June 8, 1855, p. 3.

Covent Garden Market, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843–1915

58. *London Times*, March 20, 1846, p.2.
59. *London Times*, March 20, 1846, p. 3. Unfortunately, the identity of the author and the accused is unknown to this author.
60. *London Herald*, March 11, 1843, p. 2–3. The trio mentioned in the article were not named. The letter was unsigned and no evidence for his position was provided.
61. *London City Council Minutes*, July 9, 1866; *London City Council Minutes*, May 18, 1891. Other common responsibilities of the market clerk included keeping the basement of the market house warm during the winter at his own expense, posting notices of stall rental changes, opening the market doors in the morning, and reporting market activity to council; *London City Council Minutes*, July 20, 1903; *London City Council Minutes*, May 18, 1891.
62. *Middlesex*, p. 1049. Mr Wilson emigrated from Ireland in 1840. He originally entered the cabinet business but changed jobs to work for the Great Western Railroad. In London, he served fourteen years on the Board of Education in addition to his market duties.
63. *Middlesex*, p. 282.
64. *London Free Press*, June 8, 1855.
65. *Minutes of the Middlesex County Court Records*, April 1859.
66. *The London City Council Minutes*, June 5, 1916.
67. *Police Courts Return of Convictions Records for the County of Middlesex, 1844–1895*. The records after 1895 were closed.
68. *London City Council Minutes*, October 15, 1894.
69. *London City Council Minutes*, June 14, 1900; *London City Council Minutes*, 1898, p. 169; *London City Council Minutes*, July 30, 1900; *London City Council Minutes*, 1895, p. 26.
70. *London City Council Minutes*, October 15, 1894.
71. *London City Council Minutes*, October 15, 1894. The council also added insult to injury suggesting that a copy of section eleven be sent to Mr Hall for his perusal.
72. *London City Council Minutes*, November 23, 1874.
73. *London City Council Minutes*, December 28, 1874.
74. *London City Council Minutes*, October 19, 1874.
75. *London City Council Minutes*, March 8, 1898.
76. *London Free Press*, June 16, 1903.
77. For example, *London City Council Minutes*, February 18, 1901; *London City Council Minutes*, July 7, 1902.
78. *London Free Press*, June 16, 1903.
79. *London Free Press*, April 1928.
80. These hotels were located at 401 Talbot, 369 Talbot, 109 King, and 131 King, respectively (*London City Directory*, 1886).
81. As opposed to Gilbert Stelter's three phases of urban development: mercantile, commercial, and industrial. [Gilbert Stelter, "The City Building Process in Canada," *Shaping the Urban Landscape: Aspects of the Canadian City-Building Process*, ed. Gilbert Stelter and Alan Artibise (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982), pp.1–29].