

## Surviving as a Widow in 19th-century Montreal

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Résumé de l'article

Le présent article est une première tentative pour étudier les aspects démographiques et économiques du veuvage au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, à Montréal, et il s'attarde particulièrement aux moyens que les veuves de la classe ouvrière prenaient pour survivre. Même si presque autant d'hommes que de femmes perdaient leur conjoint à cette époque, les veuves se remariaient beaucoup moins fréquemment que les veufs. Pour tenter d'établir la situation économique de leur foyer à la suite de la perte du principal soutien de famille, certaines de ces femmes se cherchaient un emploi, surtout dans la couture ou à titre de domestique ou de laveuse de linge. Quelques-unes avaient déjà de l'expérience dans la tenue d'une boutique et certaines utilisaient leur douaire, leur héritage ou leurs polices d'assurance pour ouvrir un magasin, un bar ou une pension. Les enfants étant le bien le plus précieux d'une veuve, il était habituellement plus courant qu'ils travaillent et restent à la maison dans leur adolescence et jusque dans la vingtaine que ce n'était le cas dans les foyers ayant un père comme chef de famille. Beaucoup de veuves de la classe ouvrière avaient recours à divers autres moyens de fortune pour assurer la subsistance de leur foyer, notamment le partage d'une maison avec d'autres familles, l'élevage d'animaux ou la vente dans la rue.

# *Surviving as a Widow in 19th-Century Montreal.*

Bettina Bradbury

## **Abstract**

*This paper is a preliminary attempt to examine demographic and economic aspects of widowhood in 19th-century Montreal and the ways working-class widows in particular could survive. Although men and women lost spouses in roughly equal proportions, widows remarried much less frequently than widowers. In the reconstruction of their family economy that followed the loss of the main wage earner, some of these women sought work themselves, mostly in the sewing trades or as domestics or washerwomen. A few had already been involved in small shops, and some used their dower, inheritance, or insurance policies to set up a shop, a saloon, or a boarding-house. Children were the most valuable asset of a widow, and they were more likely to work and to stay at home through their teens and twenties than in father-headed families. Additional strategies, including sharing housing with other families, raising animals, or trading on the streets, were drawn upon; they established an economy of makeshift arrangements that characterized the world of many working-class widows.*

## **Résumé**

*Le présent article est une première tentative pour étudier les aspects démographiques et économiques du veuvage au XIXe siècle, à Montréal, et il s'attarde particulièrement aux moyens que les veuves de la classe ouvrière prenaient pour survivre. Même si presque autant d'hommes que de femmes perdaient leur conjoint à cette époque, les veuves se remariaient beaucoup moins fréquemment que les veufs. Pour tenter de établir la situation économique de leur foyer à la suite de la perte du principal soutien de famille, certaines de ces femmes se cherchaient un emploi, surtout dans la couture ou à titre de domestique ou de laveuse de*

## **Introduction**

High death rates in 19th-century Montreal robbed men and women alike of their spouses, and children of their mothers and fathers.<sup>1</sup> The death of a partner involved much more than the emotion surrounding the loss of a loved one. It entailed the loss of a partner with specific familial rights and responsibilities, and it did not mean the same thing for a man and a woman. The sexual division of labour within the family, combined with the very different legal rights and economic roles of men and women meant that each faced widowhood with specific backgrounds, abilities, and skills. As a result, the ways in which they reconstructed their family economy diverged.

Widowhood not only constituted a completely different experience for men and women, it also presented distinct challenges to women with property or some income compared to those without. For women, widowhood had the potential to accentuate their class position by making clear what property did or did not exist for them to live upon as women without husbands to support or provide for them. The legal emancipation that accompanied the transition from wife to widow meant little for women with no property to control. Even women from relatively wealthy families, "liberated" from legal incapacity by the death of their husband, could find their potential freedom limited by the specific provisions of marriage contracts and wills.<sup>2</sup> Because widowhood crystallized differences of class and gender and highlighted complexities and ambiguities, the study of widows and widowers can serve as a prism, which allows a better grasp of the impact of social transformations and the structuring of inequality.

Although stereotypes of the merry widow, the remarrying widow, and widows as the most "deserving" of the poor have persisted for generations,<sup>3</sup> fundamental economic, social, demographic, and legal transformations have changed the ways in which a woman could

reconstruct her family and its economy following the loss of her husband. This paper is a preliminary attempt to examine demographic and economic aspects of widowhood in 19th-century Montreal, and to capture elements of continuity and of change in the ways widows could survive. The economic, social, and legal context is described in the initial section of the paper. The numerical importance of widows is compared with that of widowers within the city and the condition of widowhood during women's life cycle is then assessed. Having considered the demographic aspects of widowhood, the paper proceeds to an examination of some of the ways in which widows survived. The discussion is based largely on analysis of two data bases. The first is a longitudinal set of data comprised of Catholic couples married in Montreal in the 1820s and surviving to the 1860s. Their experiences show the impact of death upon one group of men and women. The second is cross-sectional: a random sample of families living in the working-class wards of Sainte-Anne and Saint-Jacques in 1861, 1871 and 1881 makes visible some of the strategies that widows devised following a husband's death.<sup>4</sup>

## **Montreal in Transition**

By the 1860s Montreal, the major centre of commerce and exchange between British North America and Britain, was rapidly emerging as the "workshop of Canada." It was the largest city of British North America, the tenth largest in North America. Factories employing more than one hundred workers, and using steam and water power, coexisted with small manufactories and artisanal workshops. Slowly and unevenly over the previous decades artisans in some trades had accumulated sufficient capital to reorganize production, take on extra workers, or invest in machinery. Local merchants turned their interest to production, and immigrants from the United States and the British Isles, who brought both capital and technological knowledge, founded

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*linge. Quelques-unes avaient déjà de l'expérience dans la tenue d'une boutique et certaines utilisaient leur douaire, leur héritage ou leurs polices d'assurance pour ouvrir un magasin, un bar ou une pension. Les enfants étant le bien le plus précieux d'une veuve, il était habituellement plus courant qu'ils travaillent et restent à la maison dans leur adolescence et jusque dans la vingtaine que ce n'était le cas dans les foyers ayant un père comme chef de famille. Beaucoup de veuves de la classe ouvrière avaient recours à divers autres moyens de fortune pour assurer la subsistance de leur foyer, notamment le partage d'une maison avec d'autres familles, l'élevage d'animaux ou la vente dans la rue.*

workshops and factories. Increasing proportions of the city's expanding population were drawn into formal wage labour in factories, workshops and construction sites. By 1891 more than 1,600 manufacturing establishments, large and small, were enumerated in Montreal. They employed nearly 36,000 workers, approximately 20 per cent of the city's 182,695 inhabitants. Had each enumerated worker been the head of a family of five, 98 per cent of the city's population would have comprised part of the emerging industrial working class. In fact, most working-class families had more than one wage earner; a growing proportion of the men, women, and children who constituted the industrial work-force were secondary family earners, supplementing the low wages of men in poorly paid, unskilled work.<sup>5</sup> Dependence on wages clearly characterized the family economy of the majority of the city's population.

Industry and commerce, factory and workshop coexisted, working out a certain *modus vivendi* in the growing and changing city. The legal structures, a heritage of arrangements made after the conquest of New France, a hybrid of French civil law and British criminal law, of seigneurial and freehold tenure, proved increasingly incompatible with the desires and goals of the predominantly English and Scottish bourgeoisie. Particularly irksome for those wishing to speculate in real estate, or purchase land as security for their old age or for their children, were the dower rights of widows and their offspring.<sup>6</sup> Under Quebec law widows who had not signed a marriage contract had the right to half the real property that their husband possessed at the moment of marriage as well as half that which he or they had acquired during the marriage. Those signing a marriage contract could specify other arrangements. In either case, these dower rights constituted a primary claim, a "hypothèque," on the property of the husband, which came into effect at the moment of marriage, but was realized only if he died first.<sup>7</sup> Someone could buy land only

to find out subsequently that his claim was secondary to that of the widow or her offspring.

From the late 18th century, merchants and judges began to call for a system of registration of marriage contracts and dower rights.<sup>8</sup> In 1841 women were given the curious "right" of renouncing their dower, and in 1866 registration became obligatory, effectively eliminating the customary dower. To date this series of laws has been interpreted as culminating in the defeat of the ancient rights of Quebec women. In rural areas the changes may well have been fundamental,<sup>9</sup> but in the cities, where fewer and fewer men had any property, the right to half or even all their land or goods would increasingly constitute an empty prerogative for most working-class women. Economic changes producing a society within which fewer people possessed farms, workshops and other property blended with legal modifications to deprive widows of the protection that French customary law had offered them. Working-class widows were increasingly vulnerable. They, like the population at large, would have to rely more and more on wages or on other strategies to raise money and minimize expenditures, or resort to charity. The expansion of wage-earning possibilities for children made these widows more dependent on the earnings of their offspring.

### *The Demography of Widowhood*

In 19th-century Montreal, widowhood was not a status limited to a few men and women, nor was it merely a stage of an individual's life cycle as it tends to be today. The 1861 Montreal census takers enumerated more than 2,600 widows and 970 widowers. Two decades later there were nearly 6,000 widows and fewer than 2,000 widowers. In the city as a whole, as in the working-class wards of Sainte-Anne and Saint-Jacques, there were generally about three widows for each widower, although the differential diminished somewhat with age. In

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both 1871 and 1881 at ages 41-60, over 20 per cent of women compared to 6 or 7 per cent of men were widowed. After age 61, the percentages increased dramatically, with over 50 per cent of women over 60 widowed and only 21-22 per cent of men (see Table 1).<sup>10</sup>

Widowhood and old age were not synonymous, although the chances of becoming a widow obviously increased over time. At any one point there were more widows than there were widowers. This may in part have been a result of the greater number of institutions in Montreal that offered shelter to older women and widows. Differential mortality rates alone explain only a little of the divergence.<sup>11</sup>

The explanation of the difference between the proportions of widows and widowers lies in the interaction between the incidence of deaths and strategies of remarriage. To assess the relative importance of these two factors it is useful to look at the histories of some older women living in Montreal in this period, namely the survivors of those couples married in Notre Dame parish of Montreal between 1823 and 1826.<sup>12</sup> Most of these women would have been 60 or older by 1861. Amongst those successfully traced until their death, a slightly greater proportion of men than women had died by 1860 (55 per cent compared to 47 per cent) so that more women had lost husbands than men wives. In the early part of the century, if these histories can be taken as representative, women were slightly, but only slightly more likely to become widows because of higher male death rates. The difference was not extreme, and the proportions of deaths occurring in each decade following the marriage was similar. By the 1880s in Montreal, and possibly earlier, this pattern appears to have changed. As in some parts of Britain and northern Europe in this period, female mortality rates were slightly higher than men's, especially for women aged 20 to 40.<sup>13</sup>

Death struck with some consistency. Amongst those in the 1823-26 group whose date of death has been clearly established, six per cent of men and four per cent of women were widowed within the 1820s. In the 1830s cholera hit Montreal hard, accelerating the rates of widowhood; around 20 per cent of husbands and wives in the sample lost their spouses in this second decade following their marriages.<sup>14</sup> Over subsequent decades disease, accidents, and old age whittled away the original cohort, so that by 1860, approximately 35 years after their marriages, approximately 55 per cent of the women and 46 per cent of the men had lost a spouse.

### **Remarriage**

More women were widowed than men following the first decade of marriage, because of higher male death rates. More important was the fact that men whose wives died tended to remarry rapidly. For men, remarriage quickly re-established equilibrium in the family economy. A new wife fairly easily took on domestic responsibilities and child care, leaving him free to pursue his craft, career, or job. For the growing number of men dependent on wages, the ten to eleven hours of daily labour required in construction and industry would have been extremely difficult to manage without someone to do the domestic labour and look after children. Someone had to be free during the day to do the shopping and the washing, to prepare meals, to protest raised rents or water rates, and to watch young children.<sup>15</sup> Where wealthier men could hire housekeepers, for most remarriage must have seemed the only option. Of the men who married in the 1820s, survived to 1860, and succeeded their wives, over a third did remarry, compared to around one-sixth of the women.<sup>16</sup> The younger the man or woman when they lost their spouse, the more likely they were to remarry. Men tended to remarry more quickly than women, especially when their wives died young. A cluster of women

experienced six to ten years of widowhood before their second wedding.

The women who remarried appear to have been wealthier than those who did not. A disproportionate number had signed marriage contracts at the time of their marriage, a practice more widespread among the wealthy, and particularly the propertied classes.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, several had already exercised more legal and economic freedom within their marriages than most Quebec women, having renounced the creation of a "communauté des biens" at the time of their marriage, and retained control over their own property, by opting for the separation of their goods. The apparent tendency for our small sample of wealthy women to remarry more than other women, which requires more study, suggests that the attraction of the rich widow in the marriage market outweighed any allure living independently may have held for those women able to do so.<sup>18</sup>

Of widows who remarried, 70 per cent married a widower, whereas only half of the sample of widowers chose widows as their second wives. For men with children, widows already experienced in motherhood should have appeared attractive spouses, but they competed in the marriage market with young, attractive, and not yet weary girls. In the choice of a partner, pragmatic needs interacted with personal sentiments and sexual preferences, not easily accessible to historians, but captured in part of a long poem published in Montreal in the 1820s following a series of charivaris:

Yet Annette was a widow; there are some  
Who like the blown rose,  
rather than the bud,  
Tho' the first incense of expanding bloom,  
Some sense hath feasted.<sup>19</sup>

Third and fourth marriages were more common among men than women. In the 1823-26 sample only one woman remarried several times. When Victoire Dufresne

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married baker Gabriel Laurent dit Lorty in 1823, it was a second marriage for both spouses. She brought a vast array of household goods into the new marriage and was able to act as joint tutor to her two children. Gabriel died 14 months after their marriage, and six months later Victoire remarried for the second time, this time to a shoemaker, Laurent Robidoux. She outlived her third husband, surviving until 1874, when she died in her eighties.

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At the time of their husband's death most women were already part of a family economy with some degree of viability. By the 1860s and 1870s the vast majority were largely dependent on a husband's wages complemented by children's earnings and a variety of other ways of making or saving a few pence. "The critical question," Olwen Hufton reminds us, "was whether her efforts, reinforced by those of her children, her family and his family, could be extended to make good the labour occasioned by his death."<sup>20</sup> In working-class families the wage deficit engendered by his death had to be restored. In the effort to survive and provide for their families, widows in the working-class areas of Sainte-Anne and Saint-Jacques employed at least six major strategies. Those whose husbands died while they were still relatively young, and their children were too young to work, sought jobs themselves. A second group, with access to varying amounts of capital or property, ran shops, workshops, and other commercial enterprises of diverse sizes. Once children were old enough to earn wages, they became the main source of support for a large number of widows. Whether they worked for wages or not, widows generally organized their living arrangements either to minimize the outlay on rent or to ensure help with care of children. In addition, widows also devised survival strategies which today would be seen as part of the informal economy. Finally, a certain number turned to charitable institutions, which generally perceived

widows as among the most deserving of the poor. The rest of this paper will examine the importance of each of these ways of making ends meet for the widows of Sainte-Anne and St. Jacques wards between 1861 and 1881.

### *Wage Labour*

Widows who sought jobs in Montreal in this period were seeking work often in competition with children and unskilled males. Unless they possessed a skill that was in demand, they had little option but to take the worst-paying factory jobs or to work in the casual and irregular sphere of private service, shunned by men as "women's work." The younger widows of the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, whether they came from rural Quebec or rural Ireland or had grown up in Montreal, had little experience of working for wages before marriage. Those who had worked outside the home before marriage must have been predominantly engaged as domestics or dressmakers. A few, like Petronille Larocque, the wife of a constable, had worked throughout their marriage. Rates of formal, enumerated jobs for married Montreal women were low, never exceeding five per cent during this period.<sup>21</sup> Most worked, like Petronille, as dressmakers, usually at home. When her husband Louis died in 1865, she simply continued to work as a dressmaker, supporting her adopted daughter, H  l  ne, and moving into cheaper housing.<sup>22</sup> For other women the transition must have been more traumatic. The domestic labour they had been performing, crucial as it was to survival, did not prepare them for a better-paying job which might support a family. Yet it was precisely to their skills as sewing women, housecleaners, and washerwomen that these women could and did turn when they sought employment.

Different parts of the city had their own small, local economies and labour markets. Widows living close to bourgeois areas found domestic work more readily available. Those

living in Saint-Jacques, where sewing at home for the clothing trades was a local tradition, responded to the opportunities it offered. Of the widows who reported an occupation to the census takers, fully 40 per cent in Saint-Jacques Ward and 20 per cent in Sainte-Anne worked at sewing in the clothing or shoemaking industries (see Table 2). Both trades relied heavily on homework, carried out largely by "women who live in their own homes. These women sit down when their breakfast, dinner and supper is over and make a garment," explained one Montreal clothier who had no idea how many women he employed in this way.<sup>23</sup> For widows with children, homework offered the advantage of being able to watch their children while they worked, or to work at home alongside older daughters. Adelaide H  bert, for example, worked in 1871 as a seamstress with her five daughters aged 16 to 22. In the 1880s, one woman's piece work at minimal rates might bring in three dollars a week, approximately half a male labourer's wage, already insufficient to support more than the smallest family. However, with several family members pooling the cash earned, with cheap housing or income from boarders, such women may have passed over the fuzzy boundary between outright poverty and destitution, getting by for a short while.

Only the occupation of washerwoman compared with dressmaking as a source of employment. In 1871, 27 per cent of the working widows of Sainte-Anne and 13 per cent of those of Saint-Jacques described themselves as washerwomen. Another 9 and 3 per cent respectively were charladies. Such jobs were easier to find for those living near wealthy parts of town. The widows of Sainte-Anne could seek employment in the homes of the more wealthy "up the hill" in Saint-Antoine Ward. However, these jobs were extremely vulnerable to seasonal and cyclical fluctuations in the economy. Once even the better-paid working-class wives had a little extra money they would pay someone to do their washing. Any contraction in the

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economy eliminated a large proportion of such jobs. "Biddy the washerwoman" would be among the first to feel the pinch.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the greater number of widows finding such work in 1871 reflects the buoyancy of the economy that year (see Table 2). Provision of such services was increasingly taken over by entrepreneurs. Small laundries were run by Chinese immigrants, and by the 1880s a few large steam laundries competed with widows and wives seeking such work. The manager of one Montreal steam laundry reported with pride, "I suppose there is no poorer class of help hired than I hire and I pay them good wages. I hire poor widow women when they come around . . . and I keep a doctor to help any of them when they fall sick, out of my own pocket." What he paid such widows he did not say.<sup>25</sup>

Female wages in all sectors and jobs for which information exists were seldom even half those of males.<sup>26</sup> For women working odd mornings or days as charladies and washerwomen, the pittances earned had to be combined with some other strategy to make ends meet. Wage rates, reflecting the misguided assumption that female labour was invariably a supplement to other earnings, made it especially difficult for a widow to support her family. Even apparently more prestigious occupations such as teaching provided no material base for a woman to support a family. Marta Danylewycz has shown that around 12 per cent of Montreal's female teachers in 1871 were widows. Supporting their children and sometimes their parents on \$100 to \$160 a year must have been virtually impossible.<sup>27</sup>

Overall, about 20 per cent of the widows of these wards reported an occupation. Of these nearly 70 per cent were dressmakers, washerwomen, domestics, or simply reported themselves as labourers or "ouvrières" (Table 2). Few worked in factories since the rigidity and sheer length of factory hours made balancing domestic and wage labour virtually impossible. Few worked in jobs where income would support the woman

herself, let alone several children. Such jobs were virtually non-existent for women. Wages had to be supplemented in ways that are less visible in the documents of the period.

### *Widows with Small Businesses*

Widows who had some capital, or whose husbands had been in trade or in a small shop, were in a different situation. In working-class parts of town, a few women either took over small businesses or trades from their husbands when they died or were able to set up some kind of stall, shop, or business with money received possibly as their dower rights, an inheritance, or an insurance policy. Women running their own businesses constituted between 15 and 20 per cent of widows officially reporting an employment. Until the 1860s some wives seem to have assumed the direction of the workshop of their artisan husband. Thus, when Emilie Bélanger's tinsmith husband died suddenly of apoplexy in 1861, she continued to supervise the five workers whom he employed. Widow Hennessy likewise continued to keep cows and deliver milk as her husband had done.

As artisanal production became less and less common in Montreal, this persistence of a husband's craft virtually disappeared. Widows worked as traders, boarding house keepers, hotel or saloon keepers or proprietors of small grocery stores. Some of these may have initially set up in business to "supplement family incomes" or against "a likely fall in family incomes as their husband's aged," as Michael Anderson has suggested for English widows in a similar period, when fully one third of widows reported this form of employment.<sup>28</sup> In Montreal, however, such self-employment appears to have followed rather than preceded the death of a spouse.

Most of the sample widows in Sainte-Anne and Saint-Jacques wards were in small, precarious businesses. Such enterprises required an initial investment or inheritance of some capital. The widows who ran them were probably quite poor, yet they were not

solely dependent on wages, and the shaping of their family economy would be different from wage-earning widows. In their studies of widows in France and England, Olwen Hufton and Michael Anderson have stressed the inheritance of such enterprises. Among Montreal women it seems unlikely that most were inherited.<sup>29</sup> Rather, women probably drew on small benefits, pensions or savings to establish such businesses. Wives of Montreal firemen, for example, could receive up to \$300 in compensation in the 1880s when their husband died. Here was sufficient capital to set up in a modest way as a trader or small shop or boarding-house keeper. Such women might rely on their children's labour for assistance in the business, or rely on wages earned by children to complement the income made.<sup>30</sup>

### *The Wages of Children*

The age at which a woman was widowed and the number and ages of her children were clearly crucial factors in influencing the nature of her widowhood. Studies elsewhere, as far apart as 16th-century Paris, colonial America, and early modern England, have shown that young, childless widows were the most likely to remarry.<sup>31</sup> This clearly was true too for the group who had married in the 1820s. For those who did not remarry their age and the ages of their children clearly influenced whether they would seek work, as well as the kind of job they might find. Among the widows of Saint-Anne and Saint-Jacques wards between 1860 and 1880, employment was most common among the youngest widows, those whose children were not yet of working age. Thus, in 1861, nearly one third of widows aged 20 to 40 reported some form of employment compared to only 18 per cent of those aged 40 to 60. After age 60 only 10 per cent reported an occupation.

About 80 per cent of the widows in these wards had children, and once these offspring reached working age, it was their contribution to the family economy that became crucial and that distinguished widows' families from

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those with two parents. Rose de Lima Lavoie, the widowed mother of six children, including a boy who had been badly beaten while working at one of Montreal's more brutal cigar-making factories, explained simply when asked whether she needed her son's work for her livelihood, "When we are not rich, we need the help of our children's work. I have been a widow these four years."<sup>32</sup> When William Lukes and A. H. Blakeby were commissioned to examine the work of young children in the factories and workshops of Canada in 1881, many of the children whom they interviewed stated they were working because they did not have a father and were helping their mother to survive.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the importance of young children's contribution to the family economy was so generally recognized at this time that even some of the reformers who were recommending stricter legislation to control the work of boys and girls suggested that exceptions be made in the case of widows who needed the wages of children under the age of 12.<sup>34</sup>

Widows clearly did rely on their children's wages more than other working-class families. On the average there were always twice as many children at work in widow-headed families as in those with a father (see Table 3). In 1881, for example, families headed by the father averaged .49 children at work, compared to .83 in widows' families. Only 13 per cent of father-headed families had two or more children reporting a job, compared to 26 per cent of widows'. Reformers focused on the cases that concerned them most: children under 12 who worked. Yet, it was not the work of these young children that was particularly widespread amongst widow's families. Such young children may have begged, sold newspapers, shined shoes, or been involved in any of the other street trades seldom reported, but it was the continued contribution of teenage and adult children that distinguished the family economy of widows from those of two-parent families. In 1881, 22 per cent of widows had adolescents living with them and working,

while only 14 per cent of father-headed families did. More striking was the case of adult children. Twenty-eight per cent of all households headed by widows, compared to 13 per cent of two-parent households, had coresident, working children over the age of 21 (see Table 3). These differences were not simply because widows were older. Of fathers over 60, for example, 25 per cent had coresident, working adult children compared to 45 per cent of widows the same age.

Older widows clearly exercised a powerful influence over these children who would leave the family home, in Montreal as elsewhere, much later than most of their peers with two parents.<sup>35</sup> They would marry later (in some cases not marry at all) and form their own families later. Thus the lives of the children were transformed, not only by the death of their father, but also by the mother's need for economic and possibly psychological support. Take, for example, the family of a Sainte-Anne widow, 70-year-old Bridget Drew. Listed as head of household, she had four children aged 26 to 36 still living with her in 1881. The oldest girl, Mary, was married but where her husband was is not clear. She and her two children were living with Bridget, who probably looked after them after school while Mary was still working at her job as a clerk. For the 34-year-old son, John Drew, the benefits of continuing to live at home are more difficult to ascertain. Certainly his boilermaker's wages were vital to the support of a household with five adults and two growing children.<sup>36</sup>

In her study of teachers in three Montreal wards, including Saint-Jacques, Marta Danylewycz has shown that a third of teachers in 1871 were daughters supporting a widowed mother. Contrary to the general impression, most were of working-class origin.<sup>37</sup> A strong sense of their mothers' dependence, accompanied in some cases by powerful moral pressure, effectively removed some widows' children from the marriage market. Daughters who never married in order to support their widowed

mothers would eventually face old age in situations even more difficult, as single women with no children to help them.

Between 1861 and 1881 the number of jobs available for children, adolescents and adults alike expanded as industry developed and new work opened up for the unskilled. The relatively buoyant period that began with the American Civil War and continued with odd fluctuations until 1874 provided widows and their children with job opportunities. The average number of workers enumerated in widows' families in the census increased from an average of fewer than 1.0 in 1861 to more than 1.5 a decade later<sup>38</sup> (see Table 3). Cyclical depressions posed major challenges. The 1881 census was taken while workers were still emerging from years of depression, debt, and unemployment. It shows widows with fewer workers per family but a greater proportion of children at work. The average number of workers in widows' families had dropped to 1.31 (compared to 1.5 for father-headed families) as widows found it hard to pick up casual work as charladies and washerwomen or to maintain small businesses in working-class neighbourhoods. The average number of children at work had increased, in part perhaps as older children, who could not afford to marry or live alone, remained longer with their mother.

The increase in the availability of jobs for boys and girls must have helped widows keep their families together, provided a more stable basis for the family economy, and heightened the incentive to retain older children at home. Overall the percentage of widows' families with offspring reporting jobs increased from 24 in 1861 to 43 two decades later. Whereas earlier in the century widows had tended to apprentice their children, or send them to work as domestics,<sup>39</sup> from the 1860s and 1870s, they were more likely to keep them at home.

### ***Residential and Informal Arrangements***

One third of widow-headed families in 1881 reported no workers to the census taker. (Ten years earlier, when the economy was stronger, one quarter had no formally enumerated workers.) For them, strategies discussed above had to be combined in different ways at different times to get beyond survival to minimum comfort. Some widows did this with energy and ingenuity. They drew on diverse skills, on families, friends, and charity, as they reshaped the contours of their family economy following their husband's death. New household arrangements, an intensification of non-wage based means of earning or saving money or turning to charity might maximize revenues or minimize expenditures, replacing or offsetting either wages or meagre incomes earned in precarious small businesses.

Most women were apparently seen as the head of the family following the husband's death. At each census date between 60 and 70 per cent were enumerated as family heads (see Table 4). Others usually lived with married children or with a working son who was designated as the head of the family. In 1861 a small minority went to live with their parents or other relatives. This practice appears to have become less common over subsequent decades. As widows aged, they were less likely to head a family. In 1871, for example, 83 per cent of widows aged 40-49 were designated as family heads. Among women aged 50-59, only 58 per cent were, and among those 60 and over, only 36 per cent were.

Very few of the widows who headed households in these wards owned their own homes. This is hardly surprising in a city where the rate of home-ownership in general was low and rapidly falling. Yet owning real estate, even a small house, offered some security to a widow able to purchase or inherit one. Only 14 per cent of widows on city evaluation rolls in Saint-Jacques Ward owned their place of residence. They were

not wealthy women. The homes of the majority were evaluated at well below the median value for the city. Of those renting, 76 per cent fell below the \$55 median rental.<sup>40</sup>

While most widows headed their own families, they were apparently less likely to head the only family in the household.<sup>41</sup> Coresidence offered a buffer against poverty as well as a potential support system. When Widow McGrath lost her husband, she was left with three children aged four to nine. She took in two other widows, one of whom had an 11-year-old child. Two of the widows worked as washerwomen, the third had a small stall at the local market. Between them they kept five pigs, probably eating some and raising cash by selling others.<sup>42</sup> Here was an economy of makeshifts, of expediency in operation.<sup>43</sup> Some of these sources of sustenance would diminish in importance as city councillors, determined to shape a healthy, modern city, made the keeping of pigs illegal and formalized control over the raising and exchange of other stock and goods.<sup>44</sup>

Raising vegetables or fruit on the productive Montreal soils also became increasingly difficult as row-housing "replaced detached houses and obliterated" the possibility of gardens, leaving "scarcely more space in the rear than was required for privies, and the community well and wash house."<sup>45</sup> In some parts of the city odd-shaped lots, spaces between buildings, and newly opening subdivisions still allowed access to enough land to produce some goods. One Scottish widow was able to save some of her earnings as a washerwoman by raising ten bushels of potatoes, two of beets and three of carrots on her quarter-acre Sainte-Anne lot.<sup>46</sup>

Some widows took in boarders. Others made root beer, hot lunches and other goods to sell to working men and passers-by. Still others purchased fruits at the market, reselling them in the neighbourhood. Their children scoured the alleys, searching for things to use or sell,

seeking lumps of unburned coal in other people's discarded cinders, roved the streets selling newspapers, shining shoes, and scavenging in a myriad of ways to stretch money or make money from other people's discarded garbage.<sup>47</sup> The large number of widows' sons who appear in the registers of the reform school suggests a fine line between making an honest dollar and a dishonest one. Widows, too, broke the law to survive, stealing or turning to prostitution, sometimes alone and quite often in conjunction with their daughters.

### ***Charity***

Wage labour, casual work and more informal production and exchange were combined to keep widows' families functioning without recourse to charity. For older women, or for the many families and individuals who could not escape illness, charity was the only recourse. Catholic orders created specifically to deal with the poor offered widows and other needy citizens some support. It might be steady, as in the case of asylums for elderly widows or orphanages for widows' children, or temporary, as in the case of home visits, soup kitchens and other orphanages that took children for shorter periods. Protestant churches, competing for the souls of Montreal's citizens, also provided various forms of aid to the poor and needy. In the records of lay women and sisters, it is most often widows who drew their sympathy. One Sister of Providence described in her chronicles the case of

A poor woman, a widow, and mother of seven children whose brain had been affected by fever and who was in the direst of poverty. The oldest of her offspring begged for bread from door to door, arriving home utterly frozen with cold.

She had seen nothing more miserable, she added, than this poor home, without furniture and often without heat even in the depths of winter.<sup>48</sup>



## *Surviving as a Widow*

Healthier widows often received work from certain charities. Invariably the work was sewing. The Montreal Protestant House of Industry and Refuge, for example, reported in the mid 1870s that it gave out sewing to 80 or 90 women a week, largely "widows with families," who made flour sacks and shirts for wholesale houses in the city.<sup>49</sup> Whether these women considered themselves workers or recipients of charity is unclear. Nor is it possible to determine how many widows received charity at home, because of the way the organizations reported cases.

Old and sick women, or those without families, could find refuge in institutions created specifically for homeless and aged women. In 1881, 26 widows were among the women sheltered by the Sisters of Providence in their asylum in Saint-Jacques Ward. Most were in their seventies, a few in their forties and fifties.<sup>50</sup>

Some widows took advantage of existing institutions, and even reshaped them. The Saint-Alexis orphanage for girls, in Saint-Jacques Ward, was used by the people of the neighbourhood. At least 14 per cent of parents who sent their daughters there were widows who brought their girls in to be cared for by the sisters, sometimes several months, sometimes even years, after their husband's death. Even more than other parents, these widows returned to the orphanage to take their children home again once the particular crisis that had precipitated their separation was over. Here is evidence of the strong links of affection binding widows and their children, but also of the need of widows for the wages of their adolescent offspring.<sup>51</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In working-class families, the death of a husband highlighted a woman's dependence on a male breadwinner and the fragility of family economies based on a division of labour in which one partner was largely responsible for the earning of wages and the other for the domestic labour necessary to

transform that wage into sustenance and shelter. Montreal's high death rates meant that at any point in her married life a woman could find herself suddenly economically responsible for herself and her children. A much smaller proportion of widows than widowers would remarry, re-establishing the family economy in that way. As the growth of industry reshaped the economy, swelling the importance of the working class and altering the conditions of accumulation and of daily life, more and more widows faced widowhood without property, without the security that dower rights once offered, and largely dependent on the wages they or their children could earn. The expansion of wage labour rendered them more vulnerable, despite the greater possibilities of work for their children. Widows and single women bore the brunt of a wage system based on the assumption that females were secondary earners. Since wages rates for women were less than half those of men, they could never simply replace their husband's lost wages with their own. It became ever more

important to retain earning children at home, or to seek other ways to make money.

The widows of Sainte-Anne and Saint-Jacques wards appear to have drawn on skills they had developed as wives: washing, sewing and cleaning. They intensified practices they had probably already utilized to stretch inadequate wages, such as keeping pigs or cows, taking in boarders, or sharing housing.

This study is based on two types of data: cross-sections from census data and the longitudinal histories of a cohort of women. To document adequately the lives of women in the past and grasp the meaning of widowhood, the two need to be combined. It should then be possible to see with more precision how the skills of women prior to marriage were drawn upon in the reshaping of the family economy that followed a husband's death, and how the experiences of relatively wealthy widows compared with those of the much larger number of working-class women.

**Table 1**  
***Widows and Widowers, Montreal, 1861-1881.***

a Numbers and ratio	Year	Widows	Widowers	Widows per widower
	1861	2674	974	2.7
	1871	4117	1154	3.5
	1881	5790	1753	3.3
b Percentage of different age groups widowed	Year	Age group	Widows	Widowers
	1861	30-40	6%	2%
		40-50	16%	5%
		50-60	27%	10%
		60+	50%	23%
	1871	31-41	9%	3%
		41-61	24%	6%
		61+	56%	22%
	1881	31-41	9%	3%
		41-61	22%	7%
		61+	52%	21%

Source: Canada, Censuses of 1861, 1871, 1881. My calculations based on published numbers in each age group. The age divisions are those of the published census.

## *Surviving as a Widow*

**Table 2**  
**Numbers of Widows Reporting an Occupation, Sainte-Anne and Saint-Jacques Wards, 1861-1871.**

	1861 Ste. Anne		St. Jacques		1871 Ste. Anne		St. Jacques	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>I Trades &amp; Factory Work</b>								
Sewing Trades	25	27%	28	42%	23	17%	65	38%
Confectioner	1		-		-		-	
Shoebinder or Shoemaker	1		-		-		1	
Leatherworker	-		1		-		-	
Tobacco Work	-		-		1		3	
"Factory Woman"	-		-		1		-	
Subtotal	27	30%	29	44%	25	19%	69	40%
<b>II General</b>								
Labourer - Unspecified	17	18%	5	8%	8	6%	13	8%
<b>III Small Shops and Trades</b>								
Boarding-house Keeper	6	6%	4	6%	9	7%	1	
Innkeeper	3		-		-		-	
Hotelkeeper	1		-		-		-	
Saloonkeeper	-		-		1		1	
Tavernkeeper	-		3	5%	-		-	
Grocer	1		1		1		3	
Trader	2		5	8%	10	7%	16	9%
Store/Shopkeeper	1		-		3	2%	1	
Candy Storekeeper	-		-		1		-	
Fish Seller	1		-		-		-	
Market Woman	2		-		1		3	
Fruit or Apple Dealer	1		-		2		-	
Huckster	-		-		4	3%	-	
Tinsmith	1		-		-		-	
Subtotal	19	19%	13	20%	34	25%	25	15%
<b>IV Private Service</b>								
Servant	7	8%	5	8%	11	8%	11	6%
Washerwoman	20	22%	5	8%	35	26%	22	13%
Charwoman	-		1		12	9%	5	3%
Cook	-		2		1		1	
Housekeeper	-		-		1		-	
Midwife	-		1		1		5	3%
Nurse	-		1		2		1	
Subtotal	27	29%	15	23%	63	47%	45	26%

## *Surviving as a Widow*

	1861		St. Jacques		1871		St. Jacques	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>V Teaching Trades</b>								
School Teacher	-		1		1		3	2%
Music Teacher	-		-		1		1	
Subtotal	-		1		2		4	3%
<b>VI Commerce and Sales</b>								
Salesperson	-		1		-		-	
Florist	-		2		-		-	
Restaurant	-		1		-		1	
Bookkeeper	-		-		-		1	
Dry Goods	-		-		-		2	
Furrier	-		-		-		1	
Subtotal	-		4	6%	-		5	3%
<b>VII Other</b>								
"Rentière"	-		-		-		11	
Cows and Milk	2		-		-		-	
Cowherd	-		-		1		-	
Carter	-		-		1		-	
Beggar	-		1		-		1	
Illegible	-		1		-		1	
Subtotal	2		2		2		13	6%
Total number of widows listing a job:	92		69		134		174	
Total number of widows:	499		333		670		565	
% listing a means of support:	18		21		20		31	

Source: All widows listing an occupation in the manuscript censuses for Sainte-Anne and Saint-Jacques wards, 1861, 1871.

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**Table 3**  
*Working Children in Male- and Female-Headed Families.*

	a Average Number of Workers Per Family.	
	Male Head	Female Head
1861	1.33	0.99
1871	1.53	1.61
1881	1.50	1.31

**b Average Number of Children at Work Per Family.**

	b Average Number of Children at Work Per Family.	
	Male Head	Female Head
1861	.23	.43
1871	.46	.74
1881	.49	.83

**c Percentage of Families with No Reported Workers.**

	c Percentage of Families with No Reported Workers.	
	Male Head	Female Head
1861	4%	43%
1871	2%	25%
1881	4%	32%

**d Percentage of Families with Children of Different Ages at Work, 1881.**

	d Percentage of Families with Children of Different Ages at Work, 1881.	
	Male Head	Female Head
Children under 15	5%	6%
Children 15-20	14%	22%
Children 21+	13%	28%

Source: Random samples, Sainte-Anne and Saint-Jacques wards combined, 1861-1881.

**Table 4**  
*Widows' Patterns of Residence, 1861-1881, Sainte Anne and Saint Jacques combined.*

Position in Family	1861		1871		1881	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Heads own family	70	64%	56	63%	115	69%
Lives with parent	3	3%	-	-	1	
Lives with children	10	9%	20	22%	16	10%
Lives with other relatives	6	6%	-	-	1	
Lives as a boarder	20	18%	14	16%	31	19%
Lives as live-in servant	-	-	-	-	2	1%
Number of widows in sample:	109		90		166	

### **Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Tétréault, "L'état de santé des Montréalais, de 1880 à 1914" (mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Montréal, 1979); Jean-Claude Robert, "Montréal, 1820-1871. Aspects de l'urbanisation" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> This subject, which I am currently beginning to study, will constitute the basis of a separate paper.

<sup>3</sup> On the stereotypes surrounding widows who remarried, as well as the reality in 16th- and 17th-century England see B. J. Todd, "The remarrying widow: a stereotype reconsidered," in *Women in English Society, 1500-1800*, ed. Mary Prior (London, 1985): 54-92.

<sup>4</sup> A random sample of one household in ten was taken in each of the wards for each of the census years. This resulted in totals of 10,967 individuals, 2,274 "households," and 1,855 "families" as defined by the census takers over the period. This work is preliminary. Eventually the two types of data will be combined to create comprehensive life histories of two cohorts of couples, based on parish records, notarial archives, manuscript censuses and other records. Collection of marriage, death and remarriage records was done by Anne-Marie

Chaput, René Roy, Alan Stewart and Jennifer Waywell. The longitudinal data contain a bias, in that they deal only with individuals who either remained in Montreal throughout this period or left and returned. To the extent that geographically mobile couples may have had a different demographic experience, their situation is neglected in this discussion.

<sup>5</sup> On the work of family members see my doctoral thesis, "The Working Class Family Economy, Montreal, 1861-1881" (Concordia University, Montreal, 1984). The involvement of women and girls in industrial work increased over the period. By 1881 females constituted 37 per cent of the work-force enumerated in industry, boys under 16 constituted a further 6 per cent. See the 1881 census of Canada, vol. 3, tables 29 to 54 (the calculations are mine). These figures are those reported by employers, not by individuals. Levels of underenumeration of women and children seem lower in such tables than in the personal schedules.

<sup>6</sup> Other areas that came under attack included the question of who had legal authority for minors when the father died, the nature of matrimonial regimes and inheritance rights. On this, see Evelyn Kolish, "Changements dans le droit privé au Québec/Bas Canada entre 1760 et 1840: attitudes et réactions des contemporains" (thèse de doctorat, Université de Montréal, 1980). Aspects of this question are currently being studied by members of the Montreal Business History Group as part of their examination of "The Transformation of Property Rights in Lower Canada/Quebec, 1812-1877" funded by FCAR. We hope to publish some of our findings shortly.

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- 7 The widow's claim to the property was not registered anywhere in the case of those without a marriage contract and, in the case of those signing them, was buried in the records of the city's notaries.
- 8 N. B. Doucet, *Fundamental Principles of the laws of Canada* (Montreal, 1841). Evelyn Kolish "Changements dans le droit privé au Québec/Bas Canada."
- 9 Le Collective Clio, *L'Histoire des femmes au Québec depuis quatre siècles* (Montreal, 1982): 151-52. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the period between the late 18th century and the 1840s was clearly fundamental in the erosion of certain women's rights, there are no detailed studies of Quebec women in this period.
- 10 Canada, Census of 1861, 1871, 1881. My calculations are based on the number of widows and widowers in each census age category as a proportion of the total number of women and men in that age group.
- 11 A very rough indication of the possible influence of the death rate can be gained by comparing the ratio of male to female deaths with the proportion of widows and widowers. In the averages calculated for 1879-82, the ratio of male to female deaths was .81 to 1.00 at ages 20-40; 1.25 to 1.00 at ages 40-60, and 1.26 to 1.00 for those aged 61 and over (see Table 4). Compare these ratios with the 1881 (3.10, 3.67, and 3.09 widows per widower at roughly equivalent ages). Differential mortality, it seems, could at best explain only one-third of the difference after age 40 and none before.
- 12 This section is based on analysis of the cohort of marriages performed in the Catholic parish of Notre Dame, which covered the City of Montreal and some surrounding districts. The 759 couples married between 1823 and 1826 have been traced through time, their deaths and remarriages reconstituted, and their marriage contracts analyzed.
- 13 The differential was slight in Montreal, but women aged 15 to 40 had higher overall age specific death rates than men, and, as in England, this appears to have been largely due to the impact of tuberculosis. Bettina Bradbury, "The Working Class Family Economy": 301-5; S. R. Johansson, "Sex and Death in Victorian England: An Examination of Age-and-Sex-Specific Death Rates, 1840-1910," in *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women*, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington, Ind., 1977): 165-67.
- 14 Thus this cohort was special in the early decimation that the cholera epidemic caused.
- 15 On women's domestic labour see chapter four of my thesis.
- 16 These percentages should be taken as indications of the degree of remarriage rather than precise figures. They are based on a search of all marriages in Montreal and surrounding districts in the decades following their marriage as well as in Loïselle's guide which covers marriages in some but not all Quebec parishes. Precise figures await further verification in the parish registers.
- 17 Thirty nine per cent (7 of 18) of the women who remarried had had marriage contracts at the time of their initial marriage compared to 29 per cent of the men. This compares with the overall percentage of 23 for all the marriages celebrated between 1823 and 1826.
- 18 Analysis of the characteristics of remarrying widows and widowers has not yet been systematically performed. Eventually patterns of remarriage will be examined in terms of the age of the partners, the length of marriage, number of children, and the provisions made in the couple's marriage contract and the husband's will.
- 19 Originally published in Montreal in 1823, this poem was reprinted in George Longmore, *The Charivari or Canadian Poetics* (Ottawa, 1977).
- 20 Olwen Hufton, "Women without Men: Widows and Spinsters in Britain and France in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Family History*, 9 (Winter 1984): 364-65.
- 21 Obviously such labour was underenumerated, and most casual or intermittent labour was ignored. However, little suggests that the rate of underenumeration would be different from elsewhere. Even if the reported rates are doubled, wage labour and remunerated work outside the home by married women seems to have been quite rare compared to American or British mill towns.
- 22 National Archives of Canada (hereafter NA), Manuscript Census of Canada, 1861, Montreal, Saint Jacques Ward, folio #8759; 1871, Saint Jacques Ward, subdistrict b.3. Archives Nationales de Québec à Montréal, Marriage, Paroisse de Notre Dame, 10 May 1876.
- 23 Canada, House of Commons, *Journals*, 1874, Appendix 3, "Report of the Select Committee on the Manufacturing Interests of the Dominion," 36.
- 24 "Joe's Advice to Biddy, the Washerwoman," *La Minerve*, 7 Nov. 1873, cited in Peter DeLottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal: Working-Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1889," *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 8/9 (Autumn/Spring 1981/1982): 17.
- 25 Canada, Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital (hereafter RCRLC), *Quebec Evidence*, Vol. III (Ottawa, 1889), Evidence of Thomas Henry Love, Manager, Montreal Steam Laundry, 690.
- 26 Fernand Harvey, *Revolution industrielle et travailleurs. Une enquête sur les rapports entre le capital et le travail au Québec à la fin du 19e siècle* (Montréal, 1978).
- 27 Marta Danylewycz, "Sexes et classes sociales dans l'enseignement: le cas de Montréal à la fin du 19e siècle," in *Maitresses de maison, maitresses d'école. Femmes, famille et éducation dans l'histoire du Québec*, ed. Nadia Fahmy-Eid and Micheline Dumont (Montréal, 1983): 109-12. A labourer working fairly steadily made \$240 a year. This could support a young family, but was inadequate once there were teenage children. The amounts that women teachers earned would not have supported a woman alone, let alone any dependants.
- 28 Michael Anderson, "The Social Position of Spinsters in Mid-Victorian Britain," *Journal of Family History*, 9 (Winter 1984): 385.
- 29 Eventually the creation of life histories of the cohort of widows will enable a definitive answer to this question.
- 30 This topic clearly requires the detailed retracing of the life histories of specific women rather than speculation. When this project is completed, it should be possible to identify exactly what women inherited, and which women set up in small businesses.
- 31 Barbara Diefendorf, "Widowhood and Remarriage in Sixteenth Century Paris," *Journal of Family History*, 7 (Winter 1982); Jacques E. Dupâquier, Etienne Helin, Peter Laslett, Massimo Livi-Bacci and Solvi Sogner, *Marriage and Remarriage in Populations of the Past* (London, 1981); Barbara Todd, "The remarrying widow: a stereotype reconsidered," in *Women in English Society, 1500-1800*, ed. Mary Prior (London, 1985); and John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (Cambridge, 1969).
- 32 RCRLC, 74.

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- <sup>33</sup> Canada, House of Commons *Sessional Papers*, 1882, no. 42. "Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Working of Mills and Factories of the Dominion and the Labour Employed Therein."
- <sup>34</sup> RCRLC, 18.
- <sup>35</sup> Hufton, "Women without Men" and T. K. Hareven and L. A. Tilly, "Solitary Women and Family Mediation in American and French Textile Cities," *Annales de démographie historique* (Paris: Société de Démographie Historique, 1981).
- <sup>36</sup> NA., Manuscript Census, 1881, Ste. Anne, Subdistrict 3.
- <sup>37</sup> Danylewycz, "Sexes et classes sociales": 116.
- <sup>38</sup> It is possible that this increase simply reflects better reporting in the later censuses. I don't think so. It corresponds too neatly to the expansion of industry in Montreal and to a decline in newspaper comments about roving gangs of young adults. Furthermore, the fact that the proportions remain fairly stable, even fall in the 1881 census, a period of relative depression, suggests that even allowing for underenumeration, especially of girls' work, the census figures are capturing a reality - the formalization of children's work and of the labour market itself.
- <sup>39</sup> The apprenticeship contracts signed before Montreal notaries in the 1820s filed at the Montreal Business History Group, McGill, bear witness to the importance of this strategy for widows.
- <sup>40</sup> The raw data was collected by Sherry Olson and David Hanna, Geography Department, McGill University. For a discussion of this data see Sherry Olson, "The Tip of the Iceberg: Scope and Progress of Research on the Sharing of Social Space in Nineteenth-Century Montreal with Bibliography," *Shared Spaces/Partage de l'espace*, 5 (June 1986).
- <sup>41</sup> Gilles Lauzon has quite correctly argued that great care must be taken when dealing with the divisions between household and family made by Montreal census enumerators. The official definition of a separate household required that it have its own outside door. Many Montreal duplexes and triplexes built at this period had one outside door, which opened into a hallway that gave access to two to four separate apartments. Only careful tracing between sources, as done by Lauzon, will determine which enumerators in different Montreal districts were inflating the apparent amount of household sharing by sticking to the official definition, despite its inappropriateness to Montreal-type housing. See Gilles Lauzon, "Habiter un nouveau quartier ouvrier de la banlieue de Montreal; Village Saint Augustin (Municipalité de Saint-Henri) 1855-1881," (memoire de maîtrise, Université de Québec à Montréal, 1986). Estimates of doubling up given in my earlier publications, as well as those of G. A. Darroch and Michael Ornstein, should be treated carefully in the light of this justified critique. G. A. Darroch and Michael Ornstein, "Family and Household in Nineteenth Century Canada, Regional Patterns and Regional Economics," *Journal of Family History*, 9 (Summer 1984): 158-77; "Family Co-Residence in Canada in 1871: Family Life-Cycles, Occupations and Networks of Mutual Aid," in Canadian Historical Association: *Historical Papers* (1983): 30-56.
- <sup>42</sup> NA., Manuscript Census, 1861, Ste. Anne, folio #3160.
- <sup>43</sup> Hufton, "Women without Men": 360.
- <sup>44</sup> On this see my "Pigs, Cows and Boarders: Non-Wage Forms of Survival among Montreal Families, 1861-1891," *Labour/Le Travail*, 14 (Fall 1984).
- <sup>45</sup> John Cooper, "The Social Structure of Montreal in the 1850s," Canadian Historical Association *Annual Report* (1956): 68.
- <sup>46</sup> NA., Manuscript Census, 1871, Ste. Anne, Subdistrict 11.
- <sup>47</sup> On similar strategies in New York see Christine Stansell, "Women, Children, and the Uses of the Streets: Class and Gender Conflict in New York City, 1850-1860," *Feminist Studies*, 8:2 (Summer 1982).
- <sup>48</sup> Archives of the Sisters of Providence, Montreal, "Chroniques de l'Asile St. Vincent," 1879.
- <sup>49</sup> Protestant House of Industry, *Annual Reports*, 1872-75.
- <sup>50</sup> I hope eventually to determine which of the women in our two marriage cohorts ended up within Montreal institutions. For a description of the living conditions in the Asile de Montréal pour les femmes âgées et infirmes in the 1840's see Huguette Lapointe-Roy, *Charité bien ordonnée. Le premier réseau de lutte contre la pauvreté à Montréal au 19e siècle* (Montreal, 1987): 194-96. Lapointe-Roy gives no idea about who the women using this charity were, nor how many were single, married, or widowed.
- <sup>51</sup> On the use of this orphanage see my article, "The Fragmented Family: Family Strategies in the Face of Death, Illness and Poverty, Montreal, 1860-1885," in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto, 1982).