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**"CLASS, GENDER, AND CHARITY: THE EXPERIENCES
OF OLDER WOMEN IN THREE OTTAWA CHARITABLE
INSTITUTIONS, 1865 - 1890"**

by

TERESA LUKAWIECKI, B.A., B.S.W.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Social Work

School of Social Work

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

April 8, 1993

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**"CLASS. GENDER, AND CHARITY: THE EXPERIENCES
OF OLDER WOMEN IN THREE OTTAWA CHARITABLE
INSTITUTIONS, 1865 - 1890"**

submitted by Teresa Lukawiecki, B.A., B.S.W.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Social Work

Thesis Supervisor

Director, School of Social Work

Carleton University

May 7, 1993

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to portray life for older working class women in three nineteenth century charitable institutions in Ottawa. The three institutions examined are; Foyer St-Charles, a French Catholic general hospital established to care for sick and old people, and two orphanages, St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum and the Protestant Orphan's Home, founded respectively by the Irish Catholic and the English Protestant communities of Ottawa.

This study discusses the conditions that existed in the charitable institutions and how the lives of the older women were affected by the prevailing institutional order. The relationship between the affluent charity workers and the older working class inmates is explored. Findings from this study suggest that while alleviating much suffering and distress, charitable institutions reinforced class and gender differences and tended to perpetuate the vulnerability, passivity, and low status of older working class women in Canadian society.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The experiences of older working class women during the late nineteenth century have generally been excluded from historical accounts. As working class people, their lives were eclipsed by an interest in the rich and famous; as women, their lives were ignored by historians who concentrated on the experiences of men. The scarce information that is available on nineteenth century women has generally focused on younger women, as was noted by the authors of a comprehensive synthesis of Canadian women's history.

Unfortunately we know little about the situation of elderly women at the turn of the century. Perhaps this is because so much emphasis was placed on woman as mother, and when she stopped being mother, she was regarded as no longer significant.¹

Therefore, to be an older working class woman in the late nineteenth century has meant historical obscurity.

The population of older women was relatively small during the late nineteenth century and may have contributed to the paucity of information. Older women represented between two and three per cent of the total Canadian population.² The small number of older women resulted from social conditions which contributed to a short life expectancy of 50 years.³ Death in childbirth, diseases, and poor health due to malnutrition, backbreaking labour, and unsanitary conditions, were the major factors affecting the life expectancy of women. European statistics from the late

nineteenth century indicated that, of the women who reached age 20, almost one-fifth died before age 40 and almost one half died before age 60.⁴

The lack of information on the lives of older women led me to explore the experiences of working class women living in three Ottawa charitable institutions during the late nineteenth century: Foyer St-Charles, St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, and the Protestant Orphan's Home. Following French Catholic tradition, Foyer St-Charles was a general hospital established to care for destitute, sick, and aged people. St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum and the Protestant Orphan's Home,⁵ were orphanages founded by Ottawa's Irish Catholic and English Protestant communities, respectively. These orphanages concentrated primarily on children but included older women, first as a peripheral concern and later as a major part of their work.

Foyer St-Charles was quite different from the other two institutions because as a general hospital it had a mandate to care for older people. It provided better care, accepted more paying inmates with families, and received greater government funding. The role of all charitable institutions caring for older people was best summed up by the provincial Inspector of Institutions.

As regards to these refuges, there is really nothing much to be said...except in their quiet way they relieve a great deal of distress and afford places where many of the aged and infirm can pass away the last years of their lives in comparative peace and comfort.⁶

The time frame between 1865 and 1890 was chosen partly because so little was known about older women during this period. Also, the time frame offered the most complete records for all three institutions. Although brief, information was sufficient to present a credible portrait of the older women inmates, the duration of

their stay, their experiences in the institutions, and their relationship to the charity workers.

The questions which directed this research were: Who were the older women inmates? What conditions existed in the charitable institutions? How were the lives of older women affected by the prevailing institutional order? What was the relationship between the founders and the older women inmates? The findings show that charitable institutions, while alleviating much suffering and distress, reinforced class and gender differences, and tended to perpetuate the vulnerability, passivity, and low status of older working class women in Canadian society.

Charitable institutions were microcosms of nineteenth century class and gender differences. In general, they accommodated working class people who could no longer care for themselves. Women's lifelong dependent status made them particularly vulnerable to requiring charitable assistance. The typical older woman inmate in the three charitable institutions was a working class, unskilled, respectable widow from the city of Ottawa with few financial resources and little family support. A large proportion of the older women found in the three institutions were Irish, indicating the difficult life conditions of this ethnic group. As well, the inmates at Foyer St-Charles were older and had more severe illnesses or disabilities.

Two distinct groups of older women lived in the charitable institutions. One group was a stable core of inmates who were frail, quiet, and manageable. The other group was highly transient for a variety of reasons including not being able to conform to behavioral expectations, finding work, becoming too physically or

mentally incapacitated, or returning to family. The underlying causes of this transience were the rigid moral standards of the affluent charity workers who managed the institutions and their inability to respond to the varying needs of the older women.

In contrast to the social standing of the inmates, the charity workers were from the middle and upper classes. The Protestant Orphan's Home was managed by affluent Protestant women. Foyer St-Charles was run by a religious order headed by middle and upper class nuns. St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum was managed overall by affluent Catholic men but nuns were responsible for the daily institutional affairs and interacting directly with the inmates. Therefore, in all three institutions, charity work was predominantly done by women of the middle and upper class. A sense of Christian duty and a desire to reform society motivated these women to provide for those less fortunate.

The relationship between the affluent women who operated the institutions and the older women inmates who used the services was premised on Victorian morality that stressed self-reliance, promoted the work ethic, recognized the "deserving" poor, and encouraged a feudal bond of gratitude. This Victorian moral order determined the rigorous admission process, prospective inmates' eligibility for charity, the rules and regulations that governed the institutions, the expectation that residents would assist with household chores, and the rationale for discharging "troublesome" or "bad" inmates. In their forced dependency positions, older working class women were extremely vulnerable to the perceptions of the affluent women who managed the

homes. They had to passively accept institutional standards or face disciplinary measures.

As with many historical studies, this one was limited by incomplete documentation, particularly for Foyer St-Charles. Many of the original documents were destroyed or unavailable so most of the information came from secondary sources such as the works of historians within religious orders. The records of the orphanages were fragmentary because their primary concern was children. The most comprehensive information on the older women was contained in the registers of inmates but even these were limited because an inmate's history was often summed up in two or three sentences.

Because the records were recorded a century ago by many different people, they have considerable internal inconsistency. At the same time, their obvious biases provide useful information. The interpretation of this study has also been tainted with my own late twentieth century thought and experience. Even with these limitations, the examination of the three institutions offers some interesting insights about nineteenth century life for older working class women.

Introduction Endnotes

1. Alison Prentice, Paula Bourne, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light, Wendy Mitchenson, & Naomi Black, Canadian Women: A History (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Janovich Canada Inc., 1988), p. 167.
2. Historical Statistics of Canada, 2nd Edition, (Canada: Statistics Canada, 1983).
3. Canadian Association on Gerontology Newsletter, Vol. 16, No. 4, (Ottawa: Canadian Association on Gerontology, 1989), p. 2. Life expectancy was also around 50 years of age in United States, France, and England. See Marilyn Yalom, "The Older Woman - Introduction," in Victorian Women: A Documentary Account of Women's Lives in Nineteenth-Century England, France, and the United States, eds., Erna Hellerstein, Leslie Hume & Karen Offen (California: Stanford University Press, 1981), p. 452.
4. Martin Kohli, "The World We Forgot: A Critical Review of the Life Course," in Later Life: The Social Psychology of Aging, ed. Victor Marshall (Beverly Hills: Sage Productions, 1986), p. 278.
5. When this institution was originally founded it was called "The Orphan's Home of the City of Ottawa" although the Annual Reports for the first five years referred to it as the "Protestant Orphans' Home." The name officially changed to "The Protestant Orphan's Home" in 1914. For clarity, I have chosen to call the institution the "Protestant Orphan's Home."
6. As cited in Richard Splane, Social Welfare in Ontario 1791-1893 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 96-97.

CHAPTER II
OLDER WOMEN, CLASS, AND CHARITY IN
NINETEENTH CENTURY ONTARIO

The three charitable institutions studied (Foyer St-Charles, St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, and the Protestant Orphan's Home) are reflections of class, gender, and charity in nineteenth century Ontario. The relationship between these factors is examined in this chapter to determine why so many working class women were forced to turn to charity in their later lives, and how their institutional experiences were shaped.

Canadian society had a class structure based on the inequality of wealth, property, education, and opportunity. Joey Noble expands on this notion of class to include all "social relations that exist between people" that are socially constructed by those who desire to retain or expand their power in society.

Class is the practice of organizing the relation between individuals who control and organize the social means of production and those who are organized by and as part of it.²

Noble further suggests that in the nineteenth century, one manifestation of the construction of class relations was the way in which charity was provided. Charity reinforced class differences, encouraged conformity to middle and upper class morals, and gave the affluent a means to interpret and contain the troubling phenomenon of poverty.³ Charity clearly established the boundaries between elites who were the donors and working class people who were the recipients. In addition to helping

build cohesiveness among the upper classes, charity also gave them an opportunity to display their socio-economic position relative to that of the working class.

Noble also identifies a belief that direct interaction between the classes had a curative effect because it created a bond of gratitude that would lead the poor to correcting the presumed cause of their poverty.⁴

Giving that was carried out in the context of a personal, voluntary relation between donor and recipient was thought to create a more 'organic,' almost feudal type of bond between superior and inferior -- in particular a direct experience of gratitude, hence presumably a sense of obligation on the part of recipients.⁵

This gratitude which Noble discusses in her examination of friendly visiting in nineteenth century Toronto, is also evident in institutional forms of charity. The charitable institutions that cared for older women actively looked for signs of such gratitude. The security of shelter and food in dependency and destitution often produced great outpourings of gratitude, as can be seen in the following passage from the records of the Protestant Orphan's Home.

It seems to us, sometimes, as if the old people but entered our door to find a quiet place to die. Still, it is gratifying to know that their last days have been made comfortable and their pathway smoothed in the decline of life, and to hear, from their own lips, as we often do, expressions of gratitude for the care bestowed on them.⁶

This gratitude was also noted at Foyer St-Charles.

Les vieillards, en général, sont bien reconnaissants. Ils le seront encore d'avantage quand, au séjour des élus, ils sauront la force des prières et l'étendue des sacrifices faits pour eux.⁷

By not expressing their gratitude verbally, older women were perceived to have character flaws. This then allowed the upper class to patronize older working class women, reflecting the struggle to maintain class and power differences.

As for the old people - well, if they are not happy in their bright, cheerful rooms, with all their wants supplied, it is because, poor souls, they have, many of them, been so tossed about by the storms of life as to embitter them and render them querulous and discontented.⁸

A lack of gratitude was sometimes attributed to the negative perception of older people being too senile to comprehend the benevolence bestowed upon them. The Sisters at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum were "ministering to the wants of those who for the most part are either too young to experience the feeling of gratitude or too old to realize that they have anything to be grateful for."⁹ Dependent older people were pictured as the docile recipients of charity and viewed as somewhat incompetent and insignificant.

Charity was based on the assumption that every Christian was imbued with a moral obligation of compassion for those who were less advantaged or who had fallen on bad times. The religious duty of middle and upper class people to be charitable was continually preached.¹⁰ Appeals to Catholics of the Irish faith to perform their Christian duty appeared in almost every annual report of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum.

We therefore as a matter of duty and christian charity call upon all the Irish citizens of Ottawa to be united in the matter to enroll [sic] themselves as members and in every way practical to render aid and assistance to the Asylum.¹¹

It was hoped that this sense of Christian duty would encourage generous donations to the charitable institutions.

Charity served to encourage the working class to conform with the ideals and values of the middle and upper classes. In Mariana Valverde's study of moral reform in English Canada, she notes that white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, middle class charity workers pressured the working class to accept and adopt their cultural values. Affluent women accomplished this through the careful distribution of charity and by waging moral campaigns such as encouraging temperance and thrift. Essentially through their work, a small group of affluent women dictated the morality of a large mass of working class women.¹²

Some women were given the possibility of acquiring a relatively powerful identity as rescuers, reformers, and even experts, while other women were reduced to being objects of philanthropic concern.¹³

In this sense, charity established a great power differential among women, creating and defining class differences.

Most of the charity workers were elite women with leisure time to pursue social and recreational activities, charity work, and higher education. As the middle class expanded and became more affluent, their involvement in charitable activities also increased.¹⁴ With industrialization there was an increasing polarity in social attitudes towards women and an increasing difference between the lives of the upper and middle classes and those of the working class. The image of the "lady," embodying the "Victorian ideals of pure, moral, domesticated womanhood," discouraged the employment of married women outside the home and became the

ideal of femininity for which all women strived.¹⁵ However, this ideal could only be attained by relatively affluent families, and as working class women were forced into lives of drudgery and hard labour, class differences widened.

Charity also provided a means to interpret and contain the phenomenon of urban poverty. The prevailing attitude towards poverty was rooted in a Victorian moral order that rested on the belief that individuals were ultimately responsible for the lives they lived. This was complimented by the work ethic, which was the belief that through hard work, success and virtue could be attained by anyone.¹⁶ By individualizing poverty, the elite could explain its existence without acknowledging its roots in the structural inequality perpetuated by their class.¹⁷

Because of these strong values, poverty was seen to be a moral failing caused by a character defect. The poverty of younger people was associated with vagrancy and the wilful refusal to work. Even in old age, self-help and self-reliance were emphasized. "Poverty in old age was often considered to be an indication of moral failure - the absence of thrift and self-denial during youth and middle age."¹⁸ It was believed that people, particularly men, should save for their old age, even though conditions such as unemployment and low pay often made this ideal impossible.

While extremely harsh attitudes existed towards poor people generally, there was a realization that certain segments of the population were destitute through no fault of their own. Aged poor people, particularly women, individuals with disabilities, and orphans were considered "deserving" poor in need of Christian

charity.¹⁹ This was reflected in the Sixteenth Annual Report of the Protestant Orphan's Home.

There are three conditions of helpless humanity which call most loudly for sympathy and assistance, viz. childhood, old age, and sickness. These, in their utter dependence, seem to be completely thrown upon the kindness of others.²⁰

The "deserving" poor "were immediately recognizable since the cause of their poverty, be it age, infirmity, or youthful innocence, was undeniably obvious."²¹

Poor older women were considered "deserving" because of women's general dependent status in society and the difficult living conditions of the working class. The presumption of saving for old age did not apply in the same manner as for men.

There are aged women ... respectable, honest and well-living, who from no fault of their own, but from the unfortunate circumstances of one kind or another have been left in their feebleness with scanty means, - and in many cases - no means at all, - to struggle through the remaining years of their lives, with no near relatives to take care of them or to attend to their needed comfort.²²

Not all older women were considered deserving and those with questionable moral characters or inclined towards intemperance were thought to be beyond redemption and were not assisted. This was justified by limited resources and the desire to help those who fit the image of the respectable older woman.

Moral upkeep was the focus of charity for older individuals, while charity for younger people focused on moral uplift. Younger people were thought to be in need of correction and discipline, and indiscriminant charity would only encourage idleness and dependency. Punitive charity was considered necessary because of the belief that human nature was capable of improvement with effort and appropriate moral

instruction. In contrast, charity for deserving older people was meant to keep up their respectability. This ensured that they were not forced to revert to immoral means for survival.

Nineteenth century charity and Canadian policy towards the poor, with the exception of Quebec, originated from the principles of the British Poor Laws. These Laws, which were a comprehensive policy for poor relief, established the responsibility of local governments and were the basis for state intervention. Although the Upper Canada Legislature rejected the Poor Laws in 1792, subsequent policy on poor relief reflected the principles of the British Poor Law Reforms of 1832-4.²³

The principles of the British reform, emphasized the efficacy of institutional care over outdoor relief. Prior to this in Upper Canada, institutional relief did not exist but "magistrates occasionally sanctioned payment or support for individuals in distress."²⁴ Around 1840, following the reforms in England, the practice of outdoor relief was greatly restricted or eliminated in English North America and Britain. Custodial care through the establishment of institutions became the mechanism of providing for dependents and signalled a change to a more permanent form of relief.²⁵ Institutional care was considered more efficient than outdoor relief because eligibility could be thoroughly investigated ensuring that charity was not given indiscriminantly and people were not receiving assistance from more than one organization. As well, institutional care ensured that the principle of less-eligibility was enforced. Less-eligibility was the belief that "the conditions of life provided by

public relief should be less pleasant than those experienced by workers of the lowest class in the community."²⁶

Although the British North American Act indicated that the provinces were responsible for poor relief, they often passed it on to local governments or private charitable institutions. In Ontario, this produced a piecemeal approach with the development of some public institutions, such as gaols and Houses of Refuge, and the provision of some funding to private charity organizations through the Charity Aid Act of 1874.²⁷ This legislative tool provided for the distribution of small regular contributions for maintenance costs based on favourable reports from the provincial inspector.

In Colonial Upper Canada, prior to the establishment of private charitable institutions, older people were housed in local gaols with the general poor population, the sick, disabled, intemperate, and unemployed.²⁸ The Ontario Royal Commission on the Prison and Reformatory System of 1891 found that "of those committed as vagrants the greatest number are deserving poor people who have been unfortunate and who are incapacitated for work by ill health or old age."²⁹ The Royal Commission decried the number of homeless older people lodged in local gaols on charges of vagrancy because no alternative accommodations existed.

Many aged and infirm people who have never been guilty of any crime or serious offence, who have led honest industrious lives, working hard while it was possible to work, who are thus disregarded and humiliated in their old age, branded as violators of the law and compelled to consort with criminals.³⁰

Poverty, feebleness, and illness forced many elderly people to seek shelter in the local gaols.

Besides gaols, a few older people also found shelter in another public institution, the lunatic asylum. Although lunatic asylums were established to cure the insane, they were also being used as dumping grounds to house younger troublesome deviants and unwanted dependent people. Not many older people were found in lunatic asylums because as "incurables" they were not welcome. One of the few exceptions of an older chronic patient was Mary M. from the London Asylum.

Mary M. (#450), an elderly Irish immigrant, became insane from 'want and loneliness' and was admitted on 26, June, 1871. Although the priest was sent for twice because it was thought she would die, Mary thrived in the Asylum. She talked a 'good deal of Irish' and wanted everyone to 'partake in any food she had.' She was 'very occasionally' bad tempered and died of old age on 20, March, 1887.³¹

As with other public institutions, lunatic asylums predominantly housed poor people because the wealthy could care for their own insane family members and did not want them mingling with the lower class.³²

The early public institutions did not recognize the category of deserving poor and many charitable citizens were concerned with the punitive accommodations these people had to endure. Private charitable institutions began to be established as charity shifted from deterrence to relief in recognition of the deserving poor.³³ This shift, that resulted in inmates in Ontario charitable institutions being increasingly categorized in terms of age, precipitated the separation of the aged from the general population. "The evolution of institutional care for the elderly both reflected and

significantly influenced the growing differentiation of the old from the rest of society."³⁴

The first charitable institution for the aged was established in Toronto during the 1830s and soon others began springing up across Ontario.³⁵ Ottawa did not have its first truly age-segregated institution until 1884 with the establishment of the Protestant Home for the Aged. The time lag occurred because dependent elderly people were being cared for with various populations in different institutions. The three institutions presented in this study are examples of places that cared for older women in Ottawa.

Some charitable institutions in Ontario accommodated both sexes, while others separated males and females. In general, more older women used these facilities than men.³⁶ There also appeared to be some racial segregation as "some of the inmates are white and some are coloured, and as a rule, they are kept in separate rooms and have different tables for their meals."³⁷ All individuals admitted to charitable institutions were called inmates.

To understand the establishment of Foyer St-Charles, one must first examine Lower Canada policy towards the poor that influenced Ottawa's French Catholic population through language ties and a church hierarchy dominated by francophone clergy.³⁸ French charity was not inspired by the British Poor Laws but rather by the social doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. After the Conquest in 1760, these social doctrines had become a mechanism for defending the French Canadian culture from the threat of British rule. It was

... an outgrowth of the antistatist position developed by the Quebec church after the conquest as a defence against the threat to French-Canadian culture posed by the dominance of the Anglophone, Protestant, commercialist minority.³⁹

The Church promoted the Catholic religion as "the fortress of the French nation" to distinguish the province from its English Protestant neighbours. Ultramontanism, which was the belief in greater or absolute supremacy of papal over state authority, became dominant in Quebec in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Because the Church was considered superior to the state in matters of education, health and charity, the reliance on religious orders to provide services was strengthened. This in turn helped to reinforce the dominance of the Catholic Church within French Canadian society.⁴⁰

Religious orders increasingly became a very popular alternative to marriage or spinsterhood for French Catholic women during the nineteenth century.⁴¹ These Catholic orders paralleled the Protestant benevolent societies because they expanded the narrow confines of acceptable female behaviour and offered women a chance at "leadership, community work and sisterhood."⁴² Piety and martyrdom, exemplified through the execution of enormous amounts of charitable work, characterized the lives of nuns.

Religious orders reflected the social arrangement in larger society with a well-established class hierarchy within each community. Upper and middle class women with dowries and formal education could become privileged "choir sisters." These sisters governed charitable institutions or assumed professional roles in teaching and

medicine. The choir sisters were also able to pursue their interests because they were expected to become proficient in art, writing, or languages.⁴³

Lay sisters were primarily working class women who were generally excluded from the governing and administrative affairs of religious orders because they were not considered social equals in the communities. Similar to life outside convents, these women with no dowry, little education, and only their labour to offer, would become domestic servants. However, for working class women, life was better within religious orders than in the secular community. Lay sisters could rise in station if they were educated, something rarely possible for women outside convents. The menial tasks they performed were important to the communities and they could expect to be cared for in their old age.⁴⁴

Class also played a role in the choice of religious order. Prestige came from the type of work the order performed and it defined the status of the community and the women who joined it. Rather than making indiscriminant decisions, women considered which community would be "best suited to their particular social preferences and personal aspirations."⁴⁵

In her study of two religious orders in Montreal, Marta Danylewycz found that upper and middle class women were overrepresented in a teaching order, while daughters of farmers and workers dominated an order doing community work with unwed mothers.⁴⁶ Teaching was considered prestigious because of the increasingly important role of education. Therefore, in this order middle class women could live as middle class nuns. The work with unwed mothers required nuns of all ranks to do

manual labour and this decline in status went against the social expectations of most women from the higher classes. The status of charitable work with older people was probably more prestigious than work with fallen women but secondary to that of children whose proper upbringing was thought to be the key to societal reform.

The Grey Sisters of the Cross, the religious order that ran Foyer St-Charles and controlled the domestic management of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, was probably a very prestigious order because it was involved with teaching and nursing. Although the profession of nursing was stigmatized as menial labour, nuns were viewed more positively than secular nurses because they "belonged to the elite group of Christ's spouses."⁴⁷ The moral superiority of religious devotion would have added to the chasm between the women who managed the charitable institutions and those who used its services. The Sisters Superior in charge of the institutions were probably from the upper or middle class and their upbringing would tend to reflect the values and attitudes of the secular world. This in turn would colour their interactions with the older women inmates.

From this backdrop on charity, attention can now be directed towards understanding the conditions which created older women's need for charitable assistance. The following background information generally describes the lives of working class women in nineteenth century Ontario. With few legal or political rights, most women's class positions were determined by the social standings of their

fathers or husbands. A woman's position seldom changed, unless she married into a different class or her father or husband crossed socio-economic lines.

Although a division of labour based on sex has always existed, with industrialization its nature changed. As families became more reliant on wage labour and work was concentrated in urban centres, men left their homes to work. Public life was seen to belong to men, while the "ideology of domestication" saw the home as increasingly the "proper sphere" for women.⁴⁸ The idea of different spheres for men and women was based on the assumptions that men would support their families at home and that it was the natural duty of women to provide domestic services.

The assumption that women would be dependent on their husbands' earnings made it impossible for them to live independently or save money for their old age. Working class women usually entered the paid workforce between the ages of 15-24, and then after a short period they married and left paid employment, at least temporarily. In keeping with the status quo, these women assumed the expected role of remaining in the home and having on average seven children.⁴⁹

Within their homes, working class women participated in an "informal economy." They would supplement the family income by sewing, making butter, babysitting for neighbours, weaving linen, and keeping bees, poultry or pigs. Although this work was essential to the survival of the family and "often made all the difference to the family's ability to accumulate capital," it was not recognized as important by the government.⁵⁰ Government statistics on female employment have

not generally to this day, acknowledged the contribution of women's unpaid labour to the prosperity of the country.

Although the onerous tasks of housekeeping and child rearing kept working class women occupied, often they were not in financial positions to attain the ideal of remaining in their homes fully supported by their husbands. Thus, increasing numbers of women had to leave their homes to work in order to survive economically.⁵¹ "By 1868, the Toronto Globe estimated that of 27,000 women in the city, 5,000 were earning their living and were 'independent of other means than their own hands' for support."⁵² When working class women did seek paid work, it was usually temporary and irregular, often resulting from spousal unemployment, illness, desertion or widowhood.

With only rudimentary education, working class women tended to work in the lowest paid, least skilled jobs. They were given lower wages than men because they were believed to be secondary earners. In 1884, the Ontario Bureau of Industries indicated that the average male wage for a 59 hour week was almost \$400 annually compared to \$133 annually for women. For the same labour, women received wages between one-third to one-half those of men.⁵³ With their meagre earnings, women could not be self-supporting so they alternated between wage labour and domestic labour spending most of their lives dependent on the wages of fathers or husbands. Often single women without means were driven to vagrancy and prostitution to survive.

Immigration compounded women's labour difficulties because it continued to supply a glut of people forced to work for subsistence wages. Many nineteenth century immigrants were brought to Canada to become servants for upper and middle class households. Before the famine migrations in the 1840's, 40 per cent of Irish emigrants were young single women recruited to become domestics.⁵⁴ It was many of these women who would in later life require charitable assistance. A small number of older women domestics were also recruited such as the older family servant brought over from Ireland to keep house for suffragette Nellie McClung's widowed father and uncle.

Judy Connor, already servant in the grandfather's home in Ireland, was sent across the Atlantic at age fifty to keep house for the two men. She served the family until her death.⁵⁵

Upper and middle class women were in constant search of good servants who were clean, celibate, obedient, respectable, hard working, and early risers. Religious dogma tended to reinforce class differences between mistress and servant with the church helping to promote the image of the "good" servant.

Domestic servants were encouraged to model themselves after Christ, the Suffering Servant, and sacrifice their own interests for their employers' without complaint.⁵⁶

Domestic service was the largest area of employment for Canadian women with 41 per cent of those working doing this type of labour in 1891.⁵⁷ Most women entered domestic service because the range of occupations open to women was very limited. A lack of skills and education further restricted women's choices. The most common domestic was the "general" servant who could cook, clean, sew, take care of

children, and perform all household tasks for the lowest of wages. Cooks and housekeepers, who were often middle-aged women, had the highest status and were the best paid. When other alternatives such as marriage or another job became available, many women rejected domestic work because of its low status, long hours, and lack of privacy.⁵⁸ The high turnover rate left women with little security in their later years forcing many to seek charity. This is highlighted in the following passage on the problem of the aged poor in nineteenth century England.

It is the custom ... for domestic servants to move about from place to place at intervals of one or two years or so. The consequence is that they do not remain in any one place sufficiently long to establish a claim on their employers. They ultimately become aged, when employers cease to be willing to employ them; consequently, they come on the [tax] rates.⁵⁹

Besides domestic service, other jobs that were considered suitable for the "female constitution" were laundry worker, seamstress, and schoolteacher. Teachers generally received lower wages than charwomen but because it was related to the care of children, the work had an "aura of genteel respectability." Only single women taught school for longer than a few years because severe regulations dictated that teachers could not get married, chew gum, wear tight shoes or coloured stockings, or have corns on their feet.⁶⁰

As working class women aged, their status which was already low, generally decreased. Poor older people with limited resources were despised while wealthy individuals, particularly men, were venerated because of their power to distribute assets.⁶¹

The aged poor, with worn-out workers reduced to destitution and homeless, wandering elderly peasants treated like animals, were at the very bottom of the

social scale. But at the very top we find the aged belonging to the upper classes: the antithesis is so enormous that one might almost be looking at two different species.⁶²

Although affluent older women's status was higher than that of the working class, they too were restricted by women's general position in society relative to men. Affluent women were considered ridiculous if they dared go beyond the "asexual, self-effacing, all-nurturing" role expected of them.⁶³

The low status of older women was further exacerbated by a shift in ideas on aging in nineteenth century North America and Europe. Aged people were increasingly separated from the rest of society because of a change in cultural attitudes and the rise in the professionalization of medicine.⁶⁴ The change in cultural attitudes resulted from the consolidation of a middle class value system based on individualism and a "moral code relying heavily on physical self-control."⁶⁵ In an effort to control rather than accept the aging process, the moral code dichotomized it into two spheres, with youth being associated with self-reliance and health, and old age linked with frailty and decline. Old age had been previously considered a natural occurrence and people continued to work until they died, but by the late nineteenth century it was accepted that older people could no longer contribute meaningfully to society.

With the advancement of scientific medicine during the late nineteenth century, aging became a pathological process. As physicians struggled to gain credibility for their profession, every aspect of human life, including the aging process, was filtered through a medical model. "As in the medical model of senescence, disease was no

longer an entity separate from old age: it had become the central and determining factor in that period of life."⁶⁶ Older people were considered beyond medical assistance and their illnesses largely incurable.

Aging had different economic and social meanings for women and men. If she survived to age 60, a woman was likely to be widowed. Widows generally had a more difficult time surviving than widowers. Once their husband's wages stopped, many older women were forced to seek paid employment in jobs that were extensions of their domestic roles in the home.⁶⁷ With no private means and no modern support systems such as pensions, widows worked as long as physically possible. When they grew more infirm, they looked for jobs that were less strenuous. Despite advanced age, illness or disability, many older women were forced to continue working at extremely gruelling jobs in order to survive.⁶⁸ The extent of their suffering is suggested in the following passage.

One old Scotswoman was picked up off the streets, collapsed from starvation. Having given up laundry work as too heavy a month earlier, she was driven to selling shoelaces but was unable to earn enough to eat. Too weak to undergo surgery, she died a few hours later.⁶⁹

Other survival strategies widows used were highlighted in Bettina Bradbury's Montreal study. Widows relied on the wages of their children and lived with other women to reduce rent or get help with childcare. They grew vegetables and fruit, kept cows or pigs, took in boarders, stole or turned to prostitution. Finally, widows sought help from their families and as a last resort they turned to charitable institutions.⁷⁰

The different societal expectations regarding remarriage for men and women was another reason widows had a more difficult time surviving. A widower, whether young or old, was expected to remarry a much younger woman because women were prized when they were young, beautiful, and capable of bearing children. However, once menopause, the "gateway" to old age was reached, not only did motherhood cease but a woman's sexual attractiveness was perceived to be over. Physicians described menopause or "the change in life," as "physically risky and emotionally harrowing [and] unhinges the female nervous system and deprives women of their personal charms."⁷¹ This was consistent with the trend towards medicalization which altered perceptions of natural occurrences and made them abnormal.

"Young and beautiful" and "old and ugly" summed up the social attitudes towards women; therefore, "the older widow in search of a spouse was not treated kindly by public opinion."⁷² The younger or more wealthy the widow was, the more likely she was to remarry. If a woman did not remarry within the first few years of widowhood, her chances decreased. Her chances were further diminished by the surplus of women in urban centres that resulted from men leaving to open the West.⁷³

Thus, many women spent their final years alone and when they could no longer care for themselves, their first recourse was their families. Families were expected to take responsibility for dependent relatives and provide whatever help could be afforded. Although the typical family household of nineteenth century Canada was nuclear, there were instances of "stemlike households" resulting from

dependent widows coming into their children's homes.⁷⁴ Women were more easily accepted into the homes of their children because older men were expected to support themselves through paid labour or remarriage, and it was not as difficult to integrate a submissive female into a male-dominated household.

Women's 'natural dependence' could, in this instance, work to their advantage in old age ... Old women were more welcome in the home because they continued to make themselves useful as babysitters and housekeepers, whereas old men were more likely to be viewed as useless and 'in the way' by their daughters and daughters-in-law.⁷⁵

Widowed mothers lived with their children, sometimes sequentially. Lucy Crawford, an older mid-nineteenth century American pioneer, wrote that she spent several years "wandering about from place to place, finding a home with her children wherever she could be most useful."⁷⁶ Elderly single women also moved between relatives depending on who would have them.

In the homes of their adult children, older women generally had no authority and were not held in high esteem. Although family life was romanticized, often older women were subject to abuse and neglect.⁷⁷ In rural communities,

... aged parents no longer able to work were often treated with various shades of indifference, resentment and even hatred by grudging son and perhaps vengeful daughter-in-law who wished them dead and sometimes drove them 'n it.⁷⁸

If an elderly woman wanted relief from an abusive family, she often had no other recourse than to seek charity.

This chapter has set the stage for understanding the relationship between class, gender, old age, and charity in nineteenth century Ontario. Older working class

women had very little status in Canadian society because as poor individuals they lacked social position, and as women they lost their reproductive value when they aged. This was exacerbated by the change in ideas about aging that made old age a social construct through the professionalization of medicine and the establishment of a middle class value system. The division of labour with the ideal of domesticated womanhood, rampant wage discrimination, and economic insecurity brought on by widowhood, contributed to the difficult lives working class women endured.

It was from these earlier life experiences that working class women were forced to turn to charity in their old age. Charity was based on Victorian morality that espoused individualism and the work ethic. Charity served to encourage conformity to the values of the upper and middle classes, and provided the elite with a means to understand poverty. Because charity was managed by affluent women and directed towards those in the working class, it created and perpetuated class differences among women. The freedom affluent women gained from their social positions was used to keep working class women in their proper place. In this sense, gender, and class were intricately linked to charity in nineteenth century Ontario.

Chapter II Endnotes

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CHAPTER III
THREE OTTAWA CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS
AND THE OLDER WOMEN INMATES

Charitable institutions in Ottawa reflected the socio-economic and cultural divisions of the city, with different facilities being established based on religion, nationality, language, and gender. For example, the Protestant Home for the Aged cared primarily for elderly Protestant men and Orphelinat St-Joseph was the French counterpart of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum. The three charitable institutions examined in this study reflected these same divisions. The Protestant Orphan's Home was an English Protestant orphanage established to care for children and older women. St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum was another orphanage that served all age groups of the Irish Catholic community. Finally, Foyer St-Charles was a hospice founded by a French Catholic religious order to care for aged and sick individuals. To understand the establishment of these institutions, one must first look at Ottawa's social, economic, and cultural climate of the period.

Geographically Ottawa was divided along class, ethnic, religious, and language lines. Ottawa's class structure consisted of a relatively small wealthy upper class, a new expanding middle class, and a great mass of working class people. The present downtown area was known as Upper Town, the home to a predominantly English Protestant middle class population. Lower Town, in what is now the market area,

housed the working class. Within Lower Town, the French Catholic community tended to live east of King Edward street while the Irish Catholics resided on the west side. Sandy Hill was home to the wealthy elites regardless of religion and ethnicity.¹

Ethnic rivalry and fighting were prominent features of nineteenth century Ottawa. Competitive and sometimes hostile relations existed between English Protestants, French Catholics, and Irish Catholics. An historian for les Soeurs de la Charité d'Ottawa noted these hostile relations during the mid-nineteenth century.

La situation sociale de Bytown à l'époque n'est guère enviable. Une hostilité profonde et même parfois violence caractérise les rapports entre les gens de langues et de religions différentes.²

In 1871, the ethnic origin of 34 per cent of Ottawa's population was French. People with origins from the British Isles constituted another 65 per cent, with Irish Roman Catholics making up roughly 30 per cent of this group. Ottawa's Irish population was part of the 104,518 emigrants who had arrived in Canada by 1847, settling mostly in Upper Canada.³ The canal workers came to Ottawa during the 1830s and were followed by the potato famine Irish in the 1840s.⁴ Most of these refugees, who migrated because of famine and British political oppression, were militantly Irish and Catholic, very poor, often illiterate, and "possessed an abiding hatred of Britain and things British."⁵ They tended to be semi-skilled workers and labourers, found among the poorest people in urban centres. Labouring for low wages, they could not accumulate any savings; nor could they support non-productive family members.

As a result of the high proportion of Irish and French citizens, Ottawa's major religious affiliation was Roman Catholic.⁶ The English Protestants responded to the

Catholic threat by establishing a very prominent Orange Order during the early nineteenth century.

The Upper Town and the rural areas surrounding, with religion and race in common, had a common antipathy to French, Irish, and Roman Catholics, an antipathy expressed through one of the most prominent Orange Orders of Upper Canada.⁷

Both Protestants and Catholics contributed to the anti-French sentiment in Ottawa.

The Irish Catholics believed that English was the best language for the "True Faith" and as early as the 1830s, clergy had to contend with many disciplinary problems between French and Irish parishioners.⁸ Competition for scarce jobs was fierce among these groups with factionalism so extreme that each had to have its own volunteer fire-brigade.⁹

Ottawa's divisive social climate was also undergoing the same rapid industrialization and urbanization that was occurring throughout Canada. Its population of 14,669 nearly doubled to 27,412 between 1861 and 1881, and the number of women over 50 years of age increased from 433 to 1,553.¹⁰ With no manufacturing base, most of Ottawa's economic activity was in the areas of lumber, construction, utilities, and the developing bureaucracy of the federal government. During this period of rapid growth, a series of economic depressions were experienced, precipitating the extreme suffering and destitution of such segments of the population as dependent older women.

This brief overview of Ottawa provides the social and economic context for understanding the climate in which charitable institutions were established. Foyer St-

Charles, named after the patron Saint-Charles-Borromée, was established in 1871 to serve aged and sick poor people in the community.

En somme, l'hospice est une maison de prière où il arrive que de pauvres vieillards, après avoir quelquefois erré loin du bercail, se retrouvent et se préparent en paix au passage dans l'éternité.¹¹

It was founded by the Montreal religious order, the Grey Sisters of the Cross. In 1845, four nuns were sent to Bytown, the original name of Ottawa, to establish a Mother House, a hospital, and a bilingual school for children. Around 1870, the Mother House directed charitable efforts towards consolidating the nuns' work with older people under one roof. Older people were being sheltered in the Mother House, and the French Catholic and Irish Catholic orphanages, Orphenlinat St-Joseph and St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum. By caring for older people in one place, the other institutions could direct their efforts at the intended populations.

An old military hospital constructed in 1847 during the typhus epidemic was purchased by the Bishop of Ottawa for the Sisters. The property on Water (Bryère) and Sussex Street was valued at \$3,200 and consisted of five lots and a two-story wooden house measuring 80 by 30 feet. In 1881, the building was enlarged with the construction of a right wing measuring 34 by 50 feet and the addition of another floor to the old part. On three separate occasions after 1888 additions were built.

Following the French practices in Quebec, which were fashioned after the religious communities in France, Foyer St-Charles was established as a general hospital to care for "the destitute sick and invalids and those people not able to subsist

by their own labour."¹² Not only was it a hospital in the modern sense, it was also a place of refuge in the traditional sense.

The earliest hospitals, or hospices, linked as they were with churches and monasteries accepted and mixed together all kinds of people; "the aged, infirm, dying, diseased, wounded, blind, crippled, idiot, insane, orphans, paupers, wanderers and pilgrims."¹³

The acceptance of people with varying problems meant that general hospitals had to address a variety of needs. Accordingly, Foyer St-Charles had both male and female inmates ranging in age from the very young to the very old. Women with children and young convalescents like 24 year old Mary Bird were also admitted.

Mary Bird née en Irlande, admise de l'Hospital à sa convalescence après une sérieuse maladie à l'Hospice St-Charles, gratis, âgée vingt-quatre ans, le 28 avril '88, sortie le 14 mai '88.¹⁴

The establishment of Foyer St-Charles as a general hospital in the second half of the nineteenth century went against the trend occurring in English hospitals.

Before 1850, hospitals in Ontario were primarily used as places for rest and recuperation, similar to Foyer St-Charles. They were charitable enterprises designed to cure both the moral and physical ailments of the poor. But by mid-century, English hospitals had developed into medical institutions shaped by science and were increasingly seen as places for surgery and recovery from operations. Many hospitals refused to admit incurables or people with infectious diseases; some even discharged older patients whose nearness to death might have raised mortality statistics.¹⁵

French Catholic hospitals had not undergone such changes because they continued to follow the traditional French practices of providing care for frail elderly people, thus functioning like modern chronic care facilities.

The founding of the Protestant Orphan's Home was largely credited to the efforts of Mrs. W.F. Coffin and Dr. C.S. Sewell. Interest in the welfare of children and the freedom of affluent women to do charity work were the motivating factors for the creation of this institution. In 1864, a meeting of prominent ladies of the different Protestant denominations was organized to establish the orphanage. However, men were invited to the meeting to preside over it because

... it was not customary then for women to occupy places on platforms and carry on the business of public meetings; on this occasion, therefore, it was entirely transacted by gentlemen, while the ladies modestly sat on the side benches.¹⁶

It was decided that the institution would be open primarily to children and secondarily to widows. The constitution stipulated that

[t]he Home shall be for the reception, 1st, of Orphans who have lost both parents; 2nd, of Children with one surviving parent, but who may be deprived by accident or otherwise of the surviving parents care; 3rd, of Children who may be deprived of all care and support from their parents, through poverty or other contingency. 4th, Widows unable from age or infirmity or other cause to earn a living. The above shall be the order of precedence of admission, as the funds may warrant.¹⁷

Males over the age of 12 were not admitted.

Funds to rent a house were raised by a grand promenade concert. The first board meeting was held on September 4, 1865 and ten days later, a matron and one child were installed into "Walkley House" on the west side of Bank Street between Slater and Maria (Laurier). The house was described as being

... solidly built of square bricks, the lathing made of split wood, the nails wrought. It was of two stories, the door in the centre, with rooms on each side - the one on the right was used by us for a Board-room, on the left for a dining-room - a few bed-rooms upstairs. A plain verandah ran along the front, with steps of hewn logs down to the sidewalk.¹⁸

Soon the institution was too small to accommodate all the inmates so the Webster property on Albert near Elgin street was purchased in August of Confederation year. The 1867 Annual Report indicated that the Board of Management was looking forward to moving to the new building because they could accommodate more inmates.

We shall soon be able to provide increased accommodation in the institution, a need which is very much felt, as we have more than once been reluctantly obliged to refuse admission to deserving objects, owing to the crowded state of the building.¹⁹

Ten years later the new house was again found to be inconvenient and "ill adapted" to the requirements of the orphanage. In 1886, a new house was built on the outskirts of the city on Elgin and Biddy (Lisgar) streets. In addition to a central building, two wings were built to separate the aged women from the children. In September the residents moved from the Webster property to the new home and the following January, it was formally opened by His Excellency the Governor-General and the Marchioness of Lansdowne.

Rapid expansion was a common phenomenon experienced by charitable institutions in Ontario, many of which "started out in a small way, often in rented quarters, and expanded as the need grew."²⁰ Expansion also occurred as the institutions became more organized, acquired more resources, and gained greater stature in the community.

In 1866, one year after the Protestant Orphan's Home was established, St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum was founded. Although a proposal to establish an institution for the Irish Catholic poor was presented in 1857 by Right Reverend

Bishop Guigues and Reverend Father McGrath, it was not until seven years later that resources were organized. The founding of the Protestant Orphan's Home the previous year may have been the motivating factor to establish the Catholic institution. The purpose of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum was "to meet the burden, and alleviate the suffering of the homeless and the helpless of English tongue and Catholic faith, and in many cases to affect the souls salvation."²¹ Both males and females from childhood to old age were to be given shelter. Although labelled an orphan asylum, the institution like the Protestant Orphan's Home, was never intended only for children. It appears that saving children had a sales appeal that would maximize public sympathy and elicit generous donations.

At the end of 1865, two public meetings were held by the Irish Catholic community to form an association for St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum. Prominent Irishmen from each parish in Ottawa were chosen to sit on the Council of Management.²² Devoted and charitable Irish Catholic ladies immediately formed an auxiliary, to assist with fund-raising, furnishing the house, and obtaining clothing for the inmates. In contrast to the Board of Management at the Protestant Orphan's Home, women in the Catholic auxiliary had no authority over the functioning of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum.

The Irish Ladies of the City have established a society in connection with the Asylum to raise funds and assist in the work of supporting and maintaining it... The Ladies particularly look after the clothing of the inmates and the supervision of the domestic economy of the House.²³

The administrative role of the ladies auxiliary was peripheral because the religious order, the Grey Sisters of the Cross, was asked to manage all internal, domestic

affairs. Sisters Fitzmaurice and Rodriguez were the first nuns sent by the Mother House to help with the opening of the orphanage.

In June 1866, a wooden frame house on Church (Guigues) Street in Lower Town was rented for \$10 a month from William Kennedy. After various repairs were made, ten orphans and four elderly people, previously cared for by Our Lady's Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, were transferred to the orphanage.²⁴ This transfer occurred because institutions were considered the best medium to distribute charity and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul only offered outdoor relief in the form of home visits and supplementary financial assistance.²⁵

By the end of 1867, the number of inmates at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum had increased and another sister was added to the small staff. The pressure to expand was similar to that experienced by the Protestant Orphan's Home. Space was limited and many applications for admission had to be refused.

Applications for the admission of several old and infirm persons, worthy objects of charity, have been refused merely for want of room suitable for their accommodation. This difficulty in regard to the admission of old people will continue until a more commodious and better arranged building is obtained.²⁶

Although the orphanage was very crowded, the Council of Management refused an offer to place all its elderly inmates at the newly opened Foyer St-Charles.

The President communicates that a proposal made by Sister Fitzmaurice from the Lady Superior to take the old people of the asylum to the new institution opened by them on Bolton Street. It was considered inadvisable to adopt such a course at present and that the old and infirm should be received into the institution as usual.²⁷

The decision not to integrate St. Patrick's older inmates into Foyer St-Charles was probably a reflection of Ottawa's ethnic hostility and the pride of the Irish Catholic community in caring for its own dependent people.

In 1873, three years after refusing to merge with Foyer St-Charles, a new building was constructed at the corner of Maria (Laurier) and Kent Street. Accommodations were ample at first, but within the next decade it was again considered too small for the increasing number of inmates and so an annex was erected in 1884.²⁸ A 1958 newspaper article described the orphanage in the following manner.

The grey stone four-storey building with its long green balconies on the southern sunny side stands aloof and cool on the corner where it has been for 85 years.²⁹

The outbuildings consisted of a stable and sheds and the institution possessed "a good horse, with carriage, sleighs, carts, and three cows."³⁰ In 1887, some land along the bank of the Rideau was purchased to serve as a summer home for the inmates.

Originally care for the older women at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum and the Protestant Orphan's Home was on the periphery of efforts to rescue children. Children were the dominant charitable interest because of the belief that through them society could be reformed. The social and moral reform movement of the late nineteenth century emphasized the "moral regeneration of the state, civil society, the family and the individual."³¹ By focusing on children, it was believed that families could be strengthened and ultimately society reformed.³²

This child-centred reform produced a movement to separate adults from children in Ontario charitable institutions because of concern over the influence of older people on impressionable youngsters. Until 1882, the older women in the Protestant Orphan's Home shared accommodations with the girl children. The Board of Management wanted some way to control the older women, specifically those known to be troublesome. Separation was thought to be one way to remedy this situation.

Another cause of great discomfort to the Matron was the behaviour of the old women, great complaints were made of Mrs. Beatty and Mrs. Mackay, both of whom had left the home without leave and had otherwise misconducted themselves. The conclusion was arrived at that something must be done to mend matters. Mrs. Tilton suggested that a separate department be opened for the aged inmates, that they should be entirely confined to the second flat, not mix with the children at all and be under the charge of a woman whose duty it should be to look after them and be responsible for their comfort.³³

The necessity of controlling the older population negated the worry over the additional expense to the institution.³⁴ In 1883, the older women were separated from the children and that winter a Sub-Matron was engaged.³⁵

... [the old women] occupy the entire south wing and are quite separated from the children, and under the charge of a Sub-Matron. They have nearly all separate rooms, and are made as comfortable as their declining days and often feeble health will admit, and as happy as they choose to make it for themselves.³⁶

That same year, adults at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum were separated from the children with distinct wards available for the men, women, boys, and girls.

The institution is now permanently divided into two classes one for the care and education of orphans and destitute children, and the other for the support and maintenance of their old age of infirm and destitute men and women.³⁷

Separation resulted from the threat of the Provincial Inspector to cut funding.

The Provincial Inspector of Asylums having decided and reported that other accommodation should be provided for the care of the old people than that afforded by the present institution, it becomes necessary, if we wish to retain the annual grant given by the Government towards the support of the House of Refuge branch, to erect a suitable building for that purpose.³⁸

This early example of provincial standards could have also affected the Protestant Orphan's Home.

The numbers of older women accommodated in the three charitable institutions were relatively small compared to the overall populations, but they gradually increased over the years (See Appendix A). There was less of an increase at the Protestant Orphan's Home, probably because it accepted fewer older women inmates than the two Catholic facilities. Roughly estimated, older women constituted only 5-10 per cent of the inmates in the Protestant Orphan's Home. They represented between 10-15 per cent of the total population at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum and between 25-30 per cent of the inmates at Foyer St-Charles. The higher percentage of older women accepted into Foyer St-Charles illustrates its different mandate to care for aged people.

Although the institutions served different populations, all had a well-defined hierarchy of management, whereby primarily upper and middle class women were responsible for directly dispensing charity to working class women. The Protestant Orphan's Home was managed by an elite group of Protestant women. The Board of Management consisted of three Directresses, two secretaries, a treasurer, and 24 ladies equally represented from the different Protestant churches in Ottawa. The Board of Management oversaw the domestic management of the Home, collected

donations, held fundraising activities, defined rules and regulations, and purchased necessities. The women also managed tasks more commonly conducted by men, such as seeing to the repairs, buying a new heating apparatus, and obtaining an insurance policy.

The Board of Management did stay within the bounds of propriety by seeking the advice of a male advisory committee on such financial matters as obtaining bank loans or locating appropriate property to rent or purchase. This male role presented a semblance of following patriarchal social dictums which did not allow women the legal or political rights to conduct the affairs of the Home on their own. The women were very capable and would not have needed any male assistance if they had the freedom to engage in legal and financial transactions.

The Board of Management supervised the daily institutional life by appointing two Visiting Ladies to report on activities at the monthly Board meetings.

[They shall] visit the Home personally, at least twice a week; they shall provide all necessary supplies; see that order, regularity and cleanliness are maintained, and that the rules of the house are carried out.³⁹

Beneath the Visiting Ladies was a working class matron, hired to manage the domestic operation of the institution. Although the matron was supposed to manage the orphanage, her authority was severely restricted; she was not even allowed to have a key to the storeroom where the supplies were kept. This reflects the Visiting Ladies' distrust and patronizing attitude towards the working class matron. In her study on Ottawa's first Protestant old age homes for women and men in the late nineteenth century, Sharon Cook concludes that "there is no indication that a common

sex did anything to dull the jagged edges of class prerogatives, and one wonders if it did not make them even sharper."⁴⁰ Being under the watchful eye of the Visiting Ladies made the matron's life clearly one of servitude.

The matron's duties included keeping an accurate registrar of the inmates, reading the bible to the children before bedtime, watching over meals to ensure proper decorum was observed, and visiting the children's rooms before retiring. In addition, it was expected that she never be absent at night without the knowledge and approval of the Visiting Ladies or the Directresses.⁴¹ The matrons changed frequently as they tried to contend with exhaustive working conditions. In July 1868, the matron Mrs. Vandusen, abruptly left and among the reasons she cited for her departure was "the insufficient help afforded her in the work of the House."⁴² Many entries in the Minutes contained references to the matrons being overworked.

Unlike the Protestant Orphan's Home, the affairs of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum were controlled by a Council of Management made up entirely of prominent men. Each fortnight two members of the Council were appointed to visit in much the same manner as at the Protestant orphanage, but their visits were less frequent. Generally the visiting men did not interfere with the internal functioning of the orphanage unless requested by the Sisters.

Although initially, the Council of Management made all decisions regarding the institution, as the minute books progressed, references to the internal management became scarcer as successive Sisters Superior were allowed more responsibilities. This reflects a clear status difference between the women in the religious orders and

the working class matrons in the Protestant Orphan's Home. The power the Sister Superior wielded in the domestic sphere can be seen when a disgruntled merchant wrote to the Board complaining that Sister Martha, the successor of Sister Fitzmaurice, had ceased buying bread from him. The Board of Management's response was clear.

On consideration it was unanimously agreed that, as the matter... related to the internal management of the Asylum, with which management Sister Martha is charged, the council in accordance with its established practice, could not interfere.⁴³

While the domestic sphere was left to the nuns, the Council of Management still retained ultimate control over all major financial and administrative affairs.

Beneath the Sister Superior, a well-educated middle or upper class nun, were several working class nuns who would act as department heads for each ward, the kitchen, and housekeeping. Successive Sisters Superior tended to remain in their positions for long periods of time so life was more stable than at the Protestant Orphan's Home. For example, Sister Fitzmaurice remained in charge from the founding of St. Patrick's orphanage until feebleness forced her retirement to the Mother House fourteen years later. The duties of the Sister Superior included supervising the work of the other nuns, ensuring that religious rituals were observed and the rules obeyed, hiring and firing servants, and purchasing necessities for the orphanage using pass books with merchants or tradesmen with whom running accounts were kept.⁴⁴

The Sisters had to conform with the expectations of their religious order. The Mother General of the order visited annually to verify the well-being of the nuns and

ensure that they were observing the rituals and practices of their faith. On one occasion, Mother General Phelan requested that the hours of supper and prayer be followed in accordance to the practices at the Mother House.

J'ai remarqué que dans cette résidence, le souper est à cinq heures et demie et le chapelet à six et demie, contrairement au règlement, maintenant en pratique dans toutes nos maisons. Comme je ne vois pas de raison de laisser subsister ce changement, je désire que dorénavant ces deux exercices aient lieu aux mêmes heures qu'à la Maison Mère.⁴⁵

The Mother General also reproached the resident priest for on occasion causing supper to be delayed because of his duties. She considered it extremely important that supper be on time to ensure that both the cook and the routine of the home were not disrupted.⁴⁶ This reveals the intimate relationship between order and morality in nineteenth century thought. Order was considered a sign of morality while disorder was equated with immorality. By stressing order in charitable institutions, individuals would be encouraged to lead morally pure lives that would regenerate themselves and the nation.⁴⁷

The Sisters at Foyer St-Charles also had to conform with the expectations of the Mother House. The religious order, the Grey Sisters of the Cross, was solely responsible for the management of the general hospital. The French tradition of heavily relying on convents to do charity work accounts for the difference in management between the French and Irish institutions. Because the Sister Superior at Foyer St-Charles reported only to the Mother General, her decisions were less restricted than the Sister Superior at the Irish orphanage who also had to report to the

Council of Management. The Sister Superior's duties and the hierarchy of nuns were probably similar to the Irish Catholic orphanage.

In all three institutions, the hierarchy of authority meant that upper or middle class women were managing the labour of working class women. The Catholic hierarchy corresponded to the Protestant with working class nuns paralleling working class matrons, and the Sisters Superior corresponding to the Protestant Ladies Board of Management. St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum had more male involvement but it was indirect and concerned only with the overall administration of the orphanage.

All three institutions were similarly financed with donations, private collections, bequests, pensions from inmates, and government grants. As well, the two orphanages had benevolent societies that held several fundraising activities and paid membership fees. The annual fees at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum were \$2 for the men's association, \$1 for the women's auxiliary members, or \$20 for life.⁴⁸ At the Protestant Orphan's Home, the women paid \$4 annually or \$50 for life.⁴⁹

The benevolent societies held fundraising activities such as concerts, picnics, lectures, and bazaars. This busy fundraising was motivated by a sense of Christian duty, a desire to display class position, and a chance to enjoy themselves at a social event. St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum held joint fund-raising ventures with other Catholic groups, such as a successful excursion to Ogdensburg with the society of St. Vincent de Paul of the Cathedral Conference. Even Catholic and Protestant Irish societies worked together at a fund-raising activity.

The Irish Protestant Benevolent Society and the Council of the Asylum having agreed upon celebrating St. Patrick's Day last by a union concert in aid of

both Institutions, carried the same by their joint action to a successful issue, the net proceeds to each being about \$69.⁵⁰

Class tended to transcend religious and ethnic rivalry as the wealthy entertained themselves to raise funds for the poor. Foyer St-Charles also received financial assistance from a group of charitable Irish "friends," who organized a benefit concert to aid the hospital when part of it was destroyed by fire.⁵¹ This is evidence of the institution's different role in caring for the sick of the whole Catholic community regardless of language. These examples highlight how charity built cohesiveness among affluent people of different religious and ethnic groups.

The three charitable institutions relied heavily on donations. Sometimes money was given but more often material goods such as clothing, furniture, firewood, vegetables, bread or books were donated. As with all charitable endeavours during the late nineteenth century, the institutions were affected by economic recessions. With scarce donations and tight finances, more thrifty systems of management had to be introduced.

In order to economize in the stables, I have got William to put locks on the oat bins so that no one except himself will have access thereto. This was rendered necessary as the boys and others were in the habit of feeding to the hens oats without judgment.⁵²

Even the hens were subject to rationing.

While donations were sometimes given freely, most often they had to be solicited. To obtain donations, private collections by benevolent association members were organized to canvas door to door. Benevolent society participation at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum was more encompassing because both a male and female

association collected for the orphanage. In contrast, only a woman's association collected for the Protestant Orphan's Home although Protestant men did procure donations on occasion.

With no benevolent society, the Sisters at Foyer St-Charles had to use other methods to acquire money. They did receive some financial assistance from a local group of charitable women, *les Dames de Charité*, who would "... accompagner les Soeurs dans leur quêtes, organiser des bazars et des soirées musicales, s'ingénier de vingt autres façons pour secourir l'hospice."⁵³ These efforts were sporadic and did not give Foyer St-Charles the individualized attention that the orphanages were receiving from their benevolent societies.

The Sisters would also sell produce such as eggs, milk, bones, and vegetables from their garden. Soap was made from fat that was collected around town, including from the residence of the Governor General. "*Les Soeurs vendaient du savon qu'elles confectionnaient avec les vieilles graisses qu'elles faisaient ramasser un peu partout et notamment chez le Gouverneur.*"⁵⁴ In addition, they received considerable financial assistance from the Mother House in Ottawa.

*On se débat dans la plus noire pauvreté; et sans l'aide presque continuelle de la Maison-mère, la première des bienfaitrices de l'oeuvre, l'hospice eût cessé d'exister depuis longtemps.*⁵⁵

The Sisters at Foyer St-Charles and St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum also travelled to various parishes canvassing for donations for the poor. "In the first days the Sisters had recourse to begging on behalf of their poor, soliciting at the market-place once each week, and in certain parishes once a year."⁵⁶ Begging for the poor was

an integral duty of the nuns and the Catholic institutions relied heavily on their efforts, so much so that "the president was requested to ask the Mother Superior for an extra Irish sister to assist in begging for this institution."⁵⁷

Payments from the inmates, which were called pensions, also financed the three charitable institutions. A double standard of care existed with paying inmates getting better accommodations than poor inmates. Non-paying inmates were generally sheltered in dormitories while inmates who paid considerable pensions were eligible for private rooms. At St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, Mary Larose was given a private room after paying \$6 "for her lifetime."⁵⁸ Although the older women inmates at the Protestant Orphan's Home originally resided in a dormitory, expansion of the building provided private rooms for almost all of them with paying clients given the choice rooms. At Foyer St-Charles, there was the case of Abbigill Warren who was,

... born in Scotland in 1802. married to Pierre Guertin. admis à l'Hospice en chambre privée payant pension par sa fille Mme. George Timmons \$11.00 par mois le 25 Oct. 1882. décédée le 30 suivant au soir. munie des Sts Sacrements par Rev. M. Campeau. âgée 80 ans.⁵⁹

Julie Veltier also occupied a private room for a sum of \$10 per month paid by her son.⁶⁰ This followed the trend in Montreal hospitals to make private rooms available for a "respectable class of patient" in an effort to secure additional funding.⁶¹ The encouragement of paying inmates at Foyer St-Charles is another example of the clear contrast between that institution and the two orphanages.

Inmates at Foyer St-Charles were charged on the basis of what they could afford.

C'est de temps en temps, un vieillard qui lègue à l'Hospice un, deux ou trois cents piastres avant de mourir. Cet argent était probablement dû pour les dix, quinze, ou vingt ars de séjour à l'Hospice.⁶²

Fees for the care of some older women were paid by associations such as the Toronto Diocese and the St. Vincent de Paul Society.⁶³ In accordance with the belief of familial responsibility for dependent people, families paid what they could afford for the care of many older women inmates. The daughter of Mme. Angélique Charbonneau paid \$6 a month while the nephew of Marianne Cadieu promised to pay \$3 a month and provide clothing for her.⁶⁴ Older women with families who were unable to pay were not turned away. For example, the Sisters were aware that Julie Gervais had two sons living at Pêche when she was admitted.⁶⁵ The family did not pay for her care indicating that they may have been unable to financially support her.

At the Protestant Orphan's Home, family members also paid for their older relatives. "Mr. Bangs sent a message through Mr. Bronson, expressing his willingness to pay for his sister's board. It was decided that \$2.00 per week be charged."⁶⁶ Mr. Chancy Bangs was a hatter and it would not have been good for business if he did not support his sister; especially if he had the financial means to do so.⁶⁷

While the two English orphanages accepted paying inmates, there was much ambivalence about taking in older people with means. This can be seen in the case of Mrs. Reburn, a "friendless gentlewoman" requesting admission to the Protestant Orphan's Home. The Board of Management thought that the orphanage was not

appropriate for someone of the middle class so efforts were made to find a more suitable accommodation in another city.

Mrs. Reburn of Prescott. The Board was quite willing to receive her but did not consider this home a suitable place for her. Mrs. Lynn was requested to ascertain if there was not some institution either in Montreal or Toronto for persons of the better class where Mrs. Reburn could be more comfortably accommodated.⁶⁸

Mrs. Reburn was later admitted as a paying inmate and because of her station was given the special privilege of a private room.

The two orphanages did not publicly advertise that they were receiving pensions from inmates. Although the annual reports of the Protestant Orphan's Home, which were available to the public, insisted that the orphanage was sheltering only people who were destitute and friendless, the internal minutes record cases of paying older women being admitted.

An old woman named Mrs. Fraser, asked for admittance through Mrs. Benson. She had no one to take care of her but was able and willing to pay something for her board... [Moved] that Mrs. Fraser be admitted into the Home, on payment of \$6.00 per month provided that room can be made without overcrowding.⁶⁹

In some cases the Ladies rejected a paying applicant with no explanation.

"Application was made from a Mrs. Dickson for the admission of an old woman and offered to pay \$20.00 towards her support. The case was dismissed."⁷⁰ Perhaps the orphanage was overcrowded or was already sheltering too many women with means and space had to be left for worthy poor women.

The discrepancy between public notices and private practices may be attributed to a fear that people would be less willing to donate if they knew that inmates were

capable of contributing to their care. The Board of Management did not formally state that they were accepting older women who could pay until 1907. The change in policy was said to be a result of receiving many applications from "aged and infirm women who are in a position to pay a small sum in return for such a privilege and advantage."⁷¹ Public opinion had probably changed enough to allow them to freely acknowledge paying inmates without fear that donations would stop.

Similarly, St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum's annual reports for members and the public stressed the poverty and wretchedness of the inmates.

The Council wish it to be known that the institution is especially for the protection of the destitute and the homeless - for that class who are the greatest objects of charity, and who stand in greatest need of the benefits of an institution like this ... For the old and infirm, who are unable to make out a living in the world, and who have no relations to rely on.⁷²

But the internal minutes and register revealed that the doors were opened for paying residents. Some older women who could no longer live alone or afford domestic help could contribute their meagre funds to the coffers of the orphanage in exchange for care. These contributions varied from sums of \$50 and \$215 for life, to a promise of \$3 per month, and a donation of \$5.32.⁷³

Besides paying pensions, inmates could also bequeath their life savings or property as in the following example.

A letter was received from Rev. D.L. Foley, Almonte for admission for an old lady named Mrs. James Keogan who holds source property valued at \$350.00 which she is willing to leave to the asylum and the application was allowed.⁷⁴

Institutions had the authority to take over assets and if inmates were unwilling to give up all their worldly possessions, they could be forced to leave. The Council of

Management at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum decided that "the old man named Clancy be dismissed unless he delivers over to this Institution the money held by him."⁷⁵

The dilemma for this old man and others was that by turning over all financial assets, their means of independence would be lost if they wanted to leave. Inmates who could assert their independence they perceived by the administration to be less willing to acquiesce to authority.

A final source of funding was grants from the various levels of government. In 1868, the two orphanages received their first grants of \$50 from the County of Carleton. Sometimes the funding was not forthcoming and at other times as much as \$125 was given. The city of Ottawa only contributed sporadically. After petitioning the government of Ontario for an annual grant, both orphanages received identical sums of \$480. These grants were not fixed and varied from \$275 to \$480 per year. In general, the two institutions received the same amount of money from government grants.

In contrast, Foyer St-Charles received considerably more from the Ontario government because as a general hospital it was eligible for more funds. Although in 1878 only \$379 was received, ten years later the funding rose to \$1943.⁷⁶ In 1891 the province spent \$77,310 on 27 general hospitals and only \$15,245 for 26 orphan asylums; each hospital received \$2863 compared to only \$586 for each orphan asylum.⁷⁷ For the year 1880, Foyer St-Charles received provincial government funding for one-third of its total expenses while the Protestant Orphan's Home only received funding for one-seventh of its expenses.⁷⁸ This is not unlike the modern

practice of generous funding of health care services and poor funding of social services.

The financing, management, and establishment of the charitable institutions dictated the rigorous procedure for determining who would be admitted. The close scrutiny of the applicants' lives left them very vulnerable to the perceptions and whims of the affluent charity workers in positions of power. While admission procedures varied between the three institutions, recommendation and status verification were common elements to all. An older woman had to be recommended by a member of the clergy or a prominent community member who could vouch for her respectability. Although the records of Foyer St-Charles did not indicate that the inmates needed a recommendation, in all probability an application was made by the woman's parish priest or by her family directly to the Sister Superior.

Although a recommendation gave an older woman greater standing, it did not automatically ensure that she would be allowed into a charitable institution. "The President had read a letter received from Rev. Father Sloan asking admittance for two emigrants to the home. Request not entertained."⁷⁹ With an overflowing inmate population, it was easier to turn away "foreigners."

At the Protestant Orphan's Home, a recommendation was followed up by a member of the Board of Management verifying the family situation to ensure that the older woman was of proper moral standing. A by-law stipulated that

... no person shall be relieved by this Society previously to their character and distress being ascertained by a member of the Committee visiting their dwellings, except in extraordinary cases.⁸⁰

During the early years at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, applications were sent to the Council of Management who appointed one or two of its members to investigate the claims of those seeking admittance.⁸¹ But by 1886, the power of admissions was transferred to the Sister Superior.⁸² If the Sister had any doubts about an application, she could refer it to a committee of three Council members for a swift decision.⁸³ This transfer of power was in keeping with the Council's growing confidence in the Sisters' ability to manage the orphanage.

In addition to receiving admission requests, the Sisters in both Catholic institutions made home visits to poor and sick people in the community. When the Visiting Sister discovered an older person requiring assistance, she would take that person back to the institution. "Sister St. George visiting Sister to the Poor sent to the Asylum an aged person by the name of McStravic an unfortunate aged over 70 years for shelter, admission ratified."⁸⁴ The older person was then cared for as long as required.

Family members were occasionally admitted together to the charitable institutions. The relationships were husband/wife, parent/child or sibling. At Foyer St-Charles, Mr. and Mrs. J.B. Ouellette, were allowed to share the same private room to ensure the maximum use of the limited amount of space.⁸⁵ It appears that the French Catholics were less concerned about sexuality among married couples than were the English Protestants, who had established separate facilities for males and females. The Council of Management of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum also

entertained several applications from married couples although there was no indication in the registers of any being admitted.⁸⁶

Some older women were admitted with their children, as in the following mother/daughter case at Foyer St-Charles.

Sophie Boyer native de St. Philippe B.C. de J. B. Boyer et Sophie Deneaud mariée à Julien Dupuis devenue veuve en 1863 âgée 66 ans admise à l'Hospice, avec sa fille, Philomène Dupuis, âgée 43 ans, infirme le 15 septembre 1882, payant \$3.00 par mois.⁸⁷

The daughter may have been infirm or disabled like 58 year old blind Peter Hayes, who was admitted to St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum with 74 year old Agnes Hayes. The two may have been either siblings or parent/child.⁸⁸ At the Protestant Orphan's Home, two elderly unmarried women, the Spronle sisters, applied for admission but it was considered inappropriate to admit them until the institution was less crowded.⁸⁹ It may also have been assumed that they could take care of each other.

At times, having friends made older women ineligible for charity. The Board of Management of the Protestant Orphan's Home held a lengthy discussion over the application from Mrs. Crawford because "she had friends who might ought to assist her and also that she expected to have special privileges."⁹⁰ The management at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum was also concerned with admitting an older woman who could be supported by friends.

Application was made by Father O'Connell of Nepean for the admission of an old woman from his parish and at present an inmate of the French asylum. The Council having learned that this person had friends who was [sic] able to support her. but the Council anxious to meet the wishes of the Rev'd Gentleman the Secretary was instructed to communicate the fact to him and if found untrue they would try and make place for her although this asylum is at the moment intended only for orphan children.⁹¹

The concern over having friends may have been an excuse to keep the older women in the facility where she was residing. The argument against her admittance was strengthened by the excuse of the institution being for children.

The rigid admission procedure determined which older women were admitted and resulted in an inmate population that was quite homogeneous. Although information on these women is unfortunately very brief, it appears that almost all were drawn from the labouring class. The general profile of an older woman inmate in the three Ottawa charitable institutions was an unskilled, poor, physically or financially dependent woman without family or friends. The inmates at Foyer St-Charles were described as poor and destitute travellers, without relation or home and in whom no one had an interest, "mais il est toujours un certain nombre de vieillards dépourvus, voyageurs sans feu ni lieu, que personne ne reconnaît pour siens."⁹² This language evokes an image of the historical purpose of a hospice being for the use of travellers.

The Index to the 1871 Census of Ontario, Carleton County, listed occupations for a few of the older women in the three charitable institutions. Unskilled labourers were the most common such as the "charwoman" Ellen Swan, the "labourer" Catherine Currie, and the "servant" Rose McMahon. A few of the older women were skilled such as Anne O'Donnell, a "dress maker" and Lucinda Spronle, a "school teacher." Even in positions requiring skill, some women could not make enough money to save for their old age. The few entries listed in the census index highlights

both the limited career choices for women and the lack of recognition of women's unpaid labour as wives and mothers.

Most of the women in the three charitable institutions were single. Some women such as Miss Caroline Bangs⁹³ never married and probably contended with limited work opportunities and wage discrimination over their lives. Many of the other older women were widows who faced dire economic circumstances when they lost their spouses. The length of widowhood ranged from Agnes McLocklin, a recent widow of four months to Margaret Burns, who was in her 37th year of widowhood. Other women who had been widowed for long periods of time were Rosalie M. Margerite Ethier, who outlived her husband 31 years and Marie Anne Prudhomme, a widow of 30 years.⁹⁴ Some of the women such as Marie Antoinette Lamoureaux, had been widowed twice. In one instance, a woman had been married three times although her third husband was living when she was admitted to Foyer St-Charles.

Emilie Charette, âgée de 76 ans, née à St-Martin de Baptiste Charette uni à Marguerite Milaire, Mariée à Joseph Ethier, deuxièmement à Augustin Valiquette, troisièmement à Xavier Larivière (vivant journalier) qui promet de payer sept piastres par mois de pension pour sa femme qui est admise le 15 septembre 1885 par Soeur St. Anne, Soeur Supérieur de l'Hospice. Décédée le 21 décembre 1885.⁹⁵

The financial dependency of widowhood was one of the underlying factors creating the need for charitable assistance. Another factor was physical frailty from failing health that made it difficult for older women to care for themselves. If an older woman lived alone, as in the case of "old Mrs. Reed living on Bank Street," she would have had a hard time looking after herself.⁹⁶ Although affluent women could

hire domestics to provide care in their state of physical dependency, this option was not available for the working class who constituted the majority of older women.

Although the nationality of many of the inmates was unknown, the Irish were found in large numbers in all three institutions (See Appendix B). At the two orphanages the greatest percentage of older women were of Irish stock while at Foyer St-Charles the Irish ranked a distant second behind those born in Quebec. The large number of Irish Canadians seeking shelter in charitable institutions indicates the very difficult life situation of this ethnic group.

The records indicate that the largest number of older women residents in Foyer St-Charles were born in Quebec, but they do not indicate nationality. The majority of the names, such as Robitaille, Monnet, Mathieu, Vachon, and Paquet suggest a French heritage, but it may not have always been the case.⁹⁷ Names like May Jones indicate that some of the women were not of French ancestry.⁹⁸ The large number of women from English speaking countries such as Ireland, Scotland, and England suggests that the hospital was bilingual and unilingual Anglophones may have been spoken to in their mother tongue. Evidence in support of this notion of bilingualism includes the facts that some records were kept in both languages and the Sisters had also established a bilingual school for children in Ottawa. In contrast, the language spoken in the two orphanages was English. No French inmates were admitted to the Protestant Orphan's Home and only one resident was recorded as being French at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum. This reflects both the divisions between the ethnic groups and the differing role of Foyer St-Charles.

The largest number of women over 60 years of age at Foyer St-Charles were between the ages of 76 and 80. This was also the largest age group at the Protestant Orphan's Home. At St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, the greatest number of women were considerably younger between 61 and 65 years of age (See Appendix C).⁹⁹ The average age of the older women at Foyer St-Charles was 77 years compared to an average age of 72 years in the two orphanages. Only Foyer St-Charles admitted women over the age of 100 because it was willing and able to provide more nursing care.

From the titles of the institutions, one would expect that the residents admitted would be only of similar faith. This was the case at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum because all the residents had to be Catholic or willing to convert to Catholicism. Mary Kelly, Catherine Oakes, and Ellen Suone were Protestants baptised in the orphanage.¹⁰⁰ The practice of conversion probably existed at Foyer St-Charles. The Protestants did not like this practice as can be seen by the case of Mrs. Gibson who was being cared for at Foyer St-Charles until a Protestant minister requested her immediate transfer.

[Mrs. Gibson] Application of Rev. Pollard. She was at present in St. Charles Home (R.C.) and M. Pollard thought it but right that as a protestant institution we should take care of our own poor.¹⁰¹

The Reverend gentleman was concerned with the inappropriateness of Catholics providing for the Protestant poor, particularly if conversion was required.

At the Protestant Orphan's Home, the majority of women given refuge were Protestant with the largest proportion of older women belonged to the Presbyterian

parish, followed by the Church of England. There were a few cases of Catholics entering the orphanage.¹⁰² Mrs. Catharine Harrison, stayed only two days before she "left without permission" and Mary Conolly was admitted on August 25, 1873 and discharged six days later having been "found to be an unfit inmate."¹⁰³ Neither of these Catholics came with recommendations. On the other hand, with the reference of Mrs. Bronson, Mrs. Elizabeth Hughes stayed nearly six years. While the first two cases suggest that Catholics were not welcome, the case of Mrs. Hughes implies that religion was secondary to an influential referral.

From the known information the majority of older women had lived in the city of Ottawa prior to admission (See Appendix D).¹⁰⁴ The selection process at the Protestant Orphan's Home was very rigorous because the inmates generally came from the city of Ottawa and Carleton County.¹⁰⁵ Although most inmates in the two Catholic institutions also resided in Ottawa, many came from small, predominantly English-speaking towns in west Quebec. One inmate at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum came from as far as Pembroke, which was over one hundred kilometres away and a considerable distance to travel during the nineteenth century. The nuns' travel to collect donations for the institutions explains the great distances many inmates voyaged. From the nuns' excursions, awareness of the charitable institutions increased and more older people turned to them for help.

In summary, most older women in the three institutions were from the working class and many were unskilled Irish labourers from the city of Ottawa. In

accordance with Victorian morality, charity was thought to be best directed towards the lower class. This was the reason for the ambivalence about accepting older woman inmates with means into the two orphanages. The management at Foyer St-Charles did not have this same compulsion because it followed French tradition. Foyer St-Charles was distinct from the two orphanages because it accepted more paying clients with families, served a diverse clientele, provided more chronic care, offered services in both official languages, and received greater government grants.

The high proportion of Irish found in all the institutions indicates the lower class and the onerous living conditions of this ethnic group. Many Irish worked as unskilled labourers and often had difficulty caring for their immediate families. When factors of old age and gender dependency are added in, it is easily understood why Irish women often needed charitable assistance.

Generally the Ottawa institutions accepted only women of similar faith, because each religious community wanted to address the needs of its dependent people. With missionary zeal, the Catholics had Protestants convert to their religion before they were allowed to stay. The Protestant Orphan's Home appeared to be less zealous in this regard and accepted a few Catholics on occasion. Most did not stay except for the ones who came with very influential recommendations. In general, a recommendation was the key to passing the rigorous admission process. The strict admission procedure was premised on the notion that the "deserving" status of an older woman had to be determined to ensure that charity was not immorally dispensed.

Most of the people directly involved with the working class inmates were upper and middle class women. As indicated previously, their class position gave them the freedom and the time to do charitable work. Men were primarily on the periphery of the charity work but they retained ultimate authority because of the forced dependency of all women relative to men in the nineteenth century. Although each institution was managed differently, all had established a well-developed hierarchy of power that also reflected class differences. The class differences in management hierarchy of the Protestant orphanage paralleled the Catholic institutions. Members of the Board of Management in the Protestant Orphan's Home and the Sisters Superior in the two Catholic institutions were affluent women who controlled the activities of working class matrons and nuns. In general, the charitable institutions were reflections of the class, gender, and ethnic differences that dominated nineteenth century Ontario.

Chapter III Endnotes

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93. COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925, Entry Number 688.
94. RSL. FSC, 1871-1933.
95. RSL. FSC, 1871-1933, p. 58.
96. AGSIC. SPO, Minute Book St. Patrick's Orphanage and Asylum, 1865-1883, February 28, 1870.
97. For example, my partner's grandfather was an Irishman from Boston named John Cherry. When he arrived in Quebec, his name was francicized to "Lacerise" and a spelling mistake later altered the name to "Lamerise" meaning "wild cherry".
98. RSL. FSC, 1871-1933, p. 36.
99. The lower limit of the age of older women has been arbitrarily set at 60 years of age and only the age upon admission has been considered.
100. AGSIC. SPO, Residents (adults and children), 1884-1925.
101. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 2, POH, Minutes 1884-1889, March 28, 1887.
102. COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925.
103. COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925, Entry Number 195 and Entry Number 247.
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CHAPTER IV

LIFE IN THE CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS AND BEYOND

Charitable institutions were a much needed refuge to older women who were destitute, unable to care for themselves, and had few family supports. In addition to providing food, shelter, and companionship in their old age, the institutions offered a certain degree of stability to older women whose lives were at best uncertain.

The two orphanages were modelled after ideas about the traditional family and sought "to recreate a home setting, restrictive though this ... was for its members."¹ Although charitable institutions were indeed restrictive, they were far less punitive than the municipally funded Houses of Refuge, which were essentially workhouses designed to discourage the pauper spirit in able-bodied individuals.² Because privately run charitable institutions served "deserving" clientele, some effort was made to ensure that the inmates were comfortable. At the Protestant Orphan's Home "some of the ladies thought that the old women were not kept sufficiently warm as regards to either fire or bedding."³ The Visiting Ladies were instructed to purchase a stove, blankets, and other bedding. After all

[i]t was only right, thought nineteenth-century Ottawans, that one's last years should be spent in agreeable circumstances, providing one had lived according to Christian precepts.⁴

Although the well-being of the inmates was considered, there were limits to the amount of comfort the affluent charity workers thought these lower class people needed. In most cases, dormitories were deemed adequate for non-paying inmates

even though this type of accommodation did not allow for much privacy. Privacy was not possible in the old women's dormitory at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum which had thirty beds, a lavatory, and a sitting room.⁵

The reliance on donations meant that dormitories were quite sparsely furnished. An iron bedstead with a bedtick and pillow, possibly a small trunk or chair, and shelves might have been the standard allotment for inmates in the dormitories. One Visiting Ladies Report of the Protestant Orphan's Home commented on how the rooms were inadequately furnished. To rectify this situation, it was requested that "a carpet and a few other necessities be purchased."⁶ These accommodations were probably better than what many older working class women had lived in when they were younger.⁷ Besides dormitories, the charitable institutions had cellars for storing milk, meat and vegetables, dining rooms, kitchens, and each Catholic facility had its own chapel. The institutions were heated by large coal or wood stoves and lighted with coal oil lamps.

Economy and substantiveness were stressed in the diet of the inmates. In addition to a staple diet of bread, beef and potatoes, the records show such purchases as oatmeal, sugar, apples, codfish, butter, cornmeal, flour, and pork. The diet was heavy in starch and typically working class.⁸ At St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, \$6.25 per day was budgeted to feed approximately 90 inmates. This amount purchased 1/16 of a pound of meat for each inmate, oatmeal or cornmeal, bread, tea, flour, syrup and sugar. This was exclusive of potatoes, turnips, cabbages, and other vegetables which were donated or collected. In an attempt to reduce expenses, all articles were

carefully weighed each morning.⁹ Although there was some rationing of food, the inmates were deemed to receive an acceptable level of nutrition. The Mother General, Mère Phelan, noted during one of her visits "que la nourriture soit bonne, bien appâtée et en quantité suffisante."¹⁰

At one point concern was expressed about the older women's diet at the Protestant Orphan's Home. "The Visiting Ladies were requested to look into the matter of the diet provided for the adult inmates and see if it was sufficiently generous and of proper quality."¹¹ In addition to this concern, the older women also benefited when "Mrs. Bronson suggested that there should be more variety in the food of the children, especially at breakfast."¹²

Food was not always plentiful in the charitable institutions. During the early years at Foyer St-Charles, the Sisters had few resources and often survived on only the "bare minimum." "On fut ainsi vingt ans à se débattre avec la plus noire pauvreté; on n'avait absolument que le strict nécessaire."¹³ At one point breakfast for the inmates and Sisters consisted of bread and a bowl of cretons. "On n'a pour tout déjeuner que du pain et un petit bol de cretons."¹⁴

Variety in the diet came primarily from donations which supplemented the basic supplies the institutions purchased. Some of the donations sent to the Protestant Orphan's Home included,

... vegetables from Mr. Matthew Heron, Mr. Young, and Mr. Fairbairn, donations of Meal were received from Mr. T. MacKay, Groceries from Mr. Bate, Mrs. Hill, Mr. J.G. Robinson and 'a Friend', [and] Bread from Mrs. Shouldis and Mr. Young.¹⁵

Gardens supplied fresh produce to all three charitable institutions, although Foyer St-Charles lost its garden when the new wing was constructed. "Le jardin fut pour l'Hospice une assez bonne ressource avant la construction de l'aile en pierre."¹⁶ In addition to a garden, St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum boasted a fresh egg supply from their chickens and milk from their cows.

Religion, which motivated and guided the founders of the institutions, was the central feature of institutional life. The Board of Management of the Protestant Orphan's Home resolved that

... [a]ll the inmates of the "Home" be required to attend family worship, both morning and evening; which exercise shall consist of Prayer, Reading the Holy Scripture and singing to be conducted by the Matron or Governess¹⁷

In all probability, the amount of religious instruction was considerably more than what the inmates received outside the institutions. To ensure that the religious practices were being followed, the Visiting Ladies were "requested to inquire of the Matron each Monday how the Sabbath has been observed and if Mrs. Griffin according to the rule of the Institution has taken the children to church."¹⁸ Members of the clergy frequented the Protestant Orphan's Home. "The religious wants of the inmates have always been attended to, many of the clergymen of the city having at one time or another, given regular services in the Aged Women's Department."¹⁹

Inmates in the Catholic institutions were expected to meet daily in the Chapel to attend mass conducted by the resident chaplains and to receive Holy Communion. Illness was the only acceptable reason for absence. For many years, the Rev. Dr. O'Connor of St. Patrick's Parish lived at the Asylum, paying for three rooms for

himself, his assistant, and the care of his horse.²⁰ At Foyer St-Charles, the spiritual needs of the inmates were seen to by the Oblates de Marie until 1874. That year Archbishop Monseigneur Joseph-Thomas Duhamel assigned residential priests "qui commit le soin spirituel des pauvres aux membres de sa maison épiscopale."²¹ As well, numerous dominican and franciscan monks were always present.

Besides visits from the clergy, the three charitable institutions also received occasional visits from high-ranking officials. For example, the Governor-General visited the Protestant Orphan's Home "and came amongst them, cheering with his pleasant words the aged women, and brightening the little ones with his kind attention and interest."²² The records of Foyer St-Charles indicated that the visit of Lord and Lady Stanley of Preston was well received.

La salle réservée aux femmes, ces dernières au nombre de 48, fut ensuite visitée et là encore Leur Excellences presèrent [sic] la main à chacune des vieilles infirmes leur donnant en même temps une parole d'encouragement.²³

These occasions were not organized solely for the benefit and enjoyment of the inmates. Rather, the inmates became objects for display attesting to the devotion and self-sacrifice of the charitable people connected to the institutions. Perhaps most importantly, these visits provided a chance to encourage donations.

As a result of living with children, the older women at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum and the Protestant Orphan's Home were regularly entertained. In the company of the children, the older women attended picnics, garden parties, and local fairs. For example, "during last summer, the inmates, old and young, were treated to

several outdoor entertainments, which made a welcome break in the long days of an unusually hot season."²⁴

Life in the charitable institutions was highly structured. The Rules and Regulations of the Protestant Orphan's Home indicate some of this structure.

The inmates of the Home shall rise at daylight from Autumn till Spring, and at five o'clock during the rest of the year, and shall be assembled in the morning before breakfast, and in the evening before bed-time, when the Matron Shall read a chapter from the Bible, and such prayers as shall be appointed for that purpose.²⁵

Before meals, grace was said by the Matron and silence prevailed during the meal as "proper decorum was observed."²⁶

The daily schedule of the two Catholic institutions was set by the pattern of the Sisters who followed the dictates of the Mother House.²⁷ The Rules for the Sisters and the Rules and Regulations at the Protestant Orphan's Home suggests how the daily schedule for the older women inmates might have looked. After rising around 5:00 am, the older women would congregate with the rest of the inmates to attend a prayer session or mass in the chapel. Breakfast would be eaten in the dining room at 7:00 am and the inmates would be allowed to linger until 8:00 am. Those well enough would then commence their household chores until lunch at 11:30 am. The chores may have been sewing for the children, helping to feed the bed-ridden residents, sweeping or dusting, gardening, or doing laundry. Household tasks would be assigned again in the afternoon. After supper at 6:30 pm, the evening would be spent quietly sewing or reading the bible in the sitting room. The day would end with an evening prayer and everyone would be in bed by 9:00 pm. Women too frail to

work would sit quietly in the sitting room and those too ill or disabled would remain in bed receiving the occasional visit from staff or clergymen.

All able-bodied women, including paying inmates, were expected to assist with household chores and the work was matched to individual capability. Not only did the older women provide a much needed service, they also showed their worthiness of charity. The "women were expected to contribute their labour to their maintenance if at all possible, and thus demonstrate a desire to make some progress towards a productive life."²⁸ This expectation was derived from morality with a degree of pragmatism since limited staffing meant the inmates had to work. In addition to the nuns or the matron in the case of the Protestant Orphan's Home, there were usually one or two domestics, a cook, untrained nurses, a teacher at the orphanages, and a man hired to look after the maintenance, repairs, and cutting wood.

Young, unskilled labourers in need of shelter were often employed, such as 23 year old Annais Martel who worked at Foyer St-Charles for three months as a domestic, "comme enfant de la maison, se donnant au travail de la cuisine, ou à toute autre ouvrage, selon la volonté des Soeurs."²⁹ Laments of too much work and too few hands to do it were common. The Mother General reported "il y a beaucoup de travail à faire dans la maison et nos Soeurs n'ont pas l'aide suffisante."³⁰ Although the inmates contributed to the maintenance of the institutions, their work was never acknowledged in any document for the public.

The lack of staff made it impossible for the charitable institutions, particularly the orphanages, to provide anything other than custodial care. Similar to other

institutions in Ontario, only the essentials, such as food, clothing, shelter, and basic care were available. Inmates were watched and protected but no remedial treatment was offered. This stemmed from the belief that advanced age produced illnesses that were not treatable. Consequently, the orphanages only attempted to "soften the decline" of the older inmates.³¹

When the orphanages could no longer care for some women due to age-related dependency, they were sent to Foyer St-Charles. For example, the management at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum decided to send the old man James Joyce to Foyer St-Charles because "there was more attendance and better opportunities of taking care of him properly."³² Providing more than custodial care to older people made Foyer St-Charles very distinct from the two orphanages.

Overcrowding was common in the charitable institutions and this contributed to the general lack of care. For example, when the Protestant Orphan's Home was opened, it could accommodate fifteen inmates, yet the Minutes indicated that nineteen people were living in the institution at one time.³³ The visiting physician was of the opinion that the orphanage should not accommodate more than ten inmates during the summer months due to the hot, humid conditions.³⁴ At St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, it was recognized that overcrowding was not healthy for the inmates.

It is only by great crowding, and judicious management on the part of the good Sisters, that accommodation could be found in the present Asylum for that number; and in fact it is not judicious or advisable, in the sanitary point of view, to increase the number.³⁵

Health and sanitary conditions were an obsession of the workers in the charitable institutions. "Particular attention is given to the sanitary condition of the Asylum, in

order to ward off as much as possible all disease."³⁶ The fear of the spread of disease meant the institutions were kept spotless.

Charitable institutions essentially served two populations - permanent residents who were dependent, frail and lived out the rest of their lives in the facilities, and transient residents who moved between various institutions and their families.

The home had been established as a permanent residence, but because of the number of social outcasts, a portion of its population moved in and out of its orbit as opportunity drew them away or misfortune threw them back.³⁷

A little more than half the older women inmates remained in the three Ottawa institutions until death - 59 per cent at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, 54 per cent at Foyer St-Charles and 50 per cent at the Protestant Orphan's Home (See Appendix F).³⁸ Some chose to stay for the security, comfort, and companionship in old age. Others may not have had the option to leave because of a lack of alternative accommodations. The length of stay in the charitable institutions ranged from two days to 26 years with the average length of stay varying between the institutions (See Appendix F). Most older women inmates remained at Foyer St-Charles between one and six months while residency at the Protestant Orphan's Home was considerably longer between one and two years. Equal numbers of women stayed between one and six months and between one and two years at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum.

Many of the permanent residents had disabilities or chronic ailments common to old age such as arthritis or heart disease. "The only illnesses in the Home have been such as are incident to childhood, or the feebleness attendant on extreme old

age."³⁹ Generally, with age comes physiological losses in hearing, sight, taste, smell or memory. Older people are more susceptible to disease, illnesses become more acute, and healing takes more time. The longer people live, the more they risk sickness and accidents.⁴⁰ As well, the decline in health for some inmates could be attributed to the working class lifestyle which was characterized by hard physical labour and poor nutrition.

While the two orphanages generally cared for inmates who had illnesses brought on by the natural advances of aging, Foyer St-Charles admitted very ill or disabled people. Its inmates were described as often having painful illnesses, "tous plus ou moins atteints d'infirmités douloureuses."⁴¹ When Louise Ethier was admitted, she was paralysed, deaf, and had sight in only one eye, "elle est paralysé, sourde et [n'a] qu'un oeil."⁴² Women with disabilities at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum included Annie O'Donnell, who was "mute and very destitute" and Bridget Kilmartin, who was blind.⁴³

Some older women were bed-ridden. The Protestant Orphan's Home cared for "an infirm woman who for many years had been suffering from paralysis."⁴⁴ At Foyer St-Charles, Anna Tomkins had the painful condition known as 'dropsy' or edema (swelling). "Anna Tomkins âgée 66 ans, admise à l'Hospice le 23 octobre 1880. Gratis. (souffrante d'hydropisie). décédée le 28 juin 1881."⁴⁵ For this illness the doctor would have followed the standard procedure of no therapeutic treatment beyond keeping the patient in bed. Doctors freely gave their time and skills to attend to the maladies of all the inmates such as "the medical gentlemen, Drs. MacDonald

and Beaubien, [who] continued to give their services gratuitously to the institution, and are ever ready at the call of the Good Sister."⁴⁶

The death rate in the institutions was mostly attributed to advanced age and the feeble condition of the older population.

The death rate for the year 1886 is an increase of a little less than 1 per cent over the previous year being 3.65 for 1887 and 2.83 for 1886 but it is to be expected that the rate will be higher, owing to the large number of old people, whose term of life is rapidly approaching the extreme limit allotted to those who live somber and Christian lives.⁴⁷

The older women generally died from a variety of age related illnesses. Mrs. MacKay died of "paralysis of the brain" while Miss Bangs "died of inflammation of the lungs after rather a short illness."⁴⁸ Mrs. Carson had typhoid and was "taken down with diarrhoea and though attended constantly by the Doctor ... had succumbed to the disease and died. [She was] buried without delay on the Doctor's orders."⁴⁹ Inmates who died in poverty were buried at the expense of the institutions in the pauper section of the cemetery.

Sometimes the death of an older woman was not caused by natural means.

Just previous to the meeting being held an old woman named Villeneuve an inmate of the asylum fell from the upper story window and was instantly killed. Coroner Wright was sent for and finding it to be purely accidental did not deem it necessary to hold an inquest. In view of the case of old Mrs. Villeneuve the Council determined to have wire screens put on all the upper windows.⁵⁰

Mrs. Villeneuve may have been either accidentally killed while wandering or she may have committed suicide.

Almost half the older women did not remain in the charitable institutions until death. This sizable group of women moved between their families and different

institutions in the community. It is from the records of these transient women that the most insight is gained into the rigidity of the charitable institutions, their impact on the lives of the inmates, and the uncertainty which surrounded care for older women in late nineteenth century Ottawa. It is important to note that the records of the Protestant Orphan's Home have provided the foundation for most of the following information. Some of these experiences are believed to be relevant for the older women inmates in St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum. Unfortunately no records of the situation at Foyer St-Charles exist, but it is believed that the mobility of the inmates was primarily caused by changes in health status rather than nonconformity.

For the two orphanages, transience was determined by the amount of care required and the degree of conformity to moral and behavioral standards. Inmates who were too physically or mentally ill were discharged. Others were dismissed if they were deemed "troublesome" or could not live up to the high moral standards of the charity workers. Some older women simply chose to leave the institutions.

Older women could be removed from the orphanages if they were too physically ill or they had a contagious disease. Women with serious illnesses, including the incurables, often could not be maintained in the institutions and were sent to a hospital with the orphanages frequently paying the bills. "Mrs. McQuinn was removed to the Hospital unwell, and an order given by the president to keep her there at the expense of [St. Patrick's Orphan] Asylum."⁵¹ Margaret Connors was discharged from St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum and died shortly after of cancer in the

hospital while Ellen McDowell was removed to the hospital on the doctor's advice ten days after she had been admitted to the Protestant Orphan's Home.⁵²

While some older women were discharged from the orphanages to hospitals, others were sent from the hospitals to the charitable institutions. There was the case of old Mrs. Ellard who was in the hospital but they were refusing to keep her. With no other place to go, she was admitted in December 1886 to the Protestant Orphan's Home where she remained until May 1888.⁵³ Hospitals were apparently experiencing the same phenomenon as today - "bed-blockers" with a lack of chronic care facilities to care for the ailments of old age.

Occasionally an older woman was removed from the orphanages for fear she would spread a contagious disease. Disease spread rapidly so decisions were made with an equal haste.

Another inmate had been received into the Home since last month. A poor woman who was suffering from St. Vitus' Dance and had neither friends or means of support. A discussion arose as to whether it would be prudent to keep her where there were children, and it was agreed to refer the matter to the medical adviser before coming to a final decision.⁵⁴

There was considerable discussion about the safety of the children. At some point the woman left the orphanage and then returned later.

It was found that Mrs. Gremoun, the woman afflicted with "St. Vitus' Dance" had again found an asylum in the Institution and it was decided by the Board to retain her, as having been discharged from the Hospital as incurable, there was no other place, except the jail, where she could find refuge.⁵⁵

Although Mrs. Gremoun was spared the indignity of seeking shelter in the local gaol, shortly after she was admitted a second time, the doctor concurred that her illness was a hazard to the other inmates and she was quickly discharged.

In the case of a woman affected with the malady known as St. Vitus dance and who had been admitted to the home, it became a matter of serious consideration the propriety of her being classed and maintained with the other inmates. After consultation with Dr. Grant who coincided in opinion that she should be removed, steps were taken and a pass obtained for her conveyance by railroad to Ogdensburg to which city she professed to belong. She has not been since heard of.⁵⁶

Although her illness was not contagious, the perception that it was, was enough to have her removed from the orphanage.

Charitable institutions generally could not care for the mentally ill. In one case, the orphanages had to collaborate to find one such older woman a place to live. Mrs. Ellen Swan had originally been given refuge in the Protestant Orphan's Home from January 4, 1883 until June 17, 1884.⁵⁷ In October of 1884 after being baptized, she was allowed into St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum.⁵⁸ After nine months the nuns considered Mrs. Swan unmanageable and refused to keep her any longer. They visited the Protestant Orphan's Home to consult with the visiting ladies, Mrs. Bronson & Mrs. Tilton, to ascertain if she could be returned to the Protestant Orphan's Home. Since neither institution was willing to admit Mrs. Swan, it was decided that the lunatic asylum was the only suitable place for her.⁵⁹ It is not clear if Mrs. Swan actually went to the insane asylum because the records from St. Patrick's indicate that she died eight months later.

In addition to being too mentally ill or sick, the orphanages dismissed inmates who did not conform to institutional moral standards. These standards included not sheltering women who could be returned to families, who could work, or whose character was in question. Mrs. Steacy a 65 year old widow was admitted to the

Protestant Orphan's Home but "when it was found that she had two sons able to support her, she was dismissed, as not being a case for the charity of the Institution."⁶⁰ The Ladies worried over the impropriety of keeping an inmate with sons who could support her. Although the sons were refusing to care for their mother, the Board of Management concluded that only temporary shelter could be offered until her errant sons were brought in line.⁶¹ In January 1868, the Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Smillie was requested to discharge Mrs. Steacy.

As it was found that Mrs. Smillie's efforts to induce Mr. Steacy to support his mother had been unavailing it was moved ... that the Corresponding Secretary be hereby requested to communicate to Mr. Edward Steacy the decision of the Ladies of the Board of Management to discharge his mother from the Orphan's Home two weeks from this date, as they are fully convinced that she is neither a suitable inmate of the Institution nor a proper object of public charity.⁶²

Other examples of inmates whose sons were not willing to provide support included Mrs. Mary Manly whose son went away leaving her "with no means of support" and Mrs. Doweley, "an aged woman, who had lived at Metcalfe with her son, by whom, according to her own story, she had been turned out of doors."⁶³ Not all sons refused to care for their mothers. For example, "Mrs. Kincaid's son is anxious to take his mother to his own home but she is not at all willing to leave the Home. The committee thinks she should certainly leave."⁶⁴ Regardless of her wishes, Mrs. Kincaid was forced to leave.

Expulsion was not necessarily cold-hearted: there was some concern for the well-being of the older women. In one instance, the Board of Management was unwilling to discharge an older woman because they were worried about the care she would receive from her son.

Mrs. Brouse's son had signified his intention of removing his mother from the Home. The visiting ladies were requested to try and induce him to leave her, as it was the opinion of the board that she would not be properly taken care of, if removed.⁶⁵

The son may have been abusive or inclined towards intemperate habits.

Some older women stayed in charitable institutions relatively short periods of time before family members removed them. Ursule Pilon spent two weeks in Foyer St-Charles before she went to live with one of her five children.⁶⁶ Other times older women remained considerably longer. Margaret Burns, lived in St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum for nearly six years until she was taken by her daughter. After four years, 77 year old Anastasia Saunders went to her daughter's home.⁶⁷ Why did it take so long for some children to remove their mothers? Perhaps the adult children did not initially have the financial means to support their aged mothers. Too many children, unemployed spouses or recent remarriage would have made it difficult to care for the older women.

The difficulty working class women had in caring for their mothers can be seen in the following example from a Toronto Globe article on poverty.

We saw one old woman eighty-five years old, whose husband has been long dead, whose only son is a soldier, and whose only support is her daughter. From what we could gather, her daughter is an industrious and respectable woman, yet she can't get work... The old creature herself tries various shifts to make a livelihood. In her window are a few bottles with a pound or two of concoctions inside of them; she does a little at stocking knitting, and sometimes thinly clad she goes out and peddles with her basket. Her whole appearance bespeaks respectability and her whole conversation is tinged with religious feeling.⁶⁸

The expectation for daughters to care for their mothers derived from the traditional belief that caring for people was the work of women. Daughters often took full

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responsibility for the care of their aged relatives. A study by Marta Danylwycz found that in 1871 one-third of the teachers in three Montreal working class wards were daughters helping to support their widowed mothers.⁶⁹ Even among the middle class, unmarried daughters were expected to provide emotional support and companionship to aged parents.

Older able-bodied women were also discharged from the charitable institutions when jobs became available. Even into their very old age, women from the labouring class were expected to work. Mrs. Nancy Pink, a 78 year old Presbyterian widow was taken to live with Mrs. Boyne of Merrivale.⁷⁰ Mrs. Pink was admitted "with the understanding that she makes herself useful in the Home" and in all probability was placed as a domestic with Mrs. Boyne.⁷¹

Placing women in jobs had a seasonal aspect, as can be seen in the following case.

Mary Sullivan - aged 60, [who] was here before at the request of Rev. Father Maquire, went out to service, sent to the Hospital from effects of liquor, came from there here, homeless. Her husband died here about a year ago, aged 84. Will leave when weather gets fine.⁷²

Leaving when the weather improved was a common phenomenon for inmates. The impending cold season swelled the ranks of the inmates as more people sought refuge for the harsh winter months.

The present winter is unusually dull, and hard times will help to fill the institution. The Council expect that before Spring the number of inmates will be largely increased.⁷³

This increase in the numbers seeking shelter in winter may have resulted from several factors. Sometimes, an older woman may have been unable to afford fuel. In his

study on nineteenth century hospitals, S.E.D. Shortt noted that winter produced an "annual clamour" for admission from people who were unable to heat their homes.⁷⁴ Other times, an older woman's family may not have been able to support her because the harsh Canadian winter climate caused shipping, farming, and construction to stop and thousands of labourers lost their jobs or had their wages cut. Low wages and irregular employment made living through the winter very difficult for most families and they could not support another dependent person.⁷⁵

Irregular employment also meant that unskilled labourers were very transient as they moved in search of a job, often leaving family members without immediate support. One example was Mrs. Drake who stayed at the Protestant Orphan's Home while her husband earned money for their return to England.

Mrs. Drake was still in the Home, but her husband hoped shortly to return to England if he could collect sufficient money to pay their passage. As soon as his arrangements were completed he would remove her.⁷⁶

Mr. Drake may have been trying to get work in the industrial centres of Toronto or Montreal.

The charitable institutions were also a temporary stopping point for women agricultural workers and household domestics between jobs. Many of these women were younger and quite different from the population of older infirm inmates.

Mrs. Thomas was staying at the "Home" at present and was in the habit of making it a temporary stopping place whenever she was out of a situation. The ladies were of opinion that although there was, perhaps, no objection to her having a home allowed her sometimes, provided she made herself useful, still it was but right that the consent of the visiting ladies should be first obtained, which appears had not been done in the present instance.⁷⁷

In another example, Bridget Buckley, a 56 year old spinster "infirm of one hand," sewed and mended the little boys' clothing in the "borders" department at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum. She was allowed to remain in the orphanage until "a suitable situation" could be found.⁷⁸ Because work was frequently irregular, the charitable institutions provided a much needed temporary service to women.

Some of these women given temporary shelter actually found employment within the orphanages. The line between paid staff and inmates was very slender except at the top. Older women hired to assist in the household duties included Mrs. Reburn, who was given the job of looking after the inmates' clothing needs at the Protestant Orphan's Home for a monthly sum of \$2.⁷⁹ Sixty-nine year old Annable Morin from Quebec was engaged as a servant at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum for \$5 per month while Isabella Mulhearn from Buckingham earned only \$3.⁸⁰ Wages for domestics tended to fluctuate with supply and demand and differed significantly between households.⁸¹

Many working class women had valuable domestic skills such as the "old servant" who was admitted because it was thought that she would be "useful to the nurse."⁸² There was a certain exploitative nature to this arrangement because although the older women's skills were needed their dependency meant that the charity workers did not have to pay them. This is highlighted in the case of Miss Spronle, who

... applied for the situation of assistant teacher in the "Home". The Ladies did not consider themselves justified in thus adding to the expenses of the institution but as she was in very needy circumstances they resolved to give

her a home, she being quite willing to make herself useful in assisting Miss Sims or Miss Fraser.⁸³

Later Miss Spronle attempted to work the patronage system by having prominent women make two requests on her behalf to be paid for her services. The Board denied these requests knowing that it was not necessary to loose the pursestrings to retain her services. She was too old to find work elsewhere and too financially dependent on the orphanage for shelter. Miss Spronle could not be too forceful in her requests or she would be discharged for insubordination.

Another major reason older women were discharged was because they were deemed to have "bad" characters, like Mrs. Harrison who requested admission into the Protestant Orphan's Home but was considered an unfit inmate.

Mrs. Lilton brought forward a case of a Mrs. Harrison, an old woman who desired admission. It was not considered advisable to bring her into the house with the children as her character was notoriously bad.⁸⁴

Mrs. Harrison's notorious character probably resulted from a moral lapse such as intemperance or promiscuity. The perceived negative influence of a "bad" character on the work the Ladies were trying to accomplish with the children, may or may not have been the real reason for rejection. Since Mrs. Harrison could not be allowed to stay, alternative arrangements were made before she was discharged.

It was first suggested that efforts be made to get her into the "Good Shephard's" Convent as she was a Roman Catholic but finally two of the ladies offered to use their endeavors to get support for her from Benevolent Societies.⁸⁵

One final reason some older women were discharged from the charitable institutions was their inability to comply with the rules outlining the expected

behavioral standards for inmates. At the Protestant Orphan's Home, meals were not to be taken in the rooms unless the inmates were sick and visitors for the adult inmates were only allowed on Tuesday afternoons. In the two orphanages, inmates could not leave the premises even for a stroll, without the permission of the matron or the Sister Superior. Behavioral norms commanded uniformity and did not recognize individual differences. The strict enforcement of the rules and regulations was considered necessary to mitigate the effects of having a large transient population. If the foundresses started recognizing individual needs, they would have been incapable of meeting the older women's multiple demands thus undermining the functioning of the orphanage. As well, following the rules was equated with having good morals and an unwillingness to conform was another sign of a bad character.

Women who did not comply with the standards of acceptable behaviour were subject to disciplinary action. They were labelled, chastised, punished, and sometimes discharged. Coercion and fear were used to encourage conformity and disciplinary action was meted out quite rigorously at the Protestant Orphan's Home. An older woman was summoned to one of the Board of Management's monthly meetings and chastised about her behaviour in front of an audience of ten to twenty prominent, wealthy women. Mrs. Griffin received such treatment.

Much dissatisfaction having been expressed at the way in which Mrs. Griffith [sic] had conducted herself of late, she was brought before the committee and warned that if her habits were not amended at once she would not be kept in the Institution.⁸⁶

Two years later she found herself again before the Board for a reprimand. "After summoning Mrs Griffin also before the Board and impressing upon her the necessity

of obedience and conformity to the rules which she promised."⁸⁷ The threat of expulsion was particularly effective against an older woman who had no home or family and no way of being gainfully employed.

Other disciplinary action included losing privileges. At one time, Mrs. Reburn was considered to be very "bothersome" and disruptive and as a consequence of her "insubordinate" behaviour, she lost the job taking care of the clothing needs of the institution.⁸⁸ The Board of Management indicated that they did not want her discharged; they just wanted her to be more respectful and quiescent. The manner in which the nonconformists were handled highlights the vulnerability and powerlessness of the older women in the charitable institutions.

Some older women inmates were discharged simply because they disobeyed the rules and were considered troublesome. The rules may have been unnecessarily rigid or the older women may not have been able to conform with behavioral expectations because they were demanding or they had a mental illness which could not be controlled. Mrs. Spearman, an 83 year old widow, was "found to be very troublesome" and the Board of Management was "obliged to discharge her."

The visiting ladies reported Mrs. Spearman to be extremely troublesome indeed almost unbearable. It was ascertained that she had a son at Chelsea and it was thought best to communicate with him and see if he could not have her removed.⁸⁹

Mrs. Spearman was taken by her son, then readmitted in May 1875 only to leave one month later.⁹⁰ This example highlights the pressure placed on families to care for their older relatives. Mrs. Spearman's son was probably in no position to care for his mother but had to try in the face of no suitable alternative.

The Council of Management at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum was equally rigorous with expulsion resulting from what they considered "inappropriate behaviour."

It was ruled that Mrs. Cousins an old lady an inmate of this Asylum shall be forthright [discharged] owing to her refractory conduct and that Mr's. [sic] Baskerville, McCaffrey and Battle will attend on the following day at 4:00 p.m. for the purpose of having her removed, and sent to Mr. McCarthy, Wellington Street from whence she came.⁹¹

Expulsion not only removed the "troublesome" inmates, it also culled the institutional population. In 1868,

[a] Committee [was] formed to investigate the case of the inmates at present in the asylum with the view of seeing which and how many of them it would be advisable to ... remove.⁹²

Increased demand and overcrowding provided an incentive for culling.

Inmates could not contest expulsion. Outside appeals for readmittance had to be made on behalf of the older woman, but these were usually not fruitful.

Mr. Caldwell made application for the readmission of Mrs. Kennedy. Application refused her place having been filled up and having left the Asylum of her own will and contrary to orders.⁹³

Readmittance was rare at Foyer St-Charles and St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, but more common in the Protestant Orphan's Home where older women were occasionally admitted a second time, and in rare instances, three times. Apparently, once a woman was known at the Protestant Orphan's Home, the charity workers were willing to accommodate her again. Perhaps the Catholics were less willing to give assistance a second time; perhaps readmittance was rare at Foyer St-Charles because the inmates were very ill and died in the institution. In any event, readmittance

reflects a repeated need for assistance because of a lack of familial support, increased dependency, and a paucity of alternative living arrangements.

Some "troublesome" inmates circulated among the various charitable institutions in town with their movement probably not being voluntary. One such case was Mrs. Elizabeth Hughes. She was admitted to the Protestant Orphan's Home in 1868 and shortly "left the House without consent of the Board."⁹⁴ In 1881, on the recommendation of Mrs. Bronson, the 83 year old Roman Catholic was readmitted, then released five years later to go to Saint Patrick's Orphan Asylum.⁹⁵ Six months later, Mrs. Hughes was escorted back to the Protestant Orphan's Home by the police.

Mrs. Hughes, the former troublesome inmate, had been brought in by the Police Authorities. She stated that she had been turned out of St. Patrick's Home. Mrs. McNab and Mrs. Wilson were appointed to go to that institution and inquire about the case.⁹⁶

Mrs. Hughes was readmitted to the Protestant Orphan's Home on December 24, 1886 and died one year later.⁹⁷

One of the more colourful characters who found refuge in two of the charitable institutions in Ottawa was Mary Anne Dagg. She first entered the Protestant Orphan's Home in September 1867.

Application was made for admission to the Home by a woman who had partially lost her eye-sight and was unable to work for her maintenance. It was decided to give her a temporary asylum until the necessary inquiries should be made concerning her, and if she proved to be a deserving object for the care of the Institution to admit her as an inmate.⁹⁸

Anne Dagg was dismissed October 5, 1868 because it was found that she was very troublesome and insubordinate.

She was summoned before the Board, when finding her unwilling to submit to the authority of the ladies or the Matron, it was considered necessary to dismiss her from the Institution as it was the unanimous opinion of the ladies present, that it was impossible to retain any inmate, who would not in all things conform to the rules and regulations of the "Home."⁹⁹

The matron had probably informed the Visiting Ladies that she was having a problem with Anne Dagg and her case was presented at a Board meeting.

After three months Anne Dagg applied for readmittance but "it was decided not to receive her."¹⁰⁰ One year later she again asked for admittance. "Ann Dagg has been to The Home during the month and is desirous of again becoming an inmate."¹⁰¹ She was readmitted for one day in October 1870 and then again in December of that year.¹⁰² Accordingly, Anne Dagg was "allowed to remain during good behaviour."¹⁰³ One year later the Visiting Ladies reported that Anne Dagg had left the home.

Ann Dagg having left last week without the knowledge of the ladies and having not yet returned, it is thought proper that some decision be pronounced in regard to her, in case she should again claim admittance.¹⁰⁴

She was dismissed in absentia for misconduct for having left the institution without permission.¹⁰⁵

Five years later, Mary Anne Dagg found her way to Foyer St-Charles.

"D'elle M. Ann Dagg âgée quatre-vingt cinq, native de Irlande, demeurant à Ottawa, entrée le 2 novembre 1876. Gratis. Sortie le 16 janvier 1877."¹⁰⁶ This was the last word on Mary Anne Dagg. In most instances, there was no indication where the older women went after they left the institutions. Their options included living on the

streets, going into service, returning to family members, or seeking refuge in the various public institutions - Houses of Refuge, gaols, or lunatic asylums.

Not all the older women who went between different charitable institutions were "hard-to-manage." Occasionally older woman would use the availability of other accommodations to exert some autonomy. Those who were not content in one institution went in search of more satisfactory lodging, as in the case of Catherine Cowan/Mary McCardle¹⁰⁷ who went shopping because she was not happy at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum.

Catherine Cowan born from Joseph Cowan married with Bridget Boyle, in Ireland united to Barny McCardell admitted at St. Charles Home on Nov. 24, 1888. Gratis from the City of Ottawa. aged 72 years. Sortie de l'Hospice pour retourner à Asile St. Patrice le 29 du même mois.¹⁰⁸

She only stayed six days at Foyer St-Charles before returning to St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum.

In summary, life in the institutions was highly structured and revolved around the morality of the Christian women who managed them. Every facet of institutional life was determined by their moral code - the rigid schedule, the daily religious practices, the behavioral expectations, the frugal accommodations and diet, and the methods for disciplining inmates. These practices were considered necessary to reduce the instability produced by a large transient population.

Although life in the charitable institutions was rather spartan, it was comfortable for those who could conform. The ideal inmate was of approved moral character, did not challenge authority, had a religious interest, and was suitably

grateful. The women who could conform to these moral and behavioral standards and did not require extensive care were part of the stable core of inmates who remained in the institutions until they died. These women were portrayed as the docile recipients of charity - so docile that they rarely merited any mention in the institutional records.

In contrast the records on the transient women were more indepth and revealed that the lives of older working class women were best described as being unstable. Older women were susceptible to a decline in their mental or physical health and this sometimes resulted in their discharge from the orphanages. Instability in the lives of older women was also produced by uncertain family supports as many working class families could not afford to care for another dependent relative. Families frequently refused to care for the older women or were abusive.

Instability was also caused by the work situation of some older able-bodied women. These women used the institutions as temporary shelters between jobs and were obliged to leave when work became available. Some of these women were also hired to work in the institutions and as part inmate, part worker their status was rather uncertain. In essence, the unstable lives many working class women led was perpetuated by the practices of the charitable institutions and the women who managed them.

Chapter VI Endnotes

1. Cook, p. 26.
2. Rudy, p. 75-76.
3. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1878-1884, November 27, 1882.
4. Cook, p. 38.
5. AGSIC. SPO, Minute Book of the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum Council, 1883-1896, Visiting Committee's Report, February 7, 1896.
6. COA. MG7-4-11, Visiting Ladies Report, 1871.
7. Gregory Kealey, Working Class Toronto at the Turn of the Century (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1974), 17-26.
8. Kealey, p. 26.
9. AGSIC. SPO, Minute Book of the St. Patrick's Orphanage and Asylum, 1865-1883, December 28, 1877.
10. AGSIC. SPO, Actes de Visites de la Supérieure Générale, 6 décembre 1880.
11. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 2, POH, Minutes, 1884-1889, November 29, 1886.
12. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1869-1878, February 26, 1872.
13. ASCO. FSC, File: Ottawa: Foyer Saint-Charles Historique - Publication 1921. No. de la Maison: 20, Folie: 11, Intitule du Folio: Publication. Soeur Ste-Berthe (Toupin), Historique de L'Hospice Saint Charles, 1871-1921, des Soeurs de la Croix d'Ottawa (Ottawa: Imprimerie de la Maison-Mère, 1921).
14. Soeur Paul-Émile, p. 306.
15. COA. MG7-2-7, POH, First Annual Report, 1866. Appendix.
16. ASCO. FSC, File "Ottawa-Foyer Saint-Charles Historique - Publication 1921. No. de la Maison: 20, Folie: 11, Intitule du Folio: Publication. S. Ste-Berthe (Toupin), Historique de L'Hospice Saint-Charles, 1871-1921 des Soeurs Grises de la Croix d'Ottawa (Ottawa: Imprimerie de la Maison-Mère, 1921).
17. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1864-1869, February 22, 1869.
18. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1864-1869, July 9, 1866.

19. COA. MG7-13-3, Maria J.I. Thorburn, The Orphans' Home of the City of Ottawa: Sketch of the First Forty Years, 1864-1904 (Toronto: William Briggs, 1904), p. 76.
20. AGSIC. SPO, Minute Book St. Patrick's Orphanage and Asylum, 1865-1883, June 8, 1879.
21. ASCO. FSC, File: Ottawa: Foyer Saint-Charles Historique - Publication 1921. No. de la Maison: 20, Folie: 11, Intitule du Folio: Publication. Soeur Ste-Berthe (Toupin), Historique de l'Hospice Saint Charles, 1871-1921, des Soeurs de la Croix d'Ottawa (Ottawa: Imprimerie de la Maison-Mère, 1921), p. 71.
22. COA. MG7-2-22, POH, Seventeenth Annual Report, 1882, p. 6.
23. ASCO. FSC, C7 Histoire, 1 Orphelinat St-Joseph, p. 253.
24. COA. MG7-2-28, POH, Twenty-third Annual Report, 1888, p. 6.
25. COA. MG7-2-7, POH, First Annual Report, 1866.
26. COA. MG7-2-7, POH, First Annual Report, 1866.
27. AGSIC. SPO, Actes de Visites de la Supérieure Générale, 1 juillet, 1886.
28. Cook, p. 25.
29. RSL. FSC, 1871-1933, p. 58.
30. AGSIC. SPO, Actes de Visites de la Supérieure Générale, November 5, 1879.
31. Haber, p. 89 & 98.
32. AGSIC. SPO, Printed Council Meeting Reports, 1866-1886, 12th Annual Report, 1877, p. 2.
33. COA. MG7-2-8, POH, Second Annual Report, 1867, p. 7. In the years 1868 and 1869 there were 19 inmates at one time in the Protestant Orphan's Home. See COA. MG7-2-9, POH, Third Annual Report, 1868, p. 6; COA. MG7-2-10, POH, Fourth Annual Report, 1869, p. 5.
34. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1864-1869, April 29, 1866.
35. AGSIC. SPO, Printed Council Meeting Reports, 1866-1886, 4th Annual Report, 1869, p. 6.
36. AGSIC. SPO, Printed Council Meeting Reports, 1866-1886, 7th Annual Report, 1872, p. 4.
37. Cook, p. 29.

38. The categories of "left" and "discharged" have been divided according to what was written in the registers. This division was arbitrary because each institution may have had a different meaning attached to the words. As well, over the years, various women were responsible for the keeping of the records and may have used different words to describe the departure of the older women residents. I have also introduced an element of definition by including women who were taken by their families or sent to another institution as being "discharged."

39. COA. MG7-2-21, POH, Sixteenth Annual Report, 1881, p. 6.

40. Marcella Weiner & Corrine Teresi, Old People are a Burden, But Not my Parents (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1983), p. 26-27 & 144.

41. ASCO. FSC, C7 Histoire l Orphelinat St-Joseph [Newspaper clippings], "À l'Hospice St-Charles", 17 novembre 1888. p. 253.

42. RSL. FSC, 1871-1933, p. 55.

43. AGSIC. SPO, Residents (adults and children), 1884-1925.

44. COA. MG7-2-1, POH, Seventh Annual Report, 1872, p. 6.

45. RSL. FSC, 1871-1933, p. 36.

46. AGSIC. SPO, Printed Council Meeting Reports, 1866-1886, 6th Annual Report, 1871, p. 3.

47. AGSIC. SPO, Minute Books of the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum Council, 1883-1896, January 8, 1888.

48. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 2, POH, Minutes, 1884-1889, June 29, 1885; Ibid., February 22, 1886.

49. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1878-1884, July 28, 1884.

50. AGSIC. SPO, Minute Books of the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum Council, 1883-1896, June 27, 1887.

51. AGSIC. SPO, Minute Book St. Patrick's Orphanage and Asylum, 1865-1883, May 9, 1867.

52. AGSIC. SPO, Residents (adults and children), 1884-1925; COA. MG7-7-2, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925, Entry Number 805.

53. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 2, POH, Minutes 1884-1889, November 29, 1886.

54. "St. Vitus' Dance", known today as "Sydenham's Chorea," is characterized by involuntary, spasmodic facial and limb movement that intensifies by voluntary effort but disappears in sleep.

It is "an acute toxic or infective disorder of the nervous system" that generally occurs in young children. On occasion people over 60 are diagnosed with "Senile Chorea," which resembles Huntington's Disease. Unfortunately, in the late nineteenth century they would not have made the distinction between the infectious childhood disease and the noninfectious disease affecting older people.

From Stedman's Medical Dictionary, 23rd Edition (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1976), p. 273; James Wyngaarden & Lloyd Smith Jr., Cecil Textbook of Medicine, 18th Edition (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1988), p. 2148-2149.

PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes 1864-1869, December 31, 1866.

55. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1864-1869, January 27, 1868.

56. COA. MG7-4-9, POH, Visiting Ladies Report, December 1870.

57. COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925, Entry Number 587.

58. AGSIC. SPO, Residents (adults & children) 1884-1925.

59. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 2, POH, Minutes 1884-1889, June 29, 1885.

60. COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925, Entry Number 30.

61. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1864-1869, October 28, 1867.

62. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1864-1869, February 24, 1868.

63. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 2, POH, Minutes 1884-1889, August 27, 1888; PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1878-1884, July 30, 1883.

64. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1869-1878, June 30, 1873.

65. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 2, POH, Minutes 1884-1889, June 29, 1885.

66. RSL. FSC, 1871-1933, p. 48.

67. AGSIC. SPO, Residents (adults and children), 1884-1925.

68. As cited in Beth Light & Joy Parr, eds., Canadian Women on the Move: 1867-1920 (Toronto: New Hogtown Press & The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1983), p. 259.

69. As cited in Bradbury, p. 153.

70. COA. MG7-7-2, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925, Entry Number 715.

71. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 2, POH, Minutes 1884-1889, July 26, 1886.
72. AGSIC. SPO, Minute Book of the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum Council, 1883-1896, Visiting Committee's Report, February 7, 1896.
73. AGSIC. SPO, Printed Council Meeting Reports, 1866-1886, Tenth Annual Report, 1875, p. 1.
74. Shortt, p. 8-9.
75. James Struthers, No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914-1941 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 3; Taylor, p. 88.
76. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1869-1878, May 28, 1877.
77. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1869-1878, August 1873.
78. AGSIC. SPO, Minute Book of the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum Council, 1883-1896, Visiting Committee's Report, February 7, 1896.
79. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 2, POH, Minutes 1884-1889, March 30, 1885.
80. AGSIC. SPO, Residents (adults and children), 1884-1925.
81. Leslie, p. 85.
82. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 2, POH, Minutes 1884-1889, February 27, 1888.
83. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes 1869-1878, August 26, 1878.
84. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes 1869-1878, November 27, 1876.
85. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, Minutes 1869-1878, November 27, 1876.
86. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes 1864-1869, November 1, 1866.
87. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes 1864-1869, October 5, 1868.
88. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 2, POH, Minutes, 1884-1889, March 26, 1888.
89. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1869-1878, May 1875.
90. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1869-1878, June 1875;
COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925, Entry Number 256.
91. AGSIC. SPO, Minute Book St. Patrick's Orphanage and Asylum, 1865-1883, July 8, 1868.

92. AGSIC. SPO, Printed Council Meeting Reports, 1866-1886, January 8, 1868.
93. AGSIC. SPO, Minute Book St. Patrick's Orphanage and Asylum, 1865-1883, November 11, 1868.
94. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes 1864-1869, April 27, 1868.
95. COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925, Entry Number 533.
96. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 2, POH, Minutes, 1884-1889, December 27, 1886.
97. COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925, Entry Number 533.
98. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1864-1869, September 30, 1867.
99. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1864-1869, October 5, 1868.
100. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1864-1869, January 25, 1869.
101. COA. MG7-4-6, POH, Visiting Ladies Report, March 1870.
102. COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925, Entry Number 30.
103. PAC. MG 28, I 37, Vol. 1, POH, Minutes, 1869-1878, January 20, 1871.
104. COA. MG7-4-11, POH, Visiting Ladies Report, 1871.
105. COA. POH, MG7-7-2, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925, Entry Number 30.
106. RSL. FSC, 1871-1933, p. 21.
107. Catherine Cowan is recorded at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum as Mary McArdle. These are the same women because Catherine Cowan's married name was McCardell. Spelling mistakes, the tendency of Catholics to name their girl children "Mary" followed by a second name which the girls usually used, a birthday and inaccuracies in recording, account for the discrepancies in the records. The strongest evidence that links these women is from the records from Foyer St-Charles which indicated that she was returning to St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum.
108. RSL. FSC, 1871-1933, p. 73.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to portray life for older women in nineteenth century charitable institutions in Ottawa. Essentially care for older women was a story of class and gender differences. Although language, religion, and ethnicity did play a role in shaping the institutions, this was of secondary importance in determining the meaning and impact on older working class women. The factionalism that was a dominant feature of Ottawa, translated into different religious and ethnic communities establishing charitable institutions for their own dependent people.

Foyer St-Charles followed the French tradition of general hospitals and was very different from the other two institutions studied. In addition to having a mandate to care for older people, it provided more than custodial care, accepted more paying inmates, provided bilingual services, and received greater government funding. In contrast the two English orphanages directed their efforts at children and only peripherally at older people. Even when the child-centred reform movement separated adults from children, interest in the older population remained secondary.

Charitable institutions were a much needed service that alleviated considerable suffering while providing women with companionship, comfort, and a degree of security in their old age. The constant shortage of space reflects the difficulty working class people experienced in providing for themselves in their old age. The three charitable institutions started in small ways and gradually expanded with the

increasing demand for services reflecting their importance to the community.

Although charitable institutions were comfortable, they were rather spartan because the charity workers believed there was a limit to the amount of comfort the lower class inmates deserved. As well, the reliance on the good will of the elite meant sparse furnishing, simple meals, and lack of privacy for the inmates.

The management hierarchy of each charitable institution reflected and reinforced class differences. The Sisters Superior in the Catholic institutions paralleled the high status of the Board of Management in the Protestant Orphan's Home while the status of the working class nuns was similar to that of the working class matrons. The founders of all three institutions were from the middle and upper classes while the inmates were almost all from the working class.

Class differences were reinforced by selecting inmates primarily from the working class. The uncertainty of admitting a middle class inmate exposes the desire of the charity workers not to mix the classes. While middle class and paying inmates were admitted to all three institutions, the charity workers tried to present the illusion that their inmates were the most wretched of the poor. Images of helpless children and poor elderly people were known to encourage donations by evoking pity and a sense of Christian duty in the upper classes.

While men did play a role in shaping the two orphan asylums, it was mainly women who were responsible for the charitable efforts. Because upper and middle class women managed the institutions and interacted on a regular basis with the inmates, they were directly responsible for the welfare of working class women.

Class transcended gender. Often when history is recorded, women are viewed as a monolithic group but this study highlights the class-based differences in power and authority held by women. The social status of affluent women gave them the freedom to engage in work that ordinarily their gender prevented them from doing. The freedom these women were allowed was used in turn to restrict the freedom of working class women by determining acceptable behavior based on their morality and values.

There were essentially two different populations of older women inmates in the institutions, temporary and long-term residents. Although most of the older women died in the charitable institutions, a large segment of that population was very transient. In the orphanages, this transience resulted from the inmates requiring too much care or not being able to conform with behavioral or moral standards. The "nonconformists" were perceived to be very "difficult" and their transience raises an interesting question as to whether they really were "difficult" or the institutions were unable to meet diverse needs. This study suggests that the latter is the stronger influence. Older people can sometimes be demanding, eccentric, or have mental illnesses that makes them hard to handle. With a lack of resources and people, the institutions could not cope with this type of behaviour. Consequently, the charity workers demanded conformity and had a strong desire not to recognize individual differences.

In addition to noncompliance, transience also resulted from bouncing back and forth between self-sufficiency, the family, and the charitable institutions. Even into

their old age, able-bodied working class women were expected to work and when jobs became available they had to leave. While the older women were in the institutions they were expected to assist with household chores, partly out of necessity but mostly because the moral code dictated that idleness was an evil. An extremely thin line existed between staff and inmates because some older women worked in exchange for room and board and a minimal salary.

Transience also resulted when older women returned to their families. Although pressured to care for elderly relatives, many working class families were not in financial positions to do so. Some families simply refused to provide for their relatives while others abused or neglected them.

The transience of some inmates exposes the limitations of the institutions and provides the most insight into how the lives of older women were affected by institutional standards. One limitation was that through forced dependency, vulnerability and passivity of older women was reinforced. The prevailing institutional standards that demanded conformity and did not recognize the unique problems affecting elderly people, left older women with very little control over their lives. This position of forced dependency made them very vulnerable to the dictates of the women who ran the charitable institutions. This vulnerability in turn, translated into passivity as older women submitted to authority or faced disciplinary action.

A second limitation of the institutions was that the low status of older women in Canadian society was reinforced. They were viewed as pitiful, dependent

creatures. Since dependency was considered inferior if not immoral, it effectively placed them in an subordinate position. Women were always deemed the weaker sex but age added a dimension of incompetence. The status of older women was further demoted because the orphanages cared for them on the periphery of their charitable efforts. Children always came first, and even after the older women were given separate quarters, concern for them remained secondary.

The experiences of these nineteenth century women is important for helping us understand some of the practices in modern institutions for elderly people. Today class distinctions still exist in the care for older people with the working class being accommodated in public institutions while the wealthy have more options. Within this class component lies a gender aspect with many women still belonging to the lower class because they remained in the unpaid domestic sphere. Elements of nineteenth century charity work, such as the class differences between donors and recipients, are still evident in social work practice today. For example, government welfare workers are comfortably middle class while many clients are disenfranchised, low income people. These workers are the gate-keepers to services in much the same manner as the operators of the charitable institutions of the late 1800s.

Much information about the lives of late nineteenth century older working class women is still missing. A community's complete response to the dependency of older women is required to ascertain where they could find assistance other than in the private charitable institutions. The records of gaols, lunatic asylums, hospitals,

and Houses of Refuge could be scoured for evidence. It would be interesting to pursue the lives of some older women, tracing their histories among the various institutions and their families. This may answer the question of what happened to all those older women who left the charitable institutions? Perhaps they ended up in the local goal; perhaps they starved to death on the street. Hopefully someday their stories will be told.

Appendix A

Number of Older Women Inmates in the Three Charitable Institution per Year, 1871-1888.

Sources: RSL. FSC, 1871-1933; AGSIC. SPO, Residents (adults & children), 1884-1925 & AGSIC. SPO, Register - St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum of Ottawa, 1866-1889; COA. MG7-7-4, POH, 29 October 1874 - 30 September 1901, Register of the Orphans' Home & COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925.

Appendix B

Nationality of Older Women Inmates in the Three Charitable Institutions, 1871-1888

Sources: RSL. FSC, 1871-1933; AGSIC. SPO, Residents (adults & children), 1884-1925 & AGSIC. SPO, Register - St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum of Ottawa, 1866-1889; COA. MG7-7-4, POH, 29 October 1874 - 30 September 1901, Register of the Orphans' Home & COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925.

Appendix C

Age of Admission of Older Women in the Three Charitable Institutions, 1871-1888

Sources: RSL. FSC, 1871-1933; AGSIC. SPO, Residents (adults & children), 1884-1925 & AGSIC. SPO, Register - St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum of Ottawa, 1866-1889; COA. MG7-7-4, POH, 29 October 1874 - 30 September 1901, Register of the Orphans' Home & COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925.

Appendix D

Place of Residence of Older Women Inmates in the Three Charitable Institutions, 1871-1888

Sources: RSL. FSC, 1871-1933; AGSIC. SPO, Residents (adults & children), 1884-1925 & AGSIC. SPO, Register - St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum of Ottawa, 1866-1889; COA. MG7-7-4, POH, 29 October 1874 - 30 September 1901, Register of the Orphans' Home & COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925.

Appendix E

Number of Deaths, Departures, and Discharges of Older Women Inmates in the Three Charitable Institutions, 1871-1888

Sources: RSL. FSC, 1871-1933; AGSIC. SPO, Residents (adults & children), 1884-1925 & AGSIC. SPO, Register - St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum of Ottawa, 1866-1889; COA. MG7-7-4, POH, 29 October 1874 - 30 September 1901, Register of the Orphans' Home & COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925.

Appendix F

Duration of Residency of Older Women Inmates in the Three Charitable Institutions, 1871-1888.

Sources: RSL. FSC, 1871-1933; AGSIC. SPO, Residents (adults & children), 1884-1925 & AGSIC. SPO, Register - St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum of Ottawa, 1866-1889; COA. MG7-7-4, POH, 29 October 1874 - 30 September 1901, Register of the Orphans' Home & COA. MG7-7-2, POH, Register, Protestant Orphan's Home, September 14, 1865 - September 11, 1925.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGSIC - Archives Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

ASCO - Archives Soeurs de la Charité d'Ottawa

COA - City of Ottawa Archives

PAC - Public Archives of Canada

RSL - Résidence St-Louis

FSC - Foyer St-Charles

POH - Protestant Orphan's Home

SPO - St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum

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