

**"THE HOMESPUN ECONOMY":
PERSISTENCE OF HANDWEAVING IN NEW BRUNSWICK
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

By

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Hand made textiles played an important role in both the rural economy of colonial British North America and in the family. Offering more than a means to earn supplemental income, these textiles were often crucial to survival, especially in localities where harsh winter conditions were the norm and supplies uncertain. Handweaving was not, however, ubiquitous in colonial North American households. Weaver's account books, general store ledgers, and memoirs all show that most households often purchased textiles from other sources.

This thesis explores some of the complex and multi-linked reasons for handweaving's popularity and persistence in New Brunswick into the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Tradition was one common factor among French-speaking Acadian households, while other weavers responded to family economics, or market conditions. A case study of weavers and their neighbours in Northumberland County dispels the myth that poverty was the prime reason for persistence in this county. Instead, a niche market of outdoor workers and a cold climate fuelled the "homespun economy".

Both tradition and markets were conditioned by two other rarely studied influences. Some residents thought industrialization would soon relieve women from the drudgery of cloth making and allow them more leisure time to "cultivate their minds" and look after their families. For this to happen, politicians, entrepreneurs and lobbyists had to promote industrialized textile manufacturing. Neither government nor

entrepreneurs were much interested in doing this since imported textiles generated important revenues in both imposts and commissions. Handweavers were thus able to continue supplying their niche market since there was little local competition.

New ideas about women's work could also influence textile production. "Cultivating their minds" led women to spend more time embroidering cushions, doing fancy knitting, and decorating their homes. Tracking these trends through agricultural society reports, provincial exhibitions, poems and articles in the press gives valuable insights into this little explored aspect of home textiles. Women did not give up handweaving for more genteel activities but integrated them with their market activity.

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McMorran, of St Stephen gifted me with a blanket hand woven by one of his 19th century relatives, Hannah Fulsom Moulton, of Charlotte County. Annabelle Powell, in Saint John donated the entire series of out of print *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society* to enhance the section on early New Brunswick.

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I hope that I have succeeded in "honouring" weavers in nineteenth century New Brunswick by giving some of them a voice and recognition for their textile work. Their industriousness has been an inspiration. Any errors or omissions are entirely my own.

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CHAPTER 1. THE HIDDEN RURAL TEXTILE ECONOMY

Introduction

A snapshot of home textile production in New Brunswick in 1871 reveals some significant changes in this traditional craft. The volume of production and the demand for home textiles would have astonished most residents in many communities. On the 1851 census hand weavers had declared over 620,000 yards of homespun cloth for home use, although fewer than 1 in 6 families owned a loom.¹ By 1871, home weaving production had increased by 80% with home weavers now reporting over 1.12 million yards of homespun cloth.² Per capita cloth production for home use had also increased by 18%, from 3.21 yards in 1851 to 3.93 yards in 1871.

This was not the only home manufactured cloth made in the province. Some weavers also wove cloth for the market and indicated details of their weaving businesses on Schedule 6, the Industrial and Manufacturing returns. Used for the first time in 1871, Schedule 6 recorded over 500 market weavers in the province.³ Since none of the data from their weaving businesses was ever tabulated or published, their

¹Among the 31,682 families in the province in 1851, 5475 of them reported loom ownership. Total cloth production equalled 622,237 yards. *1871 Census of Canada*, "Recapitulation of New Brunswick Census, 1851", (hereafter *1871 Census of Canada*) Vol. 4, 220, 224.

²The actual amount of cloth made in 1871 was 1,124,569 yards. These 1871 values represented only wool cloth and flannel, as well as linen, recorded by home weavers on Schedule 5, "Animal Products, Home-Made Fabrics and Furs". Enumerators did not inquire about loom ownership. In 1861 enumerators recorded only the dollar value of homespun and other home manufactures (\$711,394) instead of the yardage of cloth. Although there were 5134 looms reported in the province in 1861, this represented only 12.7 % of all households. "General Census Abstract," *Journal of the House of Assembly of New Brunswick* (hereafter *JHANB*) 1861, 148, 150; *1871 Census of Canada*, vol. 3, 218 and vol. 4, 229.

³Market weavers in 1871 were likely under represented since enumerators only recorded their activity in three counties. In Northumberland County, 388 weavers reported a business while another 107 did so in Charlotte, and 10 in Sunbury.

market production was hidden in the public record.

Markets for homespun cloth are another dimension of this snapshot. Ann Doak, in Northumberland County, was one market weaver supplying local residents with woven and knitted products over the years. In 1871 she ran four businesses, including a handweaving operation, a carding mill, and a small store. Ann Doak, as well as a number of other weavers, did not weave because of poverty. Entries for homespun cloth in country merchants' ledgers, as well as lumber company accounts books, show that numerous markets existed for homespun cloth and handknit socks and mitts in rural areas.⁴

Urban dry goods merchants, as well, purchased and sold homespun cloth, handknit socks, mitts, and underwear, as well as handspun yarns. More than a dozen of them in the major centers solicited home textiles in the 1870s by placing numerous advertisements in provincial newspapers.⁵ Demand for home textiles escalated in the 1870s with merchants competing for home weavers', knitters', and spinners' home production. One advertising campaign in the early 1870s shows the allure for handweavers to be involved in the market. Dry goods merchant Andrew Anderson sought 10,000 yards of homespun cloth and 550 dozen pairs of handknit socks and

⁴Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (hereafter PANB), MC 456 MS1, *Nancy Ann Harris Ledger*, Blissfield, 1858-1869; Central New Brunswick Woodsmen Museum, Boiestown, New Brunswick, L 980.34, *John Pond Ledger*, Boiestown, 1840-1872; PANB, MC 1055 *Doak Family Papers*, Doaktown: MS6/F2 Ann Doak's personal ledger, 1863-1872 and MS6/F3 Account Book 1866-1888; Kings Landing Historical Settlement, Prince Williams, *Henry Grant Ledger*, Hampton, 1872-76; New Brunswick Museum (hereafter NBM), MS 5038, F23-2, *James Russell Lumber Company Papers*, Newcastle, 1864-5.

⁵These newspapers included two Fredericton papers, *The Colonial Farmer* and *The New Brunswick Reporter*, two Miramichi papers, the Newcastle *Union Advocate*, and the Chatham *Gleaner* and one Saint John paper *The Globe*.

mitts to supply his Fredericton customers in the fall of 1872.⁶ Other merchants countered with similar but smaller requests.

Rural women did not only make utilitarian cloth in the 1870s. Changing attitudes towards women's work, including their involvement with home crafts, are an additional component of this weaving snapshot and weaving culture. Increased wealth, as well as a move away from a frontier society, were offering rural women increased leisure time to pursue new activities and participate in a modern society. Mention of these new ideas in poems, short articles, prescriptive literature, letters to newspapers, as well as reports from agricultural societies, was evidence that changes were taking place in the rural countryside.

Rural women were spending more time producing *fancy work*⁷, such as embroidery, fancy knitting and crocheting, and other decorative arts, as well as weaving. Both utilitarian domestic textiles and decorative ones appeared in public events such as provincial exhibitions and agricultural fairs. By the 1870s, *Ladies Fancy Work* was capturing increased attention and gradually displacing domestic textiles in both the home and at fairs. In the 1872 Sackville Provincial Exhibition, for instance, 100 weavers and spinners entered the domestic textile categories while 112 women submitted fancy work, especially fancy knitting and embroidery. Fair-goers admired the more pedestrian twill and plain weave homespun cloth, carpets, blankets, shawls and handspun yarns, but it was the Ladies Fancy Work which drew the most

⁶Advertisement for Glasgow House; *Colonial Farmer*, 11 November 1872.

⁷Words particular to textiles or women's work will be italicized the first time they are used.

attention and praise.⁸ By 1880, 336 of the 576 textile entries in the Provincial Exhibition in Saint John were in the Ladies Fancy Work category.⁹

Weavers and spinners also displayed their work and appeared on prize lists in rural agricultural society fairs throughout the province. Views about both domestic textiles and fancy work varied. In 1872 one local secretary noted that while "the Ladies Work was very much admired," it was the articles of domestic manufacturing that were exceptional and "could [not] be surpassed in any quarter of the globe."¹⁰ Another agricultural secretary noted, however, that "...home manufactured cloth...was of excellent quality", but the Ladies Fancy Work "...exceeded anything of the kind ever exhibited in the Parish."¹¹ Both domestic manufactures and fancy work thus competed for attention and women's available time at these events.

By the 1870s only six small weaving mills supplied domestic woollen textiles to the province.¹² A new cotton mill, recently opened by John Parks in Saint John in 1861, facilitated home production by manufacturing cotton warps for home weaving.¹³ Seventy carding and fulling mills also supported home production. Some of these mill

⁸"Report from the Board of Agriculture," *JHANB* 1873, 144.

⁹In provincial exhibitions, the number of entries in *Ladies Fancy Work* increased steadily between 1870 and 1880. *JHANB* 1871, 1873, 1874, 1881.

¹⁰Report from James Cookson, secretary of the Union Agricultural Society, King's County. "Agricultural Society Reports," *JHANB* 1873, 128.

¹¹Report from Matthew Stevenson, secretary of the Saint Patrick Agricultural Society, Charlotte County. "Agricultural Society Reports," *JHANB* 1870, 132.

¹²*1871 Census of Canada*, Vol, 3, 357.

¹³*Morning News* (Saint John), 22 November 1861; *Daily Evening Globe* (Saint John), 21 September 1866.

owners, such as John Flett, of Nelson, Northumberland County, John McGill of Pennfield, Charlotte County, and William Snow of Hampton, Kings County had received textile bounties from the provincial government in the early 1850s. However, most mill owners fully capitalized their operations themselves, realizing that government was not interested in promoting either home produced or industrial textiles.

This brief overview of handweaving presents unexpected and intriguing dimensions of a rural craft culture persisting into the industrial era. This study investigates some of the reasons for handweaving's popularity in the nineteenth century and its persistence as a viable craft until the early 1880s. While it explores some reasons offered by other historians for persistence, it focuses mainly on little studied influences such as tradition, political agendas, new ideas about women's work, and positive economic forces.

Four main questions inform this study. Was the move toward industrialization in the 1840s and 1850s strong enough to have an effect on home weaving? Can we know the level of penetration of new ideas into the rural countryside? What influence did the market have on home weavers when factory made cloth was so readily available and cheap? Was poverty a factor for the persistence of handweaving in New Brunswick? These questions provide a conduit for new interpretations of the place of rural crafts in three sub-fields of history. Women's handicrafts offers a unique location to examine a different facet of gender and separate spheres ideology.¹⁴ While other

¹⁴See also Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981; and Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres,

studies of Maritime women examined their roles in politics, religion, education, and the law, the changing rhetoric of agricultural societies and exhibitions permits a different assessment of women's identities.¹⁵ Hand weavers most often operated within the confined circles of the family farm, but they were not limited to this site. Their products became a part of public venues, including the fair grounds and the market place.

Cultural mediators were the rogue players in this scenario. Agricultural society secretaries often included comments about women's handicrafts in their reports to government in the 1860s and 1870s. Merchants also sent mixed messages about gender in their advertisements targeted to both rural and urban consumers. By soliciting crafts with payment in barter, urban merchants promoted traditionalism. But they also encouraged modernization by using slogans and new ideas about women's roles in their advertising campaigns.

This study also contributes to the sub-field of rural studies by complementing and expanding previous research on the early nineteenth century female political economy. Monographs by Marjorie Cohen¹⁶ and Jane Errington¹⁷ increased our appreciation of colonial women's involvement in the economy in Ontario while work

Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75, #1 (1988): 9-39.

¹⁵See informative articles in Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton, eds., *Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19th-Century Maritimes*. Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994.

¹⁶Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.

¹⁷Elizabeth Jane Errington, *Wives and Mothers, School Mistresses and Scullery Maids: Working Women in Upper Canada, 1790-1840*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993.

on the Maritimes is still quite recent.¹⁸ Other work on women in the economy, such as that contributed by Alison Prentice and others, gave a more generalized introduction to Canadian women's work in the colonial era.¹⁹ Here they detailed the many avenues open to women, including textile production, but were limited to a cursory overview.

By focusing on economic factors, this study also contributes to the emerging field of consumer studies. Rural residents choose to either purchase or make textile products for their homes. But they also could chose to supply some of these textiles to merchants in exchange for cash or barter. However, their family's economic situation was not necessarily one of dire poverty forcing them to participate in the market economy.

The politics of promoting or curtailing rural handicrafts is rarely addressed by craft historians, political historians, or those studying the rural economy.²⁰ Vernon Fowke's extensive study of early nineteenth century government agricultural policies

¹⁸Béatrice Craig, Judith Rygiel, and Elizabeth Turcotte, "The Homespun Paradox: Market-Oriented Production of Cloth in Eastern Canada in the Nineteenth Century," *Agricultural History* 76, # 1 (2002): 28-57; Craig, Rygiel and Turcotte, "Survival or Adaption? Domestic rural textile production in eastern Canada in the later nineteenth century," *Agricultural History Review* 49, # 2 (2001), 140-171; Craig and Rygiel, "Femmes, marchés et production textile au Nouveau-Brunswick au cours du XIXe siècle," *Histoire et Mesure* 25, no. 1/2 (2000): 83-112; Judith Rygiel, "Thread in Her Hands-Cash in Her Pockets": Textile Production in 19th-Century New Brunswick," *Acadiensis* 30, # 2 (Spring 2001), 56-70.

¹⁹Alison Prentice and al., eds., *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996), 69-83.

²⁰Few historians approached government policies directed at home crafts in the nineteenth century. The two exceptions include a study by Whitney Walton, "Women, Gender and Industrialization in 19th century France: The Case of the Lorraine Embroidery Manufacturing," in *European Women in Preindustrial Crafts*, ed. Daryl Haftner (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 96. Here Walton discussed the French government's trade restrictions on imported machine made lace to encourage local hand made production. Maxine Berg's study on an earlier period discussed British mercantile policies to 1820. Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures, 1700-1820*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 116-136.

affecting rural crafts,²¹ was published nearly sixty years ago. Historians have shown little interest in enlarging Fowke's important work. How lobby groups efforts affected rural crafts has also been neglected by historians of the nineteenth century. This study considers a number of such groups, but especially one prominent one operating in New Brunswick in the early 1850s. Before outlining the limits and parameters of this study, a consideration of other historians' views on women in the rural economy and persistence of handweaving is necessary.

1.1. HISTORIOGRAPHY OF WOMEN IN THE RURAL ECONOMY

1.1.1. Marginalization of Women's Economic Activity

Rural handweaving was an important component of the nineteenth century economy yet it receives little attention from historians, museums or ethnographers. Those who focused on nineteenth century textiles were more interested in factory production, including women's labour relations, working conditions, and immigration.²²

Alan McCullough, for instance, offered an historical perspective of Canadian textile

²¹Vernon Fowke, *Canadian Agricultural Policy: The Historical Pattern* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946), 29-66.

²²There is a rich literature on women's work in 19th century industrialization. See for example Ginette Lafleur, "L'industrialisation et le travail rémunéré des femmes, Moncton, 1881-1891, in *Moncton, 1871-1929: Changements socio-économiques dans une ville ferroviaire*, ed. Daniel Hickey (Moncton: Editions d'Acadie, 1990), 63-87; D.A. Muise, "The Industrial Context of Inequality: Female Participation in Nova Scotia's Paid Labour Force, 1871-1921," *Acadiensis* 20, # 2 (Autumn 1991): 3-31; Peter Delottinville, "Trouble in the Hives of Industry: The Cotton Industry Comes to Milltown, New Brunswick, 1879-1892," *Historical Papers* (Montreal 1980): 100-115; Susan Trofimemkoff, "One Hundred and Two Muffled Voices: Canada's Industrial Women in the 1880s," in *Canada's Age of Industry, 1849-1876*, ed. Michael Cross and Greg Kealey (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 212-229.

In a recent bibliography of women's studies in Canada, the six entries for handweaving were included in Material Culture and Manufacturing. Diana Pedersen, *Changing Women, Changing History* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1996), 217-218.

traditions by situating the cultural heritage of both industrial and home weaving within the Canadian landscape.²³ Mainly concerned with industrial processes, his monograph provided an important examination of both the chronology of industrial textile development as well as the physical legacy of mill architecture. Harold and Dorothy Burnham were pioneers in identifying and cataloguing nineteenth century Canadian textile traditions.²⁴ As an ethnographic and documentary study of textiles, it is exceptional in offering both a rare material culture analysis and an historical essay. David-Thierry Ruddel was also the exception in combining material culture history, ethnography, and museum studies in his many articles on early Quebec textiles.²⁵

Within rural studies,²⁶ rural manufacturing fell uneasily between discussions of

²³A.B. McCullough, *The Primary Textile Industry in Canada: History and Heritage*, Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1992.

²⁴Harold and Dorothy Burnham, *'Keep Me Warm One Night': Early Handweaving in Eastern Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972.

²⁵Ruddel's articles include "Domestic Textile Production in Colonial Quebec, 1608-1840," *Material History Bulletin* 31 (Spring 1990): 39-49; "The Domestic Textile Industry in the Region and City of Quebec, 1792-1835," *Material History Bulletin* 17 (Spring 1983): 95-125; "Consumer Trends, Clothing, Textiles and Equipment in the Montreal Area, 1792-1835," *Material History Bulletin* 32 (Fall 1990): 45-64; and with Adrienne Hood, "Artifacts and Documents in the History of Quebec Textiles," in *Living in a Material World: Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture*, ed. Gerald Pocius, 55-91. St John's: ISER Books, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1990. The use of material culture as documents proves informative for my study.

²⁶For theoretical views in the field of rural history see Daniel Sampson, "Situating the Rural in Atlantic Canada," in *Contested Countryside*, ed. Daniel Sampson (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994), 1-33; R.W. Sandwell, "Rural Reconstruction: Towards a New Synthesis in Canadian History," *Historie Sociale/Social History* 54 (May 1994): 1-32; Catherine Wilson, "Outstanding in the Field": Recent Rural History in Canada," *Acadiensis* 20 (Spring 1991): 177-190; John Herd Thompson, "Writing about Rural Life and Agriculture," in *Writing about Canada*, John Schultz, ed. (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1990): 90-119; Hal Barron, "Rediscovering the Majority: The New Rural History of the Nineteenth-Century North," *Historical Methods* 19, # 4 (Fall 1986): 141-152; Robert P. Swierenga, "Theoretical Perspectives on the New Rural History: From Environmentalism to Modernization," *Agricultural History* 56, # 3 (July 1982): 495-502; John Mack Faragher, "History from the Inside-Out: Writing the History of Women in Rural America," *American Quarterly* 33, # 5 (1981): 537-557.

agriculture, material culture, and manufacturing and industry.²⁷ When women's rural crafts were mentioned at all, they were often relegated to a minor position among other agricultural activities or as precursors of industrialized technology.²⁸ For the period after Confederation, rural farm women's economic activities were mostly left out or confined to their struggles in settling the West.²⁹ This trend was apparent in America as well where Joan Jensen noted historians' interests in wage work and housework rather than household production for the market.³⁰

Ruth Sandwell attributed this lack of interest in rural women's economic activity to their failure to appear "clearly or consistently on the screen of the market economy."³¹ Lack of sources partially contributed to this invisibility. Standard types of

²⁷Brook Taylor referred to women's economic activities as "the gendered nature of the political economy," a term also used by Leo Johnson in "The Political Economy of Ontario Women in the Nineteenth Century," in *Women at Work: Ontario, 1850-1930*, eds., Janice Acton and al., 13-31. Toronto: Women's Press, 1974. M. Brook Taylor, ed. *Canadian History: A Reader's Guide, Volume 1: Beginnings to Confederation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 216.

²⁸Two recent collection of articles about Maritime Canada included essays referring briefly to rural manufacturing. See essays by Béatrice Craig, "Agriculture in a Pioneer Region: The Upper St. John River Valley in the first half of the 19th Century," 17-36; Alan MacNeil, "The Acadian Legacy and Agricultural Development in Nova Scotia, 1760-1861," 1-16; and T.W. Acheson, "New Brunswick Agriculture at the End of the Colonial Era: A Reassessment," 37-60, all in *Farm, Factory and Fortune: New Studies in the Economic History of the Maritime Provinces*, ed. Kris Inwood, Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993; rural crafts in Nova Scotia were also included in Rusty Bitterman's work on Middle River, "Farm Households and Wage Labour in the Northeastern Maritimes in the Early 19th Century," 34-69; and Steven Maynard, "Between Farm and Factory: The Productive Household and the Capitalist Transformation of the Maritimes Countryside, Hopewell, Nova Scotia, 1869-1890," 70-104, both in *Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada, 1800- 1950*, ed. Daniel Samson, Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994.

²⁹Doug Owram, *Canadian History: A Reader's Guide, Volume 2: Confederation to the Present* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 211-214.

³⁰Joan Jensen, "Cloth, Butter and Boarders: Women's Household Production for the Market," in *Promise to the Land*, ed. Joan Jensen (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 187-188.

³¹Sandwell, 19.

nineteenth century sources, such as census data, frequently did not account for the range of female economic activities since women's work was often seasonal, part-time or did not enter the marketplace. Doug McCalla noted as well that, although handweaving and dairying were visible products of women's work, census aggregates and agricultural schedules frequently under represented them or merely left them out.³²

Other constraints added to the invisibility of women's work. Many rural women had neither the ability nor the time to maintain an extensive correspondence or keep a journal. Some documents, such as tax rolls and land records, left women out as well, since they had no legal identity in most provinces until the 1850s.³³ Many historians also ignored other documents which offered valuable information on women's involvement in the economy. Elizabeth Manke's creative use of ledgers dispelled some historians' contentions that these documents were "useless sources" since they were "tediously pedestrian, repetitive and detailed."³⁴

Common misconceptions are another problem in capturing women's participation in the economy.³⁵ These misconceptions were insidious in projecting a web of invisibility over rural women's household production and their exclusion from

³²Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 113.

³³Errington, xiv.

³⁴Elizabeth Manke was able to reconstruct consumer behaviour from these early ledgers, including women's products that entered the economy. Elizabeth Manke, "At the Counter of the General Store: Women and the Economy in Eighteenth-century Horton, Nova Scotia," in *Intimate Relations: Family and Community in Planter Nova Scotia, 1759-1800*, ed. Margaret Conrad (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1995), 177.

³⁵Jensen, "Cloth, Butter and Boarders," 189-90.

the historical record. The first misconception was that farms were isolated from market forces and totally self-sufficient from the early colonial period through much of the nineteenth century. Women wove cloth to satisfy their own family's needs and perhaps barter any surplus with their neighbours. Since their cloth did not enter the formal economy, there were few records. A lively debate about self-sufficiency engaged many scholars throughout the 1980s.³⁶

Universal ownership of textile equipment and skills was a second misconception. The general picture of colonial textiles was that weaving was ubiquitous in all households. Whether in Quebec, Nova Scotia, New England or Pennsylvania, historians found similar evidence about equipment ownership.³⁷

Research using estate inventories for the early colonial period in both countries now

³⁶Vernon Fowke was the only scholar writing on self-sufficiency in Canada: "The Myth of the Self-sufficient Canadian Pioneer," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 56, 3rd Series, Section II (1962): 23-37. In America see Richard L. Bushman, "Markets and Composite Farms in Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 55, # 3 (July 1998): 494-374; Christopher Clark, "The Household Economy, Market Exchange and the Rise of Capitalism in the Connecticut Valley, 1800-1860," *Journal of Social History* 13, # 2 (Winter 1979): 169-190; Michael Merrill, "Cash is Good to Eat: Self-Sufficiency in the Rural Economy of the United States," *Radical History Review* (1997): 42-71; James Henrietta, "Families and Farms: Mentalité in Pre-Industrial America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Series, 35, # 4 (1978): 3-23; Carole Shammas, "How Self-Sufficient Was Early America?" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 13, # 2 (Autumn 1982): 247-272.

³⁷See especially *Material History Bulletin* 17, Spring, 1983 which focused on the material conditions and society in Lower Canada. Here D. T. Ruddel described the reliance on both imported and homespun production through an examination of estate inventories between 1792-1835 in the region and city of Quebec, while Christian Dessureault gave important details on livestock and agricultural equipment. Among English speaking inhabitants, Peter Latta's assessment of estate inventories of eighteenth century Yorkshire settlers in Nova Scotia corroborates Ruddel's Quebec findings on textile purchases. Peter Latta, "Eighteenth-Century Immigrants to Nova Scotia: The Yorkshire Settlers," *Material History Bulletin* 28 (Fall 1988): 46-51. According to Laurel Ulrich, loom ownership was also low in many rural American households in the eighteenth century. While only 20% of residents in both Chester County, Pennsylvania and Essex County, Massachusetts owned looms, up to 70% of them had a spinning wheel. Laurel Ulrich, "Wheels, Looms, and the Gender Division of Labour in Eighteenth-Century New England," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 55, #1 (January 1998): 6-11; Adrienne Hood, "The Material World of Cloth: Production and Use in Eighteenth Century Rural Pennsylvania," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 53, #1 (January 1996): 53.

shows that only about a third of households possessed looms, although spinning wheel ownership was much higher.

Some scholars identified gender bias as another possible reason for so few works on women in the rural economy. Jeanne Kay mentioned patriarchal assumptions and androcentric views of the past, as well as generalizations about communities and societies, made women invisible.³⁸ Since experiences of men and women were different on the frontier as well as in settled communities, these generalizations often ignored women's contributions. The hidden female economy, including textile occupations of dress making and handweaving, were frequently "unmentioned or forgotten" in works on settler societies, including New Brunswick's.³⁹

Jane Errington ascribed this gender blindness to a form of elitism. Since women did not vote, take part in political life, or work in seemingly productive activities, they were often left out. As Errington observed, "what has traditionally been considered "women's work" had little or no redeeming social or economic value."⁴⁰ Marjorie Cohen also noticed that this gender blindness had obscured economic contributions of half of the nineteenth century population. These views disallowed women's contributions to the economy and as important players in capital accumulation.⁴¹ Fortunately many of these concerns are now changing with more

³⁸Jeanne Kay, "Landscapes of Women and Men: Rethinking the Regional Geography of the United States and Canada," *Journal of Historical Geography* 17, # 4 (1991): 436.

³⁹Ibid., 439. Kay mentioned Graeme Wynn's study of New Brunswick, *Timber Colony*, as an example of these generalizations about settler societies.

⁴⁰Errington, xii.

⁴¹Cohen, 1, 12.

emphasis not only on inclusion of rural women's work but as participants in the economy.⁴²

1.1.2. Potential Factors for Decline and Persistence of Traditional Crafts

Historians in America and Europe often identified turning points in the decline of rural crafts rather than their persistence.⁴³ By the early 1860s, handweaving was for all intents and purposes a "regional fireside activity" in America, but especially in very isolated areas.⁴⁴ The development of regional industrial centers in the northern states, combined with commercial agriculture and the proliferation of textile mills in New England, were all precipitating factors in the decline of home crafts. Not only did home weaving decline rapidly but other home crafts, such as furniture making, were affected by this industrial-agricultural economy. In the southern states home production prevailed, even during the Civil War period, since local commercial textile mills were less prevalent and farm production less specialized.⁴⁵

Water powered machinery had initially increased homespun cloth production in

⁴²This contention is supported by the number of articles about rural women's work in journals such as *Agricultural History*, *Agricultural History Review* and some of the main-stream social and economic history journals. The Rural Women's Studies Association, set up in 1988, is also active in promoting scholarship about farm women through their triennial conferences.

⁴³Victor Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States*, Vol.1 (New York: Peter Smith, 1929; reprint, 1949), 438-440; Rolla Milton Tyron, *Household Manufactures in the United States, 1640-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917; reprint, 1965), 242-ff; Percy Wells Bidwell and John Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1820-1860* (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 127-129, 250-255; Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, Work and Family* (New York and London: Routledge, 1978, reprint, 1987), 12-15, 32-37, 43-47.

⁴⁴Ann Cameron McRae, "Women at the Loom - Handweaving in Washington County, Tennessee," MA thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2001.

⁴⁵Jeremy Atask and Fred Bateman, *To Their Own Soil- Agriculture in the Antebellum North* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1987), 205-206; Victor Clark, 438-440; Bidwell and Falconer, 250.

the early part of the century, but this same machinery also made factory production much more feasible and cost effective. Cash income, generated by commercialized agriculture, was an added incentive for rural residents to give up home production of textile goods. Obviously transportation costs and proximity to markets to sell farm produce were both regional considerations in abandoning home production.

New opportunities for farm women's employment also contributed to the decline of home weaving in both America and Europe. The *putting out* system attracted many women in the northeastern states and in Europe with the promise of cash wages for work supplied by middlemen. Many women sewed shoes, plaited bonnets, sewed men's ready to wear garments, and made buttons in their own homes.⁴⁶ Dairying and cheese making were other occupations which replaced home textile production in both the northeastern United States and Ontario.⁴⁷ Butter making was a less tedious process than cloth making, required less capital investment, and provided a ready source of income to allow purchases of other commodities. It also increased the possibility for young girls to attend school in the winter time, a season when little

⁴⁶Tilly and Scott, 104-116, 123-129; Victor Clark, 440-442; Thomas Dublin, *Transforming Women's Work: New England Lives in the Industrial Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 29-76. For a later nineteenth century analysis of women in the putting out trades in Montreal, see Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families - Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993), 84-86.

⁴⁷Sally McMurry, *Transforming Rural Life: Dairying Families and Agricultural Change, 1820-1885*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995; McMurry, "Women's Work in Agriculture: Divergent Trends in England and America, 1800-1930," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (1992): 248-270; Joan Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds- Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 92-113; Jensen, "Cloth, Butter and Boarders...", 191-197; Cohen, 93-117.

dairying was done.⁴⁸

Since industrialized cloth making was a relative late comer in Canada, historians were more likely to discuss persistence of home weaving rather than its decline. Common factors contributing to this persistence fell into two broad categories. Economic factors included mechanization of both textile processes and agricultural equipment, poverty, markets, and employment opportunities for women.⁴⁹ Cultural factors were less well defined but included rural values, long standing traditions and habits, and knowledge of weaving practices.

1.1.3. Economic Explanations in Canada

As in the southern states of America, handweaving in Canada persisted longest in areas where industrialization and commercial agriculture were underdeveloped. In many non-metropolitan parts of eastern Ontario handweaving continued well into the second half of the nineteenth century and later. In Renfrew County, for instance, many Germans still practised handweaving into the early twentieth century due to low levels of industrialization and marginal farming.⁵⁰ This scenario was also prevalent in many districts in Quebec. In his extensive study of early carding mills in Quebec, Michael

⁴⁸Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds...*, 88.

⁴⁹Kris Inwood and Janine Roelens identified a further modification to this analysis by looking at general and variable reasons for persistence. Mechanization of carding, durability of homespun cloth, seasonal flexibility of work, ease of learning textile skills, and the adaptability to different stages of the life cycle were among general factors. Other factors were spacial and time specific such as cultural and demographic explanations. Immigrants bringing certain textile skills to a specific area and arriving at different times would fall into this variable category. Inwood and Roelens, "Labouring at the Loom": A Case Study of Rural Manufacturing in Leeds County, Ontario, 1870," in *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 7, ed. Donald Akenson (Gananoque, Ontario: Langdale Press, 1990), 217-222.

⁵⁰Brenda Lee-Whiting, *Harvest of Stones: The German Settlement in Renfrew County* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 116.

Boisvert found small carding and fulling mills more numerous in areas of low industrialization. In some cases both industrialization and handweaving co-existed on a limited basis.⁵¹

Both these studies reflect isolated cases since little work has been done connecting industrialization and handweaving in other areas of Ontario or Quebec. In Waterloo County, for example, large concentrations of professional German handweavers operated near large textile mills in the Grand River communities of Cambridge, Hespeler, Galt and Paris.⁵² As well, along the Mississippi River corridor in eastern Ontario, nearly two dozen textile mills competed with large concentrations of Scottish handweavers as early as the 1830s.⁵³ These two examples only point out the difficulty of generalizing from too few studies.

Rural poverty was most often mentioned as the major factor in persistence of handweaving in the Canadian context.⁵⁴ This contention needs to be carefully

⁵¹Both Michael Boisvert and Serge Courville et al. noted the spatial distribution of carding mills associated with the prominence of handweaving. In areas of early industrialization there was a marked decrease in home production. Serge Courville, Jean Claude Robert, and Normand Séguin, "The Spread of Rural Industry in Lower Canada, 1831-1851," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 2, New Series (1991): 43-70; Michael Boisvert, *La Production Textile dans l'Axe Laurentien au 19e siècle (1842-1861)*, MA Thesis, Laval University, 1993.

⁵²McCullough, 205-219. See Burnham and Burnham, 273-378 for an extensive discussion on complex figured coverlets made by German weavers in Waterloo County; Susan M. Burke, "Perpetuation and Adaptation: The Germanic Textiles of Waterloo County, 1800-1900", in *From Pennsylvania to Waterloo: Pennsylvania-German Folk Culture in Transition*, eds. Susan Burke and Matthew Hill (Kitchener: Joseph Schneider Haus, 1991), 78-95.

⁵³See for example, the history of Rosamond Mill in Lanark County. Richard Reid, "The Rosamond Woolen Company of Almonte: Industrial Development in a Rural Setting," *Ontario History* 75, # 3 (September 1983), 266-289.

⁵⁴Inwood and Roelens, 222; Sophie-Laurence Lamontagne and Fernand Harvey, *La Production Textile Domestique au Quebec, 1827-1941*, Transformation #7 (Ottawa: Musée Nationale Sciences et Technologie, 1997), 31-33; Lee-Whiting, 107; Burnham and Burnham, 8-9, 11; Paul Riou and Jean-

examined. According to Laurel Ulrich, female weaving was not "an artifact of rural poverty or a response to frontier exigency," but a colonial adaptation to an expanding mercantile economy.⁵⁵ Marginal land and low agricultural incomes were common in both the eastern Ontario studies of Leeds and Renfrew counties, and in some parts of Quebec, but poverty in other regions has yet to be examined.

John McCallum was the first scholar to note a linkage between low agricultural incomes and persistence of rural crafts. In Quebec, agricultural families had substantially lower incomes than their counterparts in Ontario between the 1850s and 1870s. As incomes decreased in Quebec, handweaving production increased by more than 50%. In Ontario, agricultural incomes increased substantially due to the wheat economy, but handweaving declined sooner and more dramatically.

McCallum partly ascribed Quebecers' lower incomes to limited use of mechanized farm equipment, slower response rates to new market conditions, underdeveloped transportation networks, and the variable quality of Quebec's agricultural commodities due to shorter growing seasons.⁵⁶ With lower incomes Quebecers were forced to make their own cloth as both expense avoidance and frugality strategies. Only the most prosperous farmers in Quebec in the second quarter of the 19th century could consider purchasing cloth, noted the Burnhams, as well, in

Marie Gauvreau, "Les formes de l'activité artisanale," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 41, Third Series (May 1947): 69; John McCallum, *Unequal Beginnings: Agriculture and Economic Development in Quebec and Ontario until 1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 87-88.

⁵⁵Ulrich, 6.

⁵⁶McCallum, 88-92.

their extensive survey of handwoven fabrics in eastern Canada.⁵⁷

Poverty was one reason why a certain segment of the population continued to weave, according to the Burnhams. Disadvantaged widows and unmarried women, "of an uncertain age", were often forced by their economic circumstances to earn their livelihood through weaving.⁵⁸ Recent work by Craig and Rygiel on western New Brunswick has challenged this assumption of poverty as a factor in persistence.⁵⁹

Time of settlement was also influential in persistence of handweaving. In Quebec, handweaving persisted the longest in more recently settled areas such as the Gaspésie, the Saguenay and the Lower Saint Lawrence River.⁶⁰ With the end of the seigneurial system in 1854, these districts were opened for new settlers seeking large plots of land. Unfortunately these areas also had rocky, marginal soils and longer and colder winters resulting in low agricultural productivity. Late settlers in Renfrew County, Ontario also met similar conditions to Quebec's new settlements. Arriving in Canada between the late 1850s and the 1890s, German settlers brought their weaving traditions from Europe and clustered in the central portion of Renfrew County.⁶¹

Some authors suggested market demand, facilitated by the lumbering trade, was perhaps a good incentive for weaving persistence. While both Inwood and Roelens, Courville and Seguin, as well as Boisvert suggested this factor, it was a minor

⁵⁷Burnham and Burnham, 8.

⁵⁸Ibid., 11.

⁵⁹Craig and Rygiel, 102-108.

⁶⁰Lamontagne and Harvey, 14, 21-25.

⁶¹Lee-Whiting, 4-10.

consideration in their studies.⁶² In works by Craig et al. on Charlotte and Madawaska counties in New Brunswick, markets were a major consideration.⁶³ Woven cloth was often part of the local exchange market and purchased by fishermen, lumberers and seamen who needed warm durable clothing for outdoor work.

1.1.4. Cultural Factors Explaining Persistence in Canada

Cultural factors were less well examined than economic ones in explaining weaving persistence. In Quebec, the clergy preached the need for larger families, both to colonize new settlements and to promote traditional rural Quebec values.⁶⁴ Large families meant increased need for both bedding and clothing supplies. In areas of new settlement, this was especially critical since low incomes and underdeveloped transportation networks were common. Severe winter conditions in northern areas of Quebec and in the Gaspé also meant families needed additional warm clothing.

Weaving traditions brought by immigrant groups to Canada are another cultural factor mentioned by some scholars.⁶⁵ Many families of Irish, Scots, American, and German extractions were weavers in their home countries and taught these skills to

⁶²Inwood and Roelens, 350; Michael Boisvert, "La production textile au Bas-Canada: L'exemple Laurentien," *Cahiers de Géographie du Québec* 40, No. 111 (décembre 1996), 428; Serge Courville and Normand Séguin, *Rural Life in Nineteenth-Century Quebec* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association Booklet 47, 1989), 11-12.

⁶³Craig, Rygiel and Turcotte, "The Homespun Paradox...", 38-56; Craig and Rygiel, 99-102.

⁶⁴Both the Quebec government and the clergy promoted rural handicrafts in the early twentieth century as well. Lamontagne and Harvey, 43 ff.

⁶⁵Inwood and Roelens, 227-229; Lee-Whiting, 107-138; Burke, 78-95.

their children.⁶⁶ This was more common in the pioneering stages as communal family labour was important to survival. With compulsory education starting in the 1850s, families lost some of their children's labour in home production, including preparatory tasks in home textiles.⁶⁷ While loss of family labour due to schooling was perhaps a deterrent to persistence, schooling requirements could be minimal at best in some localities. Teenage girls, who had finished their education at the eighth grade, could easily have become weavers.

This review shows that circumstances contributing to persistence of handweaving were complex and varied. Persistence cannot be attributed to one factor alone, but was usually the result of multiple linked factors. Cultural and economic forces were the main explanations offered by historians for persistence but these were not the only influences. Other reasons must also be considered, especially regional factors such as weather, geography, occupational choices, and government policies.

1.2. OUTLINE AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Tradition and markets are the two unifying themes in this study of handweaving in New Brunswick in the nineteenth century. Many of the economic themes addressed by other scholars, but especially poverty, are integral to this work. Potential markets, as well as merchant demands for home textile products, are both

⁶⁶For examples of distinctive textiles of these groups, see Burnham and Burnham, various pages.

⁶⁷Johnson, 23; and Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 67, 118-119.

major considerations. In the cultural realm, the role of the clergy in New Brunswick will not be studied since few sources revealed their involvement in promoting traditional values in the late nineteenth century. Education will not be a part of this study either, since schooling records were difficult to access. Residents' disclosures of their literacy skills on the census was also problematical since different standards of evidence were applied in different areas. However, the influence of new ideas on traditional textile practices will feature prominently. By the mid nineteenth century, these ideas would promote new cultural and recreational activities for women. The political climate in New Brunswick is also a major component of this study. Government policies could either foster or curtail rural home made cloth production as well as industrial production.

In order to situate New Brunswick women as textile producers, Chapter 2 examines both markets and handweaving traditions between 1783 and 1850. Residents participated in a weaving economy which provided both primary and supplemental income. Demand for weavers' services in the informal economy is thus an important component in examining their later engagement in formal economic relationships. Some traditions, established early in the century, continued after 1850, but there were some significant changes.

At mid-century responsible government altered New Brunswick's status from one dependent on the British motherland for most consumer products to one promoting some measure of self-sufficiency. Chapter 3 focuses on government initiatives to make the province more self-sufficient in domestic textile products. One

of these initiatives was to offer bounties for carding mills, which directly encouraged handweaving. It also explores government policies and the efficacy of a new lobby group, The New Brunswick Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture, Home Manufactures and Commerce in the 1850s. One of its mandates was to foster new industrial ventures in the colony and thereby curtail handweaving.

Cultural factors affecting women's textile work include a new focus on separate spheres and new ideas about women's leisure time activities in the second half of the century. Chapter 4 explores images of women's work in the media, agricultural fairs, and provincial exhibitions from the 1840s to the 1880s. One particular cultural group was experiencing modernizing challenges related to handweaving in the 1860s. Acadians' response to these challenges would severely compromise their involvement in traditional cultural practices including hand weaving.

The 1871 census manuscripts offers a unique opportunity to examine some New Brunswick families at close range. Chapter 5 analyzes both the demographic and economic situations of a group of weavers and their neighbours in Northumberland County. It will then compare some components of this analysis with work done by Kris Inwood and Janine Roelens on weavers in Leeds County, Ontario for commonalities in weavers' profiles. Rural poverty as a factor in persistence informs this investigation. An examination of market potentials as an alternate and more compelling reason for the popularity of homespun textiles completes this chapter.

CHAPTER 2. INDUSTRIOUSNESS AND OPPORTUNITIES, 1774-1850

Introduction

"A shipload of young women" would be a boon in the Chignecto region, suggested John Harrison in the early years of the nineteenth century.¹ Harrison was one of the most prosperous farmers in the region but was having difficulties finding "good industrious wives" for his two sons and assistance in providing textiles for his family. In a letter to his cousin in Yorkshire in 1810, he complained that they were forced to spin and weave all their own linen and wool "within our own family." A lack of "mechanics in different branches" of textile production was obvious since "there is a great call for them [females] that can card and spin."²

This early letter was unusual in identifying the age, gender and opportunities available for women entering the colony in the early years of the nineteenth century. Those with textile skills had an added advantage over other industrious colonists, suggested Harrison. Expense avoidance was one benefit, but textile skills also could be highly lucrative, providing much needed cash or barter. Five to six shillings per week was the wage he proposed for spinners and carders, nearly double that earned by

¹Howard Trueman, *The Chignecto Isthmus and its First Settlers* (Belleville, Ontario: Mika Publishing Co., 1975; reprint Toronto: William Briggs, 1902), 216. John Harrison lived in the settlement of Maccan, on the border between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

²Probate inventories for the region show a number of weavers making homespun cloth, but those providing the preparatory work of carding and spinning must have been in short supply. Peter Latta, "Eighteenth-Century Immigrants to Nova Scotia: The Yorkshire Settlers," *Material History Bulletin* 28 (Fall 1988): 49. About eight to ten spinners are required to keep one weaver supplied with weaving materials.

domestic servants, another highly desirable type of emigrant.³

Economic activity and industriousness of New Brunswick textile workers between 1774 and 1850 are the main themes of this chapter. The early years of the colony create an important precedent for weavers' and spinners' industriousness in the market after mid-century. The first part of this chapter surveys the geography and climate of early New Brunswick to provide some context. A proposed hierarchy of textile organization particular to early New Brunswick then provides a structure for examining two cultural groups' participation in the homespun economy. Comments about both Anglophone and Francophone weavers' industriousness and potential markets are integral to this discussion.⁴

A final section examines some homespun myths prevalent in pre-industrial North America⁵ to see whether they applied to New Brunswick. As a series of assumptions about handweaving, these myths could distort the reality of early pioneer societies. One deals with self-sufficiency in home textile production, a second with

³David Burpe paid his sister ten shillings a month when she worked for 14 months as a servant in his household in 1776. NAC, *Spencer Papers*, MG 24 D54, file 2, "David Burpe Ledger", Mougerville, New Brunswick, 1772-1784 (hereafter *Burpe Ledger*). Folio 42, Hephzibah Burpe, October 6, 1777. Trueman, 216.

⁴Other settlers arriving in the colony before 1784, such as the Germans in the Peticodiac area, will be included in a future article.

⁵Joan Jensen, "Cloth, Butter and Boarders: Women's Household Production for the Market," in *Promise to the Land*, ed. Joan Jensen (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 186-205; Laurel Ulrich, "Wheel, Looms and the Gender Division of Labor in Eighteenth-Century New England," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 55, #1 (January 1998): 3-36; Laurel Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001; Adrienne Hood, "The Gender Division of Labor in the Production of Textiles in Eighteenth-Century Rural Pennsylvania (Rethinking the New England Model)": *Journal of Social History* (Spring 1994): 537-561; and Michael Zakim, "Sartorial Ideologies: From Homespun to Ready-Made," *American Historical Review* 106, #5 (December 2001): 1553-1586.

universal ownership of textile equipment and skills in early farm household economies.⁶ Another myth, sometimes mentioned in emigrant guides, is the cheapness of textile equipment. Although American scholars have broached these myths, they have received little attention in Canada, except for early nineteenth century Quebec and for Leeds County, Ontario in the second half of the century.⁷

Assumptions about the gender of handweavers also distorts the importance and opportunities for women's work in the economy. The anonymous female workers, including weavers, were crucial in pioneer societies and often left out of economic contributions. According to Jeanne Kay, male economic experiences should not be generalized to women, nor did all members of society have a typical set of experiences.⁸ This holds true as well in the weaving trade, where scholars often mention the work of male weavers but less often female weavers contributing to the family economy.⁹ As data for cost avoidance is nearly impossible to capture, economic participation was evident only for those selling home made cloth, handspun yarns or textile services.

⁶Jensen, "Cloth, Butter...", 189-190.

⁷Thierry Ruddel, "Consumer Trends, Clothing, Textiles and Equipment in the Montreal Area, 1792-1835," *Material History Bulletin* 32 (Fall 1990): 45-64; Kris Inwood and Janine Roelens, "Labouring at the Loom": A Case Study of Rural Manufacturing in Leeds County, Ontario, 1870," in *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 7, ed. Donald Akenson (Gananoque, Ontario: Langdale Press, 1990), 215-235; Sophie-Laurence Lamontagne and Fernand Harvey, *La Production Textile Domestique au Quebec, 1827-1941*, Transformation # 7 (Ottawa: Musée Nationale Sciences et Technologie, 1997), 19-33.

⁸Jeanne Kay, "Landscapes of Women and Men: Rethinking the Regional Geography of the United States and Canada," *Journal of Historical Geography* 17, #4 (1991): 438-9.

⁹Harold and Dorothy Burnham, *"Keep Me Warm One Night": Handweaving in Eastern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 8-12.

Numerous sources, such as business papers, newspapers and probated wills highlight different aspects of weavers' economic opportunities. Business ledgers and receipts, for instance, reveal not only the changing values and frequency of textile activity, but also the volume of production, prices for different types of home made cloth and services, and costs of imported cotton warps and dyes. Early newspapers carry advertisements for carding and fulling services as well as prices and availability of products competing with homespun textiles. Probate inventories furnish different types of information. They not only confirm the presence and appraised value of textile equipment in many households, but also the importance placed on cloth and textile tools in estimating a person's total assets.

Sources commenting on industriousness of textile producers and their motivations are more elusive. Although only a few first hand reports from weavers and spinners have survived, these extant letters and diaries add nuanced colour and dimension to their industriousness as well as their involvement in the local economy. Travel accounts, emigrant guides, and agricultural society reports frequently mention the industriousness of handweavers and spinners. For sake of convenience, this examination of early nineteenth century weavers and spinners will be divided into two sections: evidence of Anglophone weavers from 1774-1850, then Francophone weavers from 1791-1850.

2.1. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Landscape, climate, economic conditions, and demographics all played

important roles in industriousness and economic opportunities. These factors had a bearing not only on settlers' decisions to stay in their adopted county, but their ambitions to provide their families with a comfortable maintenance. This moral ideal of competency or comfortable maintenance was probably familiar to early residents of New Brunswick. According to Daniel Vickers, one of the values of early households in both America and Europe was to "possess sufficient land to absorb the labours of family members and also to provide them with something more than mere subsistence."¹⁰ Emigrants arriving on the shores of New Brunswick would have certainly brought these ideals along with their trunks of clothes and tools to their new homes in the Maritimes. Commercial exchanges were also part of this ideal but these hinged on the exigencies of local geography and ease of transportation.

A short trip through the countryside will capture the essence of the geography awaiting new arrivals in early New Brunswick. The forested landscape was a forbidding and impenetrable presence compared to the densely populated conditions in both New England and the British Isles.¹¹ Abundant forest cover, numerous navigable rivers, accessible coastal frontages, and a thinly spread but growing population supported activities in resource extraction, especially fishing, lumbering and farming. Overland transportation was nearly non-existent. Visitors travelling in the colony, such as Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Gubbins in 1811, reported on the extremely bad roads in

¹⁰Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 47 (January 1990), 3.

¹¹Abraham Gesner, *New Brunswick with Notes for Emigrants* (London: Simmonds and Ward, 1847), 249-50.

some districts which were frequently mere trails in the forest.¹² Most traffic depended on the numerous river systems in the colony but these were challenging as well, especially during periods of low water or spring freshets.

MAP 2.1. NEW BRUNSWICK in the 1850s by Alexander Monro¹³



¹²Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Gubbins, *Gubbins' New Brunswick Journals, 1811 & 1813*, Howard Temperley, ed., (Fredericton: New Brunswick Heritage Publications, 1980), 13.

¹³Alexander Monro, *New Brunswick, With a Brief Outline of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island*, Halifax: Richard Nugent, 1855; reprint ed. Belleville: Mika Studio, 1972.

Although land was abundant in New Brunswick, many parts of the province were stony and rocky as a result of previous glaciation. Since the land was covered with infertile, thin and acidic soils in all but the interval and marsh lands, farming offered a second best choice for prospective settlers. Clearing land, which was a back breaking chore with few immediate results, could not compete with the lure of the forest and lumbering. The lack of available farm labourers, scarcity of hard currency, and isolated conditions furthered hampered farm expansions. Labour was frequently unspecialized, with plural occupations being common among many farm families, including pioneer women, who turned their hands to chopping or field work as demand required.

Climate played as vital a role as geography in determining resource exploitation.¹⁴ Four distinct seasons, water levels on inland rivers, heavy snow cover, and short growing seasons all challenged settlers. The climate in New Brunswick was particularly harsh and unpredictable. Settlers needed to be resourceful to provide sufficient foodstuffs, fuel, adequate clothing, and bedding to meet the demands of a northern climate. Snow and cold weather frequently occurred as late as May, noted Azor Hoyt in his journal. As an early Loyalist resident of the Kingston Peninsula, farmer Hoyt was acutely aware of weather conditions as he recorded yet another snowfall on May 9th, 1815. The following year's conditions were no better with thick ice still on the shores of the Kennebecasis River on May 31st and cool weather

¹⁴See Gesner, especially 224-231, for a discussion of New Brunswick's climate and growing conditions.

delaying spring planting.¹⁵

Planting seasons, harvesting, tilling new acreage, and clearing brush all had to be fitted into demands of weather. Freshets, fuelled by previous heavy winter snows, caused flooding along major rivers, and eroded river banks. Spring mud hampered transportation overland by foot or by sleds and sleighs. Along with severe winter conditions, summers were hot, humid and short, with frequent hail and thunder storms damaging crops in August and September. Both locals and newcomers found the frequent fogs along the coasts in the summer another threat to both crops and travel.

By far the most worrisome and annoying challenges were the insects. The ubiquitous mosquitoes and black flies filled the air in the summer months of May, June and July, adding to the discomfort of outdoor workers and visitors alike. Luke Harrison's first impressions of the Chignecto region in 1774 tempted him to return to England. In a letter to one of his English relatives he noted,

The mosquitoes are a terrible plague in this country. You may think that the mosquitoes cannot hurt, but if you do you are mistaken, for they swell your legs and hands so that some persons are both blind and lame for some days. They grow worse every year and they bite the English the worst. There is a black fly that is worse than all the rest. One is tormented all summer with mosquitoes, and almost frozen to death in winter.¹⁶

By 1811, Gubbins noted many residents used smoke to control insects but the mosquitoes were still "more troublesome than I had ever found in any other part of the

¹⁵Azor Hoyt, *Ice Out Past My House-The Diary of Azor Hoyt, a King's County Loyalist*, Jack E. Hoyt, ed. (Self published, 1993), 14, 16.

¹⁶Luke Harrison to William Harrison, 30 June 1774; in Trueman, 214-215.

world."¹⁷ Although both Harrison and Gubbins were discomfited by insects, Hessian flies were a further nuisance as they ravaged vital wheat crops and turnips, thus compromising farmers' labours.¹⁸

Part of these labours included harvesting the products of the forest and the sea. Lumber, masts, deals, and cod fish left the many ports of the colony in the early part of the nineteenth century for both the Caribbean and the British Isles. Returning ships stopped at the major ports of Saint John, Chatham and St Andrews, while internal traffic plied along coastal areas and river waterways supplying local residents with both necessities and luxury goods. Most farming, fishing, and lumbering households were not self-sufficient but needed, appreciated, and desired other goods, even luxuries like chocolate and silk. John Keillor, of Dorchester, paid more for his pound of chocolates in 1795 than for a pound of ten penny nails, probably a more useful purchase. A black silk handkerchief, either for himself or possibly for his wife, was also worth more than the two yards of cotton fabric he commissioned Amos Fowler to bring back from his visit to Saint John.¹⁹ Mercantile brokers like Fowler, as well as William Harper, also brought in rum, molasses, tea, tobacco, and madeira wine from the West Indies, while Boston merchants provided tools, hardware, and cloth.²⁰ Ships,

¹⁷Gubbins, 19.

¹⁸Ibid, 20.

¹⁹Keillor, a prominent resident of the Sackville area, paid two shillings for his chocolates, one shilling three pence for nails, eight shillings for two yards of cotton, but nine shillings for the handkerchief. W. C. Milner, *A History of Sackville, New Brunswick* (Sackville: Tribune Press, 1934), 103.

²⁰Helen Harper Steeves, *The Story of Moncton's First Store and Storekeeper* (St. John: J & A. McMillan, 1924), 22.

often made in New Brunswick, left for the British Isles with timber and spars and returned with Scottish and English cloth as well as immigrants.

The forest industry and its allied occupations had lured these land hungry settlers to populate both colonial New England and many parts of colonial British North America. In many ways late eighteenth century New Brunswick resembled early colonial New England. Residents worked with pre-industrial technology, especially in the forest industry, lived in small village sites or farms, and depended on waterways for transportation and commercial links. The one major difference from New England was that New Brunswick's forests were still largely virgin territory until the mid-nineteenth century.²¹

This virgin forest was both an asset and a liability. As Gubbins noted in his military log in 1811, "the trading in lumber has had a baneful effect" upon many residents. They often neglected their farms for the lure of ready cash afforded by lumbering, but this was an uncertain business. Some of this cash went to Saint John merchants for "rum, tea, and cloth too fine for their situation in life" noted Gubbins. This led in turn to "dissipation and idleness."²² While lumbering took some men away from their farms, it also provided important markets for suppliers of lumber camps. Farm families with surplus hay, oats, animals, pork, or even home made socks and mitts found a ready market for these supplies. But lumbering was also highly dependent on the needs of foreign markets. While many men combined seasonal

²¹See also Graeme Wynn, *Timber Colony* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 26-54.

²²Gubbins, 02 July 1811, 5.

lumbering with farming, a recession in international markets could severely affect their income potentials.

For early nineteenth century New Brunswick women, domestic service was one of the few employment options. Women servants were so scarce, noted Gubbins, that women often interviewed their employers to see if they had "a good character" before accepting a situation. In Fredericton, he knew of two or three women who hired out for the day to either serve or cook at special dinner parties.²³ As Harrison's letter indicated, another option for women was available. Textile production could present a viable source of complementary income since resources for purchasing durable clothing were often lacking and ready customers were at hand.²⁴

A small customer base and transportation difficulties were initial hindrances for those wishing to establish a business. Residents lived in thinly scattered holdings over nearly 27,000 square miles of land. As more immigrants entered the colony, pockets of settlements made internal commerce a more viable option. New arrivals often settled near those with established farming operations or sought land grants with others of the same ethnic, religious, or linguistic backgrounds.

In the seventeenth century, French Catholics had been the first of these immigrants arriving in the colony. Leaving France in the 1640s, they initially settled in the fertile Annapolis Valley area of Nova Scotia, and later on the Isthmus of

²³Ibid., 26.

²⁴See also Elizabeth Jane Errington on Upper Canadian colonial women: *Wives and Mothers, School Mistresses and Scullery Maids: Working Women in Upper Canada, 1790-1840*, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995.

Chignecto, a border area between present day New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Here they established farms, built dikes, and created a distinctive lifestyle and identity in the greater region then known as Acadia.²⁵ Pawns in the French and English wars in the eighteenth century, these neutral Acadians refused to sign an allegiance to the British crown. Deportation of approximately 12,000 Acadians commenced in 1755 and continued for two years. Although the majority were sent to the eastern seaboard of America and some to France, not all Acadians were deported. Some hid in the woods or moved to other locations. Acadians took refuge along both the Restigouche and Miramichi rivers and along the Bay of Chaleur in what is now northern New Brunswick. Others settled in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdellan Islands of present day Quebec, while some escaped to the French Islands of St Pierre and Miquelon.²⁶

The first Treaty of Paris, signed in 1763, allowed Acadians to legally return to Nova Scotia but not to their former residences in the Annapolis Valley and the Chignecto region. Nearly a third of them set out for Nova Scotia over the next twenty years, but their lands were now occupied by both New England and British colonists. British authorities permitted Acadians to re-establish themselves in less fertile and more isolated regions and by the early 1800s many Acadians applied for titles to these

²⁵See Alan MacNeil, "The Acadian Legacy and Agricultural Development in Nova Scotia," in *Farm, Factory and Fortune: New Studies in the Economic History of the Maritime Provinces*, ed. Kris Inwood, 1-16. Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993; and Brigitta Wallace, "An Archeologist Discovers Early Acadia," in *Looking Into Acadie: Three Illustrated Studies*, ed. Margaret Conrad, 9-27. Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum Curatorial Report 87, 1998.

²⁶For further information on Acadians see Nicolas Landry and Nicole Lang, *Histoire de l'Acadie*, Sillery: Les Éditions Septentrion, 2001; Sally Ross and Alphonse Deveau, *The Acadians of Nova Scotia*, Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1992.

new lands.²⁷ New Brunswick Acadians settled primarily in the eastern coastal areas, from the Chignecto Isthmus to the northern reaches of the Bay of Chaleur, and in the north western regions near the confluence of the Madawaska and Saint John Rivers.

Acadian land forfeiture had been one of the spoils of the French and British wars in the eighteenth century. Britain instigated settlement programs in the 1760s and 1770s to allow land starved New Englanders and British settlers to occupy lands recently vacated by the Acadians in greater Nova Scotia. Subsidized transportation, assistance and free lands enticed between 7,000 and 8,000 southern New England Planters to migrate to Nova Scotia between 1758-1762. Many established agricultural communities in the Annapolis Valley while others settled in the Saint John River Valley and the Chignecto region.

Colonists from the British Isles also sought a better life in British North America in this same period. These included over 9,000 immigrants from London, Yorkshire, the Scottish Highlands and Lowlands coming to both colonial New England and to Nova Scotia. Many of these 1773-1776 settlers, especially those from Yorkshire, went to vacant Acadian lands near Sackville in the Chignecto region of Nova Scotia.²⁸ By 1780 fewer than 4,000 persons of European descent shared the countryside with First Nation tribes of Mi'qmac and Maliseet people.²⁹

²⁷For more about the Acadians' return to the Maritimes see Landry and Lang, 91 and chapter 3; Ross and Deveau, 73-76.

²⁸See also W. S. McNutt, *New Brunswick, A History: 1784-1867* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1963; reprint 1984), 1-41; Esther Clark Wright, *The Loyalists of New Brunswick*, Fredericton: self published, 1955; and Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 355-429.

²⁹Wynn, 3.

In 1784 Britain severed Nova Scotia into two separate colonies - New Brunswick and Nova Scotia - to better administer the area and accommodate the large influx of British Loyalists fleeing America after the American Revolution. Forced to leave their lands and possessions behind, these civilian refugees and disbanded military personnel obtained generous land grants and settlement packages in the Maritimes. More than 50,000 Americans went into exile, with upwards of 30,000 coming to Nova Scotia, many to Eastern Ontario, a few to Barbados and Great Britain.³⁰ Most of those coming to New Brunswick occupied land grants in Charlotte County, or along the Saint John River and its tributaries. A small number went to the Miramichi area, as well as the Chignecto region.³¹

By 1803 the population of New Brunswick was growing, with about 25,000 people inhabiting the colony. Five groups made up this cultural mix. These included returned Acadians, displaced Americans, early immigrants from the British Isles, Native people, as well as a scattering of German-speaking people in the Petitcodiac area.³² Although the mix was heavily weighted towards those of American heritage, Scots, Irish, and English started arriving directly from the British Isles in the 1820s. A large influx of famine Irish arrived on New Brunswick's shores in the late 1840s,

³⁰Ann Gorman Condon, "1783-1800: Loyalist Arrival, Acadian Return, Imperial Reform," in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation*, ed. Philip Buckner and John Reid, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 191.

³¹Wright, 151-67; Rev. W.O. Raymond, ed. *Winslow Papers 1776-1826* (St John: New Brunswick Historical Society, 1901), 483-502; T. W. Acheson, "A Study in the Historical Demography of a Loyalist County," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 1 (April 1968): 53-65.

³²For the German migration to New Brunswick, see Rainer L. Hempel, *New Voices on the Shores: Early Pennsylvania German Settlements in New Brunswick*. Toronto: German-Canadian Historical Association, 2000.

clogging the ports of Saint John, Chatham, and Newcastle and changing the ethnic composition of the province. By mid-century, New Brunswick was still sparsely populated in comparison to other British North American colonies but the ethnic mix of its nearly 200,000 people was by now firmly established.

2.2. HOME WEAVING ORGANIZATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Recreating their previous work lives in New Brunswick would prove difficult for some immigrants, but especially for weavers. Poor economic conditions, industrialization, and wars had forced many to leave their native countries for a second time to seek a new life elsewhere.³³ In America and Europe many weavers had laboured in a putting-out system³⁴, in small handloom factories³⁵, and in industrialized

³³Many Irish weavers had initially immigrated to Scotland in the late eighteenth century during the decline of the Irish linen weaving industry. By the 1830s fully a third of all handloom weavers in Scotland were of Irish origin where they made a living weaving simple fabrics for poor wages. A second forced exodus, due to poor economic conditions, sent many hand weavers to British North America in the 1820s and 1830s. Norman Murray, *The Scottish Hand Loom Weavers, 1790-1850: A Social History* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1978), 32-33.

³⁴The putting-out system was an option targeted at small rural cloth producers in both America and Europe. Sometimes called *outwork*, this system featured yarn merchants or petty manufacturers acting as middlemen between producers and consumers. They delivered weaving materials to rural producers, collected finished cloth, then marketed the cloth to both retail and wholesale customers. See Thomas Dublin, *Transforming Women's Work: New England Lives in the Industrial Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 29-76 for an examination of different types of women's rural outwork in America; in Europe, Gay Gullickson, *Spinners and Weavers of Auffay: Rural Industry and the Sexual Division of Labor in a French Village, 1750-1850* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 68-73; Deborah Simonton, *A History of European Women's Work, 1700 to the Present* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 141-155; and Louise A. Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, Work and Family* (New York and London: Routledge, 1987), 43-53.

³⁵Scottish handloom factories started in the late eighteenth century in mostly urban areas. As in France and England, the hand loom weaving industry in Scotland was highly compartmentalized and involved a large number of full time workers making specialized types of cloth. Weavers with both skill and strength wove many of the "fancy fabrics", such as fine damask linens, silk and fine wool shawls and velvets and were the best paid. Unskilled younger workers with stamina and strength wove many of the simpler and wider fabrics, such as carpets and blankets. Once power looms were introduced in the

weaving mills.³⁶ A smaller group also had been custom weavers in more remote areas supplying their neighbours with basic textiles. Those who had worked in either industrialized or handloom factories found their skills redundant in New Brunswick as small weaving mills were rare until mid-century. For Daniel Davis, who had worked in a handloom factory in Bristol, England in the 1820s, farming in the Chignecto region was the preferred option.³⁷ Weavers in the putting-out system were out of luck as well, since this option was unknown in the colony.

While Davis had chosen to abandon handweaving altogether, other immigrant weavers decided to seek other options including custom weaving. Also known as market weavers, custom weavers interacted directly with their customers by supplying them with simple coarse linens and woolens or sometimes fancy fabrics. In the early 1800s, custom weaving still provided a viable income for both male and female weavers in both Scotland and America. Transferring these skills to their new homes in New Brunswick meant that they could continue being independent entrepreneurs. As in other locales many custom weavers combined handweaving with other occupations since their customer base was usually fairly small and localized.

Other custom weavers, sometimes known as professional weavers, set up

1820s many handweavers found themselves out of work.

³⁶Among the 53 males declaring weaving as an occupation on the 1851 census, there were 31 from Ireland, 18 from Scotland, two from England, one from America, and one native born New Brunswicker. Records for the counties of Gloucester, Queens, Victoria, Albert and Kent were missing, slightly skewing the numbers. The majority of these weavers arrived prior to 1845. Murray, 13-17; see also individual articles in John Butt and Kenneth Ponting, eds., *Scottish Textile History*, Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen Press, 1987.

³⁷Trueman, 217.

permanent full time workshops where they wove both simple fabrics but also fancy fabrics on order. Mostly males, these professional weavers had invested both time and money to purchase complex looms and costly apprenticeships needed for complicated techniques.³⁸ Many Loyalist weavers had received such training and had been successful entrepreneurs in colonial America.³⁹ Itinerant weavers also fell into this category of custom weavers. While less is known about their work, they travelled about the countryside, stopping in communities for a short time to weave household textiles for various customers.⁴⁰ Being an itinerant weaver in New Brunswick in the early years of the colony would prove problematical. The sheer size of early Canadian looms, lack of roads, scattered settlements, and small size of settler's houses made this type of lifestyle chancy. Supplying general stores with generic handwoven cloth was perhaps another possibility, but little evidence supports this type of trade in the late

³⁸See, for example, some of the work by professional weavers in Wayne County, Upper New York State and in Waterloo County, Ontario. Clarita S. Anderson, *Figured and Fancy: Weavers of Wayne County, New York*, Wayne County Historical Association, 1996; and Burnham and Burnham, 264-378.

³⁹Although the total number of Loyalist weavers coming to New Brunswick was unknown, 16 of them did declare this occupation on ship records. See Wright, 253-345. David Pickett was one Loyalist New Brunswick weaver seeking compensation in 1787 for his lost home and business in Connecticut. Issac Bell, testifying on Pickett's behalf in front of the Loyalist Commissioners in Saint John, stated that David had "carried on a good deal of business" in the weaving trade and had "two or three looms going. He was an honest and good man." Alexander Fraser, *Second Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario* (1904), 826. (A transcription of Pickett's claim was among the Pickett papers, PANB MC 999, MS1/1/1, Film #9830.)

⁴⁰The question of itinerant weavers was unclear. Supposedly these weavers brought their own looms to various communities, stayed for a few months, then dismantled the equipment before leaving for the next set of customers. Other scholars indicated that the weaver carried samples of his weaving and pattern books and used the customer's loom. Nancy Bogondoff, *Handwoven Textiles of Early New England* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackhouse Books, 1975), 54-56; Loris Russell, *Everyday Life in Colonial Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1973), 118; Huia Ryder, "History of Handicrafts," in *Arts in New Brunswick*, eds. R.A. Tweedie and al., (Fredericton: University Press of New Brunswick, 1967), 234.

eighteenth or early part of the nineteenth century in New Brunswick.⁴¹

Custom weaving was only one facet of many organizational grids scholars use to examine hand weavers' relationships with the market. Before formulating a weaving structure for New Brunswick, it is useful to examine some of the criteria of other models. Some scholars simply differentiate between family and market production. Victor Clark, for instance, divides early handweaving into the homespun stage, where pioneer families produced textiles solely for their own consumption, and household stage, where families wove for outside markets.⁴² Other scholars use gender as a criteria⁴³, while location of workplace was still another way to determine weavers' relationships with the economy.⁴⁴ Marjorie Cohen uses culture as a way to determine market relations in Ontario. Society expected women to care and nurture their families foremost. Women's onerous duties, including home textile production intended for the family's use, left little time to produce for the market.⁴⁵

⁴¹In the more populous centers, such as Saint John, Fredericton and Chatham, dry goods stores advertised primarily imported fabrics. Extant ledgers for stores in the larger centers have not surfaced, while an examination of early ledgers for stores in the port town of St Andrews revealed no trade in homespun cloth.

⁴²Victor Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States* Vol. 1 (Washington: Carnegie Institute, 1929; reprint, New York: Peter Smith, 1949), 438-445.

⁴³Percy Bidwell and John Falconer looked at the strength, skill, and gender of family members when delimitating textile production in the eighteenth century. Percy Bidwell and John Falconer, *History of Agriculture in Northern United States, 1620-1860* (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 127-129.

⁴⁴For England and France see Louise Tilly and Joan Scott, *Women, Work and Family* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 12-15, 44-47; and Adrienne Hood, "Industrial Opportunism: From Handweaving to Mill Production, 1700-1830," in *Textiles in Early New England: Design, Production, and Consumption*, Vol. 22 of *Annual Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife 1997*, ed. Peter Benes, 135-151. Boston: Boston University, 1999 for a regional dimension.

⁴⁵Marjorie Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets and Economic Development in Nineteenth Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 82.

Rollo Tyron's eighteenth century American model of pre-industrial manufacturing is particularly useful for early nineteenth century New Brunswick. Based on the level of industrialization and extent of settlement, Tyron distinguished three distinctive stages in America.⁴⁶ The family stage was one common to frontier societies where households were practically self-sufficient and had virtually no surplus production. His second stage, itinerant-supplementary, involved accessing outside inputs to increase production and create a surplus for market. Hiring the services of others to perform part of the work, as well as using industrial processes, were two important strategies in this stage. Full time hand craftsmen working in permanently established workshops was his third stage of pre-industrial manufacturing. In this stage craftsmen performed custom work for a number of customers who often met part of their bills with raw materials or barter.

My early New Brunswick model differs somewhat from Tyron's. Based on the degree of activity, the number of practitioners, and the permanency of the work space, a simple three tiered pyramid can represent the early textile community. At the base are numerous home weavers, followed by smaller numbers of custom weavers and spinners, and finally, a few allied adjuncts.

Home weavers were the largest group in the weaving community. Often hidden from the public record in the early part of the century, these weavers worked only in

⁴⁶Rollo Tyron, *Household Manufactures in the United States, 1640-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint, 1966), 243-245.

their own homes and wove fabrics exclusively for their families' use. Probate records⁴⁷, catalogues from auctions, museum inventories⁴⁸, diaries⁴⁹, traveller's journals, and agricultural fair reports revealed the identities of a few of them. Beginning in 1851, however, their presence became more apparent in the number of households reporting loom ownership and home woven cloth in the first comprehensive New Brunswick census. Over 5400 households in the colony reported owning a loom in 1851, and weaving over 600,000 yards of cloth.⁵⁰ Since fewer than a hundred residents reported a weaving trade, we have to assume that home weavers wove most of this cloth for their own use.

Custom weavers and spinners sold or traded their homespun cloth or textile services to others. Although most worked part time from their own home, they might also board for a short time at their customers' homes before moving on to the next customer. Establishing their numbers for the early part of the century would be difficult since no comprehensive sources exist. However, custom weavers and spinners occasionally appeared in household account books, diaries, and store ledgers.

⁴⁷For probated wills, see especially PANB, F1449 *Hubbard Family Papers*, 1796-1818, Burton, New Brunswick (hereafter called *Hubbard Probates*).

⁴⁸Some New Brunswick textiles with known provenance are in the collections of the New Brunswick Museum, Saint John; Kings Landing Historical Settlement, Prince William; Kings County Museum, Hampton; and Queens County Museum, Gagetown, as well as two pieces at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Gatineau, Quebec.

⁴⁹In York County, Anne Campbell mentioned spinning numerous times between 1827 and 1835. PANB, MC 300, *Dugal Campbell Papers*, MS 23/1, "Diary of Anne Campbell, 1826-1840". See also G.G. Campbell, "Susan Dunlap: Her Diary," *Dalhousie Review* 46 (Summer 1966): 218-219; and Dale McClure, ed. *Louisa's Diary*, Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1989 for Nova Scotia diaries.

⁵⁰Families reported 5475 looms, representing only 17.2% of the 31,682 households in the province in 1851. *1851 Census of New Brunswick in 1871 Census of Canada*, vol 4, 229.

By mid-century custom weavers became more visible though census schedules. Although 94 residents reported a weaving trade on the 1851 census, this probably did not represent the entire custom weaving community. Nominal schedules were missing for five counties and weaving might have been one part-time activity among others. Since residents were asked to report only their primary occupations on census schedules, many more part-time weavers might have been in the colony.⁵¹ Some women's occupations, such as spinning, were also not included among occupational categories in the census, leaving spinners no opportunity to report this activity. Due to cultural bias of both enumerators or heads of households, some women weavers might have been omitted as well from occupational categories.

In New Brunswick, as elsewhere, more specialized custom weavers had permanent weaving workshops near their homes. This was a small group of mostly immigrant male weavers who had received specialized training in their native countries and wove full time as an occupation. Often called professional weavers, they sometimes wove fancy fabrics on complex looms or simpler custom fabrics for their customers. Evidence for this group is quite scarce. Very few weaving account books have surfaced in New Brunswick and the designation "weaver" on the census did not adequately differentiate custom from professional weavers.⁵²

⁵¹Among the 53 male weavers on the 1851 census, eight stated a dual occupation as Farmer/Weaver. Four of these men resided in Restigouche, 2 in Charlotte, and one each in Kings and Northumberland counties. 1851 Census of New Brunswick, manuscript schedules.

⁵²Only one source mentioned an itinerant immigrant Irish weaver coming to the community to weave cloth. Dawn Bremner and Marion Reicker, eds., "Memories from the Pen of William MacDonald" (Queens County Historical Society, 1991), 17.

These three groups of weavers all benefitted from the services of specialized craftsmen and industrial inputs. Although this third group of allied adjuncts was the smallest on the weaving pyramid, their services were important and sometimes crucial in cloth production. Some specialized craftsmen offered their expert skills to those needing textile tools. Anyone handy with simple woodworking could probably build a basic loom structure and shuttles. Blacksmiths, on the other hand, were adept at making metal hardware for looms and spinning wheels, or perhaps the metal cloth on hand cards. Cabinet makers and wheelwrights fashioned both the wheels and turned posts for spinning wheels, clock reels, as well as the bodies of niddy noddys.⁵³

Weaving reeds were one accessory that were usually made by skilled craftsmen. Initially made of dried marsh reeds, weaving reeds were made in a variety of sizes depending on the density of the cloth.⁵⁴ Reeds were crucial to handweaving but they also were a substantial investment. David Pickett, a professional weaver from Kingston, Kings County was one of the few known reed makers providing this service in the early years of the colony.⁵⁵ In early New Brunswick, a spinning wheel could cost between six and seven shillings while one of David's reeds could cost as much as ten shillings six pence.⁵⁶

⁵³Niddy noddys and clock reels were tools used to measure yarn.

⁵⁴Linen fabrics, for instance, usually required a much finer spaced reed than that used for either wool cloth or blankets.

⁵⁵PANB, MC 51, *Pickett Collection*, "Fulling Mill Account Book, 1770-1776, 1788-1817," MS 2/5/2 (hereafter called "*Pickett Fulling Mill Ledger*".)

⁵⁶Account for Hephzibah Burpe, 1776. *Burpe Ledger*, folio 42. *Pickett Fulling Mill Ledger*, folios 68a, 71a. In Ontario in 1813, reed makers were scarce and weaving reeds very expensive. One reed maker charged a customer \$6.50 (32 shillings) for two reeds plus a day's labour in 1813. Edwin

Fulling and carding mills were the earliest forms of industrial inputs which relieved spinners of the tedium of carding and weavers of the labour of *dressing* finished cloth. Carding mills transformed raw fleece into wool roving, a product which increased spinners' production by almost a third. Dressing services included a range of activities from scouring handwoven cloth, brushing and thickening it to increase its durability and insulation value (fulling), as well as pressing and dyeing. According to one visitor in the late 1840s only a few carding mills or fulling mills "of a simple construction" existed in the colony.⁵⁷

This textile pyramid is only a tool to organize the weaving community for the first half of the century. Weavers, spinners, makers of looms, reeds and spinning wheels, or even carding and fulling mill owners probably did not categorize themselves into such neat compartments or notice how their work fitted into the larger economic picture. Elements of this textile pyramid will be used throughout the following discussion to examine both economic contributions of handweavers and the valuable trait of industriousness between 1774-1850.

2.3. ANGLOPHONE WEAVERS AND ALLIED ADJUNCTS: 1774-1850

2.3.1. 1774-1829

Weavers and allied adjuncts were evident in early New Brunswick almost from

Guillet, *Pioneer Arts and Crafts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1940; reprint edition, 1968), 24.

⁵⁷Although Gesner thought that only a few carding and fulling mills existed in the colony, the 1851 census reported 52 undifferentiated weaving and carding establishments. Gesner, 304; *1851 Census of New Brunswick* in Vol 4 of *1871 Census of Canada*, 229.

the beginning of European settlement. While their economic activity was apparent in a variety of sources, only a partial picture exists of the extent of weaving activity in this period. Three weavers, for instance, appeared in David Burpe's Maugerville ledger by settling their accounts with cloth between 1774 and 1784.⁵⁸ This ledger, unfortunately, left no indication whether two of David's siblings, Esther Christie and Edward Burpe, as well as a Mrs Sarah Strickney had other customers or why they started their weaving businesses. All three Burpe sisters owned textile tools. Lydia inherited two wheels from their father's estate in 1774, while Hephzibah bought three spinning wheels from her brother David in 1776. Their sister, Esther, must have had a loom as she settled her account with over 60 yards of cloth in 1780.⁵⁹

The work of allied craftsmen also appeared in this ledger. David's grandfather, Deacon Jonathan Burpe, was a carpenter by trade and bartered a hand made loom in 1774. David, meanwhile, broke flax for a number of neighbours, sold wool cards to a Saint John merchant, and the three spinning wheels to his sister.⁶⁰ However, there was no indication whether Hephzibah Burpe ever used her spinning wheels or if someone in David's family actually wove on the bartered loom. There were obviously other

⁵⁸Cloth accounts, *Burpe Ledger*: Sarah Strickney, 1774, folio 33; Esther Christie, 1780, folio 52; Edward Burpe, 1777, folio 15 and 1783, folio 18.

⁵⁹Esther Christie might have used the indigo she bought in early 1780 to dye the nearly 50 yards of handwoven cloth she delivered her brother in November 1780. *Ibid.*, Hephzibah Burpe, 1776, folio 42, Esther Christie, 1780, folios 52-3; Lydia Barker, 1774, folio 40a.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, Deacon Jonathan Burpe, one loom valued at 25 shillings, 1774, folio 36; Hazen and White (merchants, Saint John), wool cards, five shillings, 1778, folio 48; two linen wheels valued at 14 shillings and one woollen wheel, six shillings, both to Hephzibah Burpe, September 1776, folio 42. James Hannay, "The Maugerville Settlement, 1763-1824," in *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society* 1 (1894; reprint 1969), 70.

textile workers in the small Maugerville/Sheffield community. Spinning wheels, looms, flax combs, homemade sheets, homespun twill cloth, and coverlets appeared on probate inventories for the area between 1788-1814.⁶¹

A completely different source reveals why another custom weaver started her small business in the same Maugerville area in the 1790s.⁶² Mary Coy's journal detailed her spiritual life over a sixty year period as well as her economic hardships during the early years of her first marriage.⁶³ She was a new bride in 1794 when her husband announced that the couple were in severe financial difficulty. David Morris had no means to earn money that winter and creditors were threatening legal action over past lumbering transactions.⁶⁴ Mary's textile skills furnished a solution to their financial difficulties. In her journal she noted, "Just at this critical time, it occurred to

⁶¹This included 16 spinning wheels and three looms along with a quantity of handwoven bedding and four expensive "coverlids" (also called coverlets). Blankets were valued at seven shillings each, while coverlids were three times more expensive, at 22 shillings each. *Hubbard Probates*. Inventories of Jacob Barker, Sheffield, 1788; Charles McLean, Macquapit Lake, 1795; Jacob Burke, Sheffield, 1790; Daniel Jewett, Sheffield, 1802; Ezachiah Wyeth, Burton, 1807; Samuel Nevers, Maugerville, 1808; Captain Ebenzer Hathway, 1811; Samuel Briggs, Sheffield, 1812; Abel Flewelling, Maugerville, 1814; John Mercereau, Sunbury, 1814.

⁶²Mary (Coy Morris) Bradley, *A Narrative of the Life and Christian Experience of Mary Bradley*, Boston: Strong and Brodhead, 1849.

⁶³Mary Coy's family, originally from Pomfret, Connecticut, were among the first wave of New England settlers to establish permanent residences in the lower Saint John River Valley in 1763. One of eleven children, she was the fourth daughter and eighth child born to Ana and Edward Coy in 1771. The Coy family were very prominent in the community especially with their church related activities. Margaret Conrad, "Mary Bradley's Reminiscences: A Domestic Life in Colonial New Brunswick," *Atlantis* Vol 7, #1 (Fall 1981): 92; Hannay, 63-68.

⁶⁴David and Mary's marriage was fraught with difficulties from the onset. David's "comparative poverty...and a great disparity in our ages," were two major problems, but the greatest one was that "I did not love him," Mary noted in her journal. Another constraint was that David "was not a professor" of religion although he had initially supported the Maugerville Congregational Church financially. Bradley, 91-94; "Documents of the Congregational Church at Maugerville," *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society* 1 (Saint John, 1894; reprint 1969): 132.

me, I will commence the business of weaving. Accordingly I set up my loom, and notified my neighbours, and soon I had plenty of work."⁶⁵ Among the many qualities Mary considered important in this newly imposed endeavour were "carefulness, prudence and industry, which I considered my bounden duty...". Sufficient customers must have called on her, for her textile work "procured for us as much bread stuff [flour] as we needed. I soon got into the way of helping ourselves greatly."⁶⁶ In early pioneer communities, customers frequently ordered work on shares, supplying wool or other goods as payment for finished pieces. Mary noted she took her pay "in such trade as was suitable for our family's use, which made the payment easy to my customers...".⁶⁷ Unfortunately she never mentioned whether her weaving activity continued once the Morrises' economic situation improved.⁶⁸

Mary made no mention either where she had learned to weave. The Burpes were close neighbours as were five male Loyalist weavers who had settled in Queens County.⁶⁹ Perhaps her mother had taught her the complexities of cloth making. When

⁶⁵Bradley, 102.

⁶⁶Ibid., 103.

⁶⁷Ibid., 102.

⁶⁸Mary inherited £10 from her father, enough to clear up their accumulated debts in 1795. The Morrises moved to Saint John in the early 1800s where they rented lodgings. David Morris' will in 1817 listed inventory for only two rooms in the Saint John house with no mention of any textile tools. PANB, RS 69, *Probate Court for Queens County*, Edward Coy, F10441. PANB, RS 71, *Probate Court for Saint John County*, David Morris, F10924. See also Cynthia Wallace-Casey, "Providential Openings": The Women Weavers of Nineteenth Century Queens County," *Material History Review* 46 (Fall 1997): 29-44 for more on Queens County weavers.

⁶⁹Among the nearly 6000 Loyalist entries, 16 men declared weaving as their trade, along with two silk dyers. No women weavers appeared on these lists. Wright, 253-345; Hannay, "The Maugerville Settlement...", 67.

Edward Coy moved to New Brunswick with his family in 1763, both male and female weavers wove custom cloth in many parts of America, but men dominated the trade.⁷⁰ Here in the lower Saint John River Valley, the growing population, now approaching two thousand people, could support many skilled artisans of either gender.⁷¹

Weavers also sought their neighbours' custom by advertising their services in the press in the 1790s. Francis Blackburn, a fulling mill owner and weaver in Queens County, informed potential customers that he manufactured "all sorts of woollen cloth...likewise colour[ed] cotton and linen...and blue in particular, for making checks".⁷² His comments were very revealing about the types of cloth, fibres and dyes available to local residents and New Brunswick's participation in the international economy. Since both cotton and indigo blue dyes were imported from America and Britain at this time, New Brunswick was not isolated from international markets. These two products, but cotton in particular, were also indicators that residents wanted and appreciated both colour and labour saving industrial inputs. Local merchants were partners in this economy by making both *cotton warps*⁷³ and dyes available to weavers

⁷⁰The work of both Adrienne Hood and Laurel Ulrich were especially informative about the male dominance of handweaving in eighteenth century Pennsylvania and New England. Ulrich, "Wheels, Looms, ...", 12-14; Hood, "The Gender Division of Labor...", 544-7.

⁷¹By 1803, the number of residents in the area had increased to over two thousand people. "Report of James Peters to Edward Winslow, 1803", Raymond, 495.

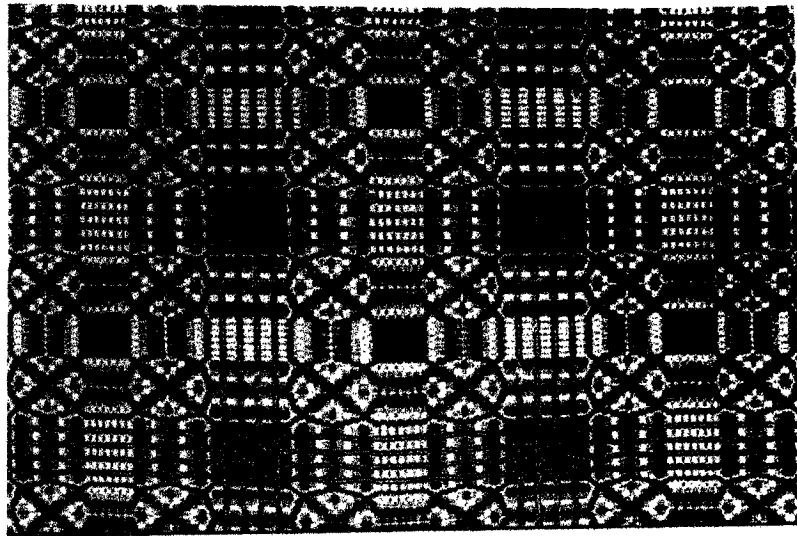
⁷²On three occasions Blackburn petitioned the House of Assembly for a bounty for his fulling mill but was unsuccessful each time. *Journal of the House of Assembly of New Brunswick, 1793-1797: Minutes 1794, 379; 1795, 400; 1797, 558; Royal Gazette, 01 September 1795, 3, advertisement for Francis Blackburn's fulling mill, Waterborough, Queens County.*

⁷³Although merchants sold their customers warps, this was a misnomer. They were not selling pre-measured threads ready for the loom but five pound bundles of skeins of cotton thread.

and spinners. Cotton was slowly replacing both wool and flax as the material of choice for warps. Residents wanted lighter weight goods, as well as spending less time and effort on fibre preparation.

A coverlet, attributed to another early Queens County weaver, was probably woven in *overshot* technique using cotton warp and hand dyed blue woollen weft.⁷⁴

Illustration 2.1. Overshot coverlet from New Brunswick, mid-nineteenth century⁷⁵



These types of coverlets were very popular in the early part of the nineteenth century, but those woven with indigo blue wefts predominated.⁷⁶ James Saunders' extant coverlet was one of the few indications that he had operated a weaving business. Little

⁷⁴Although Ryder mentioned an extant coverlet woven by Saunders, c.1780, she did not indicate whether it was in a private or public collection. Ryder, 234.

⁷⁵Burnham and Burnham, # 324, 242. York-Sunbury Museum, Fredericton, NB.

⁷⁶Many examples of these four shaft overshot coverlets are featured in Burnham and Burnham's, including some from New Brunswick. The Queens County Museum in Gagetown, has a number of early overshot coverlets as does the New Brunswick Museum and Kings Landing.

is known about Saunders' or Blackburn's weaving trade or their place of origin.

Although a few other Saunders resided in the Maugerville area in the 1780s, neither James Saunders nor Francis Blackburn appeared on passenger lists of Loyalists coming into the colony, nor on settlers lists of the Maugerville community.⁷⁷

At the turn of the nineteenth century another custom spinner and weaver in the Fredericton area also left little information about her origins and weaving background. Polly Mercereau appeared in Beverley Robinson's farm account book as one of many artisans supplying various services between 1802-1805.⁷⁸ Initially part of Fredericton's elite society,⁷⁹ the Robinsons had now retired to their farm on the Nashwaaskis River, a short distance from the capital. By patronizing local artisans the Robinsons were perhaps displaying their fall from elite society, as textiles often conveyed status, social position and symbolic values in this period.⁸⁰ Without a detailed inventory of the

⁷⁷There were three references to the name Saunders in the Maugerville settlement. The first was Jane Saunders, who married Moses Pickard, senior in Rowley, Massachusetts in 1742. The family later emigrated to New Brunswick in 1763. Gerald Keith, "The Pickard Papers," in *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society* 15 (1959), 58. A second reference is a list of settlers surnames with "Sanders" among them but with no first names. Hannay, "The Maugerville Settlement...", 68. A Thomas "Sanders" was also a customer in David Burpe's ledger, folios 34-35.

⁷⁸PANB, *Robinson Family Papers*, F369, Farm and household accounts, np.

⁷⁹It is uncertain whether Mrs Anna Robinson or her unmarried daughter, Susanna, knew how to spin or weave since they were now hiring Polly to work for them. Beverley Robinson had been a commanding officer in the Loyal American Regiment, serving in New York during the American Revolution. After emigrating to New Brunswick, he served as a member of the Legislative Council from 1790 to 1802, and clerk of the Supreme Court. Robinson died in New York in 1816, his wife, Anna Dorothea Barclay Robinson, in Fredericton in 1806. Isabel Louise Hill, *Some Loyalists and Others* (Fredericton: Self published, 1976), 20-21.

⁸⁰Robinson's term of office in the Legislative Assembly finished at the same time as the King's New Brunswick Regiment disbanded in 1802. According to Jonas Howe, this reduced the family's status "from a position of wealth and affluence." Jonas Howe, "The King's New Brunswick Regiment," *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society* 1 (Saint John, 1894; reprint 1969): 30-1; see also Richard Henning Field, *The Material Lives of Lunenburg German Merchants and Yeoman: The Evidence Based on Probate Inventories, 1760-1830*, (PHD thesis, Dalhousie University, 1990), 203; and

Robinson estate, however, it would be difficult to know whether they chose Polly Mercereau's fabrics for reasons of poverty, style, or durability in their new location.⁸¹

Robinson engaged in sheep husbandry as one of his farming activities.⁸² Each spring he gave Polly between 45 to 65 pounds of fleece to spin and then weave into cloth.⁸³ The amount of labour involved in her textile work would have been considerable.⁸⁴ The spinning alone would have taken approximately two and a half months; weaving would have taken another one to two months.⁸⁵ Since some of the cloth returned as fulled fabric, Polly probably wove close to 100 yards per season. Robinson did not disclose Polly's rate of pay for weaving and spinning. He simply noted that he had "paid Polly in full of all accounts", usually with "an order on Fraser's" store.

Ruddel, "Consumer Trends...", 50 for a discussion on how clothes revealed a person's status.

⁸¹Unfortunately there was no inventory of the Robinson estate. PANB, RS 75, *Probate Court of York County*, F11752, Beverley Robinson, 1816.

⁸²Robinson probably owned a fairly large flock of between 15 to 30 sheep unless he was buying wool from other local farmers. Estimates for the number of pounds of fleece per animal varied considerably in this period from four pounds to eight pounds depending on the breed. John Stewart, *An Account of Prince Edward Island* (London: Winchester and Sons, 1806; reprint Yorkshire: S.R. Publishers, 1967), 134.

⁸³ In June 1802 Robinson gave Polly 66 pounds of fleece; in 1803, 67 pounds white, 13 3/4 pounds black; in 1804, 67 pounds; and in 1805, 43 3/4 pounds. Robinson farm account, np.

⁸⁴In both 1803 and 1804 Robinson noted that nearly half of the cloth Polly delivered was fulled. Fulling shrinks the cloth to increase its durability and add insulating value. This process reduces cloth by an average of 25% in both length and width.

⁸⁵These estimates are based on my experience as both a Master Weaver and a spinner, as well as input from my textile colleagues. It is unlikely that nineteenth century hand weavers, using the type of technology then available, could make more than six to eight yards of coarse cloth per day. Preparations before actual weaving included measuring the warp threads, sizing them with some sort of glue or starch for added strength, winding these threads on the loom, then threading them in a pre-determined pattern. For the size of Polly's order from Robinson, these procedures could easily add on another two weeks of work.

Ledgers from the period also gave a fair idea of the value of some of these textile tasks.⁸⁶ Account books show merchants valued the cost of spinning in three different ways: by the run, by the pound, and by the day.⁸⁷ In 1790, David Pickett, for instance, paid between five to seven pence per run for both wool and tow linen while William Nelles, in Ontario, paid sixteen pence per day or sometimes four shillings per pound.⁸⁸ Weaving prices were also variable. Labour to weave simple woollen cloth cost seven and a half pence to twenty four pence per yard depending on the complexity of the pattern.⁸⁹ Coverlets were much more expensive, fetching as much as 20 shillings each.⁹⁰

⁸⁶*Pickett Fulling Mill Ledger*, various entries 1794-1800; entries for custom weavers in the *Burpe Ledger*; UNB, MG H19, *Hubbard Family Papers, 1794-1953*, Box 2, "Bills and Receipts, 1795-1859, (hereafter *Hubbard Papers UNB*); *William Nelles Account Book, 1792-1845*, Grand River and Grimsby, Ontario, private collection.

⁸⁷Yarn was commonly measured by "runs" (800 yards) and not by weight. There was no standard for the number of runs per pound.

⁸⁸Rates for spinning changed little over the years. Nathaniel Hubbard paid spinners six pence per run in the 1840s. *Hubbard Papers UNB*; Mrs Henry Mitchell, 06 Oct 1841; Mrs Thomas Griffith, summer 1843. *William Nelles Account Book*: 1805, Sally Glover, spinning cotton, 16 pence per day; 1814 Michael Coone, by spinning wool, 48 pence per pound.

⁸⁹Handwoven cloth was valued at between six pence to twenty four pence per yard. For instance, Benjamin Crawford, in the Kingston Peninsula of New Brunswick, paid James Whelpley, 7 1/2 pence per yard for wool cloth in 1817. Public Archives of Ontario, F709, Box 1, *Crawford Family Papers*, Benjamin Crawford's diary entry, (hereafter known as *Crawford Diary*) 21 October 1817; *Pickett Fulling Mill Ledger*, numerous entries. Labour prices in Ontario were similar. Between 1805-1807, William Nelles paid weavers between six pence to 12 pence (1 shilling) per yard for weaving; 1805, Alexander Patten, for weaving flannel, 9 pence per yard, for weaving linen, 6 pence per yard; 1807, Mathias Book, for weaving linen, twelve pence per yard. *William Nelles Ledger*.

⁹⁰Parson Clark of Gagetown paid David Pickett 25 shillings for a coverlet in 1799, while Benjamin Northrop had paid less than half that amount (10 shillings) in March 1790. *Pickett Fulling Mill Ledger*, Folios 43, and 83. Coverlets in probate inventories were similar prices, ranging from eleven shillings to 22 shillings. *Hubbard Probates*, inventories for Jacob Burke, Sheffield, 1790 and Ezachiah Wyeth, Burton, 1807. One shilling was worth about 20 cents, while one pence was about 1.5 cents (Halifax currency). There were 12 pence in one shilling and 20 shillings to one pound (£).

Not all custom weavers wove seasonally like Polly Mercereau or Mary Coy Morris. Some, like David Pickett in the Kingston Peninsula, had a full time weaving business. His professional activities are one example of the interactions of practitioners in all three tiers of the weaving pyramid in one community. Home weavers, custom spinners, allied crafts people, industrial inputs and David's own work as a custom weaver all appeared in the family's fulling mill account book between 1788-1817.⁹¹ David Pickett was born near Stamford, Connecticut in 1743 and had worked as a professional weaver since at least 1770 before removing to New Brunswick in the loyalist migration of 1784.⁹² He was also a reed maker and probably involved in the family's fulling mill between 1797 and 1817; customer accounts for both the weaving and fulling businesses were intermixed.⁹³ The fulling mill account books also later recorded entries for David's legal work, such as drawing up wills, writing letters, settling estates, expenses as justice of the peace, and another small business of blacksmithing.

Pickett lost no time setting up his custom weaving business in New Brunswick.

⁹¹Two extant ledgers from the 1770 to 1817 period included 224 different customers: 136 from New Brunswick and 88 from Connecticut. *Pickett Fulling Mill Ledger*, and PANB, *Pickett Family Collection*, MC 999, MS1/1 "David Pickett's Book of Accounts in the State of Connecticut, 1770-1793." The Picketts also had a carding mill, but records for this operation are missing. Carding machines must have been fairly rare in the early part of the century. Although a local history of the Sackville area noted that Amos Botsford built "the first carding machine ever seen in the country," in 1812, other carding mills, such as Francis Blackburn's, were built in the 1790s. Milner, 72.

⁹²Doris Calder, a relative of the Pickett family, noted details of the family and the local economy in *All Our Born Days: A Lively History of New Brunswick's Kingston Peninsula* (Sackville: Percheron Press, 1984), 79-84.

⁹³Ads for the Pickett fulling mill appeared in the *Saint John Gazette* 27 July 1798, 19 October 1798 and the *Royal Gazette*, 12 November 1799. Only David's son, Gould, appeared on advertisements for the family's fulling mill.

Six years after his arrival in the colony he already had 43 local customers purchasing his cloth.⁹⁴ The variety of complex patterns mentioned in his weaving accounts,⁹⁵ such as diamond coverlets and eight shaft diaper fabrics, showed that he had received advanced training and owned at least one complex loom.⁹⁶ He also patronized local craftsmen for weaving and spinning equipment.⁹⁷ In 1793, for instance, he paid Martin Trecartens two pounds for a new loom, almost double the price of other looms in this period.⁹⁸ David continued weaving until he was in his mid 70s, a profession that had occupied him for at least 47 years both in Connecticut and New Brunswick. When his will was probated in March 1827, he owned two looms: one he willed to his son Abraham Munson Pickett; the other to his daughter, Hannah Whiting.⁹⁹

Both custom spinners and home weavers appeared in the Pickett fulling mill

⁹⁴The fulling mill account book showed entries for 136 different local residents who either bought cloth, had their cloth fulled, or both between 1788-1818.

⁹⁵See also a piece of double weave cloth attributed to David Pickett in Burnham, 301, # 401.

⁹⁶In the Proceedings of the Loyalist Commissioners for claims, David Pickett testified that he had lost "weaving implements worth £40." Alexander Fraser, *Second Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario*, 1905, 826.

⁹⁷David bought both a "Great Wheel" for spinning wool in 1794 and a set of "weavers spools" from Nathaniel Trosdick in 1795. *Pickett Fulling Mill Ledger*, folio, 69b.

⁹⁸Assessors valued two looms in the Sheffield area for 15 shillings each between 1790-1802. Samuel Briggs, of Sheffield might also have been a professional weaver since his loom and *harnesses* were valued at more than 60 shillings in 1812. Harnesses are a set of two wooden rods with string *heddles* in between. In the middle of each heddle is a loop (*heddle eye*). Warp yarns are threaded individually through each heddle eye to create a pattern. A minimum of two sets of harnesses are needed to weave cloth. *Hubbard Probates*, inventories of Jacob Burke, 1790, Daniel Jewett, 1802 and Samuel Briggs, 1812; see also *Pickett Fulling Mill Ledger*, folio 50b.

⁹⁹Hannah had been David's apprentice in 1788, learning to prepare warps for customers. There was no information whether she continued weaving after her marriage. PANB, RS 66, *Probate Court of Kings County*, F11570, David Pickett, 1827. *Pickett Fulling Mill Ledger*, Folio 42.

ledger. David hired the services of eight custom spinners to supply him with small amounts of tow linen yarn between 1789 and 1796.¹⁰⁰ This thread could have been partial payment for weaving since, in all cases, these spinners also purchased handwoven cloth. Although less obvious than the custom spinners, home weavers also patronized his business. The sale of weaving reeds to a number of customers between 1788 and 1798 meant that other weavers lived in the neighbouring districts.¹⁰¹

Surprisingly, these same customers also purchased cloth from Pickett. A second indication of home weavers were the number of customers who frequented the Pickett fulling mill. Some 50 residents patronized the fulling mill between 1797-1818, but not all of them purchased cloth from David Pickett. Perhaps these residents were now weaving their own cloth, or patronizing other custom weavers and bringing this fabric to be fulled and dressed.¹⁰²

Gould Pickett's fulling mill was only one of a number of similar mills offering textile services to local residents in the early years of the nineteenth century.¹⁰³ Since

¹⁰⁰*Pickett Fulling Mill Ledger*, folios 51b, 54b, 55b, 77b.

¹⁰¹Pickett sold less than ten reeds in various sizes up to 1800. There must have been others making weaving reeds in the colony as merchants only started advertising imported reeds at mid century. See *Pickett Fulling Mill Ledger*, folio 71.

¹⁰²Another local resident, Benjamin Crawford, frequently mentioned taking cloth to the Pickett fulling mill. This cloth was not woven by David Pickett but by two other weavers, Benjamin Elston and James [Jane] Whelpley. *Crawford Diary*, 17 July and 25 September 1811; 18 December 1812; 8 November and 23 December 1813; 9 November and 12 December 1814; 28 June and 8 November 1815; 4 January, 20 July and 9 September 1816; 21 October 1817.

¹⁰³Gould Pickett had probably learned the fulling trade from Moses Fox, an American who was his partner for a short time. Fox had previously worked at Thomas Flewelling's fulling mill at Long Reach, Kings County before becoming Pickett's partner. *Saint John Gazette* 01 September 1797, and 27 September 1798. The Pickett's also operated a carding mill some time later, but documents dating this enterprise are missing. According to Calder, both the carding and fulling operations continued until the 1860s. Calder, 122.

at least five fulling mills operated along the southern reaches of the Saint John River in the early part of the century, prices for their services had to be competitive.¹⁰⁴

Prices for fulling and pressing cloth were in the range of six pence per yard, while scouring, shearing and dyeing cloth were more expensive at fourteen pence to sixteen pence per yard.¹⁰⁵

2.3.2. 1830-1850

During the 1830s and 1840s workers in all three tiers of the weaving pyramid were more conspicuous than ever in New Brunswick. Home weavers increasingly participated in agricultural fairs in their local communities, often winning prizes and mention in the press for their homespun cloth. Initially started in the late 1700s, some agricultural societies promoted domestic manufactures as "courses of employment beneficial... to the individual and the public."¹⁰⁶ The executive of the Saint John Agricultural and Emigrant Society further suggested extending premiums for other forms of domestic manufactures, such as homespun, to "excite and reward the Industry of the Country Female population."

This society, as well as others in the province, started offering prize money for

¹⁰⁴The five known fulling mill owners along the Saint John River corridor included Gould Pickett, Kingston and Thomas Flewelling, Long Reach, both in Kings County; Francis Blackburn, Waterborough and John Shaw, Wickham, both in Queens County; and Benjamin Glasier Jr., Sunbury County. It was possible that there were other mill owners who did not advertise their services such as the carding mill in Clifton, Kings County. Dorothy Dearborn, *An Anecdotal History of Kings County, New Brunswick* (Saint John: Neptune Publishing Company, 2001), 50.

¹⁰⁵*Royal Gazette of New Brunswick*, 12 November 1799; advertisement for Gould Pickett's mill. Francis Blackburn did not note his service fees in his advertisement in 1795.

¹⁰⁶*Report of the Saint John Agricultural and Emigrant Society*, 1826, 10. Fredericton: Legislative Library, vertical file, "Agricultural Societies".

the best samples of homespun and cloth manufactured from native fleeces. Although lists of prize winners' names often appeared in the press and sometimes in agricultural society reports, it was not always possible to identify exactly who made the cloth, nor whether prize winners were representative of the local population. The head of household's name appeared on all entries and therefore on prize lists, effectively masking the maker's identity. A prize winner could have been the husband, his wife, or perhaps one of their teenaged children.

Since agricultural societies operated only on cash subscriptions, only better off residents, with five shillings to spare, could join them and be eligible for prizes. At the 1844 Sunbury County fair show held in Maugerville, secretary, Calvin Hathaway noted items of "domestic manufacture," including homespun, were of a "respectable description." He awarded R. Cowperwaite a first prize for homespun, while Stephen Estrabrooks won the second prize.¹⁰⁷ This second prize winner could have been the same Mrs Estrabrooks who appeared in Nathaniel Hubbard's receipts as a custom weaver in 1853.¹⁰⁸

The Hubbards were a well established prominent Loyalist family living in the Burton area of Sunbury County, near Fredericton.¹⁰⁹ In household accounts from 1824-

¹⁰⁷*Farmers Manual*, Vol 1, #4, 1844-5, 100.

¹⁰⁸New Brunswick Museum, F28, *Hubbard Family Papers*, "Accounts payable, invoices, receipts of Nathaniel Hubbard", (hereafter *Hubbard Papers NBM*). This file contained receipts for three weavers: James Baily, 1833; a Mrs Eastabrooks, 1853-54; a Mrs Lynch, 1849, and 1851; as well as for carding mill services by Currier and Turner, 1851. There were four families with the Estrabrooks surname appearing in the 1851 Burton, Sunbury County census.

¹⁰⁹For further information about the Hubbard's farming and legal activities, including those of Nathaniel's father, William, see W.D. Moore, "Sunbury County, 1760-1830" (MA thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1976), 60-81.

1854, Nathaniel Hubbard and his father kept receipts for fourteen individual custom weavers and spinners and two carding mills who had all provided his family with textile services over the years. These accounts also included invoices from a number of merchants, including L.H. DeVeber of Saint John and James Gaynor of Fredericton, when Nathaniel Hubbard bought both imported cloth, dyes, cotton warps and other dry goods.¹¹⁰

From the mid 1820s to 1850 the Hubbards hired eight weavers to make cloth for their household and two spinners to produce yarn. Production levels for weavers were fairly small, ranging from a few yards to nearly 50 yards per season. The Hubbards did not buy homespun every year but patronized different weavers on an irregular basis. Only men's names appeared in the weaving entries. Whether some of these men were actually weavers or simply receiving payment for their wives' or daughters' work was unknown. James Bailey, however, was one known male weaver who supplied the Hubbards with cloth in the 1830s.¹¹¹ He had immigrated from Ireland and settled in the Maugerville area in 1825, and likely wove cloth for a number of customers. In 1834, Nathaniel Hubbard paid Bailey for Jarvis Shannon's outstanding weaving bill. Mrs Henry Mitchell and Mrs Thomas Griffith were the only two women textile workers appearing in the Hubbard receipts before the late 1840s. Both earned

¹¹⁰*Hubbard Papers UNB*, Box 2, "Accounts, bills, receipts, 1831-1854."

¹¹¹In February 1833 Hubbard bought two different kinds of homespun from Bailey, totalling 40 yards. *Hubbard Papers NBM*, F28-2.; and *Hubbard Papers UNB*, 28 January 1834, receipt for Hubbard paying Bailey for 13 1/2 yards of cloth which he had made for Jarvis Shannon.

just over 16 shillings for spinning wool for the Hubbard family in 1841 and 1843.¹¹²

Other custom weavers in the area, such as Sybèl Grey, also wove cloth for customers or made cloth for local merchants. In her memoirs of pioneer New Brunswick, Emily Beaven praised the skills of New Brunswick women such as Sybèl Grey for providing comfortable homes for their families.¹¹³ According to Beaven, "prosperity depends on female industry," and Sybèl was a prime example of the industriousness of bluenose women.¹¹⁴ Sybèl was familiar with weaving homespun, dyeing wool, and making clothes for her small family, all tasks that carried status in rural areas. Here in the backwoods of New Brunswick, most residents regarded purchased broadcloth as a sign of "bad management and most likely of debt," noted Beaven.¹¹⁵

A lack of knowledge was the compelling reason why Emily Beaven hired Sybèl Grey to make blankets, clothing, socks and mittens for her in the early 1840s. The whole process of converting wool into coloured fabric completely eluded Emily. She found the "mysteries of colouring brown with butternut bark, ... the proper

¹¹²*Hubbard Papers UNB*; Mrs Henry Mitchell, 1841, Mrs Thomas Griffith, 1843.

¹¹³A native of Ireland, Emily Shaw arrived in New Brunswick about 1836 with her seafaring father, and stayed on as both a student and as a teacher. In 1838 she married Dr. Frederick Beaven, who practiced medicine in the colony, and the couple moved to Long Creek, Queens County. Emily was both a writer and poet who published her work in literary magazines in both New Brunswick and England. Her book about pioneer New Brunswick was a form of emigrant's guide with numerous observations about landscape and local customs. She returned to Ireland in 1843, and never revisited the colony. Mrs F. Beaven, *Sketches and Tales Illustrative of Life in the Backwoods of New Brunswick* (London: George Routledge, 1845), 26. Susan E. Merritt, *Her Story II: Women from Canada's Past* (St. Catherines, Ontario: Vanwell Publishing, 1995), 27-35.

¹¹⁴Although the term "bluenose" is often applied to those living in Nova Scotia, Beavens used this term to identify original Loyalist settlers in New Brunswick. Beaven, 2, 79.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, 36.

proportion of sweet fern and indigo to produce green," too much to cope with.¹¹⁶

Certain types of weaving products were status symbols among these rural families.

Sybèl displayed her "splendid coverlet" on the sole "couch" [bed] in her family's small log cabin. Her coverlet was a sure sign, according to Beaven, of "industry" and "getting along in the world," for Sybèl and Melancthon Grey's small family.¹¹⁷ Sybèl's weaving efforts included her homespun plaid gown, her store of warm blankets, the coverlet adorning the one bed, and the family's woollen garments hanging on hooks around the walls. All these were tacit reminders of the importance of textile skills for the matron of a young family. That she still had time and energy left over to do custom work for her neighbours, as well as looking after two small children and her other chores, was a tribute to her determination to contribute to her family's comfort.

Custom weavers found new opportunities in the 1840s to supply a different market unknown in the early part of the century. City merchants increasingly sought homespun cloth as well as handknit socks and mitts through advertisements in local newspapers. Hugh O'Toole, for instance, notified rural weavers and knitters that he would "honestly and strictly attend" to selling their homespun cloth, mitts and socks on consignment in his Saint John store in 1845.¹¹⁸ Another Saint John merchant, Thomas P. Crane, frequently advertised homespun cloth and woolen socks for sale as

¹¹⁶Ibid., 26.

¹¹⁷Beaven was impressed with Sybèl's industriousness and resourcefulness in pioneer circumstances. Sybèl made her own butter, prepared nourishing meals, kept a garden, furnished all of the family's textiles, while looking after a six month old enfant and a toddler. Ibid., 30.

¹¹⁸*New Brunswick Courier* (Saint John), 8 November 1845.

well in his store. In 1847 he advised customers he had 500 yards of wool and cotton and all wool homespun, as well as 50 dozen pairs of socks available for purchase.¹¹⁹ Dry goods stores in both larger and smaller centers offered weavers the opportunity to be small wholesalers and supply a larger market than their immediate neighbourhoods.

Other custom weavers promoted their businesses through newspaper advertising instead of community contacts at mid-century. James Pollock informed the public he was prepared to weave "all kinds of Woolen or Cotton Cloth" in September 1850. A Fredericton resident, Pollock had fourteen years experience as a weaver. Both country produce or cash were acceptable forms of payment, noted Pollock.¹²⁰ He must have been a prolific weaver since Fredericton merchant, John T. Smith, carried Pollock's striped shirting cotton in his store along with domestic made cloth from William Snow's mill in Hampton.¹²¹

Illustration 2.2. Advertisements for James Pollock, 1850

Weaving! Weaving!

THE Subscriber intimates to the inhabitants of Fredericton and the country generally, that he is prepared to weave all kinds of Woolen or Cotton Cloth. From fourteen years practice in the Province, he will be prepared to give full satisfaction to all parties who may wish to patronize him.

Charges moderate, and Cash or Country produce received in payment.

JAMES POLLOCK.
Fredericton, King Street, Sept. 27. 1850

¹¹⁹*New Brunswick Courier*, 27 November 1847.

¹²⁰*New Brunswick Reporter* (Fredericton), 27 September 1850.

¹²¹Ad for John T. Smith; *New Brunswick Reporter*, 16 August 1850.

Industriousness was also a trait of one anonymous Northumberland County weaver in 1850. In a letter to the *Miramichi Gleaner* this weaver asserted that he/she "had wrought ...with my own hands" over a thousand yards of cloth in a six month period.¹²² Obviously being a full time custom weaver was still a viable occupation at mid-century.

The number of allied adjuncts, but especially carding and fulling mills, also increased between 1830 and 1850. By 1851, the census enumerated 52 undifferentiated carding and weaving establishments in New Brunswick.¹²³ Since there were only a handful of weaving mills, at least forty or more carding mills operated in the colony by 1850. Some mill owners placed advertisements in the press to promote their businesses or advise customers of a change in ownership. For instance, the carding mill in Boiestown, Northumberland County changed hands four times between 1840 and 1846. With each new owner, a fresh advertisement appeared in the local newspaper.¹²⁴ Most mill owners did not need to advertise since they usually serviced only their local areas. However advertisements still allowed customers to compare various operators' prices and services and choose which mill would best suit their

¹²²*Gleaner* (Chatham), 11 March 1850.

¹²³It was unclear whether fulling mills were included in "Weaving and Carding Establishments" or if they were part of the generic category of "Other factories". *1851 Census of New Brunswick*, in *1871 Census of Canada*, Vol 4, 229.

¹²⁴Thomas Boies built the first carding mill in the Ludlow area sometime in the late 1820s. Grace MacMillan Spencer, *A History of Early Boiestown* (Boiestown: Central New Brunswick Woodsmen's Museum Inc., 1987), 10. Ad for D. & A. M'Leod, *Gleaner*, 24 August 1841; ad for Patrick Long, *Ibid.*, 20 May 1843; ad for Thomas Armstrong, *Ibid.*, 11 July 1846.

requirements.

2.4. EARLY FRANCOPHONE WEAVERS: 1791-1850

Even though Acadian weavers were probably as industrious as their Anglophone counterparts, there was little evidence they ran custom weaving businesses in the latter part of the eighteenth or early part of the nineteenth century. As a cultural minority in the Maritime colonies, their primary goal was simply to survive and try to maintain their cultural identity. As one visitor noted in 1828, Acadians were frequently "not in such easy circumstances" as their Anglophone neighbours and had to work hard to find ways to support their families.¹²⁵ The only indication that Acadians wove prior to 1851 were comments from travellers visiting their settlements. Most commentators remarked that women were industrious and that homespun cloth was for domestic use, implying it was not for sale.

Brook Watson's letters to Rev. Dr. Andrew Brown in 1791 evoked the nostalgia of Acadian life before the 1755 expulsion.¹²⁶ As a young British military officer, Watson was very familiar with Acadians since one of his duties had included enforcing deportation orders in the Chignecto area. Watson remembered Acadians as an honest, sober, industrious, and virtuous people who worked hard to maintain a

¹²⁵John MacGregor, *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of the Maritime Colonies of British America* (London: Longman and Co., 1828; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968), 74.

¹²⁶Andrew Brown was compiling a history of early Acadia and was soliciting materials from a number of observers. Since Watson was very familiar with the dispersal of the Acadians, Brown was looking for his impressions. Watson was also familiar with the dispersal of other people from their homelands. In 1783 he was in charge of settling New York Loyalists in the Maritime colonies. "The Acadian French," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society* Vol 2 (1881): 129-135; correspondence of Brook Watson to Rev. Dr. Andrew Brown.

comfortable lifestyle. He described, in particular, the work of home weavers in Acadian settlements. According to Watson, women were very adept at textile work, including carding, spinning, and weaving the abundant quantities of wool, flax and hemp growing in the area.¹²⁷ These women were also fond of bright colours, but especially red. Having no local dye plants which gave red, women devised an ingenious way to provide some artistic relief to their sombre garments. Acadians bought English scarlet duffel cloth which was recycled and woven into stripes to decorate their garments. Industriousness was very important in Acadian communities. Young people were not encouraged to marry until the young woman could weave a web of cloth and the young man make a pair of wheels.¹²⁸

Two other prominent travellers also offered comments about Acadian textiles during official visits in the 1811-1813 period.¹²⁹ Lieutenant Colonel John Gubbins was in New Brunswick in 1811 and 1813 to inspect militia preparedness, while Mgr. Joseph-Octave Plessis was conducting a pastoral visit of his extended diocese in 1811 and 1812. Gubbins was less generous than Plessis about Acadian's industriousness and especially their conservatism. Gubbins noted in 1811 that Acadians in the Chignecto region were "indolent farmers, contenting themselves with the mere requisites, and

¹²⁷In the early colony, men also had been weavers. Ross and Deveau, 29.

¹²⁸"The Acadian French," 133; letter of Brook Watson to Rev. Dr. Andrew Brown, 01 July 1791. Thomas Albert, *Historie de la Madawaska* (La Salle, Quebec: Éditions Hurtubise, 1982), 167. A *web* refers to a length of handwoven cloth immediately after it is cut from the loom.

¹²⁹Gubbins was grateful that Plessis had visited eastern New Brunswick in 1812. When he arrived on 15 July 1813 to enroll men in the militia, young Acadian men gladly volunteered thanks to Plessis' exhortations the previous year. Gubbins, 73. Mgr. Joseph-Octave Plessis, *Journal des deux voyages apostoliques dans le golfe Saint-Laurent et les provinces d'En Bas en 1811 et 1812*, Quebec, 1865.

...[had] adopted the pursuits of the Indians."¹³⁰ "Ignorance and poverty", conceded Gubbins, had created a mistrust among Acadians for English customs. One of these customs was dress style among "Acadian ladies". In the Caraquet area women still maintained a particular costume imitating the "full dress of the Norman mode" popular in the previous century.¹³¹

Illustration 2.3. Early 19th Century Acadian Costume¹³²



¹³⁰Gubbins, 22.

¹³¹Gubbins visited the Caraquet area on 10 July 1813. Ibid 67-68. Recent research on Acadian dress included examining the types of fabrics used for women skirts, aprons, men's pants and men's shirts. On Sundays and festive days, women wore a striped handwoven wool skirt in either black and white stripes, or alternately red and white stripes on an indigo blue ground. For weekdays, they wore serviceable dark homespun skirts and handwoven linen aprons. Men wore dark homespun pants with a linen shirt for work. Jeanne Arseneault, "A La Recherche du Costume Acadien," *Material History Bulletin* 4 (Fall 1977): 51-3.

¹³²Note especially the traditional black and white striped skirt. Burnham and Burnham, # 76, 64.

Mgr. Joseph Octave Plessis was concerned as well with Acadians' poverty and women's outmoded dress. As Bishop of Quebec, he had a large pastoral charge which included the three Maritime colonies and the Magdellen Islands. During his visits to the area in 1811 and 1812 he made countless observations on both the rigours of his trips, economic conditions of his flock, and their curious habits. Acadians still participated in traditional forms of agriculture and tried vainly to coax the poor soil into fertility, he noted.¹³³ Unfortunately those who attempted to raise sheep and cattle along most of the coastal areas from the Bay of Chaleur to the Grand Digue area found the fodder barely able to sustain their livestock. What little wool they raised went into clothing and bedding.

While many Acadian women wove and wore the simple homespun skirt, it was their headgear and hairdos that drew his attention. Women in the Richibucto area wore a "ridiculous large muslin headdress over their bouffant hairdos" on Sundays, noted Plessis. On the Magdellen Islands Acadian women dressed more conservatively with a modest bonnet, simpler hairstyles, and again the handwoven skirts.¹³⁴

Community sanctions and Acadian clergy's exhortations to maintain their cultural heritage were two reasons why Acadians resisted current fashions.¹³⁵ Some Acadians, John MacGregor noted in 1828, retained, "with a kind of religious feeling,"

¹³³See also John Jennings, *Tending the Flock: Bishop Joseph-Octave Plessis and Roman Catholics in early 19th century New Brunswick* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1998), 86-89.

¹³⁴Plessis, 95, 181.

¹³⁵MacGregor, 196.

the dress and habits of their ancestors.¹³⁶ In some Acadian communities neighbours ridiculed those who had the audacity to wear English broadcloth, while in other Acadian areas residents were more tolerant.¹³⁷ In the Caraquet district, some Acadians had already adopted compromise outfits consisting of English style coats and gowns, instead of their traditional handwoven homespun costumes. However women in this district still clung to their distinctive and elaborate Sunday headdresses.¹³⁸

What impressed MacGregor most about Acadian women was their industriousness in textiles and their work as labourers in traditional male activities. In some Acadian areas MacGregor noted,

The industry of their wives and daughters is wonderful; they are at work during the spring and harvest on their farms; they cook and wash, make their husbands' as well as their own clothes; they spin, knit and weave, and are scarcely an hour idle during their lives.¹³⁹

Acadian wives, like their Loyalist counterparts, worked alongside their husbands to make ends meet. As MacGregor also noted about Loyalist families, a gender division of labour was inappropriate in a new country, and this held true for Acadian households as well.¹⁴⁰ All family members had to share in providing the family's economic viability with inventiveness and thrift.

MacGregor saw many challenges confronting the Acadian people, who had

¹³⁶Ibid., 74.

¹³⁷Ibid., 196.

¹³⁸Ibid., 195.

¹³⁹Ibid., 74.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 69.

little education and even less money than their Anglophone neighbours. Acadian women's work in fishing villages was especially arduous.

The women in all the fishing villages are perfect drudges. The men, after splitting the fish, leave the whole labour of curing to the women, who have also to cook, nurse their children, plant their gardens, gather what little corn they raise, and spin and weave coarse cloth.¹⁴¹

Thrift was part of this lifestyle and Acadian women, like their ancestors a hundred years before, recycled old garments into coarse, serviceable handwoven bedcovers and cloth.¹⁴²

Some Acadian men continued wearing handwoven and homespun garments well into the nineteenth century. Madawaska County Francophone woods workers wore red woollen shirts and pants made of "grosse flanelle tissée dans le pays" in the 1820s, continuing the tradition of using serviceable and durable homespun cloth.¹⁴³ Acadians also started buying imported dyes, such as indigo and madder red, as well as finer imported cloth to relieve the sombreness of natural coloured wool and linen.

John Dean and Edward Kavanaugh, surveyors from the State of Maine, were impressed with Acadian inventiveness in supplying their families' needs in the 1830s.¹⁴⁴ While men in the Madawaska seemed to have an "easy life", their wives and

¹⁴¹Ibid., 196.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³This type of cloth, sometimes called "étoffe du pays," was highly fulled, durable, woollen homespun fabric. George Sirois, "Les Acadiens et la naissance du commerce du bois dans le nord-est du Nouveau-Brunswick, 1820-1860," *Les Cahiers de la Société Historique Acadienne* 7, # 4 (décembre 1976): 185.

¹⁴⁴Thomas Albert, *Histoire de la Madawaska* (La Salle, Quebec: Éditions Hurtibise, 1982), 457.

daughters were constantly occupied with both household tasks and textile production, noted these two surveyors. Women in Acadian communities spun and wove both flax and wool, especially for bedding and garments. Along with making maple sugar in the spring, Acadians in some areas also sold frozen oysters and moss cranberries in winter, chores which would have occupied all family members.¹⁴⁵

Whether Acadian weavers made homespun for exchange or only for their own use was not readily known. Acadian weavers in the Madawaska region of north western New Brunswick exchanged little homespun either with the Dufour or the Emerson stores in the 1840s and 1850s.¹⁴⁶ There might have been other opportunities to sell their homespun outside their immediate area. Issac Stephenson, who lived north of Fredericton, remembered a variety of boats, including Acadian *pirogues*, going down the Saint John River in the 1840s with different farm products. Madawaska settlers were "carrying to market the woolen garments made from their own flocks of sheep and maple sugar obtained from the woods," noted Stephenson.¹⁴⁷ Production of these items, including homespun, must have been significant for other residents to notice surpluses available to an outside market.

Farmer's wives, in particular, were resourceful in combining industriousness and chores with some sociability. The frequent mention of *frolics*¹⁴⁸ by travel writers

¹⁴⁵Emily Beaven often saw Acadians in Queen's County on their way to market with frozen oysters and moss cranberries during the 1840s. Beaven, 2.

¹⁴⁶Craig and Rygiel, 96-98.

¹⁴⁷Issac Stephenson, *Recollections of a Long Life, 1829-1915* (Chicago, 1915), 28.

¹⁴⁸Frolics were co-operative work parties which often terminated with parties in the evening.

were another indication that many Acadian home weavers and spinners were involved in textile production. Gubbins, for instance, noted the popularity of frolics as a way of dealing with unwelcome tasks by both men and women on his 1811 tour of New Brunswick.¹⁴⁹ Since many residents lived in remote areas with insufficient labourers, neighbours got together to share in communal work parties. MacGregor as well commented on the popularity of frolics in 1828. "A good wife", noted MacGregor, "invited as many neighbours as the house could accommodate" to help her card and spin her store of flax and wool. Women spent the day and sometimes into the evening visiting, drinking copious amounts of tea, and helping out their neighbours.¹⁵⁰ Some of these frolics culminated in dancing parties lasting well into the night. Industriousness, in the company of others, was a way of meeting some of the demands of rural society since all knew that their efforts were appreciated and would be returned. These frolics were often the only chance for young people to meet potential spouses and to court.

2.5. HOMESPUN MYTHS

A number of myths about hand weaving were apparent in these travellers reports for the early part of the century. Among these homespun myths, self-sufficiency was perhaps more significant than loom ownership or cheapness of textile equipment. Both Joseph Gubbins and John MacGregor noted how farm families were self-sufficient during their visits in 1811 and 1828. On his July 20th visit to

¹⁴⁹Gubbins, 35.

¹⁵⁰MacGregor, 73.

Westmorland County in 1811, Gubbins commented farmers "...were their own weavers, dyers, taylors, shoemakers and carpenters. Farmers... have almost everything made at home that is required for the use of their families."¹⁵¹

This was a strange comment from Gubbins who had just attended a dinner party the previous week with Colonel James Peters in Gagetown. In 1803 Peters had compiled a concise report for Edward Winslow about the economic opportunities in Queens County.¹⁵² In his report Peters had noted twelve milling operations in the county, including a fulling mill.¹⁵³ By the time of Gubbins' visit in 1811, another Queens County entrepreneur was also in the fulling mill business.¹⁵⁴ Gubbins would have also passed by other fulling and carding mills on the Kingston Peninsula, including the Picketts', on his way to inspect the militia and visit Amos Botsford in Westmorland County. Botsford, as well, was considering building a carding mill near his home at Westcock to service local residents of Westmorland County and nearby Cumberland County, Nova Scotia.¹⁵⁵

William and Elizabeth Trueman, neighbours of the Botsfords, were perhaps more cognizant than Gubbins of the textile services available to local residents in the Chignecto region. In a letter to Yorkshire in 1811, they advised relatives to "lay in

¹⁵¹Gubbins, 23; entry for 20 July 1811.

¹⁵²Raymond, 495.

¹⁵³This might have been Francis Blackburn's fulling mill.

¹⁵⁴Advertisement for John Shaw's "New Fulling Mill"; *Royal Gazette*, 02 July 1806.

¹⁵⁵Amos Botsford died in 1812, the same year that the carding mill was built. Milner, 72; Gubbins, 19 and 63; sketch of the Botsford estate, 20.

well some common clothing. Bring some home-made linens and checks" before emigrating to New Brunswick. Even if families could supply some of their own textile needs, durable everyday clothing and bedding were obviously in short supply in the Chignecto area in the early part of the century.¹⁵⁶

John Harrison's call for more carding and spinning girls for the area in 1810 had been yet another plea to furnish residents with needed textile products. William Harper had been supplying some residents living in remote areas with consumer goods since 1797. Harper made frequent trading voyages on his vessel, the *Weasel*, along the Bay of Fundy coast and the Peticodiac River, exchanging both produce and finished goods with local residents. By 1812 Harper moved to the Bend (Moncton) to open a store where he carried homespun cloth for sale, as well as imported textiles.¹⁵⁷

Stores such as Harper's, along with enterprising merchants in Saint John, Chatham, and Fredericton were able to supply both urban and rural residents with many consumer goods.¹⁵⁸ Account books from the early part of settlement up to the 1850s show many residents both bought and sold homespun cloth as well as imported cloth. John MacGregor was perhaps more aware than Gubbins of dependence on outside sources for textiles. In his opinion, families of Loyalist extraction were in general "... industrious and independent in their circumstances."¹⁵⁹ However, they could

¹⁵⁶Trueman, 116; letter by William and Elizabeth Trueman, 29 March 1811.

¹⁵⁷Steeves, 45; extracts from the Harper ledgers also in Hempel, 331-33.

¹⁵⁸See also T. W. Acheson, *Saint John: The Making of a Colonial Urban Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 48-26.

¹⁵⁹MacGregor, 69.

not supply "more than half what is required to clothe their families." Mothers and their daughters were the prime textile producers among these Loyalist households and occupied themselves spinning, knitting, and weaving linens and coarse woollen cloth for domestic use.¹⁶⁰

Emigrant guides and emigrant societies were ambiguous in promoting this myth of self-sufficiency and encouraging industriousness. Some emigrant societies suggested emigrants bring a minimum of one blanket per settler, while others encouraged emigrants to bring "plenty of protective clothing and bed clothes."¹⁶¹ Prospective Scottish emigrants were specifically instructed to teach their female children how to knit coarse woollen socks, to spin both linen and wool, to sew, and especially how to cut out men's and women's clothes. Any surplus production, advised this 1820s guide, "can be exchanged for their value in something else."¹⁶² Already the possibility of selling textile products and doing custom work for others was worthy of consideration.

MacGregor was mistaken, however, when he noted that "almost every farmer in the thinly settled districts has a loom in his house."¹⁶³ Probate inventories for the Chignecto and Maugerville regions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century

¹⁶⁰Ibid, 262.

¹⁶¹Robert Lamond, *Narrative of the Rise and Progress of Emigration from the Counties of Lanark & Renfrew to the Settlements in Upper Canada* (Glasgow: James Hedderwick, 1820; reprint ed., Ottawa: Canadian Heritage Publications, 1978), 25; Robert MacDougall, *The Emigrant's Guide to North America* (Glasgow: J. & P. Campbell, 1841; reprint ed., Elizabeth Thompson, Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 1998), 13.

¹⁶²Lamond, 28.

¹⁶³MacGregor, 262.

show that while spinning wheels were common, not every household owned a loom.¹⁶⁴ This was also true in the rural regions around Quebec City in the same period where 80% of households owned spinning wheels but only 31-47% owned a loom.¹⁶⁵ This lack of loom ownership explains why custom weavers, such as David Pickett, had so many customers ready to purchase or barter for needed cloth. In other areas of the colony as well, custom weavers found ready customers.¹⁶⁶ Neither Beverley Robinson, Nathaniel Hubbard nor Emily Beavan had to search very far to find weavers and spinners ready to process their wool into cloth.

Cheapness of textile tools was another homespun myth. One emigrant guide, published at mid century, suggested that new settlers need not bring their own textile tools since they were available in the colony "at a cheap rate."¹⁶⁷ However, in the early part of the century, these tools were expensive enough to represent a sizeable investment for customers, but could also produce significant income for skilled craftsmen. David Pickett, for instance, paid forty shillings for a loom in 1795, about two and half times the current rate noted in probate inventories.¹⁶⁸ When his estate was

¹⁶⁴Hubbard *Probates*; Latta, 49.

¹⁶⁵Ruddel, "Consumer Trends...", 53.

¹⁶⁶English weavers from Yorkshire and Pennsylvania Germans did custom weaving in the Chignecto region in the late eighteenth century. See James Dean Snowdon, "Footprints in the Marsh Mud: Politics and Land Settlement in the Township of Sackville, 1760-1800," (MA Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1974), 139; Hempel, 203-4, 268-9.

¹⁶⁷Monro, 383.

¹⁶⁸This loom might have replaced part of the £40 worth of weaving equipment that was confiscated when David left New York in 1783. PANB, MC 999, *Pickett Family Collection*, MS1/2, "Claim of David Pickett, Loyalist," 1787. *Pickett Fulling Mill Ledger*; Account with Martin Trecauten, 1795 for a loom, folio 56.

inventoried in 1827 his weaving equipment, including two looms, reeds, *gears*, etc. was valued at £10 (200 shillings).¹⁶⁹ Other inventories for the Maugerville area between 1790 and 1812 valued spinning wheels at between ten to twenty shillings and looms for about fifteen shillings.¹⁷⁰ Tools were certainly a major capital cost that prospective artisans needed to consider.

The Hubbard's weaving receipts, as well as the 1851 census, pose some perplexing questions about the gender of weavers. Nine men appeared in Hubbard's receipts, but only one of them was a known weaver. Although we know for certain that James Bailey was a weaver, there was little information on the others. Were they also weavers or merely selling their wife's or daughter's weaving production? Did they perhaps live somewhere in an adjacent county where the manuscript census data is missing? As Janice Potter-MacKinnon noted of eastern Ontario Loyalists, men, even of the second generation, controlled the purse strings and transactions with the outside world. These Loyalist men collected their wives' butter, cheese and spinning and ferried them down the St Lawrence River for sale in Kingston.¹⁷¹ Nathaniel Hubbard's family and neighbours were of the same generation and Loyalist mentality as those MacKinnon studied in the Kingston area. Perhaps he was following contemporary convention by listing men's names in his transactions and not women.

¹⁶⁹Gears refer to sets of pattern harnesses. PANB, RS 66, *Kings County Probate Court*, F11570, David Pickett's will, 1827.

¹⁷⁰William Hubbard was registrar of wills, deeds and mortgages for Sunbury County between 1796-1819. *Hubbard Probates*.

¹⁷¹Janice Potter-MacKinnon, *While the Women Only Wept-Loyalist Refugee Women in Eastern Ontario* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 151.

Nathaniel Hubbard included a woman weaver in his accounts for the first time in 1849.¹⁷² Lydia Estrabrooks, Ann Jane Estrabrooks and Julia Lynch all supplied him with substantial amounts of cloth in the early 1850s,¹⁷³ but none had listed themselves as a weaver on the nominal schedules in 1851 census. Obviously there were weavers who either did not declare their occupation or decided that their businesses were insignificant. Some scholars have asserted that 99% of professional weavers were immigrant men, and those women who did weave for a living were widows or single women.¹⁷⁴ This was not the trend in Sunbury County nor in other parts of New Brunswick at mid-century. Of the eighteen declared weavers in Sunbury County, fourteen were women, including seven married women; only one was a widow. All had been New Brunswick born; the four male weavers had all immigrated from Ireland. In the rest of the colony, women represented 43.6% of all those reporting weaving as an occupation on extant nominal manuscript schedules. Most of these 41 women weavers were New Brunswick born; all but one of the 53 male weavers were Irish or Scottish born.

This discussion about both home weavers and custom weavers in early New Brunswick shows that many homespun myths need to be revisited for early British North America. David Pickett's customers were clear evidence that not all early settlers owned looms, nor were they self-sufficient in cloth production. Pickett was

¹⁷²*Hubbard Papers NBM*, F28-34 (2), Mrs Lynch, 11 January 1849.

¹⁷³*Hubbard Papers NBM*, F28-21(1), Lydia Estrabrooks; F 28-21 (2) Mrs Ann Jane Estrabrooks; F 28-34 (1) Mrs Julia Lynch.

¹⁷⁴Burnham and Burnham, 11; Cohen, 81.

only one of a few weavers operating a business in the first years of the nineteenth century whose records were preserved, but other custom weavers were active as well, since travellers would not have bothered mentioning them in their accounts.

Industriousness was the trait most often mentioned by these travellers and others who saw hand weaving as part of the local economic scene. Weavers such as Mary Coy Morris, Polly Mercereau, Sybèl Grey, Lydia Estrabrooks, Ann Jane Estrabrooks and Julia Lynch, along with 41 other women weavers on the census, are only a few of the known female custom weavers prior to mid-century. Many more anonymous weavers also supplied their families with needed textiles and sold their cloth to provide a comfortable maintenance for members of their families.

CHAPTER 3. THE POLITICS OF HOME MANUFACTURES

Introduction

Residents of New Brunswick had three options when buying cloth at mid century. They could purchase a wide variety of both European and American textiles from dry goods merchants in the major centers and from general stores in many small towns.¹ Locally made homespun cloth was also available from two different suppliers. Handweavers made one version, while three small weaving mills made a cloth which resembled homespun.² Many residents, regardless of their occupation, purchased all types of cloth - homespun for work clothes and imported factory cloth for more formal occasions and for other uses, such as bedding and table linens.

Supplying sufficient homespun to meet the demands for warm and durable clothing for over 25,000 outdoor and industrial workers was a problem.³ Most handweavers could only produce a limited volume, due to both time constraints and physical demands of hand production. Although one prolific Northumberland County

¹This imported cloth included both luxury fabrics, such as cassimeres, Paisley shawls, and silk velvets as well as utilitarian tweeds, denim, serges, and Scottish homespun. Advertisement for Burke and Noonan in Chatham, *Gleaner* 20 December 1856; advertisement for Andrew Anderson in Fredericton, *New Brunswick Reporter* 01 July 1859.

²Throughout this study "domestic manufactures" refers to the industrialized production of commodities, while home production are goods made by hand in mostly rural households. In 1850, William Snow, of Hampton, Kings County, John McGill, of Pennfield, Charlotte County, and the Picketts' in Kingston, Kings County ran the only known woollen mills in the province. The state of operations at the Pickett mill were unclear as the owner, Munson Pickett, was in jail. Doris Calder, *All Our Born Days: A Lively History of New Brunswick's Kingston Peninsula* (Sackville: Percheron Press, 1984), 115-122. See advertisements for Snow's cloth in *New Brunswick Courier* 03 February 1849 and 14 May 1853.

³ Over 65% of all male workers in 1851 were either farmers or worked in industrial trades. Unfortunately census documents did not include fishermen or other out door workers, such as miners or stone masons, among the 26,877 workers who might have appreciated homespun's qualities. *Census of Canada 1871, "Recapitulation of 1851 New Brunswick census"*, vol 4, 226 and 229.

weaver noted making over 1000 yards of cloth in six months, this was hardly the norm for most weavers.⁴ Even if hand weavers sold half their 1851 production, this was barely enough for one set of work clothes for each these workers.⁵ Homespun was particularly appreciated because of its durability and warmth, regardless of cost.⁶ The hand made variety was frequently more expensive than factory homespun, but there was still only a limited supply available.⁷

There was also a limited supply of locally made factory homespun. William Snow was one mill owner who advertised his cloth in the 1850s. Although his mill was barely a year old, he contracted with Saint John wholesalers, John T. Smith in 1850 and later, M. Francis in 1853, to carry his goods.⁸ However, neither he nor the other two small mill owners could meet demand for homespun at mid-century.

Snow, John McGill and Munson Pickett were among the new breed of small entrepreneurs and handful of politicians who believed from the late 1840s onward

⁴"Domestic Manufacturing," *Gleaner* 11 March 1850.

⁵Since weavers reported 622,237 yards of homespun in 1851, the amount allotted to work clothes would come to just over ten yards, only enough for a pair of pants and a shirt.

⁶William Snow noted in his February 1849 advertisement that his homespun was "cheaper and more durable" than imported varieties. See also Katherine Brett, "Country Clothing in Nineteenth Century Ontario," in *Proceedings of the 4th Annual Agricultural History of Ontario Seminar*, ed. Alan Brookes (Guelph: University of Guelph, 1979), 40-69.

⁷In the late 1840s and early 1850s homespun sold for between 60 to 80 cents per yard. Ordinary grey cotton cloth sold for only twelve cents per yard; silk sixty three cents per yard; heavier Osnaburg seventeen cents per yard; and wool melton cloth forty cents per yard. *Doak Family Papers*, PANB, MC1055, Ledger MS1K/1 (1855-8), Ledger MS6F/6 (1867); Charlotte County Archives, M77.74 Odell Ledger for 1857 and M77.83 Henry Swift Ledger, 1858; *Islander* (Charlottetown), Market prices 12 April 1845.

⁸In the *New Brunswick Courier* of 3 February 1849, Snow mentioned Smith as his agent, and on 14 May 1853, he now named a M. Francis as his wholesale agent. Ads for John T. Smith, " *New Brunswick Reporter* 14 June and 16 August 1850.

that the province could eventually be self-sufficient in textile production. Merchants and older politicians who supported the "old economy" of mercantilism were not enamoured with those who wanted to promote this "new economy" based on self-sufficiency in consumer products.⁹ Those involved in the timber export trade and carrying trade, especially, saw no commercial advantage in supporting domestic manufacturing. According to T. W. Acheson, for these merchants, "economic life outside of British mercantilism was unthinkable".¹⁰ Both government and larger merchants would lose income if local enterprises, such as textile mills, provided too much competition for imported cloth. In the 1840s these imported textiles made up from 22% to over 50% of all imports,¹¹ but by the early 1850s the volume of imported textiles levelled off to about 25% of all imports. Nevertheless, merchants realized important profits by importing goods, while duties provided government with substantial income.

The following discussion focuses on debates about whether legislators and merchants should encourage textiles made locally by both handweavers and small mills, or continue the status quo of depending on imports in the 1840s and 1850s. The politics of providing sufficient cloth for a growing population was complex at

⁹See Rose-Mary Ommer, "The 1830s: Adapting Their Institutions to Their Desires," in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation*, ed. Phillip Buckner and John Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 296-7; W. S. MacNutt, *New Brunswick, A History* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1963, reprint 1984), 296; and T. W. Acheson, *Saint John: The Making of a Colonial Urban Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 54-58 for brief discussions of the "old" and "new" economy.

¹⁰Acheson, 58.

¹¹*JHANB*, "Custom House Reports," 1842-1855. In 1844, for example, textiles were the highest proportion of imports at 51.5%, and worth £329, 919. In most other years they averaged nearly 25% of all imports.

mid-century and not limited to New Brunswick's elite class of merchants and politicians. British-appointed lieutenant governors also leaped into the political stew.

For instance, Lieutenant Governor Sir William Colebrooke noted in 1842 that weaving mills "ought to be encouraged" in the province since they would bring prosperity to the settlements. Not only would they provide farmers with an outlet for their wool, they would also offer opportunities to exchange wool for "wrought fabrics as a substitute for "homespun cloth."¹² The "abridgement of labour with machinery," according to Colebrooke, was essential in the fabrication of woollen clothing commonly used by farmers and their families.¹³

However, entrepreneurs were slow in building these crucial weaving mills. Capital costs were high and some encouragement was needed to finance building programs. There was also no guarantee that these mills would be profitable. Since textiles were an important component of the economy, should government support this sector by various forms of encouragement? Should government be involved at all in encouraging any form of manufacturing? If so, what forms should this take? Both lobby groups and individuals were especially active between 1845 and 1855 encouraging both mechanization and protection. How did government view their efforts?

These questions are considered chronologically over four time periods,

¹²W. M.G. Colebrooke to Lord Grey, 27 April 1847, Dispatch #33 in *British Parliamentary Papers*, (hereafter *BPP*) 1847-48 Vol 17, (Dublin: University Press of Ireland, 1969), 19-20.

¹³W. M.G. Colebrooke to Lord Stanley, 28 October 1842, Dispatch #100 in *BPP*, 1843 Vol 16, 533.

reflecting the increased participation of government, lobby groups and individual citizens in debates over encouraging factory-made cloth and discounting home-made homespun. It also shows that precedents in the earlier period did not necessarily continue into the 1830s or early 1840s. The initial settlement period from 1790-1842 was one of ambiguity on the part of government about any direct encouragement of textile production. While some entrepreneurs undertook construction of a few carding and fulling mills, weaving was still the domain of hand producers. Those making decisions about support were mostly merchants and ship owners who did not want to see their lucrative import businesses challenged by domestic manufacturing.

Both protection and mechanization became the watchwords between 1844-1850. Concerned citizens and lobby groups presented their cases for government consideration and awaited some support. However, government continued to be ambivalent about supporting any form of industrialization, including textile mills, as economic depression gripped the province towards the end of the decade.

The third period chronicles the activities of a new provincial lobby group and some support from government. The New Brunswick Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Manufacturing, Agriculture, and Commerce started lobbying efforts in 1850 but collapsed by 1855. Reports from their many public meetings, as well as letters from citizens in the press, became important components in the protracted debates about the value of industrialization.

With the Act to Encourage Agriculture in 1854, government support of manufacturing came to a virtual standstill. Between 1855 and the mid 1860s many

individuals became disillusioned and discouraged with their efforts to promote industrialization. Provincial Exhibitions, which fostered both industrialized manufacturing and home manufactures, were government's only response to encouragement.

3.1. Precedents for Encouraging Textile Production: 1768-1842

3.1.1. Government

In the late eighteenth century, British mercantile policies had initially discouraged and prohibited colonial manufactures since they competed with goods from the mother country.¹⁴ However by 1768, Lord Hillsborough noted that colonial manufactures did not interfere with British made goods since the scale of colonial production was so small. Furthermore, enforcement of mercantile laws were ineffective, commented Hillsborough, as "the positive prohibition [of colonial industries] is equally impracticable and impolitic..."¹⁵ Colonial authorities allowed and even encouraged local residents to raise flax and weave linen, and use their fleeces to make wool cloth for the market. Colonial administrators, such as Lord Dartmouth, thought it was unlikely though that Canadians would succeed in their textile ventures. In 1774, he noted that textile projects would most likely fail since colonials had little

¹⁴Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures, 1700-1820*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 123.

¹⁵Lord Hillsborough to Sir Guy Carleton, 15 November 1768 in *Select Documents in Canadian Economic History, 1497-1783*, ed. H.A. Innis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1929), 405-6.

"ambition or genius" to carry out such endeavours.¹⁶

Colonel Thomas Carleton, the first governor of New Brunswick, thought differently about colonials' ability to establish manufactures. In 1786 he asserted that one of the roles of the new provincial government was to promote incentives for any "industrious exertions on the part of colonists."¹⁷ Industry was foremost in his mind as Loyalist residents had now exhausted their stores of government supplied goods and needed to find new sources of both food and clothing. Agriculture and commerce would be the main vehicles for them to achieve a "flourishing and happy condition," noted Carleton.¹⁸

One of the ways government could encourage both agriculture and industries was through bounties. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century bounties were common in both Upper Canada and the Maritimes.¹⁹ Both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick supplied bounties to encourage cultivation of flax, hemp, and bread-corns,²⁰ wolf disposal, fisheries, clearing, fencing, and sowing new lands.²¹

¹⁶"Dartmouth papers VI," in *Ibid.*, 578.

¹⁷"Address of Thomas Carleton to the House," 9 January 1786, *Journal of the Legislative Council of New Brunswick*, 1786, 3.

¹⁸"Carleton's Address," 15 March, 1786, *Ibid.* ; MacNutt, 64-5.

¹⁹Mary Quayle Innis, "The Industrial Development of Ontario, 1783-1820," in *Historical Essays on Upper Canada*, J.K. Johnson, ed. (Toronto: Maclelland and Stewart, 1975), 140-47.

²⁰Bread-corns included all grains such as wheat, oats, barley, rye, buckwheat and Indian-corn used in making bread stuffs.

²¹Vernon Fowke, *Canadian Agricultural Policy: The Historical Pattern* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946), 35, 73-4. Both Upper and Lower Canada provided extensive support for agriculture and enacted early legislation for hemp cultivation as a cash crop. The government of Upper Canada passed legislation as early as 1812 for the encouragement of hemp culture. George E. Reaman, *A History of Agriculture in Ontario*, Vol 1 (Toronto: Saunders, 1970), 36.

Additional bounties supported capital costs for small manufactories processing hemp, flax, wool, and oats.²²

Petitions for government aid were not always successful nor expeditious. Three entrepreneurs petitioned the New Brunswick House of Assembly for textile bounties prior to 1800. Both John and Andrew Hay and Francis Blackburn encountered numerous delays in having their requests considered. In 1793 the Hay brothers wanted help in discharging debts for their weaving manufactory in Miramichi, Northumberland County. Their request was sent to the Committee of Supply for further study and no further action was taken.²³ Francis Blackburn was more persistent in seeking aid for a fulling mill and small weaving workshop at Jemseg, Queens County. His three petitions between 1794-1797 were either summarily turned down or delayed for further study.²⁴

Government officials cited the Dingee case for their refusal to support Blackburn's petition in 1795.²⁵ The previous year Soloman Dingee had also petitioned the government for funding for a fulling mill near the one proposed by

²²Nova Scotia was more active than New Brunswick in promoting flax cultivation and flax mills. As early as 1820, the Nova Scotia government set aside prize money amounting to £22-10-0, divided among four awards, for the farmer producing the largest amount of flax and seed in the province. J.S. Martell, *Bulletin of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia*, Vol. II, no.2, "The Achievement of Agricola and the Agricultural Societies, 1818-1825," (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1940), 26-7, 41, 45-46.

²³*Journal of the House of Assembly of New Brunswick* (hereafter *JHANB*) 25 Feb 1793, 302. Unfortunately the accounts of this committee were missing.

²⁴Blackburn's initial petition was dismissed on 25 February 1794; both his 12 February 1795 and his 3 February 1797 petitions were "laid on the table." *JHANB* 1794, 379; 1795, 400; 1797, 558.

²⁵*JHANB* 12 February 1795, 400.

Blackburn in Jemseg. Dingee received a £12.10.0 gift in February 1794.²⁶ His bounty, however, came with three conditions: the mill had to be operational within eighteen months; he had to provide a certificate from three justices of the peace of Queens County; and he had to give security to the treasurer of the Province that he would carry on the business for at least five years. Dingee never actually built his mill and his failure to comply with government conditions hampered other petitioners, especially Francis Blackburn. Blackburn later built his Jemseg fulling mill, at "great trouble and expense", he noted. He again requested assistance from the government. His petition was once again laid on the table for reconsideration.²⁷ Faced with this poor success rate, other petitioners would not approach government for textile bounties for the next forty years.

3.1.2. Agricultural Societies

Along with bounties, colonial governors also supported home manufacturing circuitously through patronage and subsidies to agricultural societies. When the first societies started in the late eighteenth century, colonial administrators acted as patrons for societies in Nova Scotia (1789), Quebec (1790), New Brunswick (1790), and Niagara (1791).²⁸ Lieutenant governors opened agricultural exhibitions, sometimes offered their own funds to support subscriptions, and suggested

²⁶JHANB 25 February 1794, 379.

²⁷Any indication whether Blackburn received a grant during the 1798 sitting of the Assembly are unknown, as copies of the *Journals of the House of Assembly* were unavailable. Blackburn died in late 1798. *Royal Gazette*, 04 December 1798. JHANB 03 February 1797.

²⁸Fowke, 51, 69; James Hannay, *History of New Brunswick* (Saint John: John A. Bowles, 1909), 374-5.

initiatives to legislators.

One of these initiatives was the formation of a central agricultural society subsidized by government money. The Central Society for Promoting the Rural Economy of the Province was founded in Fredericton in 1820 with a grant of £300. In 1821 it received an additional £500 to support its activities.²⁹ The Central Society lasted only five years when another society with a larger mandate replaced it. In 1825 Governor Sir Howard Douglas encouraged the New Brunswick legislature to offer a £700 grant to the first combined New Brunswick Agricultural and Emigrant Society. During the next five years this Fredericton based society received a total of £3,100 in government grants.³⁰ These combined societies were not limited to the more urban areas of the province but sprang up in many rural districts as well in the 1820s.

Encouragement of home manufacturing was one goal of these subsidized agricultural societies between 1800 and the early 1840s. Societies accepted government monies to promote both progressive ideas, such as scientific farming, and traditional activities, including handweaving.³¹ Dissemination of useful knowledge, including ways to improve crops and raise superior animals were

²⁹Fowke, 51; Howard Trueman, *Early Agriculture in the Atlantic Provinces* (Moncton: self published, 1907), 25.

³⁰Fowke, 52.

³¹For an excellent overview view of Nova Scotia's agricultural societies see Graeme Wynn, "Exciting a Spirit of Emulation Among the 'Plodholes': Agricultural Reform in Pre-Confederation Nova Scotia," *Acadiensis* 20, no. 1 (Autumn, 1990): 5-51. For New Brunswick see J. White, "*Speed the Plow*": *Agricultural Societies in Pre-Confederation New Brunswick*, MA thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1976.

common goals of most societies. Scientific farming was becoming the rage among certain sectors of society in both America and Great Britain in the 1820s and would continue into the 1840s. Certainly Agricola's submissions to Nova Scotia newspapers in the 1820s were evidence that progressive ideas were also percolating in the Maritimes as well.³²

Some agricultural societies, which included both prominent businessmen as well as prosperous farmers, were more like elite social clubs while other societies had more practical goals.³³ Some early societies also included the altruistic goals of "cultivation of social Virtue, acquirement of useful Knowledge and promot[ion of] the well being of the Community."³⁴ James Souter, secretary of the Northumberland County Society, cited the advancement of "social order, virtue and happiness" as secondary goals of their recently formed society in 1842.³⁵

Local societies financed their activities by recruiting members as well as

³²The early King's County Agricultural Society in Nova Scotia included the encouragement of manufactories as part of its mandate in 1789. Established at the same time as the Halifax Society (1789), it emphasized goals common to most agricultural societies of the period, including New England's. Martell, Vol 11, no. 2, 6.

³³James Talman, "Agricultural Societies of Upper Canada," in *Ontario Historical Society Papers* Vol 27 (1931): 545-6.

³⁴American societies started about the same time as those in Canada. The Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture (1785) was the earliest, modeled after similar English societies. Many other agricultural societies followed in the eastern states by 1800. They were not clubs of practical farmers but groups of professionals and business men whose purpose was to disseminate knowledge of the progress of agriculture in other countries. The mandate for the Philadelphia Society's included reference to the union of "Commerce, Arts and Manufacturing with Agriculture." Percy Bidwell and John Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620-1860* (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 184-188.

³⁵This society was only four years old and had already made significant strides towards accomplishing many of its goals. *JHANB* 1842, clxxvii.

applying for government subsidies. Members paid modest yearly membership fees ranging from one to five shillings. For every membership raised, the New Brunswick government doubled this amount with matching funds up to an annual cap. In 1842 the government revised the amount of subsidy and increased it to £100 to benefit county societies.³⁶ These monies were then used for communal purchases of seed, stud animals, and new agricultural implements, as well as prize money³⁷ to encourage residents to enter their local fairs.

Fairs offered residents an occasion to socialize, to view their neighbours' progress in both agriculture and home manufactures, and to compete for premiums in various categories. Agricultural societies encouraged traditional activities, such as handweaving, through premiums at annual fairs. These premiums had a secondary purpose of "reward[ing] and stimulat[ing] domestic industry", noted the Saint John Agricultural and Emigrant Society in its 1826 fair report.³⁸ Although homespun cloth was not yet a category at this particular fair, organizers suggested premiums for the best samples of "homespun and cloth manufactured from native fleeces" for future fairs.

Most residents were probably familiar with the term *homespun* in the 1820s. Often made of a cotton warp and wool weft, this cloth could also be constructed

³⁶Government raised grants to £100 to encourage county societies. *JHANB* 1842, 261-2.

³⁷Agricultural Societies always referred to prizes at fairs as *premiums* during most of the nineteenth century.

³⁸Province of New Brunswick, Legislative Library, Vertical File, Agricultural Societies, "Report of the Saint John Agricultural and Emigrant Society, 1826," 4, 10.

with all wool for both warp and weft. Imported cotton warps from both Britain and America were commonly available at general stores and weavers used them extensively. The type of weave and finish also differentiated entries in the homespun categories in agricultural fairs. These usually included twills and plain weave, as well as fulled and unfulled cloth.³⁹ Cloths from native fleeces were most likely all wool cloth made from handspun domestic wool. All cotton or all linen textiles were not usually called homespun. Over the next fifty years the term homespun took on other connotations outside the fair circuit. The term frequently referred to plain, simple, unsophisticated or rustic attitudes, as well as designating cloth of domestic origin.⁴⁰

Both textile activity and textile related products were gendered at these early fairs. Organizers of the 1826 Saint John fair suggested that premiums for homespun and other domestic manufactures would "reward and excite the Industry of the Country Female population".⁴¹ Attracting only female competitors in the homespun categories was a blatant case of exclusivism since numerous professional male weavers also operated weaving workshops in the province. It was unclear whether women actually entered their products for competition since traditionally

³⁹Fulling shrinks the cloth thereby increasing its insulating value. Often the cloth was then brushed to create a nap.

⁴⁰Another term for homespun, *hodden*, might be more appropriate for the types of cloth made in early New Brunswick. Hodden was a coarse woollen cloth of undyed wool made by country weavers on handlooms. Spinners usually mixed white fleece with brown or black wool to create a soft brown or grey colour yarn used for both knitting and weaving. *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol 1, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1315, 1323.

⁴¹"Report of Saint John Agricultural and Emigrant Society..." 4.

the head of household's name appeared on submission forms and prize lists.

Related textile products were also gendered in prize categories. The Saint John fair organizers suggested future premiums for Best Sheep Shearer and Wool Dresser, both male dominated categories. Homespun cloth became a traditional female prize category while animals and the "best and heaviest fleeces" used in homespun production belonged to the male domain.

Wearing homespun cloth was frequently linked to patriotism as well as being a visible form of encouragement of household manufacturing during the first half of the century. The Midland Society in Upper Canada, for instance, urged its members in 1830 to wear garments made of "Canadian cloth" for all Society's meetings as a form of encouragement for Canadian made goods.⁴² In New Brunswick, residents were less enamoured with using cloth for patriotic purposes. Henry Chubb, editor of the Saint John newspaper, *New Brunswick Courier*, was a vocal promoter of mechanization and industrialization in the early 1820s. In an 1826 editorial he condemned homespun textile production as both a backward step and one which smacked of republican ideas. New Brunswick politicians need not emulate Americans, he declared, by wearing garments of plain homespun cloth in the House of Assembly. Chubb viewed homespun garments as "neither very seemly nor decorous to our legislature," and "not suited to the atmosphere of this loyal colony". New Brunswickers should not embark on the same path as American

⁴²Talman, 548.

politicians by wearing homespun as an act of defiance in the Assembly, he noted.⁴³ Patriotism and encouragement, associated with homespun cloth, would come to the forefront again in the 1840s and early 1850s.

Premiums offered at fairs for homespun production inadvertently promoted handweaving throughout the first half of the century. Neither agricultural societies nor government were much interested in supporting industrialized textile manufacturing at this time. No petitioners applied for government textile bounties, nor were there any references to textile manufacturing in government documents until 1842. There was no evidence in this period either of New Brunswick farmers ever petitioning for flax bounties.⁴⁴ Although a few carding mills were planned and built in the early part of the century, these entrepreneurs did not approach government for assistance in their enterprises.⁴⁵

3.1.3. Arguments about Trade Policies: New Stage of Encouragement, 1842

When Sir William Colebrooke, the new lieutenant governor, arrived in the

⁴³Chubb was referring specifically to John Hancock and his rebel associates in the Massachusetts Assembly wearing homespun clothes as a form of protest during the American Revolution. "Editorial of Henry Chubb," *New Brunswick Courier*, 17 Nov 1827.

⁴⁴An extensive search of petitions in the *JHANB* during the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s revealed no residents asking for assistance for carding mills, fulling mills or flax bounties. In Nova Scotia few residents sought flax bounties either in the early part of the century. In 1824 the Nova Scotia government set aside £337-10-0 for bounties to erect 27 flax mills. There was little response for the £12-10-0 bounties until 1826 when only six Nova Scotia entrepreneurs applied for assistance. There were no attempts to industrialize linen production in British North America before 1850. Martell, 41; McCullough, 54.

⁴⁵There was no evidence that Amos Botsford ever applied for a bounty for his carding mill, built circa 1811-12. See W. C. Milner, *A History of Sackville* (Sackville: Tribune Press, 1934), 72.

province in 1842, he proposed important changes to encourage manufacturing.⁴⁶ Instead of offering bounties for mill construction, he suggested remittance of duties on weaving machinery.⁴⁷ In both America and Great Britain mechanized weaving machinery had been commonplace for the past twenty years. However, British North America lagged behind in promoting industrialization.⁴⁸ Textile machinery was still relatively rare in British North America in the 1840s, including in New Brunswick. Since this machinery had to be imported, remittance of duties could act as a positive incentive for entrepreneurs to consider their purchase.

Colebrooke directed his comments about weaving machinery to small rural entrepreneurs and to the rural population who depended on homespun cloth for their daily wearing apparel. By encouraging "common manufacturing", such as weaving mills, "general commerce also would prosper and flourish", noted Colebrooke. Manufacturing would increase community resources, as well as facilitate the interchange of other products, both directly and circuitously. These products included sheep's wool, which farmers could sell directly to the mills, or exchange for factory cloth.⁴⁹

Colebrooke was perhaps alluding to Seymour Pickett's petition for remittance

⁴⁶While not a popular representative of the Queen, Colebrooke nevertheless suggest some new legislative measures which went contrary to British mercantile policy. MacNutt, 277-295.

⁴⁷W. M.G, Colebrooke to Lord Stanley, 28 October 1842, in *BBP Dispatch* # 100, 1843 Vol. 16, 533.

⁴⁸*Canadian Economist*, "A Review of the State of Manufacturing in Canada," 8 August, 1846, in Innis, 301; McCullough, 45-55.

⁴⁹Colebrooke to Lord Stanley, 1842, 533.

of duties on weaving machinery that he had recently purchased. Pickett was the first entrepreneur to set up a domestic weaving mill that would supplement both handweaving and imported cloth.⁵⁰ He was also the first and only petitioner to request remittance of duties as a form of government patronage in the 1840s. In both 1842 and 1843 he purchased American weaving machinery to expand his family's fulling business in Kingston, Kings County.⁵¹ Both his bids were successful, but even with Colebrooke's patronage, the introduction of mechanized textile manufacturing progressed slowly. Merchants and politicians were at logger heads about whether to continue advocating British mercantile policies or lobby for protection of local industries.

3.2. Ambivalence of Government and Emergence of Lobby Groups, 1844-1849

Seymour Pickett also wanted government to consider other ways to protect and encourage domestic manufacturing in the 1840s. While bounties for oat mills never exceeded £25, the government was willing to provide twice that amount for textile bounties. In 1844 Pickett petitioned government for a bounty to continue his small weaving mill. He noted in his submission that he was willing to take either the £50 bounty or "the imposing of a protective duty, as the House may deem

⁵⁰The Pickett family had a long history of involvement in textile related enterprises in Kings County. Seymour's father, Gould, had built a fulling mill in 1790 and operated it until his death in 1840. Seymour's grandfather, David Pickett, had been a professional weaver in the village of Kingston between 1787-1817. The fulling mill was still in operation in the early 1840s.

⁵¹Pickett's 1842 petition for return of duties amounted to £46-9-8 and £14-9s in 1843. *JHANB* 1842, 200; 1843, 223. Seymour Pickett was only a young man of 28 when he took over the family business in 1840 and decided to incorporate weaving along with the fulling operation. Calder, 116.

expedient."⁵² He accepted the bounty but the wording of his submission epitomized the two divergent attitudes about the economy.

The second half of the 1840s were difficult times for most residents in the province as the economy continued to deteriorate with anticipated changes in British mercantile policy. Timber preferences were one of these proposed changes, along with abolition of the Navigation Acts, and repeal of the Corn Laws.⁵³ These changes, but especially the timber preferences, would have a profound effect on the New Brunswick economy since it was so dependent on the sale of its forest products. Some residents blamed population growth, along with the shortage of skilled labourers and mechanics, as the prime reasons for poor economic times. Agricultural labourers had always been in short supply and were now desperately needed to increase food production.⁵⁴

High duties paid for imported consumer goods was another scapegoat. The volume of imported goods, especially agricultural products, textiles, tea and sugar were all draining specie from the province. Textiles alone amounted to £301,727, or

⁵²Seymour Pickett's petition. *JHANB* 1844, 81.

⁵³The initial Corn Laws of 1815 allowed Canadian wheat to enter Britain under preferential rates, usually free of duty, or at a lower rate than for other nations. These laws were revised a number of times until they were finally repealed in 1846. The Navigation Acts encouraged a triangular trade between Great Britain and other British colonies. Colonial goods entering other British colonies, such as the West Indies, were free of duty. W.T. Easterbrook and Hugh G. J. Aitken, *Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1956), 231-38, 281-286.

⁵⁴See also Béatrice Craig, "Agriculture in a Pioneer Region: The Upper St. John River Valley in the first half of the 19th Century," 17-36 and T.W. Acheson, "New Brunswick Agriculture at the End of the Colonial Era: A Reassessment," 37-60; both in *Farm, Factory and Fortune*, ed. Kris Inwood, Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993.

28% of all imports into the Saint John Custom House in 1847.⁵⁵

3.2.1. Politicians' Reaction to the Economic Status

Government reacted to these economic challenges in two ways. The lieutenant governor proposed certain interventions to the House of Assembly. The House and the Legislative Council would then consider these proposals before sending them to the Executive Council for approval. Those in government were not always in accord about rewarding prospective entrepreneurs or enacting legislation. Dissention provoked many heated debates and ultimately influenced many decisions affecting encouragement. Although requests for bounties were often approved by various committees in the House, many were subsequently turned down by the Legislative Council.

In 1844 Lieutenant Governor Colebrooke again suggested encouraging all sectors of the economy, but especially domestic manufacturing, agriculture and the fisheries to alleviate poor economic conditions.⁵⁶ The House of Assembly, however, did not want to commit itself to hasty decisions. Responding to Colebrooke's suggestion, it set up three special committees to specifically focus on trade, the fisheries and manufacturing.⁵⁷ The manufacturing committee, however, was short lived. Less than a month after its formation, the government discharged its members

⁵⁵"Report of the Saint John Custom House", *New Brunswick Courier* 11 March 1848, 4. Imports into the province totalled £1,070,514 in 1847.

⁵⁶*JHANB* 1844, 6, 16.

⁵⁷*New Brunswick Courier*, 10 February 1844.

from their duties.⁵⁸ The trade committee took over this portfolio and recommended only one weaving mill bounty in 1844.⁵⁹

In 1845 and 1846 two petitioners again requested government bounties for textile mills. Seymour Pickett, who had already received three government grants, and newcomer, John McGill of Pennfield, Charlotte County, both requested aid for their weaving mills. Although the House approved both petitions in 1845, the Legislative Council rejected the House's decisions. The following year, both the House and the Legislative Council reconsidered Pickett's and McGill's petitions and approved their requests.⁶⁰

The lieutenant governor suggested encouragement of manufacturing again in 1847. This would be a priority and at least decrease the volume of imports, suggested Colebrooke. As he noted in his dispatch to the Colonial Office in 1847, many settlers might be encouraged to manufacture coarse articles since these "might be profitabl[e] and ...some might become valuable as exports." Colebrooke was disappointed that so little encouragement had been offered to manufacturing in the past since "the peasantry [were] dependant in many cases on their own rude

⁵⁸*JHANB* 22 March 1844, 215.

⁵⁹This was for Seymour Pickett's mill.

⁶⁰No textile bounty applicants submitted petitions in 1847. *JHANB*, 1845, 293; 1846, 66, 150. This would be the last time that Seymour Pickett petitioned for government aid for his textile mill as he died in a fatal shooting accident in December 1846. His brother Munson was charged in the shooting and spent the next four years in jail before being pardoned. The fate of the Pickett mill during his time of incarceration was unknown. Munson resumed mill operations upon his release and continued until 1862. Calder, 116.

conveniences."⁶¹

Nearing the end of his term in 1848, Colebrooke suggested for the fourth time that the "utmost encouragement" should be offered to agriculture, the fisheries, and other sources of "productive wealth".⁶² The House launched a new Provincial Resources committee to look at these three sectors and suggest ways to alleviate and remedy the current economic distress raging in the province.⁶³ Headed by protectionist, Robert D. Wilmot, this new committee had two mandates. One was to study how fiscal regulations could restrain imports which inhabitants were "capable of producing and manufacturing themselves." New currency regulations were the second part of their study.⁶⁴

The familiar refrain of excessive imports were again blamed for the poor economy. Wilmot saw the current economic situation as a calamity affecting the overall welfare of the province. In his report to the House he noted that,

...the excess of imports has deranged the currency, caused most calamitous disasters in the mercantile community, and has injuriously affected all branches of business in the Country.⁶⁵

His committee suggested three possible solutions to prevent future economic

⁶¹Colebrooke to Lord Grey, 27 April 1847, *BPP*, vol 17, Dispatch # 33, 1847-1848, 108.

⁶²Colebrooke's address to the House and Legislative Assemblies. *JHANB* 1848, 5.

⁶³This committee was formed on 24 January and presented its first report one month later on 25 February. *JHANB* 1848, 19, 186-189.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

distress and limit dependency on any single staple.⁶⁶ The government should first of all provide "every legitimate and reasonable encouragement" for branches of industry which would be "permanently" beneficial to the province. Textiles were an obvious choice for encouragement since they represented a large portion of all imports. Secondly, any activity which was injurious to the interest of the province should be discouraged or restrained. Assured home markets for both agricultural produce and domestic manufactures would be a third priority. Hopefully entrepreneurs would respond to these favourable policies, invest in local manufacturing, and reap financial rewards. As Wilmot noted, the province was rich in natural resources which required only the "application of the labour and industry of the people" for their development.

Presentation of solutions to relieve economic distress and actual espousal of such policies did not necessarily mesh. Requests from petitioners seeking financial encouragement from government were often delayed or turned down as had been the case earlier in the century. Textile mill petitioners were not the only ones to have their requests rejected by government. Petitions for oat mills and other forms of manufacturing were also turned down.

Both Robert and Hugh Davis' as well as William Snow's petitions for textile bounties in 1849 were good examples of government division on small manufacturing. While the manufacturing committee approved the Davis request, their grant for a mill in Woodstock was negated by a division of the House. In

⁶⁶Ibid.

Snow's case, both the Manufacturing committee and the committee of Supply approved his petition but the Legislative Council rejected it.⁶⁷ When Snow presented his case again in 1850, the House was divided on his request and he was again turned down.⁶⁸ In both Davis' and Snow's cases there was no clear majority for rejection in either the House or the Legislative Council.⁶⁹

The manufacturing committee was also divided about encouragement in 1849. They requested more time for study since the question of encouragement was "one of so much importance".⁷⁰ Their only recommendations were to suggest higher duties on imports to protect domestic production, and legislative encouragement to promote the "productive industry of the inhabitants."⁷¹

Occupations of members of the Legislative Council between 1848 to 1850 showed the traditional mind set of those still supporting the old British mercantile policies in the colony.⁷² Among the 19 members sitting on the council, most were over 50 years old and had been brought up with the British system. More than half

⁶⁷Robert and Hugh Davis wanted to set up a mill in Woodstock, while William Snow ran a mill in Hampton. In Davis' case his request was negated by a vote of 12 yeas and 15 nays. *JHANB* 1849, 239, 302.

⁶⁸Snow's 1850 bid was turned down in the House by a vote of 16 yeas and 19 nays. *JHANB* 1850, 230.

⁶⁹William Snow received £50 in 1848 but was turned down in both 1849 and 1850. Robert and Hugh Davis were initially approved for two yearly grants of £50 by the Manufacturing committee in 1849. *JHANB* 1848, 218; 1849, 239, 302; 1850, 230.

⁷⁰"Report of Manufacturing Committee, 19 March," *JHANB* 1849, 207.

⁷¹"Report of Manufacturing Committee, 20 February," *JHANB* 1849, 121.

⁷²PANB, MC1150, *Graves Papers: New Brunswick Political Biographies*.

of all councillors were merchants involved in shipping, lumber exporting, and large mercantile businesses. All had been in business since at least the 1820s and were perhaps unwilling to consider changing their business practices or investing in local manufacturing. Lawyers made up nearly one third of remaining councillors.

Not only did residents have to contend with a government unwilling and unable to expedite legislative decisions in the late 1840s, but the Colonial Office was also reversing decisions on colonial manufacturing. Lord Grey informed Colebrooke in 1848 that he was to withhold his assent on any bill offering assistance to manufacturing, especially on the proposed bounty for hemp and flax. Colonial funds were not to be used either to encourage industries nor could the New Brunswick government grant differential duties.⁷³

Encouraging small manufactures had hit a blockade. As in the early part of the century, the poor success rate of textile petitioners compelled many of them to turn their backs on government assistance. Between 1844 and 1850, the government approved only four of the nine textile petitions presented to the House. However, when census enumerators called in 1851, they found 52 carding and weaving mills operating in the province.⁷⁴ Only three of these had received government encouragement.

3.2.2. Lobby Groups and Government Policies

Seymour Pickett was not the only businessman wanting government to offer

⁷³Hannay, 128.

⁷⁴*Census of Canada*, 1871, vol 4, 229. "Recapitulation of 1851 New Brunswick census."

protection to fledgling manufacturing enterprises in the mid 1840s. Groups of artisans, farmers and fishermen united to defend the need for new tariff policies to curb foreign imports and encourage domestic manufacturing. Others petitioned Colbrooke to encourage weaving and spinning mills.⁷⁵ Although some businessmen promoted free trade, others were diehard protectionists. According to Vernon Fowke, Maritime protectionists used "example, cajoling, evangelical persuasiveness, warnings, threats, and all varieties of petty cash assistance" to protect their commercial interests and further the cause of protection.⁷⁶

New Brunswickers were no different from their counterparts in Nova Scotia or other parts of British North America in making their views on protection known.⁷⁷ In 1843, 299 artisans presented their appeal to government for higher tariffs to protect locally made goods. This small group of artisans from Saint John would be followed by three larger formal groups opposing free trade. The Provincial Association, the Colonial Association, and Friends of Protection to Home Industries and Domestic Manufactures were all active supporters of protection in New Brunswick.

The Provincial Association arose from a public meeting attended by over

⁷⁵Petitioners directed Colebrooke's attention to the good quality wool grown in the Loch Lomond district near Saint John which was annually wasted since there were so few mills to process it. *New Brunswick Courier*, 17 February 1844, 2.

⁷⁶Fowke, 7.

⁷⁷Gilbert N. Tucker, *The Canadian Commercial Revolution, 1845-1851* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), 63-82.

500 supporters at the Saint John Mechanic's Hall on 12 January 1844.⁷⁸ Among the eight speakers were members of the House, including Moses Perley, Robert D. Wilmot, Dr. Robertson Bayard, and B. Assley.⁷⁹ Wilmot's interest in manufacturing made him the logical spokesman for encouraging this sector of the economy. In his view, agriculture and manufacturing were mutually beneficial. Operatives who engaged in manufacturing also furnished the farmer with a "home and certain market" for their surplus agricultural produce. Perley used the same type of argument in promoting the fisheries and Bayard on encouraging agriculture.

"Equal support without undue preference" for any particular branch of agriculture, the fisheries or manufacturing was another issue. No one sector of the provincial economy should be neglected, noted Mr Assley. Subsequent meetings saw the formation of committees to petition local residents for their support and present a united front to government. Initially an urban lobby group, the Provincial Association's aims and goals spread like wild fire through every hamlet in the province. Citizens founded branch associations in both Kingston and Hampton. Committees prepared reports comparing preferential duties in Great Britain and the United States on articles from New Brunswick. The Association presented this information, along with a petition signed by 2500 supporters, to government on 9 March 1844.

⁷⁸"Public Meeting at the Mechanic's Hall," *New Brunswick Courier*, 13 January 1844, 2. Also see Acheson, *Saint John...*, 86-90.

⁷⁹Wilmot would later chair the manufacturing committee proposed by the House and become a consistent proponent of protection.

According to George Fenety, editor of the *Saint John News*, lobbying for protection in 1844 was intense:

...the lobby of the House was filled with representative men from almost every branch of manufacturing in all parts of the province...to convince the honorable members behind the scenes that there was only one way by which the province could be saved from impelling bankruptcy...⁸⁰

In less than three months, the Provincial Association had marshalled enough support to have their views heard. The outcome of their petition was an increase in duties on a number of commodities as well as free entry of raw materials used in manufacturing. Cotton fibre, cotton warps, raw wool, flax, hemp and dye woods used in textile manufacturing were among the materials now exempt from duty.⁸¹ A variable set of tariffs would still apply to imported clothing and cloth however.⁸²

Patriotism, associated with homespun, was also part of the Provincial Association's campaign. The executive of the Association urged members "to use, consume and wear" products of manufacturers of New Brunswick as a sign of loyalty.⁸³ This was the second time that homespun cloth was used to promote manufacturing. When Chubb had made his comments about wearing homespun in 1826 he was only criticizing the elite in New Brunswick society. Now ordinary

⁸⁰George Edward Fenety, *Political Notes and Other Observations in New Brunswick*, Vol. 1, (1867), 93-4.

⁸¹"Report from the House of Assembly," *New Brunswick Courier*, 9 March 1844, 2.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³"Meeting of the Provincial Association," *New Brunswick Courier*, 10 February 1844, 2.

citizens were encouraged to wear homespun cloth as a protest against government policies favouring free trade.

The Provincial Association sank to oblivion after the 1844 tariff debates. By 1849 and early 1850, media coverage shifted to two other protectionist groups. William Parks, a small businessman, proposed a local branch of the Colonial Association be formed in Saint John in 1849.⁸⁴ Dedicated to fostering both self-government and a federal union of the provinces, the New Brunswick branch also aimed its efforts at increasing the prosperity of the province. The Committee of Management proposed two recommendations that would affect domestic manufacturing. A commercial agreement with the United States would foster a reciprocal coasting trade and free exchange of natural products of the two countries. The second was more immediate to the needs of the province. It aimed to "encourag[e] in every practical way, native enterprise and home industry." Former members of the Provincial Association also formed the Friends of Protection to Home Industry and Domestic Manufactures in early 1850. Through public meetings they assembled a petition of 1234 signatures for higher tariffs on manufactured goods and farm produce.⁸⁵

3.2.3. Agricultural Societies

Agricultural societies were only marginally involved in encouraging manufacturing in the 1840s. Robert Jardine, president of the Saint John County

⁸⁴"Colonial Association," *New Brunswick Courier*, 4 August 1849; 2 and 15 September 1849.

⁸⁵Acheson, *Saint John...*, 90. *New Brunswick Courier*, 23 February, 1850, 2.

Agricultural Society, felt that these societies should be neutral on whether government should meddle with certain home industries at the expense of others. "Let trade follow its own natural course," he noted, "especially on issues dealing with protection of home industry".⁸⁶ A speedy progress towards prosperity with an "increase in enterprise and intellectual economy" was the only outcome that would benefit the province.

Lobby groups' goals had been to focus attention on commercial problems facing the province and hope that government would somehow remedy them. But as William Acheson has so succinctly noted, "protection of goods was never a simple matter in colonial New Brunswick."⁸⁷ Free traders and protectionists still pleaded the tenets of their causes and would continue to do so in the 1850s. By endorsing a modest level of protection on a limited range of goods, government in fact encouraged domestic manufactures, but the number of manufactures were still insufficient to satisfy the growing population. Support of home manufacturing was elusive as both textile mills and other forms of manufacturing constantly had their petitions for financial encouragement dismissed or delayed.

3.3. 1850-1855 New Efforts to Promote Industrialization

Interest in textile manufacturing took on a different complexion in the early 1850s. Although more petitioners approached government for textile bounties, they

⁸⁶"Annual Report of the Saint John County Agricultural Society," *New Brunswick Courier*, 3 November 1849, 4.

⁸⁷Acheson, *Saint John...*, 85.

were not always satisfied with the results. Government officials also continued to be ambivalent about providing aid and expressed their concerns both in the House and in the press. New players promoting increased manufacturing also arrived on the scene. Both the New Brunswick Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture, Home Manufactures and Commerce⁸⁸ and some agricultural societies endorsed encouragement of increased textile mechanization.⁸⁹

3.3.1. Government

The new lieutenant governor, Sir Edmund Head, confirmed the government's continuing interest in manufacturing in his 1850 address. The Navigation Laws had just recently been revoked and he was confident that commerce would revive. He also hoped that local manufactures might thrive in this new atmosphere of increased prosperity.⁹⁰ However, reports of debates appearing in the press gave a more nuanced view of politicians' views than did official reports.

According to media reports, legislators were not convinced they should encourage textile mills through bounties.⁹¹ If approved, these textile bounties would create a precedent and other branches of manufacturing would want their requests considered as well. Legislators sided with the 1848 Colonial Office's stipulations on manufacturing that it was not the place of government to support entrepreneurs.

⁸⁸Hereafter called the "New Brunswick Society."

⁸⁹The New Brunswick Society was encouraging both home and industrialized manufacturing. *JNB Society*, 19 March 1851, 129.

⁹⁰*JHANB* 1850, 5-6.

⁹¹"Legislative Debates," *NB Reporter*, 5 April 1850, 1.

Legislators reaffirmed that, although cloth manufacturing would be very beneficial to the province, entrepreneurs had to "pay their own way; if otherwise, it was most unjust to call upon the country for assistance." Inhabitants should count on their own "enterprise and industry" and not depend on government for assistance.

Not only were residents to develop entrepreneurial skills but they also had to give up their desire for refined products, noted James Caie. As secretary of the Northumberland County Agricultural Society, he pointed out that this was one reason why New Brunswick was in such dire commercial straits.⁹² Residents' appetite for "superfine flour, superfine cloth, superfine everything" was promoting "indolence and extravagance" among a segment of the population. Caie promoted locally grown oats, barley, wheat and wearing homespun cloth in preference to imported grains and textiles. He cautioned residents they could only achieve prosperity if they adopted "habits of economy, industry, and frugality" in their choices of consumer goods.

Wearing homespun cloth as a sign of industry and self-reliance was not only suggested by Caie, but again became an issue a year later. Kent County MPP, William McLeod, thought that gentlemen of the "learned professions" should appear in homespun cloth as a sign of encouragement to home manufacturing.⁹³ His comments about homespun were intriguing as there were only three small mills in

⁹²"Report of the Northumberland County Agricultural Society for 1849-50," *The Gleaner*, 11 February 1850, 1; Robert Jardine, president of the Saint John County Agricultural Society, was always very critical of those preferring imports and looking down on the farming community. "Saint John Agricultural Society Report," *New Brunswick Courier*, 3 November 1849, 4.

⁹³*Journal of the New Brunswick Society* (hereafter *JNB Society*), 19 March 1851, 123.

whole province making cloth which resembled the home made variety. McLeod was a member of the manufacturing committee and he would have been present during deliberations over textile petitions. His intentions were clear when he later noted that homespun cloth, prepared by the "wives and daughters of the inhabitants", was superior to the imported variety. He was indeed endorsing household production and not mill made cloth.

Andrew Barbarie, MPP for Restigouche, responded to McLeod's comments with his own remarks about homespun. He commented that "he must be on the right track" as far as encouraging textile production in the province. He had been wearing homespun cloth made from wool from his own fleeces and woven by members of his own household for several years.⁹⁴ He too seemed to be encouraging household production and not mill produced cloth. Nevertheless, in 1851 he personally endorsed a fulling, spinning, weaving, and dressing mill proposed by one of his constituents.⁹⁵

The Provincial Resources committee also presented their report on the controversial issue of government support for manufacturing in 1851.⁹⁶ R. D. Wilmot's committee noted it was the "imperative duty" of the Legislature to adopt a course of "sound Political Economy" in encouraging both Domestic Manufactures

⁹⁴Ibid., 124.

⁹⁵Robert Harvie, of Durham, Restigouche County, received a grant of £50 divided into two equal amounts- one to be paid when the fulling mill was operational, the second when the spinning and weaving machinery were in working order. *JHANB* 1851, 334.

⁹⁶"Report from the Provincial Resources Committee," *JHANB* 1851, 374.

and Agriculture. In doing so, it would mutually benefit both farmers and manufacturers. Farmers would have a remunerative home market for their agricultural surpluses and manufacturers for their consumer goods. Not all legislators were in accord with Wilmot's report and this dissension split the vote supporting encouragement. After a lengthy debate, the government proposed an amendment diluting the committee's strong stand on encouragement. The amended resolution barely passed the House.⁹⁷ Nevertheless two textile petitions received support in 1851.⁹⁸

Edward Williston, businessman and MPP, had been among those voting for the revised amendment. In March he reaffirmed the government's divided position on encouragement by addressing the New Brunswick Society. A "sickly dependence on legislation," was not to be encouraged, commented Williston. Residents should depend on their own labour and resources and be self-reliant. In addition, entrepreneurs should not expect government to endorse protection for any form of manufacturing in the province. According to Williston, if new manufacturing "could not prosper *without* protection, neither could it prosper *with their assistance*." Even though large sums of hard currency were yearly leaving the province for imported goods, protection would not assure new manufacturing sufficient advantage nor satisfy the craving for refined products.

Increased domestic production of cloth in New Brunswick would at least

⁹⁷The vote for the diluted amendment was 21 for and 18 against.

⁹⁸Nathan and Matthew Laud of Loch Lomond, Saint John County received a £50 bounty for a flax mill to convert fibre into thread for shoes, twine and warp.

counter the volume of imported refined products. In 1853 and 1854, three textile petitioners adopted a new strategy in their bid for government bounties. William Snow included the support of 35 of his neighbours in his petition, while 220 of Joseph Kingston's neighbours attested to his need for increased capacity. While the government dismissed Snow's petition on the grounds he had previously received support in 1848,⁹⁹ they awarded Kingston's Sunbury County mill with £200, the largest bounty yet awarded to any textile mill in the province.¹⁰⁰

Kingston's textile petition also made the news in April 1854.¹⁰¹ According to legislator, Amos E. Botsford, Kingston's bounty amounted to protection and he should not have received it. If Kingston could not sustain a viable manufacturing concern on his own, he had no business asking for public support, noted Botsford. Botsford was a free trader and felt that government should discontinue bounties since they only depleted the government coffers and did not add to them. He hoped that Kingston's factory would not share the same fate of textile mills elsewhere.¹⁰²

Robert and Hugh Davis of Woodstock also solicited the support of others in their textile bounty petition in 1854.¹⁰³ Although they had previously applied for a

⁹⁹*JHANB* 1853, 225.

¹⁰⁰Kingston owned fifteen looms and was proposing installing power looms in his mill. *JHANB* 1854, 344.

¹⁰¹*NB Reporter*, 27 April 1854, 2; *JHANB* 1854, 344.

¹⁰²Kingston's bounty application was passed on division. *NB Reporter*, 28 April 1854. In some American and English mills, those who had received government aid were now abandoning their operations since they could not compete in the market.

¹⁰³*JHANB* 1854, 344.

bounty in 1849, this time they included the signatures of 53 of their Carleton County neighbours. The committee approved their submission and granted them £125 for a carding, spinning, weaving and dyeing manufactory, with the proviso that the mill be in full operation within nine months.

The Davis petition was the first one which mentioned the possible market for domestic cloth. The committee noted this mill would perform a "great public utility to both the agricultural and lumbering interests" of the province. For farmers it would provide a market for their wool and a ready means to clothe themselves and their families. For the lumberers, it would supply cloth needed for warm clothing for their season in the woods. These were similar to the goals Colebrooke had proposed ten years previously when he first encouraged textile manufacturing.

John McGill was the third entrepreneur applying for a textile bounty in 1854. This was his third bid as he had unsuccessfully petitioned in 1845 and 1846. Dissent in the House and a lack of consensus were also apparent in his 1854 petition.¹⁰⁴ McGill's mill petition went through five stages of review before being finally negated. When McGill applied again in 1855, he was once again refused. This was also the fate of William Mays of Prince William in 1856. No textile entrepreneurs applied for bounties again until 1863.

Government endorsement of textile bounties during this five year period were inconsistent and fraught with dissension. Some entrepreneurs received awards while others constantly reapplied for consideration. The success rate for bounties in

¹⁰⁴ *JHANB* 1854, 391-2, 419, 423-4.

the 1850s almost matched that of the 1840s. Of thirteen requests, seven were successful. However, to their credit, the government had more than doubled the amount of money available for textile applicants.¹⁰⁵

Two textile mills also petitioned the government for corporate status in the 1850s. Both mills were joint stock companies financed by prominent citizens. This type of operation was an innovation in textile mill ownership but still had to go through official government channels to receive legal status. Although government officials could choose to delay petitions for incorporation, it would be unusual if they did so. Joshua Upham, Samuel Foster, and 12 others proposed a new woollen mill for the village of Upham in Kings County in 1852.¹⁰⁶ Twenty six prominent businessmen and MPPs purchased many of the 800 £5 shares for the proposed York Woollen and Home Factory in Fredericton two years later.¹⁰⁷ Other similar cotton and woollen mills would soon be erected, including the William Parks' Saint John Manufacturing Company and the Mispick Manufacturing Company.¹⁰⁸

3.3.2. Agricultural Societies and Encouragement

Agricultural societies involvement with encouragement was also a new

¹⁰⁵During the 1840s, government had spent only £200 on textile bounties while between 1850-1854, this increased to £525.

¹⁰⁶Petition for the Upham mill. *JHANB* 1852, 186.

¹⁰⁷Among the list of investors in York Mill, eight belonged to the New Brunswick Society. *JHANB* 1854, 106, 451; *New Brunswick Reporter* 5 May 1854, 2. Research by this Society in 1851 estimated that £1350 was sufficient to erect a small mill with another £2249 needed to run it for six months. *JNB Society*, 02 April 1851, 163.

¹⁰⁸*New Brunswick Courier*, 24 November, 1860; 16 March 1861, 2; 30 March 1861.

phenomena in the 1850s. During most of the 1840s these societies had remained impartial in debates about protection and the encouragement of mechanized weaving. In 1850, however, the Northumberland County Agricultural Society decided to approach government for a bounty to encourage the erection of a fulling, carding and dressing mill in the county.¹⁰⁹ This was the first time that a third party, instead of an individual, petitioned for a textile bounty. The Society received a £50 bounty in 1851 which they then offered to any entrepreneur wishing to erect a mill. Unfortunately there were no applicants in 1851 and the Society reapplied the following year for the same bounty. John Flett, of Nelson, won their bid as well as a second bounty of £25 from the government.¹¹⁰

3.3.3. The New Brunswick Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture, Home Manufactures and Commerce

The Northumberland County Agricultural Society and the government were not the only groups to award John Flett a textile bounty in 1852. A new provincial organization, formed in 1850 to promote agriculture, home manufactures and commerce, also voted a premium of £15 to support Flett's carding machines, dye works and cloth dressing operations.¹¹¹ Modeled after the Highland Society of Scotland, and similar societies in Europe and America, the NB Society was among the first to provide both bounties and practical solutions to curb the economic

¹⁰⁹*JHANB* 1851, 294.

¹¹⁰"Premium of £50 offered for Carding, Fulling and Dressing Machine" from the Northumberland County Agricultural Society, *Gleaner*, 11 February 1850. *JHANB* 1852, 364, 383.

¹¹¹"Report of 7 January meeting 1852," *JNB Society*, 203.

distress prevalent in the early 1850s.¹¹²

Their mission statement was three fold: "to *collect* facts, to *disseminate* information concerning available resources in the province, and to *encourage* individuals in all laudable attempts to develop them."¹¹³ One of its secondary goals was to attract prominent men who were unconnected to either farming or manufacturing, but who were well educated and interested in promoting the country's wellbeing and prosperity.¹¹⁴ Initially billed as a central agricultural society, founders had decided from the onset that they would remain politically neutral, neither embracing free trade nor protection as part of their mandate.¹¹⁵ Founders decried political wrangling as impractical and ineffective in curing the economic distress troubling the province in the late 1840s and early 1850s.

Patriotism was also inferred in their goals for a prosperous province.¹¹⁶

¹¹²There is no evidence that similar societies started in Upper or Lower Canada in this period. In 1870 a central Society started in Nova Scotia embracing the same goals as the NB Society. One of their more innovative proposals was to erect or rent a building to permanently showcase specimens of Nova Scotia's domestic industry, free of charge to the public. *Nova Scotia Society for Developing and Encouraging Home Manufactures*, Halifax, Nova Scotia: By the Directors of the Nova Scotia Society, 1870, 9-13.

¹¹³"Report of 30 August 1849." *JNB Society*, 07 January 1850, 4.

¹¹⁴Among the initial subscribers were 17 MPPs, as well as prominent businessmen, judges, doctors, lawyers, and clergy, including the Bishop of Fredericton. *JNB Society*, 19 March 1851, 111. Membership list for 1850. See also Bidwell and Falconer, 184-186 for a membership profile of American societies.

¹¹⁵James Hogg, owner and editor of this Fredericton newspaper, published a disclaimer early in 1850 "to correct erroneous statements" about the political affiliations of the Society. "Editorial," *NB Reporter*, 01 January 1850, 2.

¹¹⁶*JNB Society*, 19 March 1851, 117. Patriotism also featured strongly in the Nova Scotia Society's goals. Residents were urged to patronize merchants and producers selling Nova Scotia made goods on the assumption these articles were equal in quality and price to similar imported goods. *Nova Scotia Society...*, 9-13.

Domestic manufactures would keep talent, money and resources within the province and encourage self-sufficiency. Residents would also be encouraged to give up "Foreign goods for Domestic Manufactures and the Foreign Market for a Home Market."¹¹⁷ Since profits from the timber trade were no longer certain, residents should also consider making a transition from this sector to farming and manufacturing. Encouragement in every way possible, but in a "spirited, effective, and uniform" manner, was one way to attract new enterprises.¹¹⁸ In 1850 the New Brunswick Society sought incorporation and the patronage of Sir Edmund Head, Lieutenant Governor of the province. Like other agricultural societies, it received matching government allowances based on membership subscriptions.¹¹⁹

These memberships included both ordinary citizens, who paid the annual five shilling subscription fee, and presidents of county agricultural societies, who were *ex officio* members with no fee. Officers included a 30 person Executive Committee and a General Committee. It was this General Committee which posed future problems for the New Brunswick Society as it included elected officials who had previously formulated government policy on encouragement. All Legislative Councillors and other members of the House of Assembly comprised this General Committee who then acted as promoters of the New Brunswick Society's interests

¹¹⁷*JNB Society*, 07 January 1851, 3.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*,

¹¹⁹The New Brunswick Society received an annual allowance of £200 based on £100 being raised throughout the province with subscriptions. The government also awarded it one time grants for special projects.

in their respective counties. One of their roles was to be a communications conduit so that remote members in their counties could express their opinions to the Executive. However, The New Brunswick Society wanted each member of the General Committee to be considered and treated as private citizens and not in their legislative capacity.¹²⁰

Part of the work of both committees was to research and report on various subjects related to agriculture and manufacturing. Only with sufficient information could the New Brunswick Society recommend specific actions for both farmers and potential manufacturers to undertake change. The New Brunswick Society encouraged textile manufacturing with pecuniary methods, verbal encouragement and research. In April 1851 they allocated £80 for the encouragement of mills and manufactories especially in counties where this form of encouragement had been lacking. They specifically mentioned textile mills, such as fulling mills, in this decision.¹²¹ John Flett was the first entrepreneur to receive funding from the New Brunswick Society in 1851. It also offered a £5 prize for the best essay on the "improvement of the Woollen Manufactures...as regards fineness of texture and permanency of dyes." Obviously these were areas for improvement in some of the factories.¹²²

Among the 98 subjects the various committees compiled for future

¹²⁰"Constitution of the New Brunswick Society," *JNB Society*, 07 January 1851, 10-14.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, 19 March 1851, 131, 134.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 134.

discussion groups were the culture and weaving of flax.¹²³ By encouraging flax cultivation they hoped it would become a "great advantage and profit" to the province.¹²⁴ The committee researching flax production noted that it was mostly grown in French speaking regions of the province, especially on the north shore and in Westmorland County. Many of these residents had ready customers for their "French linen" and sent the seed to Boston where it received a "fair return."¹²⁵

Other committees conducted feasibility studies on both woollen and cotton mills to determine how household and domestic manufactures could "best be encouraged increased, and made profitable."¹²⁶ Since so few mills existed in New Brunswick, some of the committee travelled to Maine to visit their mills.¹²⁷ The committee on cotton mills took the government to task for not encouraging construction of such mills in New Brunswick. If the government had offered a "reasonable amount of bounty", capitalists might have been interested in building mills in the province.¹²⁸ Good will and confidence on the outcome of such projects were both needed to encourage textile manufacturing.

¹²³Ibid., 126-128.

¹²⁴Ibid., 130-131.

¹²⁵James Robb and Robert Jardine prepared an extensive report on all parts of flax cultivation. Spinning and weaving this fibre had previously been the occupation of "all thrifty housewives," not only in New Brunswick but also in the mother country, they noted. Machinery had now taken over much of this task. They hoped that the "wise-hearted wives and daughters" of New Brunswick would soon take up the tradition again. Ibid., 02 April 1851, 183-193.

¹²⁶Ibid., 03 April 1850, 91-92.

¹²⁷"Report on Woollen Manufacturing," Ibid., 2 April 1851, 162-163. Unfortunately there is no evidence of a report on cotton mills.

¹²⁸Ibid., 03 April 1850, 78-81.

Even with the good will exhibited by many committee members researching the long list of projects, not all was progressing as anticipated in the New Brunswick Society's affairs. Both delayed government funding and late submission of reports continued to plague its projects. The Society had requested a special grant to host a Show and Fair in 1851. The government delayed funding and the show and fair had to be rescheduled for the following year.¹²⁹ The high expenses associated with this show perilously depleted the New Brunswick Society's available funds and they decided to hold only triennial events in the future. Government restrictions on the use of grant money was also a problem. The government requested more flexibility in allocating their funds to finance only worthy and pressing projects.

Even though all members of government were officially members of the New Brunswick Society, one MPP was ashamed of the lack of appreciation shown by the Legislature for the valuable work being done by its many committees. James Taylor commented in 1853 that the government had given larger sums in the past for "much inferior projects."¹³⁰ The small amount of assistance contributed from the public funds for the New Brunswick Society's goals were a "disgrace". The New Brunswick Society had been waiting for over a year for government funds to send prize winning entries from their 1852 show to exhibitions in New York and Dublin.

Operations of the New Brunswick Society were floundering by early January

¹²⁹Ibid., 08 January 1851, 107.

¹³⁰"Abstract of Proceedings at Quarterly Meeting 06 April 1853." Ibid., 460.

1854. Some county surveys, due two years previous, still had not arrived. As well, the New Brunswick Society was getting little feedback whether their reports or efforts were of any benefit to local agricultural societies. Money problems continued to plague the Society as they requested help from both individuals and other agricultural societies to help raise subscription funds and money for publishing reports. Mr Justice Street, president of the New Brunswick Society, informed board members that the "Society must stop its operations unless aid" was forthcoming.¹³¹

By 1855 the New Brunswick Society's days were numbered. Henry Chubb, editor of the *New Brunswick Courier*, was perhaps more astute in citing the major reasons for its failure. He noted that the New Brunswick Society had been "neglected by the House of Assembly, and ignored by the Government," in trying to promote prosperity in the province.¹³² Others visiting the province in the mid 1850s also noticed the New Brunswick Society's lack of "support, attention, and praise due to its gigantic exertions."¹³³ Chubb suggested that a provincial Board of Agriculture, run by the government, could better address ideals set out by the New Brunswick Society.

The New Brunswick Society was perhaps the most vocal adherent for the

¹³¹"Report of the 10 January 1854 meeting," *Ibid.*, CHIN # 53122, np. Also in *NB Reporter* 13 January 1854, 2. Only two pages of this important report have survived.

¹³²"Comments on Agriculture," *New Brunswick Courier*, 3 November 1855, 2.

¹³³Alexander Monro, *New Brunswick with a Brief Outline of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island* (Halifax: Nugent Press, 1855; reprint, Belleville, Ontario: Mika Studio, 1872), 121.

encouragement of manufactures that the province had ever seen. While its plans were grandiose, its intentions were aimed at the good of the province. As Chubb had suggested, government did take over many of the Society's functions when it passed the first Act to Encourage Agriculture in 1854. However the encouragement of manufacturing would play only a minor role in the new affairs of government.

3.4. 1855-1865 Disillusionment

3.4.1 Government

New Brunswick lagged behind other colonies in proposing specific legislation to encourage manufacturing.¹³⁴ In the sister colony of Nova Scotia, legislators had passed a bill as early as 1819 for the "Encouragement of Agriculture and Rural Economy in the Province" with an appropriation of £1,500. However, in New Brunswick, the only encouragement to manufacturing after 1855 were premiums awarded at agricultural fairs and provincial exhibitions. All local agricultural societies were urged to apply to government for annual subsidies which would then support these premiums.

In 1859 the government appointed a Board of Agriculture to oversee both agriculture and manufacturing. Professor James Robb, the first Secretary of this Board, was familiar with both these aspects of his new position. In 1850, he had been one of the founding members of the New Brunswick Society and had served

¹³⁴"Report of Viscount Falkland, 29 March 1841," *BPP*, Vol. 16, 1842-46, 496. Also see Fowke, 53, 83 for similar acts in Lower Canada, 1817, and Upper Canada, 1830. Nova Scotia was more active in promulgating early legislation to promote agriculture and the rural economy than the other colonies.

as its first President. He was also well aware of the need to encourage all forms of manufacturing in the province. However, when he submitted his first report to government in 1861, it contained no mention of encouragement to manufacturing.¹³⁵

Another of the Board's priorities was to hold a triennial Provincial Exhibition in different locations in the province. This exhibition offered encouragement to both factory made cloth and home made cloth, as well as spinning wheel and loom manufacturers, with premiums.¹³⁶ Inhabitants of the province, however, were reticent to endorse many of the Board's ideas, including exhibitions. Although billed as a provincial event, some counties submitted no entries in the various categories of the exhibition, including domestic manufactures.¹³⁷

Few petitioners bothered to approach government for bounties or other forms of assistance after 1855. William Parks was the sole petitioner for a textile bounty between 1856 and 1863. He had ordered machinery for his new cotton mill from Great Britain in 1861, but waited until 1863 to petition government for a remittance

¹³⁵Robb had previously compiled a report on agricultural progress in the province on behalf of the New Brunswick Society. James Robb, *Agricultural Progress: An Outline of the Course of Improvement in Agriculture in New Brunswick*, Fredericton: J Simpson, Printer, 1856. He later submitted a second report on agriculture. James Robb, *First Annual Report of the Board of Agriculture of the Province of New Brunswick* (Fredericton: Legislature of New Brunswick, 1861), 49-50.

¹³⁶"CAP. XXIII An Act for the Encouragement of Agriculture," *JHANB*, 1863, Appendix 73-79.

¹³⁷At the First Provincial Exhibition, held in Sussex Vale in 1861, four counties, including the three northern counties of Gloucester, Restigouche, and Victoria, along with Charlotte sent no representative samples of domestic manufactures. In 1864 these same northern counties, as well as Kent County, did not participate in the Provincial Exhibition held in Fredericton. "Provincial Exhibition," *JHANB* 1862, 142; 1864, 104.

of duties.¹³⁸ Since these duties had amounted to \$1,408.25, he was hoping for some assistance. Park's bid was recommended by the committee on Trade, but denied by the House.¹³⁹ He applied again in 1864, but his petition was once again denied.¹⁴⁰ Premiums at exhibitions were thus the only real evidence of any government involvement encouraging either factory made or home produced cloth at this time.

3.4.2. Interested Citizens

Lobby groups had mostly given up the cause by the late 1850s. Citizens, however, were increasingly expressing their concerns about how government and residents could encourage manufacturing. An anonymous Northumberland County writer, calling himself "Progress," noted in 1857 that there was no reason why this county could not manufacture "five-sixths of the woollen garments required by the inhabitants."¹⁴¹ All that was needed were farmers willing to increase their sheep stock and entrepreneurs ready to invest their capital in new factories. John Boyd's presentation to the Saint John Chamber of Commerce in 1858 also reviewed these links between agriculture and manufacturing in the bid for prosperity. He noted that "A food producing community creates a manufacturing community; the flour and

¹³⁸*JHANB* 1863, 213. Unlike New Brunswick, the Prince Edward Island government remitted duties on some manufacturing equipment in the late 1860s. Rose Marie Langhout, *Public Enterprise: An Analysis of Public Finance in the Maritime Colonies During the Period of Responsible Government* (PHD thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1989), 69.

¹³⁹*JHANB* 1863, 129, 205, 213.

¹⁴⁰The House wanted to place this petition, along with a number of others, under the review of the Lieutenant Governor. *JHANB* 1864, 229.

¹⁴¹"Letter to the editor," *Gleaner* 14 February 1857, 2.

the cloth mill soon rise up in these localities..." and are mutually beneficial.¹⁴² His speech however made little headway in promoting any government encouragement.

Local merchants and not government encouraged residents to buy domestically made cloth from local textile mills in the 1860s. Articles in the press urged New Brunswickers to patronize and "Encourage Native Industry" by buying cloth made by both the Mispick Manufacturing Company and the St John Manufacturing Company.¹⁴³ With convenient outlet stores in Saint John, merchants could inspect samples of cotton and woollen goods made in New Brunswick before buying from a foreign market. Good will, sufficient population and means were all that was required to make New Brunswick self-sufficient in textiles.

David Kerr was the foremost promoter of manufacturing in the province. As a lawyer and one of the founders of the New Brunswick Society, he had travelled extensively throughout the province in late 1849 and the early 1850s promoting the Society's aims. In May and June of 1861, Kerr again delivered speeches to encourage local manufacturing at two public meetings in Saint John.¹⁴⁴ He once again stressed the importance of "substantially encouraging Home Manufacturing Establishments" by suggesting farmers participate in the upcoming Provincial

¹⁴²The text of John Boyd's report on the need for railway expansion included many useful insights on agriculture, immigration, and general conditions influencing prosperity. "A Report on New Brunswick Railways," *New Brunswick Courier*, 17 July 1858, 1.

¹⁴³"Enterprising," *New Brunswick Courier*, 24 November 1860; "Encourage Native Industry," *Ibid.*, 16 March 1861; "The St John Manufacturing Company," *Ibid.*, 30 March 1861.

¹⁴⁴Kerr was accompanied by Robert Jardine, one of the founding members of the New Brunswick Society and past president of the Saint John Agricultural Society. "Meeting of Mechanics and Manufacturers," *New Brunswick Courier*, 18 May 1861; and "Meeting of Artists, Mechanics and Agriculturist," *Ibid.*, 22 June 1861.

Exhibition in Sussex Vale and in the World's Fair in London.

Between 29 June and 21 September, 1861 Kerr continued his promotional efforts in a series of ten letters addressed to the "editors of the public journals in the City and County of Saint John". This body of letters spoke eloquently of Kerr's continuing concern for economic prosperity in New Brunswick and were reprinted in other provincial papers.¹⁴⁵ His second and third letters focussed specifically on manufacturing. As he noted on 06 July, manufactures have been "overlooked and neglected ...and call for prompt and energetic reform."¹⁴⁶ Lack of encouragement for manufacturing was not only seriously affecting emigration but hurting commerce and prosperity in the province as well. His extensive experience in promotion had taught Kerr "that manufactures are as necessary to our independence as to our comfort." He was especially harsh on government and used examples from America to support his claims. As he noted, "when has our Legislature ever uttered such wisdom" as the Americans had about home manufactures, or "attempted an encouraging *act* or *said* an encouraging *word* on this subject? *Never!*"

The following week Kerr gave statistical evidence from Maine on manufacturing and once again affirmed that the government had to be more proactive in encouraging manufacturing. Although the lieutenant governor had just

¹⁴⁵Letters of David Kerr to the *New Brunswick Courier*, 1861: 29 June, "Agriculture and Manufactures"; 06 July, "Home Manufactures and the Mechanics"; 13 July, "Home Manufactures"; 20 July, "Home Commerce"; 03 August, "On Emigration"; 10 August, "On the Exhibition"; 31 August, "On the Exhibition", part II; 07 September, "Correspondence"; 14 September, "Correspondence"; 21 September, "Correspondence". Parts of these letters also appeared in the 20 July 1861 *Miramichi Gleaner*.

¹⁴⁶*New Brunswick Courier*, 06 July 1861.

presented the Royal highnesses, the Prince of Wales and Prince Alfred, with a "full suit" of the [Saint John] manufacturing company's cloth, this public display was not enough to promote manufacturing in the province. He suggested that members of the Legislature, including the lieutenant governor, should appear dressed in domestic homespun as a sign of encouragement.¹⁴⁷

Kerr had other innovative suggestions as well. Not only should government appoint committees in each county to promote manufacturing, but they should also allocate £10,000 to "aid by loan or otherwise, in reasonable sums and under proper restrictions, the erection of such factories as might be worthy of encouragement." Furthermore, this sign of encouragement should be posted in international papers such as the *London Times* and the Scottish and Irish newspapers to encourage emigration of prospective entrepreneurs. Finally, the government should prepare a promotional booklet noting inducements for manufacturing to encourage visitors to the upcoming London World's Fair to perhaps emigrate to New Brunswick.¹⁴⁸ Government, however, payed little attention to Kerr's words.

By 1864 the new slogan for encouragement of manufacturing was "Productiveness is wealth".¹⁴⁹ Henry Chubb's editorial in the *Courier* was a strong endorsement for the promotion of productiveness in every possible mode. "Public wealth was to be found in manufacturing," noted Chubb. As a prominent public

¹⁴⁷Whether he was referring to mill made homespun or household homespun was uncertain.

¹⁴⁸*New Brunswick Courier*, 13 July 1861.

¹⁴⁹"Editorial of Henry Chubb", *New Brunswick Courier*, 05 November 1864, 2.

figure in Saint John, Chubb had been extolling the benefits of manufacturing over the past forty years. He had renounced his republican ideas associated with homespun, and was now using Britain's riches as a model which New Brunswickers should emulate. The recent exhibition of New Brunswick manufactures had shown how much progress residents had made in producing many types of consumer goods. He urged the "sons and daughters" of New Brunswick to persist in encouraging the productive manufacturing energies of their country.

George Fenety, an observant political commentator, owner of a Saint John newspaper, and protectionist noted in 1867 that not much had changed in New Brunswick in the past twenty years. Inhabitants still depended on the neighbouring colonies for many of their basic supplies while few mills operated in the province. On the eve of confederation Fenety observed that the "material interests of the Province have not advanced as might be supposed by the division of labour from the farm to the workshop".¹⁵⁰ Some forms of manufacturing had made inroads in the province, but many things had remained unchanged.

Encouragement of textile manufacturing was in essence a myth during most of the nineteenth century. Although government wanted the province to be prosperous, it gave only token encouragement in promoting manufacturing enterprises. Colebrooke's goals for textile self-sufficiency in the 1840s had evaporated like the morning mists. With considerable effort, individuals, lobby groups and the New Brunswick Society had tried their best to improve the

¹⁵⁰Fenety, 353.

province's prosperity. However, colonial imperial policies, apathy and inertia on the part of government and inhabitants, and a lack of self-confidence all prevented promotional ideals from becoming reality. The New Brunswick Society, merchants and concerned citizens, such as David Kerr, as well as many others, wasted a lot of ink and energy on their promotion activities. Imported textiles continued to drain hard currency away from the province's coffers while handweavers found a new niche market to support their continued and increasing activities.

CHAPTER 4. IMAGES of WOMEN'S WORK

Introduction

Controversy over textile industrialization in the 1850s also implicated handweavers. While men in positions of power debated the value of promoting textile mills, proponents of progress suggested home weavers start re-evaluating their traditional craft. Home weaving was becoming a lost and dying art and "must decrease with the progress of civilization" noted one Saint John reporter in 1852.¹ Mill woven cloth would soon replace the work of "spinning wheels and fingers" and consign textile tools to gather dust in rural attics. Factories and mills, the two new icons of the progress of civilization, would proliferate and replace hand production. Steam and mechanics could obviously do the work "cheaper and better" than hand production, also noted this reporter.² However as the last chapter revealed, textile mills did not suddenly spring up in the countryside to replace handwoven or indeed imported cloth.

Another comment in this report must have perplexed many weavers. Farmer's wives and daughters, noted this same reporter, only spun and wove when they had "nothing better to do" with their time.³ They should abandon hand weaving entirely to allow for more leisure time "to cultivate their minds and minister to the comforts and enjoyment of their families." One way to do this was to learn ornamental textile skills

¹"Report of the Provincial Exhibition," *New Brunswick Courier*, 16 October 1852. Peter Waite also noted that the "decay of institutions of country life", were also affecting artisan crafts in Ontario in the 1860s. Peter Waite, "The 1860s," in *Colonists and Canadians, 1760-1867*, ed. J.M.S Careless (Toronto: MacMillan, 1971), 251.

²"Report of the Provincial Exhibition," *New Brunswick Courier*, 16 October 1852.

³Ibid. This report could have been written by the pro-manufacturing owner and editor of the paper, Henry Chubb.

and other decorative arts. Many "daughters" of New Brunswick, noted another report on the same exhibition, had submitted "brave and beautiful" ornamental textiles to grace the body and the home.⁴ These ornamental textiles not only enlivened the dreariness of rural homes and added beauty to the wearer, but also became visible reminders to neighbours and others that the household was becoming "more modern". Needlework and home decoration were becoming the new symbols of idealized femininity and virtuousness in rural New Brunswick, as well as elsewhere.⁵ New ideas about domesticity were thus seeping into the rural psyche, while increased wealth was liberating some farm women from many traditional chores.

Comments from both these reporters denigrated traditional textile work by suggesting that weavers were dilettantes but also that weaving was gendered. A survey of all extant schedules of the 1851 census found over 5,400 looms in the province.⁶ While many weavers were women, at least 10% of these looms were owned and operated by men.⁷ Should they too abandon home weaving to espouse new ideas of domesticity?

This chapter considers new ideas about women's work, but especially those

⁴William Watts' speech to the Mechanics Institute of Saint John also discussed the recent provincial exhibition. "Want of Confidence in Our Country and Ourselves," *New Brunswick Courier*, 18 December 1852.

⁵Some farmers thought too much leisure time would make their daughters less fit as "good and profitable wives." Percy Bidwell and John Falconer, *History of Agriculture in Northern United States, 1620-1860* (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 252-3. See also the work of Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 60-75

⁶1871 *Census of Canada*, Vol. 4, 229, "Recapitulation of 1851 Census of New Brunswick."

⁷This examination revealed 53 men and 41 women identifying handweaving as their primary occupation. These numbers were likely low as there were a number of missing schedules.

associated with textiles, between the late 1840s and the early 1880s. The wide variety of sources mentioning these ideas suggests that an important change was percolating in the rural countryside. For instance, poems and prescriptive literature in both the city and agricultural presses hinted that attitudes towards rural women's household duties were starting to change in the 1840s. Emily Beavan's memoirs of her seven years in New Brunswick between 1836 and 1843 offered astute observations about rural people's lifestyles, but especially women's work.⁸ The *Colonial Farmer*, a new agricultural newspaper appearing in 1863, was instrumental in diffusing new ideas about household management, home decoration, and women's "proper sphere" to farming families.⁹ Seven letters to the *Colonial Farmer* in 1865 specifically addressed the idea that handweaving was inappropriate drudgery for "refined" women. Since only few extant diaries exist for rural women, it is difficult, however, to measure how far these ideas actually penetrated into the rural psyche.

Merchants' advertisements in the press are another source for exploring changing ideas about home textiles. During the early 1880s merchants portrayed women as weak and frivolous. Nonetheless, they also expected rural women weavers to engage in "drudgery" to provide them with increasing volumes of homespun cloth and hand knit socks and mitts.

Agricultural societies' reports offered additional glimpses into the dissemination

⁸Mrs F. Beavan, *Sketches and Tales Illustrating Life in the Backwoods of New Brunswick*, London: George Routledge, 1845.

⁹This type of newspaper had been envisioned by the New Brunswick Society in the early 1850s to offer practical suggestions about scientific farming and other farm related news. It continued the work of the *Farmer's Manual*, a short lived 1840s farming newspaper.

of new ideas about women's work in rural households. Most reports included comments about textile entries or their makers participating in local agricultural fairs from the late 1840s onward. While many female fair goers still submitted traditional textiles for competition, rural women also started entering ornamental textiles in these fairs. Jurors' comments about textile entries in provincial exhibitions added further evidence as well that new ideas were slowly infiltrating some rural households.

As early as the 1840s, three images of rural womanhood emerged from these sources. The first was the traditional overworked farm woman whose daily life was drudgery and endless labour. The new ideal farm woman was a second image. She was intelligent, cunning, and capable of accomplishing her work with skill and contentment. A third hybrid image was also evident. This woman still espoused traditional values but sought ways to engage in new leisure activities such as needlework or other decorative arts.

4.1. DOMESTICITY AND IMAGES OF RURAL WOMEN'S WORK

The cult of domesticity was gaining currency in New Brunswick in the mid nineteenth century.¹⁰ Increased wealth, a move away from a frontier society, and a backlash against republican ideas shaking Europe and America were all catalysts for change in the perception of family relations. Also called separate spheres ideology, or

¹⁰Cynthia R. Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 19-25. Also see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 149-192 for a discussion of domestic ideology, and 357-396 for the creation of the middle class home.

the cult of true womanhood, this new value system used biological differences to explain emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and moral distinctions between men and women. Both groups had separate and complementary roles, supposedly designated by God. Women took on the role of creating a strong moral environment which nurtured the family, both physically and spiritually. This focus on domesticity also assumed increased leisure time for women, engendering a revolution in both domestic habits and practices.

One of women's new roles was to create a comfortable and pleasing home with increased emphasis on interior decoration and genteel activities.¹¹ Decorative textiles, printed wall coverings¹², pianos, and music or drawing lessons¹³ for daughters all contributed to creating an aura of refinement and gentility in often ordinary households.¹⁴ Women used floral motifs and other devices of nature extensively in these vibrant and extravagant interiors, as well as decorative art pieces.¹⁵ Ornamental needlework and fancy patchwork quilts became the rage in both cities and villages.

¹¹Andrew C. Holman, *A Sense of Duty: Middle Class Formation in Victorian Ontario Towns* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill/Queen's University Press, 2000), 152-161; Luella Creighton, *The Elegant Canadians* (Toronto/Montreal: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 113-118.

¹²Three advertisements for printed room paper from Boston; *Colonial Farmer*, 13 June 1864.

¹³Two instructors directed their advertisements in the "polite branches" of education at young ladies in Saint John in 1847. Miss Kelly's boarding and day school included academic subjects as well as music and drawing lessons. Monsieur Le Chaudélec included French lessons along with drawing classes for young ladies. *NB Courier* 14 August 1847.

¹⁴See also Jeanne Minhinnick, *At Home in Upper Canada*, Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1970; Jenny Cook, "Bringing the Outside In: Women and the Transformation of the Middle Class Maritime Interior, 1830-1860," *Material History Review* 38 (Fall 1993), 36-49; and Una Abrahamson, *God Bless Our Home: Domestic Life in Nineteenth Century Canada* (Toronto: Burns and MacEachern, 1966), 136-142.

¹⁵Cook, 37.

Society also expected women to be the moral pivot of the household. As Andrew Holman has observed, middle-class women proved themselves in character traits of "purity, beauty, warmth, sincerity, cultivation, and domesticity."¹⁶ Women were to be dutiful daughters, wives, and mothers who contributed to a warm and loving home environment. One novel, written in the 1870s, suggested these ideas were commonplace in New Brunswick among upper-class women as early as the 1830s.¹⁷ In *Lady Rosamund's Secret*, women were expected to teach their daughters, "the graces which are desirable to beautify the female character, and make woman an ornament in her family and society."¹⁸ Emphasis on these character traits would gradually filter down to all levels of society.¹⁹

These ideas were not unique to the Maritimes. Residents of both Upper Canada and New England were also enamoured with interior decoration and the values associated with domesticity.²⁰ In some areas of Upper Canada, as well as New England, fine imported cloth replaced old-fashioned homespun, while many women happily gave up their heavy *linsey-woolsey* dresses for cooler calicos, silks and fine

¹⁶Holman, 98,

¹⁷Cook, 36-7.

¹⁸This novel depicted Fredericton society during of governance of Sir Howard Douglas, 1824-1831. Rebecca E. Armour, *Lady Rosamund's Secret: A Romance of Fredericton* (Saint John: Telegraph Printing, 1878), 11. For more on the political times of governor Douglas, see W.S. McNutt, *New Brunswick, A History: 1784-1867* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1984 ed.), 193-224.

¹⁹See also numerous entries on domestic economy and sewing in Juliana Horatia Ewing's diary for 1867-1869. Margaret Howard Blom and Thomas E. Blom, eds. *Canada Home: Juliana Horatia Ewing's Fredericton Letters, 1867-1869*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983.

²⁰Leslie Jones, *History of Agriculture in Ontario, 1613-1880* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946), 214-5; Bidwell and Falconer, 250-252; Holman, 160-169.

wools.²¹ In many rural households, Brussels and ingrain carpets were quickly replacing rag rugs and scoured floors. Although these decorative changes focused mostly on the private sphere of the family home, some women also transposed these new ideas of domesticity into the public sphere. Social welfare reform, education, political activism, and religion in Upper Canada, New England and the Maritimes all became new interests for many women.²²

The "idleness and frivolities of pride and luxury" were also invading farm households and challenging traditional chores.²³ Women in the country were supposed to learn decorative needlework, household management, and become gracious companions and conversationalists. Agricultural newspapers started carrying instructions for making "Cheap home-made embellishments for the house in winter," as well as advertisements for piano-fortes, sewing machines, and where to buy the latest edition of the popular women's magazine, *The Ladies Friend*.²⁴ Female teaching seminaries also advertised for prospective students. Here girls learned both plain sewing and fancy needlework along with academic curriculums.²⁵ Pianos and

²¹Jones, 214. Bidwell and Falconer, 254. Linsey-woolsey is a homespun cloth made of either cotton or linen warp with a wool weft.

²²See especially articles on women involved in activism, education and religion in the Maritimes by Rusty Bitermann, Gail Campbell, Hannah Lane and Janet Guildford in *Separate Spheres: Womens' Worlds in the 19th Century Maritimes*, eds. Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton, Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994; chapters 6, 7 and 8 in T. W. Acheson, *Saint John: The Making of a Colonial Urban Community*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985; and for Upper Canada, Holman, 97-169.

²³"Idleness" and "frivolity" were terms coined by an unnamed American clergyman in Bidwell and Falconer, 253.

²⁴*Colonial Farmer*, 13 June and 10 October 1863, 01 January, 1872.

²⁵Misses MacIntosh, for instance, advertised their services as teachers of plain and ornamental needlework. *New Brunswick Courier*, 31 December 1842. The Sisters of Notre Dame, in Memramcook

embroidery were quietly replacing looms and spinning wheels as preferred possessions of young rural women.

Gender ideology did not have a uniform influence in all rural households however.²⁶ The Maritimes were still a predominantly rural society with strong traditional values of self-sufficiency and independence.²⁷ Some farm girls accepted these new ideas while others sought more appealing opportunities, such as teaching, or left home to work in America.²⁸ Lack of money deterred many families' acceptance of new ideas. Many still lived in modest country houses with barely enough income to support their families. Still, the rural housewife might have sufficient egg or textile money left over to buy small amounts of colourful embroidery floss or crochet cotton to decorate her pillow cases, or an occasional newspaper to glean new ideas.

4.1.1. Images in the Press: 1840s to 1860s

Romanticized and idyllic images of farm women's duties were often juxtaposed with the dreariness and drudgery of farm chores between the 1840s and 1860s. Farm women initially received these new ideas from articles in American farm journals

ran boarding and day schools where they taught a large variety of needlework skills, home management, drawing, painting, and singing, along with a full roster of academic subjects. *Moniteur Acadien* (Shediac), 10 November 1871.

²⁶Comacchio, 21.

²⁷Rusty Bitterman, "Women in the Escheat Movement- The Politics of Everyday Life on Prince Edward Island," in Guildford and Morton, 31; Comacchio, 21.

²⁸See for example the advertisement in the *Saint John Globe*, 26 July 1867 for a Massachusetts mill recruiting Maritime women; Betsy Beattie, *Obligation and Opportunity: Single Maritime Women in Boston, 1870-1930*, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000; Margaret Conrad, Toni Laidlaw and Donna Symth, eds., *No Place Like Home: Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women, 1771-1938* (Halifax: Formac Publishing Co., 1988), 119-204.

reprinted in New Brunswick newspapers.²⁹ While only sources from New Brunswick newspapers will be used in this discussion, other advice literature and articles on domestic economy were readily available from city book and magazine sellers. Some farmers, as well, purchased subscriptions to the *Maine Farmer* and the *Canada Farmer*, both sources of progressive ideas about farming and household management.³⁰

New Brunswick readers started noticing practical advice on household chores and suitable instruction for young women in the early 1840s. Recipes for jams, dyes³¹, baking and medical remedies, along with advice on housekeeping and etiquette often appeared in local newspapers. Women dutifully copied out these hints and worldly advice and included them in their scrapbooks or diaries for future reference.³² Whether they actually followed these suggestions was another matter as traditional and new ideas often clashed and diverged within rural households.

"Lucy" offered advice for farm daughters in a diatribe against education in 1844.³³ She disputed the value of acquiring "generally useless accomplishments"

²⁹These newspapers included the *Albany Cultivator*, the *Tennessee Agriculturist*, and the *Maine Farmer*. Two other agricultural newspapers, the *Canada Farmer* (Toronto), and the *Colonial Farmer* (Fredericton), became available in the mid 1860s.

³⁰The *Maine Farmer*, a progressive agricultural newspaper which supported scientific farming, commenced publishing in 1842. Nathaniel Hubbard, a Sunbury County farmer, had subscriptions to both the *Maine Farmer* and the *Colonial Farmer* in the 1860s. *Hubbard Family Papers UNB*.

³¹Recipes for "Blue for Cotton, Linen and Wool with Indigo," *The Gleaner* (Chatham), 6 March 1843, 185.

³²See Eliza Carter's *Recipe and Remedy Book*, 1846 in Judith Baxter and Beth Quigley, eds., *Life and Times of Eliza Cox Carter* (Gatineau: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Mercury Series 48, 1997), 79-129.

³³"To the Farmer's Daughters," *The Farmer's Manual* (Fredericton), Vol. 1, no. 7, 1844, 104.

instead of "the acquisition of useful and necessary knowledge" such as housekeeping skills. Lucy merged traditional rural values with some elements of the new domesticity in her comments. A young girl should be "domestic, industrious, and contented" along with having "engaging manners and a modest deportment" in order to attract a spouse, she noted. These young women would have learned these traits not from their mothers but from their farmer fathers, Lucy further suggested. He would have taught them it was "honorable to engage in all the useful employments in which the greater part of the duty of women consists". This stress on duty and usefulness was typical of traditional male values. Since the mothers' role was completely missing from Lucy's comments, the feminine pseudonym was perhaps a ruse to disguise the author's true gender.

The male focus was further suggested when the author described the idyllic household. New ideas of domesticity clashed with older ideals in this description of the perfect wife. She was one,

...who could sit down happily at home, and study household good, without sighing for the excitement of fine dress, fashionable furniture, fashionable visits, and all the fashionable things that disturb the peace of young housekeepers, and render a home a scene of misery and strife, instead of the gathering place of the heart's best affections.³⁴

In this 1840s household, domesticity's stress on a peaceful household was gathering currency, while the fashionable part was less acceptable. This divergence between the fashionable and the traditional would be evident throughout the 1840s and into the

³⁴Ibid.

1850s.

Mrs Emily Beavan described this divergence in her recollections about her stay in New Brunswick between 1838 and 1843.³⁵ Much of her 142 page book, she noted, was intended to "...illustrate the individual and national characteristics of the settlers," and to "display the living pictures and legendry tales of the country."³⁶ She did this through story telling, detailed descriptions, and a poem about the people, the sights, smells, and sounds of her community. Her great curiosity included charming descriptions of foodways, courtship and neighbourhood frolics. While in New Brunswick, she also wrote stories and poetry that were published in New Brunswick's first literary magazine.³⁷

As the wife of a rural medical doctor, Irish born Beavan spent much of her time visiting her neighbours, observing their lifestyles, but especially their home decoration and furnishings. Her commentaries about both women's roles and her neighbours' households were often very astute and revealed that new ideas were already evident in some rural New Brunswick homes in the 1840s. Emily described households belonging to Sybèl and Melancthon Grey, Stephen Morris, and Mary

³⁵Little is known about the personal life of Irish born Emily Shaw Beavan. She was a teenager when she arrived from Belfast in 1836 with her seafaring father, Captain Samuel Shaw. She later became a teacher and author, submitting stories and poetry in literary magazines. In 1838, she married Frederick Beavan, a rural physician practising in English Settlement, Queen's County. She and her husband must have moved, as Beavan noted in her first chapter that they had been living "for some time," at Long Creek, a small community in York County. Beavan, 6; Susan Merritt, *Her Story II- Women from Canada's Past* (St Catherines, Ontario: Vanwell Publishing Ltd, 1995), 27.

³⁶Beavan, 1.

³⁷There was no indication if her 1845 book, published in England, was ever available locally. Merritt did not mention the name of the literary magazine.

Gordon in some detail.

Sybèl Grey, a young weaver, was inventive in using her own handwoven cloth to enliven her one room log cabin. Colourful handwoven clothing decorated the walls, "snow white" blankets covered the single chest, and a "splendid" handwoven coverlet lay on the large airy couch.³⁸ However, there was no mention of either a loom or a spinning wheel among Sybèl's household furnishings. Other practical and decorative items also filled this simple dwelling. Various pieces of pine and willow furniture, made "in the bush," and a wooden "yankee" clock, similar to one made by the renowned "Sam Slick, of Slickville", graced the one room cabin.³⁹ The clock case presented a bit of frivolity in an otherwise conservative household. A most "elegant picture of Cupid, suitably attired in frilled trowsers and morocco boots to cover his nakedness", was in direct contrast to Sybèl's meagre library of only three books lodged on a simple shelf.⁴⁰ Young couples, like the Greys, were willing to make some of their own furniture but still wanted some marks of refinement.

Sybèl also displayed some unusual locally made furnishing accessories. She owned a stack of bright Indian baskets, a pair of beaded moccasins, and a reticule of porcupine quills which she hung on the wall for "ornament." Other colourful touches included Indian corn, while medicinal and culinary herbs hung from the ceiling. Her

³⁸Beavan, 36.

³⁹Sam Slick, the clock master, was a fictional character created by Thomas Chandler Haliburton, a well known Nova Scotia author. There was possibly a local artisan in the community who made clocks similar to those in Haliburton's story.

⁴⁰Ibid., 30-31. Sybèl's library included a bible, an almanac and a religious song book.

small log cabin was as crowded as any urban Victorian parlour.

Stephen Morris's family owned a large log cabin with a workshop at one end and a dairy on the other, a spacious porch, and two large rooms. Around the porch windows Morris had planted hop vines to remind himself of his favourite English roses. They also displayed some of the accoutrements of the new domesticity.⁴¹ The living area had "an air of undefinable English idealism" noted Beavan. The room was fitted with English oak furniture, which had been "dragged through the forest paths". Old but well cared for chintz curtains surrounded the beds. Even these bed curtains were part of the English definition of gentility. Many English settlers were uncomfortable with the "publicity" of sleeping arrangements common in North America. Even in the backwoods of New Brunswick, some decorum was expected.

Beavan was especially impressed with Mrs Morris's collection of crockery. On a large solid dresser were "...old China tea-cups, wisely kept for show, little funny mugs, curious pitchers, mysterious covered dishes, unearthly salad bowls, and a host of superannuated teapots." Also brought from England were a "bright copper kettle, a large silvery pewter basin and glittering brazen candlesticks."⁴² Some of these decorative items were obviously superfluous in this rural setting but nonetheless contributed to an atmosphere of refinement and gentility.

Other neighbours, the Gordons, had immigrated from northern Scotland in the mid 1820s. After twenty years in the colony, they had now reached a more

⁴¹Ibid., 43-45. Beavan did not mention Stephen Morris's wife's first name.

⁴²Ibid., 44-45.

comfortable living standard. They had recently added a frame house to their original log cabin to provide more room for themselves and their older children.⁴³ Unlike Sybèl Grey, Mary Gordon had "receptacles" in which to store her homespun garments and blankets, a book case for her treasured volumes, a portrait of Robbie Burns on the wall, and porcelain tea cups. She was also well educated and conducted a school for local children in a second frame building on the property. Mary Gordon could discuss philosophy as easily as recipes with Emily Beavan.

These three wives had been instrumental in creating these prosperous and tranquil surroundings. While they were all interested in decorating their homes, traditional values were still important. Beavan noted how women's industry was vital in rural settlements, "...here woman's empire is within, and here she shines the household star of the poor man's hearth; not in idleness, for in [North] America, prosperity depends on female industry."⁴⁴ All three wives were good managers as well as having additional skills to contribute to the family.⁴⁵ Sybèl provided extra income with her spinning and weaving while caring for her two young children. Mrs Morris had done field labour alongside her husband in the early years of their marriage. Mary Gordon had taught her daughters to spin and make splint hats from poplars growing near the house. These useful skills would provide both material and economic

⁴³Ibid., 37-38.

⁴⁴Ibid., 79.

⁴⁵Beavan was less successful in adapting to rural New Brunswick. She and her husband left for Ireland in 1843 and never returned. In an e-mail to Susan Merritt on 11 January 2004, she indicated one of Emily's relatives had contacted her and noted that Emily and her husband had subsequently emigrated to Australia in the 1840s.

advantages later on in their daughters' lives. Both older women could now spend some leisure time enjoying the bounty they had created in their remote surroundings.

In an 1848 parody on the proper roles of farm women, the "Model Wife" had no such leisure time to spend on idleness or frivolities.⁴⁶ She had to be subservient, obedient, dependent and hard working, with no mind of her own, ready to do the bidding of her husband. The counterpoint to Model Wife's typical traditional farm wife was in reality the assertive new farm woman. Sally Helvenson called this new woman the "ideal image" of the nineteenth century American farm wife.⁴⁷ She was intelligent, simple yet refined, attended the sewing circle or her church, and managed a busy household. The aim of the Model Wife parody was to actually encourage rural households to question women's roles by presenting a humorous but negative image of farm wives' duties. The positive side was readily apparent. In many farm households in New Brunswick, women were already exercising economic agency since their husbands were frequently away in the lumbering woods or out fishing for extended periods of time.⁴⁸

Two other contrasting images of the ideal girl also appeared in the late 1840s. One was the homespun clad "rosy cheeked cottage girl".⁴⁹ Homespun cloth became the

⁴⁶"Model Wife," *Gleaner*, 27 June 1848, 292.

⁴⁷Sally L. Helvenson, "Fashion and Function in Women's Dress in Rural New England: 1840-1900," *Dress* 18 (1991): 34.

⁴⁸For a discussion of rural women in New England port towns running family businesses while their husbands were away at sea for extended periods of time, see Elaine Forman Crane, *Ebb Tide in New England: Women, Seaports and Social Change, 1630-1800* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 125-130.

⁴⁹"Cottage Girl," *NB Reporter* (Fredericton), 13 Feb 1846, 1.

symbol of industrious habits, economy, self support, simplicity, and a rural lifestyle. These traits would assure rural girls more independence and happiness than the "lazy children of wealth could ever have," noted the anonymous author. Homespun was also the mark of a certain rural backwardness associated with farm folks who could afford little else. Urban residents were less likely to wear homespun or ornaments "of their own handwork."

The second image contrasted this cottage girl with the leisure seeking new urban woman. The "putty-faced, wasp-waisted, consumption-mortgaged, music-murdering, novel-devouring daughters of Fashion and Idleness" were no competition for the ideal wife described in a 1847 sermon. Pastor John Dow presented the perfect wife as a "bright eyed, rosy cheeked, full breasted, bouncing lass" who could successfully accomplish a long list of varied farm and household chores without complaint.⁵⁰ Dow's counsel was somewhat contradictory, however. He urged women to work more and seek less leisure time, to "loosening yourselves a little," and enjoy more liberty and less restraint by fashion. While suggesting they breathe the "pure atmosphere of freedom", his lengthy list of farm chores allowed them little time to enjoy any diversions.

These two views of women further reinforced the distance between traditional values and new ideas of womanhood. Dow highlighted only the negative side of these new ideas while also promoting ambiguous traditional ones. Farm women's myriad chores, including ways to supplement the family budget, were also highlighted in an

⁵⁰"Good Advice," *Gleaner*, 19 January 1847, 118.

1849 poem written by a Fredericton area farm woman named Dolly.⁵¹ This poem was a poignant display of her ingenuity in providing for her large family of nine children. It also epitomized the conflict between rural poverty and the need to impress her neighbours. Although this poem reads like a shopping list, it portrayed traditional values where the wife's work, including handweaving, was critical to the family budget. Part of the poem, when the husband went to the city to sell the family's home production, is worth reproducing.

COUNTRY COMMISSIONS

We have butter and homespun, some eggs, cheese and chickens
 All good, you may tell them, the best they can buy
 The eggs will find Mary in fine shoes and stockings
 And the chicks upon Betsy's blue bonnet shall fly.

Since Fanny's so smart, you must get her a polka (jacket)
 And bracelet and necklace to match with the same
 Silk or satin will do, but if muslin, the folk all
 Will whisper we're poor, and *you know* its a shame.

Our Liddy is sixteen years old in November,
 And girls of her age must look decent, *you know*
 So, you'll surely allow from the price of the timber
 Five pounds for an outfit, to get her a beau.

Now husband be sure and get Bobby his booties
 Bring sugar and tea, and bleached cotton for all,
 Then get for your own use, a strong pair of shoe ties
 To spare the black ribbon I gave you last Fall.

External impressions were important to Dolly who craved pretty things for her family, especially for her marriageable daughter. In other parts of the poem she noted she was

⁵¹"Country Commissions," *NB Reporter*, 21 September 1849, 1.

willing to forsake certain expenses, such as books, a new dress, and education for her son, in order to provide small luxuries for the rest of the family. These expenditures were also signs that Dolly wanted to create an aura of gentility, even though most of the family had to be content wearing bleached cotton and homespun cloth.⁵²

The economic potential of homespun cloth appeared again in 1850. A letter to the Chatham *Gleaner* outlined the successful weaving business of an anonymous weaver in Napan, Northumberland County.⁵³ Weaving production for a six month period topped 800 yards, with thread promised for an additional 550 yards. This was obviously not a leisure time activity but a profitable business. Since fifteen professional weavers resided in the district, it was not possible to identify the particular weaver writing this letter.⁵⁴ It could have been either a male or a female weaver since both sexes wove in the 1850s, although the number of male weavers was rapidly decreasing.

Other images that emerged in the 1850s were more symbolic than the realities reported by Emily Beavan or Dolly. Backwardness and progressive thinking were implicit in two drawings of women washing clothes in 1858.

⁵²Dolly's family probably lived in York County since she mentioned names of prominent Fredericton merchants in other parts of her poem.

⁵³"Domestic Manufactures," *Gleaner*, 11 March 1850, 157.

⁵⁴Census of Glenelg parish, Northumberland County, New Brunswick, 1851. Four of these weavers were men, the other eleven women.

Illustration 4.1. Boston Chemical Washing Powder Ad.⁵⁵



One part of the image showed the lightness and erect posture of a woman using Boston Chemical Washing Powder, the second, the drudgery of using a traditional product. These two images were, in essence, representations of the new ideal woman and the older traditional housewife. New ideas about women's work were also subtly expressed in the text of this advertisement. The Boston product was appropriate for the "finest fabrics", implying a level of wealth and ease. Soap powder was also associated with leisure. Using the Boston product was guaranteed to relieve women of "labour, time, and the expense" of laundry work. Additional leisure time could not only be gained from changing laundry practices but also by abandoning handweaving, as the provincial exhibition reporter had suggested in 1852.

A poem about spinning in 1858 gave a romanticized view of a women's work.

⁵⁵*NB Reporter*, 24 March 1854.

Spinning was effortless and dream-like, with the fleece akin to frothy clouds and dew drops.⁵⁶ Work was done under "the flickering rays of sunlight" as an idyllic leisure time activity. Image and reality collided with this spinning trope. Parts of this short poem are worth quoting.

SPINNING

All yesterday I was spinning,
 Sitting alone in the sun;
 And the dream that I spun was so lengthy,
 It lasted til the day was done.

I took the threads for my spinning
 All of blue summer air,
 And a flickering ray of sunlight
 Was woven in here and there.

At last the gray shadows fell round me,
 And the night came dark and chill,
 And I rose and ran down the valley,
 And left it all on the hill.

I went up the hill this morning,
 To the place where my spinning lay,
 There was nothing but glistening dewdrops
 Remained of my dream to-day.

The actual work of spinning might not have been so appealing. Picking out chaff and bits of manure from a greasy, dirty fleece and being bitten by insects outdoors probably tempered this less than idyllic chore.

4.1.2. Images in the press 1860-1880s

Economic choices started to replace drudgery as the most consistent commentary on rural women's work in the 1860s. This shift in attitude also marked a

⁵⁶"Spinning," by Miss Proctor; *NB Courier*, 7 August 1858.

definitive change from the traditional pioneer woman to the new assertive rural woman.⁵⁷ Women could combine gentility with industry, and economic initiatives with leisure. As George Woodcock has observed, much of the history of women in Canada was "embraced in the struggle to be productive, but also free, neither a drudge nor a goddess."⁵⁸ Freedom and the goddess image implied the new emphasis on leisure, domesticity, and choice, while drudgery implied older values.

The likelihood of finding a goddess image associated with rural women in New Brunswick was rare indeed. However, articles in the press in the 1860s sometimes linked handweaving with religious themes. The Biblical trope of the lilies of the field, who neither toiled nor spun, was a useful foil for exposing the slothful ways of some farm girls who expected life to be a garden of roses. Drudgery and the repulsiveness of labour were the main topics of a pseudo-sermon in 1860.⁵⁹ An anonymous author chastised idle, useless girls who "loung[e] or slept the morning away" instead of fulfilling their rightful duties.

...[these girls] have no habits of industry, no taste for the useful, no skill in any really useful art. Have they made or are they making any preparations for the onerous duties which will assuredly fall their lot-duties to society, the world and God.

Industriousness, usefulness, and skills were intimately linked with onerous duties, the

⁵⁷Elizabeth Thompson found some intriguing middle-class metaphors for rural women in the non-fiction work of Catherine Parr Traill. Elizabeth Thompson, *The Pioneer Woman: A Canadian Character Type* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1991), 30-59; see also Virginia Watson Rouslin, "The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Pioneering in Canada," *Dalhousie Review* 56 #2, (1976): 319-335.

⁵⁸George Woodcock, *The Century That Made Us: Canada 1814-1914* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989), 115.

⁵⁹"Young Ladies Read," *Gleaner*, 3 November 1860, 5.

fate of rural women from an earlier time. This image was very ominous compared to the earlier, light idyllic poem about spinning.

Like most earlier works, this article also merged traditional values with domesticity. Practical house keeping education and learning to do everything that "pertains to the order and comfort of the household" were part of the curriculum for these young women. These skills were beneficial training and useful in making a "comfortable marriage", the author of "Young Ladies Read" noted. Many useful guides, including Mrs Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management*, were now available to teach them these skills.⁶⁰ Juliana Ewing, of Fredericton, was particularly fond of J. H. Walsh's, *A Manual of Domestic Economy: Suited to Families Spending from £100 to £1000 a Year* for recipes and information.⁶¹

Religious images also appeared in a romanticized and pastoral view of farm women's lives in 1863.⁶² God's providence had a hand in creating an idyllic household, noted the author of "Farmer's Wives". The "soul stirring beauties of nature - the handiwork of nature's God", enhanced both her life and that of her family. A home, "made happy by her presence, a contented disposition, [and] wishing no change" were the ideal characteristics for the model wife. These moral qualities, as well as her "quiet easy way of turning off work", again merged the tenets of domesticity with

⁶⁰Mrs Beeton's book initially appeared in 24 monthly parts in America. The hard cover version was published in 1861. Copley Booksellers' (Fredericton) carried this book along with others. *Colonial Farmer* (Fredericton), 11 April 1868. For a series of home management guides in Upper Canada, see Abrahamson, 162-201 .

⁶¹Blom and Blom, 25. Walsh's book was published in London in 1857.

⁶²"Farmer's Wives," *Colonial Farmer* 17 August 1863, 1.

traditional values. These women were obviously capable of efficiently managing their households, yet having some leisure time to promote a serene lifestyle. Pastoral images such as this were becoming increasingly appealing to those living in the squalor of urbanizing communities.⁶³

A new agricultural newspaper played a large part in communicating these ideas in the 1860s.⁶⁴ The *Colonial Farmer* offered practical advice about animal husbandry, new ideas about scientific farming, as well as household management tips for farmers' wives.⁶⁵ The New Brunswick Society's goal in the 1850s for improved communication sources for rural families had finally taken hold.⁶⁶ Much of the debate about rural women's roles took place in its pages. The economic benefits of handweaving started appearing in the *Colonial Farmer* and other newspapers in 1864.⁶⁷ Farmers' wives and daughters were to give "all their attention" to weaving, noted a short article about the upcoming provincial exhibition. Fair organizers were expecting an influx of American visitors wishing to purchase woollen homespun cloth at this event. With the Civil War

⁶³For further views of urbanization problems in New Brunswick in the mid nineteenth century, see T. W. Acheson, *Saint John...*, 214-229; and Scott See, *Riots in New Brunswick: Orange Nativism and Social Violence*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.

⁶⁴As Peter Waite has succinctly noted, newspaper were growing in power in the 1860s. Waite, 251.

⁶⁵The *Colonial Farmer*, founded in Fredericton in 1863, was in circulation until the fall of 1878 when it was replaced by the short lived *Agriculturist*. The *Maritime Farmer* continued this publication for only a few years until the mid 1880s.

⁶⁶The New Brunswick Society had set up a special committee to investigate the best modes of disseminating agricultural and other useful information to the farming and working classes. *JNB Society*, 31 January 1850, 18; 19 March 1851, 116. Other agricultural newspapers in the 1840s, such as the monthly *Farmer's Manual*, were in circulation only a few years.

⁶⁷"Homespun Cloth," *The Colonial Farmer*, 18 July 1864, 1.

disrupting cloth production in America, there was an obvious a demand for homespun cloth from other suppliers.⁶⁸

Farm women's economic activities, including homespun cloth production, were the most "profitable part of any farming business", noted a second article in 1864.⁶⁹ It also reinforced the familiar refrain that a farmer's success was in direct relation to the industry and good management of his wife. Other traditional female chores of this prosperous farm included dairying⁷⁰ and poultry keeping. Income realized from domestic manufactures, "wrought by the spinning wheel, loom and needle, and other modes of woman's handicraft, [were] not inconsiderable," noted the "Farmer's Wife". Rural New Brunswick families had some inkling of the value of this homespun cloth in the 1860s. In the recent census, provincial officials estimated homespun and other home manufactures worth more than \$700,000, almost double the amount of 1851.⁷¹

Separate spheres ideology and genderization of chores also emerged from this brief American article. Men were to do the "heavier and exposed" chores and provide

⁶⁸One hundred and forty three exhibitors submitted nearly 1500 yards of homespun cloth available for potential buyers. Ten yards was the usual amount of cloth required per submission. "Provincial Exhibition," *JHANB 1864*, Appendix 6, 104.

⁶⁹This article was drawn from an unspecified American publication since there were references to the Hamden County Agricultural Society and the Secretary of the Commonwealth. "The Farmer's Wife," *The Gleaner*, 29 October 1864.

⁷⁰See also the work of Sally McMurry, *Transforming Rural Life: Dairy Families and Agricultural Change, 1820-1885*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995; and Marjorie Griffin Cohen, *Women's Work, Markets and Economic Development in Nineteenth Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 93-117.

⁷¹The reported dollar value of cloth and other domestic products in 1861 was \$711,394. Without knowing which portion was cloth it is impossible to make an accurate assessment. In 1851 the estimated value of 622,237 yards of homespun would be in the range of \$350,000 since its market value was between 55 cents and 65 cents per yard. "General Abstract, 1861 Census of New Brunswick," *JHANB 1862*, 150.

sufficient wood and soft water for the household. This division of labour would ensure a "cheerful, tidy helpmate with an easy and agreeable manner". "Farmer's Wife" also noted that weaving was in fact one of the lighter chores she had to perform on the farm. Cloth production would not be drudgery but a source of "contentment and bliss" if she were relieved of the heavier farm chores. Concern that women be happy and content was a welcome change from the previous focus on household drudgery.

This focus on the lightness and economic benefits of handweaving was unusual since most American historians have focussed more on the drudgery of home textiles.⁷² Only a few Canadian authors noticed the labour intensiveness of home textile production. Loris Russell, for instance, noted that professional weaving was too strenuous for women with the "repeated pushing of treadles and the throwing of the shuttle".⁷³ Spinning, however, was definitely woman's work. Marjorie Cohen observed that many families sought alternative methods of providing some items, like cloth, because of the heavy labour requirements.⁷⁴ Jane Errington identified wool preparation as one of these labour intensive activities. "No housewife in Upper Canada could hope

⁷²In America this drudgery was mostly reported for the earlier period. See Cynthia Kierner, *Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700-1835* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 15, 174; Paul Gates, *The Farmer's Age: Agriculture, 1815-1860* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), 348-9; and Jane Nylander, *"Our Own Snug Fireside": Images of the New England Home, 1760-1860* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 182. Norton Juster included a large variety of contemporary sources and images of home textile production in the 1870s and 1880s. Norton Juster, *A Woman's Place: Yesterday's Women in Rural America* (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1996), 139.

⁷³Loris Russell, *Everyday Life in Colonial Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1973), 118.

⁷⁴Cohen, 75.

to tackle the whole process on her own," she noted.⁷⁵ Additional female labour or using the services of a carding mill would lighten the load and make textile production worthwhile. Kris Inwood and Phyllis Wagg are among the few Canadian scholars who note the economic benefits of handweaving.⁷⁶ This activity was a rational choice for women since few other economic opportunities existed for them in rural communities.

One New Brunswick woman thought textile chores were both economically worthwhile and relaxing. In 1865 "A Farmer's Daughter" sent two letters to the *Colonial Farmer* in response to critical remarks from a correspondent about women's textile roles in the home.⁷⁷ "Agricola" had asserted that handweaving was a "dishonorable and undignified" occupation for women since it allowed them no opportunities to "acquire little accomplishments and pleasant manners".⁷⁸ He was obviously familiar with the new notions of women's roles.⁷⁹ One of his concerns was

⁷⁵Elizabeth Jane Errington, *Wives and Mothers, School Mistresses and Scullery Maids: Working Women in Upper Canada, 1790-1840* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 99.

⁷⁶Kris Inwood and Phyllis Wagg, "The Survival of Handloom Weaving in Rural Canada, Circa 1870," *Journal of Economic History* 53, #2 (June 1993), 354-55.

⁷⁷"Communications: "Agricola," *Colonial Farmer*, 16 January 1865, 1; two letters from "Farmer's Daughter," *Colonial Farmer*, 06 February 1865, 26 June 1865.

⁷⁸Although Agricola published frequently in the *Colonial Farmer*, there was little evidence of his identity, except that he lived in the "Dark North" and used "Northumberland" county as part of his signature. He occasionally mentioned travelling to the United States on business and that he was practicing scientific farming. This was not the same Agricola who had published commentaries on scientific farming in Nova Scotia in the 1820s.

⁷⁹Correspondents to New England agricultural newspapers frequently used pseudonyms from the classical world. Junius, Rusticus, Quercus, Ulmus, but especially Agricola, were the most popular. Two New Brunswick writers were also fascinated with classical civilization and its contribution to agriculture. Agricola was a prolific contributor to the *Colonial Farmer*, while Rusticus only sent a few letters. Brenda Bullion, "The Agricultural Press: To Improve the Soil and the Mind," in *The Farm: Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, 1986*, ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University

that handweaving would turn women into "petty manufacturing drudges" and permanently harm their families, but especially their husbands.

Encouraging handweaving was also a "waste of money", noted Agricola. The farmer was better off investing in labour saving devices for his farm than buying spinning or weaving equipment, which was usually of the "clumsiest" design. Agricola was not only finding excuses as to why women should not engage in productive market activity, but also expressing the same patriarchal ideas described by Marjorie Cohen in Ontario.⁸⁰ Men spent money on capital investments to increase the productivity and net worth of the family, but little on improvements to women's tools, since their work was mainly reproductive, noted Cohen. A new spinning wheel or a better loom were therefore frivolous and unnecessary.

A Farmer's Daughter and another male correspondent responded to Agricola's comments by noting the positive benefits of handweaving and spinning to the family economy. "Rusticus" agreed with A Farmer's Daughter that hand weaving was not detrimental to women's image, nor did it diminish her social standing but only enhanced it.⁸¹ A Farmer's Daughter further insisted that gender had no connection with textile work. She did not think it was only man's work to process wool, "neither do I think it drudgery for a woman." Women's training in practical skills was a definite

Press, 1988), 82.

⁸⁰Cohen, 41.

⁸¹Letter from "Rusticus," *Colonial Farmer*, 12 May 1865. "A Farmer's Daughter" had contributed her first piece to the *Colonial Farmer* on the 29 February 1864, a commentary on society's restrictions based on gender.

asset.⁸²

Another correspondent added his erudite comments about home produced textiles. Harry Hudson thought highly of the "spirit and tenor" of A Farmer's Daughter's letter. However, he assumed only poorer families employed their wives and daughters to make cloth.⁸³ Class concerns were obviously part of his rationale for dismissing handweaving. Like Agricola, Hudson also thought that home weaving diminished young women and promoted unhappiness in the family. Both Hudson and Agricola were advocates of industrialized cloth manufacture. They both agreed that factories should be producing cloth and not individuals, especially females.

Unhappiness was not the fate of A Farmer's Daughter. Her second communication not only listed the benefits of hand production, but she responded individually to the three male writers. As the eldest child of a large family in Queensbury, York County, she had learned valuable work habits from her mother at a young age. For A Farmer's Daughter, weaving was neither hard work nor drudgery,

...any more than making butter or cheese or other housework. I know many who prefer it before any kind of dairy or housework; and those who understand it, can work with as much ease as they can at most other work.⁸⁴

She was well acquainted with farm chores, including spinning and weaving all day. Doing this kind of work was preferable to becoming an "old maid," she chided.

⁸²"A Farmer's Daughter," *Colonial Farmer*, 06 February 1865, 1.

⁸³Hudson's notion that handweaving was linked with poverty will be explored in depth in the next chapter.

⁸⁴"A Farmer's Daughter," *Colonial Farmer*, 26 June 1865.

Weaving skills were also a saleable commodity A Farmer's Daughter noted. Many rural residents preferred "hiring help" to turn their wool into cloth, she noted, especially if they had no one at home to do the job. Only a few weaving factories operated in the countryside and customers were often dissatisfied with the product. These deficiencies could provide a steady market for women's textile services. A Farmer's Daughter personified the image of the new farm woman who could think independently yet perform traditional tasks with skill and cunning.⁸⁵

"Susy", the fifth correspondent, was one of those hybrid women who combined traditional values with notions of gentility. Like A Farmer's Daughter she also had intimate knowledge of handweaving, and contributed two letters to the handweaving debate.⁸⁶ For Susy, weaving was drudgery and she hoped to have "a long play spell now," to relieve her "shoulders and side from aching so".⁸⁷ Although she was proud that she could weave her family's cloth, she was eagerly awaiting the day when factories might do the task for her. Weaving was hard work and she was tired of the "ceaseless clatter and bang of the old loom."⁸⁸

The split between traditional and new ideas was also part of Susy's comments. Collage and other decorative arts done by "city ladies" had recently captured her attention. She provided detailed instructions on how to create an inexpensive picture

⁸⁵Helvenson, 34.

⁸⁶"Communications, Susy," *Colonial Farmer*, 25 September 1865, 4 and 4 December 1865, 1.

⁸⁷"Communications, Susy," *Colonial Farmer*, 4 December 1865, 1.

⁸⁸Although Susy wove off 132 yards of cloth with reluctance, she still needed a good deal of skill and fortitude to complete her year's production.

frame and a collage of leaves, vines and ferns mimicking ones made by a "Saint John woman". Creating decorative ornaments with found objects was one of the new activities pursued by Victorian urban women, not only in America but in the Maritimes as well.⁸⁹ Susy's comments also showed that rural women combined both traditional practices and new ideas of leisure in their households.

Susy might have recognized the symbolic ornament reference when it described women's roles in a short article in the *Colonial Farmer* in 1872.⁹⁰ "Woman's Power" was subtle in exposing the true work of women as comforters, helpmates and providers of solace in times of adversity. As this article noted, "...it is beautifully ordered by Providence that woman, who is the mere dependent and ornament of man in his happiest hours, should be his stay and solace when smitten with sudden calamity." Women were expected to be the softer sex but able to exercise unshrinking firmness in the face of trouble. These opposing character traits were perhaps troubling to some women, who were expected to be refined, but still participate in the drudgery of household chores or contribute to the families finances by handweaving .

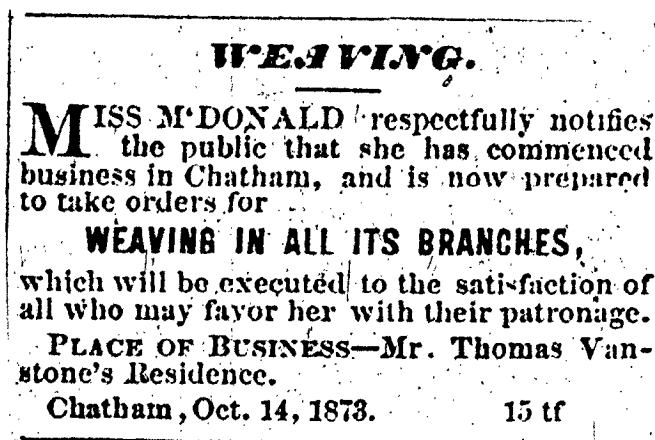
One weaver blatantly announced the commercial aspects of handweaving by advertising her services in 1873. A Miss M'Donald informed the public she was commencing business in Chatham and invited customers' patronage for "Weaving in

⁸⁹Floral motifs were very popular among Victorian women in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Cook, 44; and Jo-Ann Citrigno, *Needle Arts in Nova Scotian Women's Lives: 1752-1938*, Curatorial Report # 83 (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museums, 1998), 72. For America see Ellen M. Plante, *Women at Home in Victorian America* (New York: Facts on File, 1997), 156-176; and Beverly Gordon, "Victorian Fancywork in the American Home: Fantasy and Accommodation," in *Making the American Home: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Material Culture, 1840-1940*, eds. Marilyn Ferris Motz and Pat Browne (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Press, 1988), 48-68.

⁹⁰*Colonial Farmer*, 01 April 1872, 1.

All its Branches."⁹¹

Illustration 4.2. Miss M'Donald's Weaving Advertisement⁹²



M'Donald was the sole female found advertising a weaving business in New Brunswick newspapers. Her weaving business also marked a shift from traditional rural locales for women's home weaving businesses to that of an urban area. Few weavers, especially women, operated independent weaving businesses in towns and cities. In 1866, only three weavers, all women, appeared on Hutchinson's Directory of businesses in Chatham.⁹³ M'Donald was not among them.

Other impressions of farmer's wives in the late 1870s were less rosy than those portrayed by *A Farmer's Daughter* or by Miss M'Donald. Farm women were suffering

⁹¹This might have been the same Ann M'Donald who appeared on page eleven, family 35 of the 1871 census for Newcastle sub-district 1. This 24 year old weaver reported weaving 240 yards of cloth over a ten month period.

⁹²M'Donald's advertisement continued for four weeks. "Weaving," *Union Advocate* (Newcastle), 15 October 1873.

⁹³James Fraser, *By Favourable Winds: A History of Chatham, New Brunswick* (Town of Chatham, 1975), 315-320.

from mental breakdowns noted "Overworked Farmers' Wives" in 1879.⁹⁴ This article placed the blame squarely on inconsiderate husbands who never helped out, demanded prompt meals, and monopolized the Sunday paper. The dreariness and drudgery of innumerable farm chores for both farm women and men were highlighted again in a poem called the "Farmer's Wife" in 1883.⁹⁵ Women's chores were never ending, including textile work, child care, and food preparation. In this poem, the husband has his rest at the end of the day but,

...the faithful wife, from sun to sun,
Takes the burden up that is never done;
There is no rest, there is no pay
For the household good she must work away;
 For to mend the frock
 And to knit the sock,
 And the cradle to rock,
All for the good of the land.

Women often received as much of the blame as their husbands if their textile work was considered drudgery. The author of "Overworked Farmer's Wife" had no patience for women who allowed themselves to be so down trodden. She, A Farmer's Daughter, and a Model Wife were part of the new breed of assertive women who displayed optimism instead of hopelessness and submission when faced with household tasks.

Merchants also included these new ideas of domesticity in their advertisements

⁹⁴"Overworked Farmers' Wives," *Saint John Globe* (Saint John), 23 December 1879.

⁹⁵"The Farmer's Wife," *Maritime Farmer* (Fredericton), 06 June 1883, 1. This same poem, written by Henry Davenport Northrup, appeared in his book *Crown Jewels* in 1887 with the title "The Busy House Wife". Juster, 97-8.

destined for rural women. Two Fredericton dry goods merchants used similar images to solicit traditional textiles in the 1880s. Up until early 1880, A.A. Miller's advertisements for homespun had been fairly mundane and straight forward. However, on August 19 he combined an unusual image with a request for traditional textiles.⁹⁶ An icon of a fashionable woman attired in a plumed bonnet, décolleté dress, a pendant on a ribbon, and resting her arms on floral edged frame was incongruous with his request for home textiles such as "Socks, Mitts, Yarn, Oversocks, Knit Drawers, Homespun shirts, Pants, etc." These types of decorated frames were all the rage among urban women and had been part of *Ladies Fancy Work* at the recent provincial exhibition.⁹⁷ Inside the frame the message contained a request for 1500 Pairs of Socks and Mitts.

Illustration 4.3. Miller's advertisements⁹⁸

**FALL and WINTER
DRY GOODS!!**
MILLER & EDGECOMBE,
ALBION HOUSE,
Have just completed their Importation of
STAPLE and FANCY DRY GOODS,
For the **FALL and WINTER Trade,**
Purchased in the European and United States Markets.
We respectfully invite inspection of our stock, as it comprises all the Leading Novelties of the Season.
Our Importations are large and beautifully selected, and we can with confidence ask the patronage of parties who wish to purchase the best description of Dry Goods, at the very lowest living prices.
HOMESPUN OF ALL KINDS, AND SOCKS AND MITTS TAKEN IN EXCHANGE FOR GOODS.
MILLER & EDGECOMBE

WANTED
A. A. MILLER & CO'S
Opp. City Hall, Fredericton,
HOMESPUN CLOTH
of all kinds,
**SOCKS, MITTS, YARN,
OVERSOCKS,
KNIT DRAWERS,
Homespun Shirts, Pants, &c.**



⁹⁶*Maritime Farmer* (Fredericton), 9 September 1880.

⁹⁷See also Cook, 43; reference to "Susy" earlier in this chapter, and the "Report of the Secretary of Agriculture", *JHANB* 1878, 21.

⁹⁸Left: *Colonial Farmer*, 27 November 1876; right *Maritime Farmer*, 19 August 1880.

Miller's advertisement in November again had the same feminine image, but this time the frame held a slightly different message. Here Miller "WANTS all the Homespun Cloth, Socks, Mitts, Yarn, etc. Made in York County."⁹⁹ His demand had escalated but his choice of motifs had not changed. Home made products and traditional values definitely clashed with this decidedly feminine image.

Tennant & Davies used the same icon in their November ad the following year.¹⁰⁰ This time however, their request for traditional "Socks, Homespun, Mitts and Yarn" was merely a single line at the bottom of the advertisement. The rest of the ad extolled the values of imported textiles. Tennant & Davies had recently purchased the entire inventory and probably the stock icon, as well, from A.A. Miller.¹⁰¹

Fred Edgecombe, another Fredericton merchant, frequently solicited homespun cloth from rural suppliers throughout the 1870s. In his 1880 Christmas campaign, one small insert suggested new ideas associated with domesticity while a second insert solicited homespun cloth for his store.¹⁰² According to Edgecombe, women were to be partners in the household but their primary role was to be "pleasant rainbows set in the sky," while their husbands confronted the outside world. Ladies patronizing his dry goods store would leave "happy and beaming," he assured them. Whether this was due to the new Crompton corsets on sale or the goods he was offering in exchange for

⁹⁹*Maritime Farmer*, 10 November 1880.

¹⁰⁰*Maritime Farmer*, 23 November 1881.

¹⁰¹The icon might also have been part of the newspaper's stock images.

¹⁰²"Supplement," *NB Reporter*, 8 December 1880.

homespun was a moot point. All three merchants sent conflicting messages about womanhood and class. Could rural women supplying these traditional textiles aspire to the lofty lifestyle of city women, and be refined as well?

4.2. Images in Agricultural Society Reports and Provincial Exhibitions

Agricultural society fairs also spread new ideas of domesticity to rural New Brunswickers. Initially held to promote traditional values, the character of these fairs changed in the 1860s to reflect more progressive ideas, both in farming and in family relations.¹⁰³ As Catherine Kelly has observed, agricultural fairs "simultaneously applauded the old fashioned economy while celebrating the fashionable display that attended middle-class culture," in New England.¹⁰⁴ This was the case as well in New Brunswick.

While women often submitted dairy products, vegetables, and flowers to the fairs, it was their textile entries that usually elicited comments from agricultural secretaries throughout the province. Textiles became symbolic of change taking place

¹⁰³See also the work of Graeme Wynn, "Exciting a Spirit of Emulation Among the 'Plodholes': Agricultural Reform in Pre-Confederation Nova Scotia," *Acadiensis* 20, #1 (Autumn 1990): 32-34; James Talman, "Agricultural Societies of Upper Canada," *Ontario Historical Papers* 27 (1931), 545-552; David Sutherland, "Nova Scotia's Response to the Crystal Palace: The Provincial Industrial Exhibition of 1854," *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society* Vol 3 (2000): 72-84; Elinor Vass, "The Agricultural Societies of Prince Edward Island," *The Islander* (Charlottetown) #7 (Fall/Winter 1979): 31-37; and Lorna Williams, "From Agricultural Improvement to Industrial Affirmation: The Evolution of the New Brunswick Provincial Exhibitions, 1852-1883," MA thesis, University of New Brunswick, 2003.

¹⁰⁴Catherine Kelly, "The Consummation of Rural Prosperity and Happiness": New England Agricultural Fairs and the Construction of Class and Gender, 1810-1860," *American Quarterly* 49, #3 (1997): 585.

in the rural countryside.¹⁰⁵ Attention placed on homespun cloth reminded fair goers of an older, traditional, more independent, and less complicated way of life in a household economy.¹⁰⁶ As a component of agricultural fairs since the 1820s, it was also an expression of the longevity of traditional values. Generations of farm women and indeed, some male weavers, had supplied their families with such evidence of their industry and skills over the years.¹⁰⁷

Not only were traditional textiles part of a value system at these fairs, they were also part of the domestic economy. Homespun cloth and hand knit socks and mitts received prizes at fairs, thereby contributing to the household economy. At some fairs they also provided additional income to support societies' activities. At the 1857 Northumberland County Agricultural Society Fair, organizers awarded prizes to residents for both homespun cloth and handknit socks and mitts. They then bought the prize winning entries of socks and mitts, as well as butter and cheeses, products usually made by women in the family.¹⁰⁸ These items were then offered for sale at

¹⁰⁵Similar changes were taking place at agricultural shows in New England. Linda Borish noted these shows displayed not only new ideas about gender and power relations but also politics and culture. Linda Borish, 'A Fair, Without *the* Fair is No Fair at All': Women at the New England Agricultural Fair in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Sport and History* 24 #2 (Summer 1997): 155-176.

¹⁰⁶The image of homespun was so pervasive that commercial woollen mills started using the word "homespun" in their advertising and on corporate logos to remind their customers of past values. Humphrey Woollen Mill Papers, 1906 registration of corporate logo. Private collection, Moncton New Brunswick. Other mills, such as the Colchester Mill in Oxford, Nova Scotia, referred to one of its products as "Oxford Homespun." Ad for T.R. Jones and Co., Saint John; *Union Advocate* (Newcastle), 25 January 1882.

¹⁰⁷Elizabeth Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society during the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 265; Jones, 159-168, 337-342.

¹⁰⁸"The Northumberland Agricultural Society's Annual Exhibition," *Gleaner*, 27 December 1857.

public auction immediately after the prizes had been awarded.

Ornamental textiles were relative newcomers, appearing in both agricultural fairs and provincial exhibitions only at mid century. As evidence of new ideas about woman's leisure, their showiness and fancy patterns often attracted the attention of many fair goers. Netted doilies, fancy crocheted and knitted stockings and lace, hair and quill work, as well as needlework pictures served only a decorative function with no utilitarian value. However, they did display women's virtuousness and attention to morality since religious slogans were often used for embroidery. Women used their decorative skills to embellish their houses or as gifts for friends, but it was unlikely that these products would enter the market place.¹⁰⁹ Implicit in ornamental textiles was also the trend towards rural capitalism. Only prosperous farmers could excuse female family members from farm chores to spend time in non-productive work.

Triennial provincial exhibitions were also influential in presenting new ideas to provincial residents. Billed as mostly urban events, their innovations often filtered down to local agricultural societies.¹¹⁰ Reports from both groups, however, did not necessarily represent prevailing norms. They were only capsule impressions of rural trends, including the adoption of new ideas.¹¹¹ Although both urban and rural residents

¹⁰⁹Items of ladies fancy work were often received and given as gifts enforcing positive personal relationships among women. Gordon, 52.

¹¹⁰Of the nine provincial exhibitions held between 1852 and 1880, only two were outside major urban areas. In order to make the exhibition more accessible for rural exhibitors, organizers held the 1860 show in Sussex, and the 1872 show in Sackville. All the other exhibitions were either in Fredericton or Saint John.

¹¹¹Graeme Wynn's research on Nova Scotia's agricultural societies was equally applicable to New Brunswick. Memberships in many agricultural societies in the province were dwindling, not all families attended the fairs, nor submitted entries for competition. Samuel Freeze, secretary of one of the

participated in provincial exhibitions, it was impossible to determine which entrants lived in rural areas. Organizers published only the list of prize winners without indicating the specific town, village or hamlet where these resided. The first provincial exhibition, hosted by the Mechanic's Institute in 1851, featured a limited range of decorative textiles.¹¹² However, a second exhibition in 1852, "solicited [women] to exert their talents and ingenuity in [entering] fancy and ornamental work."¹¹³ Sponsored by the New Brunswick Society, this exhibition also had a separate category reserved especially for traditional domestic textiles.

The official 1852 Exhibition Song also made it clear that both types of textiles had their place in New Brunswick society. Laden with images of traditional pastoral landscapes and occupations, one verse of William Watt's song also endorsed ideas of domesticity.

The arts in a gay array
 The glories of woman's skill,
 Ho! good and fair in a union rare,
 We hail them with right good will;
 From loom, from lathe, from frame,
 With spoils from land and sea,
 From the gentle taste and skilful hand,
 These glorious guerdons be.¹¹⁴

Northumberland County societies, was only one of many who expressed concern over the drop of memberships in 1871. "Report of Blissfield and Ludlow Society," *New Brunswick Legislative Council Journal*, 1871, 138; Wynn, "Exciting a Spirit of Emulation....", 32-38.

¹¹²The Industrial Exhibition in Saint John was the first of three such events held in the Maritimes. Prince Edward Island held its first industrial show as well in 1851, and Nova Scotia in 1854. *The Islander* (Charlottetown) 5 March 1852; *The Nova Scotian* (Halifax) 23 October 1854.

¹¹³*JNB Society*, 28 February 1852, 223.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, 375. This song was written by William Watts, Sr. "Guerdons" were rewards or prizes.

Women had already been using "spoils from land and sea" by incorporating seashells and pine cones into decorative boxes and frames.¹¹⁵ Their "gentle tastes" extended into embroidered pictures and fire place screens as well as embroidered and crocheted furniture protectors.¹¹⁶ Yet products of the loom dominated the display of textile goods in the exhibition hall. Blankets, woollen carpets, homespun cloth, woollen shawls, table and bed linens all attracted attention of fair goers. Traditional work and traditional values still dominated this event although the first notions of new ideas of domesticity were also evident.

Gender specific judges for textiles products were another innovation in this 1852 show. Four male judges evaluated traditional, non-gendered, and safe domestic textiles, while three female judges examined "decorative brave arts" from the feminized parlour. Three separate gendered spheres thus operated at the exhibition - all male categories for farm animals and agricultural products, all female categories for fancy work, and a non gendered one for domestic textiles.

William Watts further differentiated two sub-categories within textile entries.¹¹⁷ Based on marital status and age, he created a weaving hierarchy with wives entering "comfortable tribute" in the form of traditional textiles, and "daughters of New Brunswick" sending "brave and beautiful decorative work." Although some of the wives' work was of "rare beauty, indicating great taste and skill," commented Watts,

¹¹⁵Cook, 40.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷"Want of Confidence in Our Country," by William Watts, Jr., *NB Courier* 18 December 1852.

all were substantially "serviceable and suited to the wants of the country." Wives were being relegated to the common place, with durable and serviceable traditional domestic textiles. Their daughters, however, became the new women who embraced current ideas with their decorative work. Whether daughters of New Brunswick was intended to include only younger women or women in general was uncertain.

A weaving hierarchy was also evident in agricultural society reports elsewhere in the province. In 1868 the Restigouche Agricultural Society secretary noted young ladies were sending in very creditable specimens of fine arts to "grace the walls of the exhibition hall."¹¹⁸ William Parker, in Northumberland County, noticed local fairs stimulated "farmer's wives in producing better fabrics from the loom and superior articles of butter and cheese from the dairy."¹¹⁹ The division between young ladies doing ornamental textiles and fine arts and their mothers making utilitarian products seemed firmly fixed in the minds of some rural residents.

This was not the case at the provincial exhibition in 1870. Prize winners among single ladies and their mothers were almost equally divided in the Ladies Fancy Work categories. Two women's organizations also entered fancy work in the exhibition.¹²⁰ Both married and single women might have contributed to the prize winning quilt knitted by the York County Ladies Bright Needlework Society. The marital status of

¹¹⁸"Restigouche Agricultural Society," *Gleaner*, 11 January 1868.

¹¹⁹"Blackville and Derby Agricultural Society Report," *JHANB* 1870, Agricultural Reports, 133.

¹²⁰Among the 44 known prize winners in Ladies Fancy Work were 13 single women, 12 married, the York County Sisters of Charity and the York County Ladies Bright Needlework Society. Four of the prize winners were listed with male names, while seven entrants won multiple prizes. *JHANB* 1870, Provincial Exhibition, 89-92.

the Sisters of Charity of York County, who won two prizes for shell work and Berlin work, was obvious.

Although men's names often appeared on prize lists for weaving and decorative work in both agricultural fairs and provincial exhibitions, the true identity of the maker was often unclear. The practice of using men's names had been the norm since the beginning of these events as they were usually the ones buying the membership in the society or submitting entries in exhibitions. In one local fair, judges praised Samuel Fairweather, of Norton, King's County for a pair of superior handwoven blankets "as white and fine as any of English manufacture".¹²¹ The following year, his daughter, Miss E. Fairweather, received an honorary premium for her "notable blankets" at the Industrial Exhibition in Saint John.¹²² The blankets associated with her father's name were likely hers and she was finally receiving recognition for her work.

Language used to describe women's textile activity was also an indicator of the unease between traditionalism and new ideas. Initially agricultural societies used non gendered and mundane language when commenting on home weaving. C. L. Hathaway, secretary of the Sunbury County Agricultural Society, merely noted the articles of domestic manufacture "were of a respectable description" in the 1844 fair.¹²³ In the 1850s, secretaries of societies often identified weavers in gendered terms. They became the "fair hands," the "ladies," "females," and "ladies" handiwork, and less

¹²¹"Report of King's County Central Agricultural Fair," *NB Courier*, 30 November 1850.

¹²²"Report on the Industrial Exhibition," *NB Courier*, 27 September 1851.

¹²³"Report of the Sunbury Agricultural Society, 1844," *The Farmer's Manual* 1 (4), 1844, 100.

often "manufacturers" or "exhibitors." Weaving was becoming recognized as a distinctly female activity.

Judges also tended to use value laden terms when referring to both domestic manufactures and *Ladies Fancy Work*. The Sackville and Westmorland Agricultural Society was typical in noting home textiles "evinced the skill and industry of the female portion of the community" in 1852.¹²⁴ Industry and skill were often aligned with moral qualities of virtuousness, taste, and creditability. Towelling exhibited at the Saint John Industrial Exhibition in 1851 was "highly creditable to the virtuous industry of their makers", noted James Robb in his report.¹²⁵ The secretary of the Gloucester Society noted many residents, especially the ladies, had all agreed that the "ladies of taste and industry" had produced many "useful articles" of wearing apparel and household furniture at their 1865 fair.¹²⁶ John Stuart, in turn, applauded "the ladies ...for their industry and skill," when describing home manufactures at the Albert County fair in 1869.¹²⁷

However when male judges and reporters viewed *Ladies Fancy Work* in both rural shows and provincial exhibitions, they often confused industry with art. As arbitrators of taste and skill, men were at ease in the ungendered domain of traditional cloth. They could comment intelligently about the value of blankets, homespun cloth

¹²⁴"Sackville and Westmorland Agricultural Society," *NB Courier*, 13 November 1852.

¹²⁵"Report on the Industrial Exhibition," *NB Courier*, 27 September 1851.

¹²⁶"Gloucester Agricultural Society," *JHANB* 1865, Appendix 6, 41.

¹²⁷"Baltimore Agricultural Society Report (Albert County)," *JHANB* 1869, 139.

or carpets since these were all products of the domestic economy. However fancy textiles were unfamiliar territory in which they had no competence. These must “pass along with summary recounting and be content to receive the general praise,” noted William Watt in 1852.¹²⁸ Unlike homespun, ornamental textiles relegated men and women into separate spheres. Fancy work suggested untrodden and unfamiliar territory inhabited by women who worked their magic in the feminized company of their friends in the front parlour.¹²⁹

Terms used to praise ladies fancy work were also incongruous. Good taste and skill often replaced virtuous industry as the more common form of praise for fancy work in local fairs. Fancy Work showed “taste and skill,” noted the secretary of the Albert County Society in 1877.¹³⁰ Meanwhile, in Grand Falls, Charles McClusky noted *Ladies Fancy Work* displayed “neatness and skilful labour”.¹³¹ These types of comments were different from Catherine Kelly’s observations. Men in New England who judged women’s fancy work, “tended to overlook women’s skill and imagination, commending them instead for their thrift and industry.”¹³²

At the 1878 provincial exhibition, *Ladies Fancy Work* finally came of age.¹³³

¹²⁸*NB Courier*, 18 December 1852.

¹²⁹Kelly, 590-591.

¹³⁰“Report of Albert County Agricultural Society,” *JHANB* 1877, Appendix, 17.

¹³¹“Report of Grand Falls Agricultural Society,” *JHANB* 1877, Appendix ixv.

¹³²Kelly, 588-90.

¹³³“Report of the Secretary of Agriculture,” *Journal of the Legislative Council of New Brunswick* 1878, 20.

Here good taste was associated with art. Ladies of the province had spent their leisure hours producing "art with their needles", noted the two page report on the exhibition. Fancy work displayed "artistic taste, a fine sense of colour, great ingenuity, and exquisite neatness of hand...and that humble but powerful quality, patience." Whether ladies fancy work was, in reality, a form of work or recreation, was never questioned. However there was no doubt that both traditional and ornamental textiles took skill and patience in their execution.

The increasing numbers of entries of *Ladies Fancy Work* in provincial exhibitions between 1860 and 1880 showed how new ideas of domesticity were becoming popular among both urban and rural women. Although some women still submitted traditional textiles in these exhibitions, their numbers were declining. The larger number of domestic textiles at the 1880 provincial exhibition was a paradox since interest in home weaving was starting its downward spiral. Ornamental textiles more than doubled at this event, showing both the attraction for this form of textile work and increased leisure time. While the number of entries from rural women is unknown, it is likely that many more were spending time making decorative textiles. These types of textiles had become the vehicle for promoting some middle-class ideas to rural farm wives who could now indulge themselves with creating decorative pieces as well as more utilitarian work.

Table 4.1. Number of entries in Provincial Exhibitions, NB: 1860-1880

Year	1860	1864	1870	1872	1873	1880
TE	2071	1633	2233	1181	NA	3630
DM	220	143	153	100	133	240
FW	124	132	162	112	150	336
LOC	Susse	Fred.	Fred.	Sack.	Fred.	SJohn

Code: TE = Total entries in all classes; DM = Domestic manufacturing (weaving, knitting); FW = Ladies Fancy Work (embroidery, etc); LOC= Location of exhibition: Sussex, Saint John, Sackville or Fredericton.¹³⁴

4.3. Images of Acadian Textiles

Acadians in New Brunswick were also affected by new ideas about women's work. While some of them spoke English, the founding of the first French language newspaper in the Maritimes in 1867 brought them into the mainstream. The *Moniteur Acadien's* mission was to promote traditional values while introducing Acadians to a greater world view. Acadians disputed both the ideas of progressive farming and women's roles in its pages.

In an early issue, the *Moniteur Acadien* presented images of the ideal woman to Acadian readers. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's¹³⁵ poem "Evangeline" had been duly translated into French by Pamphille LeMay and ran in serialized format in the

¹³⁴Although there was an exhibition in 1878, the number of entries in both textile categories were not noted in the exhibition report. Source: *JHANB Agricultural Reports, "Provincial Exhibitions"* for stated years.

¹³⁵Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Evangeline*. Toronto: Copp Clark edition, 1915. Longfellow's poem was initially published in America in 1847.

Moniteur starting in August 1867. Evangeline Bellefontaine, the fictitious heroine in the 1755 Acadian deportation story, showed all the character traits of the new ideal woman. Her cheerful countenance, piousness, bravery, and loyalty all reflected the new modern values of womanhood. She was intelligent and industrious, and knew how to govern her widowed father's household with grace and skill. Spinning flax and wool grown on her father's farm were also part of her everyday duties. She had already finished weaving all the bedding needed for her upcoming marriage to Gabriel Lajeunesse before the deportation had shattered their plans. Evangeline quickly entered the hearts of Acadian women as an important role model.¹³⁶

Increased schooling in the 1860s also allowed many more Acadians to read the Evangeline story. Education was now available for Acadian girls in many boarding schools run by religious congregations. Taught in their own language, Francophone girls learned academic subjects along with some of the new leisure activities, such as needlework and embroidery. A taste for luxury was also appearing in some Acadian homes in New Brunswick. Merchants, such as Isreal Landry, won the franchise for an American piano in 1872 and was selling a large number of instruments by 1874.¹³⁷ As in Anglophone homes, the piano and fancy needlework were capturing the attention and the leisure time of young Acadian women.

The Evangeline icon reappeared in the 1880s when two male correspondents,

¹³⁶See also Barbara LeBlanc, "Construction d'un paysage identitaire: Grand Pré et la collectivité acadienne," *Material History Review* 50 (Fall 1999), 35-41 and *Postcards from Acadie*, (Kentville, Nova Scotia: Gaspereau Press, 2003), 51-76.

¹³⁷As cited by Sheila Andrew, *The Development of Elites in Acadian New Brunswick, 1861-1881* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 55.

aptly named "Evangeline" and "Gabriel," expressed their views on Acadian womanhood in the *Moniteur Acadien*. Acadian girls were diligent and properly instructed in traditional female tasks, declared one correspondent, aptly named Evangeline. Acadian boys should forsake Scottish girls as potential mates since these girls had no "house keeping skills nor knew how to spin or knit."¹³⁸ This was clearly an issue of cultural norms discouraging mixed marriages and had nothing to do with industriousness. However, the Evangeline icon allowed this correspondent to remind other readers of more traditional values and cultural purity.

Gabriel responded by calling this correspondent an "Evangeline in trowsers".¹³⁹ He knew many Scottish girls who were as capable, diligent and industrious as Acadian girls. They were also familiar with traditional women's work of educating children and supplying the household with decent food and clothing. Some women in Gabriel's community had just recently decided to be more modern by giving up their traditional costume and dressing more like their neighbours. Modernity had encouraged some of them to change part of their cultural practices, although many retained components of their traditional dress. Whether this happened in all Acadian areas of the Maritimes in this era is still unknown.¹⁴⁰

Few aspects of traditional Acadian dress or textile work appeared in agricultural reports. However, at the Alnwick Agricultural show in Northumberland

¹³⁸"Letter to the editor," *Moniteur Acadien*, 29 April 1880.

¹³⁹"Letter to the editor," *Moniteur Acadien*, 20 May 1880.

¹⁴⁰Factors contributing to the persistence of traditional Acadian costume is the subject of a future study.

County in 1854, an Acadian won six textile prizes plus an additional prize for flax production.¹⁴¹ Bonaventure Savoy's awards were rare evidence of the types of cloth woven by Acadian women in the third quarter of the century. This was also one of the rare references of Acadian involvement in agricultural societies in the 1850s. Savoy's family won prizes for 10 yards of plain tartan of cotton and wool, a pair of woollen blankets, three comforters, and 10 yards of plain flannel in cotton and wool. These pieces were likely woven by his wife, Julie, or one of his four daughters.¹⁴²

Savoy's second place prize was for a half bushel of flax seed, a typical grain grown in Acadian districts. Some of the flax fiber was likely used in traditional coarse shirts for men in the family or for kitchen towels. Acadians were thrifty in the use of fabric, reserving home textiles for the pieces of clothing that required the largest amounts of fabric. Ten yards of either the cotton and wool flannel or the tartan would have been more than adequate for two to three women's skirts or petticoats, or three pairs of men's pants.

Savoy was not the only Acadian farmer to grow flax. In 1865, the Gloucester Agricultural Society noted Acadians in their district raised flax for domestic purposes, often "interweaving it with cotton warp."¹⁴³ Anglophone communities in New Brunswick in the 19th century produced little linen cloth but might have cultivated

¹⁴¹"Report of the Alnwick Agricultural Society 1854," *Gleaner*. 4 March 1854.

¹⁴²Mr Savoy was in his 70s when he reported farming as his occupation to census enumerators in 1851. His wife, Julie, four daughters in their early 20s, a 19 year old son and a nephew all lived in his household. Alnwick was a mixed district of Acadians, Irish and Scottish settlers on Miramichi Bay. Acadians comprised 58 of the 200 households in the district. Carman Williston, *Compiled Census of Northumberland County, 1851*, Province of New Brunswick, 1991. Parish of Alnwick, 6.

¹⁴³"Gloucester County Agricultural Society Report," *JHANB* 1865, 40.

flax for its seed. Flax was grown predominantly in the four New Brunswick counties with the highest concentrations of Francophone inhabitants: Kent, Gloucester, Victoria and Westmorland.¹⁴⁴ These four counties produced 90% of the 1871 production of linen in the province and again 94% of the total 1881 volume.¹⁴⁵

The Gloucester Society was only one of a handful of agricultural societies which Acadians joined in any number.¹⁴⁶ Although English was the predominant language, Acadian farmers joined other societies in Ste-Marie (1875), St Leonard (1864), Caraquet (1864), St Louis (1869), and St Hilaire de Madawaska (1870).¹⁴⁷ These Francophone societies reported on textiles in much the same way as societies in the rest of the province. Rev. Joseph Paquet, secretary of the Caraquet society, referred to weavers as manufacturers, a non generic term which did little to demonstrate their "good taste" in domestic manufactures.¹⁴⁸ At their 1869 fair, visiting gentlemen from Europe were surprised to see "such ability displayed in the manufacture of cloth" submitted by local residents. It must have been a sight as there were 223 samples of a

¹⁴⁴Canada, Census of New Brunswick, 1871, Vol. 3, 218. Four counties produced 74,241 yards: Victoria, 10,851 yards, Gloucester, 14,115 yards, Kent, 15,334 and Westmorland, 27,026 yards.

¹⁴⁵*1881 Census of Canada*, Vol 3, 236. See also Sophie-Laurence Lamontagne and Fernand Harvey, *La Production Textile Domestique au Quebec, 1827-1941*, Transformation #7 (Ottawa: Musée Nationale Sciences et Technologie, 1997), 26-30.

¹⁴⁶Andrew, 40, 189. Only a few Acadian farmers who had elite status actively worked on the executives of agricultural societies.

¹⁴⁷See also Anita Lagacé, "The Grand Falls Agriculture Society, 1865-1878," in *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society* #18 (1963): 166-179; Andrew, 3, 189.

¹⁴⁸"Report of Caraquet Agricultural Society," *JHANB* 1865, 44. In Caraquet 94% of all residents declared French as their mother tongue in the 1861 census.

variety of domestic textiles in the Caraquet exhibition hall.¹⁴⁹

Flax cultivation and processing dominated Acadian textile activities in the Madawaska region as well. Charles McCluskey, secretary of the Grand Falls society, noted that flax production was increasing in the area in his 1870 report. Acadians in his community had submitted numerous samples of handwoven fabrics from their own flax, especially some "very good, coarse linen table cloths".¹⁵⁰ In St Leonard's, Mr. D. O. Burgoine also noticed both the "beauty and durability" of Acadian homespun cloth and other hand woven linen textiles in 1872.¹⁵¹

Acadians were not only submitting domestic textiles but were also interested in decorative needlework. McClusky also noted in 1871 that *Ladies Fancy Work* had attracted a lot of attention at the recent exhibition in Grand Falls. Ladies had submitted a great display of fancy work in "different patterns and designs," he noted, which "reflected great credit on the ladies who produced them."¹⁵² Acadians, like their Anglophone counterparts were keeping some aspects of their traditional values but also espousing new ideas.

The traditional image of farm women's work as being only drudgery had changed considerably since the 1840s. Rural women found new interests in directing some of their time to decorative arts while still maintaining an active interest in

¹⁴⁹"Report of Caraquet Agricultural Society," *JHANB* 1870, 133.

¹⁵⁰"Report of Grand Falls Agricultural Society," *JHANB* 1871, 129.

¹⁵¹"Report of St Leonard's Agricultural Society," *JHANB* 1872, 38.

¹⁵²"Report of Grand Falls Agricultural Society," *JHANB* 1872, 34.

handweaving. Reports from fairs and exhibitions show that looms and spinning wheels were not relegated to household attics, but continued to produce both homespun cloth and yarn for hand knit socks and mitts. New ideas of domesticity did enter rural homes but their influence was not as insidious as some thought. With more leisure time due to increased wealth, many families now included music and education for their daughters as part of family strategies. In 1884, the Queen's County Agricultural Society lauded the county's wives and daughters who had "not forgotten the cunning" of their grandmothers who had woven domestic textiles for their families' benefit.¹⁵³ This generation too, were weaving homespun cloth for their families and for the market, as well as making decorative needlework to embellish their homes.

¹⁵³"Queen's County Agricultural Society Show," *Maritime Farmer*, 22 October 1884.

CHAPTER 5. "CLEVERNESS AND CUNNING" OF HANDWEAVERS, 1870s

Introduction

As both a useful and lucrative craft, handweaving was immensely popular in New Brunswick between the late 1860s and the early 1880s. Poverty, isolation, a cold climate, tradition, inadequate transportation, or too few occupational choices¹ could hardly have accounted for the more than 1.12 million yards of textiles "reckoned by the yard" reported in 1871.² Comments from weavers in one county, as well as merchants' advertisements in provincial newspapers, suggest, however, another rarely explored reason for weaving's popularity and continuing high demand in this period.

Forty eight weavers in two Northumberland County census districts told enumerators they not only wove for their own use, but "sold [their cloth] in the market", made it "for other parties", or intended it "for country people" and "country

¹These were some of the common reasons identified by scholars for persistence elsewhere. See especially Kris Inwood and Janine Roelens, "Labouring at the Loom": A Case Study of Rural Manufacturing in Leeds County, Ontario, 1870," in *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 7, ed. Donald Akenson (Gananoque, Ontario: Langdale Press, 1990), 215-235; Paul Riou et Jean Marie Gauvreau, "Les formes de l'activité artisanale," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 41, Third Series (May 1947), 69; Sophie-Laurence Lamontagne and Fernand Harvey, *La Production Textile Domestique au Québec, 1827-1941*, Transformation #7 (Ottawa: Musée Nationale Sciences et Technologie, 1997), 31-33; Brenda Lee-Whiting, *Harvest of Stones: The German Settlement in Renfrew County* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 107; Harold and Dorothy Burnham, *'Keep Me Warm One Night': Handweaving in Eastern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 11; Ann Cameron McRae, "Women at the Loom: Handweaving in Washington County, Tennessee," MA thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2001), 59-74; Paula Mitchell Marks, *Hands to the Spindle: Texas Women and Home Textile Production, 1822-1880* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1996), 74-96.

²"Reckoned by the yard" was a general term used for flat textiles such as homespun cloth, blankets, shawls and other such textiles. *Sessional Papers* #64, 34 Victoria, 1871, "Manual Containing 'The Census Act' and Instructions to Officers Employed in the Taking of the First Census of Canada, 1871," (hereafter called the *Census Manual*), 138-9.

wear".³ These country people and other parties were sometimes their neighbours, but more often local merchants who resold homespun cloth to other customers. Merchants' demands for homespun cloth increased dramatically throughout the 1870s and into the early 1880s providing additional opportunities for weavers to dispose of homespun production. This chapter focuses on these markets but also on family economics and structures, ethnicity, tradition, climate and occupational choices as a complex set of reasons for home weaving persisting into the 1880s.

Market weavers reported cloth production, as well as other details of their businesses, on the new Industrial Schedule of the 1871 census. Designed by Joseph Charles Taché, this schedule highlighted economic contributions of small industrial establishments as well as small entrepreneurs. An advocate of home manufacturing, Taché was among many prominent people who thought handweaving played a "civilizing role" in society and that large scale industrialization had detrimental effects on family values. As a Catholic agrarian reformer, he was interested in traditional rural values and the place of domestic manufactures within this society.⁴ He probably had this in mind when defining a small industrial establishment. It included "any establishment ... where materials are manufactured, made up, changed or altered from one form to another, for sale, use or consumption..."⁵ A loom in a rural farmhouse

³Schedule 6, the Industrial and Manufacturing Schedule, will henceforth be called the "Industrial Schedule". Another fourteen Blackville district weavers only wove for their "own use". *1871 Census of Canada, New Brunswick, Northumberland County*. NAC, films #10388-90; Blackville districts.

⁴Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840-1875* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 283.

⁵*Census Manual*, 138-9.

would thus be an industrial establishment since it transformed wool or cotton yarn into a more valuable product. Value added and not skill was the main criteria for reporting a business on this schedule.⁶

Nineteenth century customers likely called weavers with small businesses customary weavers, tradesmen or country weavers.⁷ Some scholars also referred to them as custom weavers, market weavers, and outwork weavers.⁸ In this chapter, weavers reporting cloth only for home use on the Home-made Schedule⁹ will be called *home weavers*, while those reporting a small business on the Industrial Schedule will be called *market weavers*.¹⁰

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first situates residents in a case study of weavers in one county. Demographic and economic profiles of market weavers, home weavers, and their neighbours in five rural census districts form the second part. Including both home weavers and their non-weaving neighbours allows

⁶Transforming raw materials into usable goods increases its value in the marketplace. *Value added* is measured by deducting the cost of raw materials from the wholesale price of the final product. Extant textiles in New Brunswick showed varying degrees of skill. These textiles include those at the New Brunswick Heritage Center at King's Landing, the New Brunswick Museum in Saint John, King's County Museum in Hampton, Queen's County Museum in Gagetown, the York-Sunbury Museum in Fredericton, Musée Acadien at the L'Université de Moncton, Kings' Landing in Prince William, and private collections.

⁷William Thompson, *A Tradesman's Travel* (Edinburgh, 1842), 143.

⁸See also Kris Inwood and Phyllis Wagg, "The Survival of Handloom Weaving in Rural Canada, Circa 1870," *Journal of Economic History* 53, #2 (June 1993): 348-349; Thomas Dublin, *Transforming Women's Work: New England Lives in the Industrial Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 37-47.

⁹Schedule 5, "Animal Products, Home-made Fabrics and Furs" will be called "Home-made Schedule" for the balance of this study.

¹⁰These are similar to the categories of weavers in Chapter 2.

comparisons to measure wealth as a factor in weaving persistence. Family size, ethnicity, the number of extra women in the family, place of birth, and age are part of this demographic profile. The economic profile assesses relative wealth by comparing land ownership and a number of other indices. Finally, a business profile analyzes various aspects of market weavers' enterprises.

These three profiles permit a comparison of market weavers in the New Brunswick sample group with those in a similar study in Leeds County, Ontario. Kris Inwood and Janine Roelens suggested it was "unlikely that the complete picture of [market] weavers [in eastern Canada] would look very different" from that of their Leeds County study.¹¹ Market weavers in this study were often foreign born, middle aged, and members of families with an usually large number of women. Since most of them had only small land holdings and marginal agricultural production, difficult financial circumstances obviously influenced their weaving activity. Market weavers in New Brunswick, however, display a somewhat different profile from those in Leeds County. Profiles of four market weavers fleshes out this predominantly quantitative assessment of weaving activity.

Underlying this analysis is ethnicity. Whether cultural traditions had any influence on weaving persistence is an elusive question. It must be considered, however, since all cultural groups in New Brunswick practised weaving, except the small number of Native people. One cultural group in particular, French-speaking Acadians, will be considered in depth.

¹¹Inwood and Roelens, 225.

Markets form the last but integral part of this work.¹² Merchants were important players in the *homespun economy* and their demand for handweavers' production cannot be overlooked. John Rowan, a travel writer touring eastern Canada in the mid 1870s, best identified the type of customers appreciating homespun cloth. "Canadian homespun, he noted, [was] famous stuff", especially for "rough clothing".¹³ Both city and country merchants purchased quantities of this homespun cloth for a particular niche market which needed rough clothing. Rural occupations and climate conditioned these markets.

5.1. METHODOLOGY

Census enumerators only identified market weavers in three New Brunswick counties on the 1871 Industrial Schedule.¹⁴ Among these 508 weavers, 388 reported in Northumberland County, 110 in Charlotte and 10 in Sunbury. There were probably many others in the province but ambiguous instructions likely led enumerators to

¹²Market influences have only recently become part of investigations of weaving persistence. See in particular recent works by Béatrice Craig, Judith Rygiel and Elizabeth Turcotte, "The Homespun Paradox: Market Oriented Production of Cloth in Eastern Canada in the Nineteenth Century," *Agricultural History* 76, #1 (Winter 2002): 28-57;, "Survival or Adaptation? Domestic Rural Textile Production in Eastern Canada in the Later Nineteenth Century," *Agricultural History Review* 49, Part II (2001): 140-171; and Béatrice Craig and Judith Rygiel, "Femmes, marchés et production textile au Nouveau Brunswick au cours du XIXe siècle", *Histoire et Mesure* 25, #1/2 (2000): 83-112; Judith Rygiel, "Thread in Their Hands, Cash in Their Pockets": Women and Domestic Textile Production in 19th Century New Brunswick", *Acadiensis* 30, #2 (Spring 2001): 56-70; Dublin, 45; Inwood and Wagg, 347 only alluded to potential markets.

¹³John Rowan, *The Emigrant and Sportsman in Canada* (London: Edward Stanford, 1876), 433.

¹⁴Gerald and Elizabeth Bloomfield, Department of Geography, University of Guelph greatly facilitated this search by furnishing results from their 1991 research project on the 1871 Census. Also see Elizabeth Bloomfield and G.T. Bloomfield, *Canadian Women in Workshops, Mills and Factories: The Evidence of the 1871 Census*, University of Guelph, 1991.

include them on the Home-made Schedule instead. The Census Manual had specifically instructed enumerators to keep "hand-made fabrics distinct from those made in cloth or linen factories".¹⁵ However, it failed to define what exactly constituted a cloth factory.

Confusion over cloth factories was also evident when enumerators described hand weaving businesses in both Northumberland and Charlotte counties. Some enumerators called these small businesses "cloth factories," while others used the term, "homespun factories," or sometimes "cloth manufacturing." All these terms are usually associated with industrialized manufacturing. "Weaver's shop," "handloom," and "weaving establishment" appeared in a few cases and were perhaps more descriptive of small producers. The Census Manual also included examples of individual artisans expected to report on the Industrial Schedule. Carpenters, shoe makers, dress makers, tailors, harness makers, and blacksmiths were all included but not weavers.¹⁶ Knowing Taché's interest in women's domestic cloth production, this omission was incongruous.

Weavers in both Northumberland and Charlotte counties were initially considered for this study. Each had sufficient census data to conduct economic and demographic analysis, two substantial commercial centers, and two local newspapers. However, the commercial ports of Chatham and Newcastle, in Northumberland County were much larger and more active than either St Andrews or St Stephen in Charlotte County. The larger number of market weavers, comments about the market, as well as

¹⁵*Census Manual*, 138.

¹⁶Presumably weavers were the "etc's" tacked onto the end of the crafts people list in the *Census Manual*. *Census Manual*, 139.

the existence of four extant rural merchant account books for the 1860-1880s period made Northumberland County the better choice.¹⁷ Merchants and mill owners in this county also frequently placed advertisements in local papers for both homespun cloth and mill services.¹⁸ Loom ownership likely more than doubled between 1851 and 1871¹⁹, as did cloth production.²⁰

Another important consideration was ethnic diversity among weavers and their neighbours. Weavers in Northumberland County identified with a number of cultural and linguistic backgrounds including Gaelic speaking Scots and Irish, English speakers from America and Great Britain, French-speaking Acadian residents, as well as other ethnic backgrounds.²¹ Charlotte County was more homogeneous, with a mostly English

¹⁷An extensive search of ledgers for Charlotte County merchants at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick and the Charlotte County Archive, in St Andrews, uncovered few references to homespun cloth in the 1860-1890 period.

¹⁸Merchants and mill owners placed few advertisements for homespun cloth or mill services in either the *St Andrews Standard* or the *St Croix Courier* (St Stephen)..

¹⁹Only 10% of all families in Northumberland County owned one of the 227 reported looms in the county in 1851. By 1871 there were close to 700 looms in the county assuming all weavers actually owned a loom and did not share one with someone else. Cloth production and loom ownership did not always coincided. In the parish of Kent, Carleton County, 57 families who reported cloth production did not report owning a loom in 1851.

²⁰In both 1851 and 1871 cloth intended for home use appeared on only one schedule. Enumerators recorded 43,872 yards of cloth made in Northumberland County in 1851, compared to 40,458 yards in 1871. This apparent decrease, however, did not include cloth made by market weavers, and reported only on the Industrial Schedule. Production here added an additional 51,736 yards of both woollen and linen cloth, for a total of 92,194 yards made in the county. 1871 *Census of Canada*, vol 4, 220, "Recapitulation of 1851 Census of New Brunswick"; and vol 3, 218; all Industrial Schedule returns for Northumberland County.

²¹Whether some residents still spoke Gaelic in Northumberland County was unknown. Other ethnic connections included Dutch, German, Welsh, and Portugese backgrounds.

speaking population.²² Choosing Northumberland County also allowed a re-evaluation of Régis Brun's contention that Acadians living in the northeastern part of New Brunswick were the most destitute in the province.²³ One hundred and fourteen French-speaking Acadian families lived in Northumberland County, including 69 market weavers. Comparing the French cohort with their neighbours will aid in substantiating Brun's claim.

Locating weavers initially proved challenging since evidence of weaving activity appears on three different census schedules in 1871: the Nominal Schedule, the Home-made Schedule, and the Industrial Schedule. Among the 3191 families in the county, 68 individuals reported weaving as their occupation on the Nominal Schedule.²⁴ This was only a small fraction of all weavers since enumerators recorded 715 weaving families on the Home-made Schedule. This represents nearly 34% of all rural households in the county. Unfortunately most of these home weavers remain anonymous, since this schedule was linked only to the head of household's name. Who actually wove the cloth was unknown since many families had numerous women. It could have been the work of one of them or a combined effort. Differentiating between family and individual production was also a difficulty encountered by James

²²See T. W. Acheson, "A Study of the Historical Demography of a Loyalist County," *Historie Sociale/Social History* 1 (April 1968), 53-65 for more on Charlotte County.

²³Régis Brun, *De Grand Pré à Kouchibouguac: Histoire d'un peuple exploité* (Moncton: Éditions d'Acadie, 1982), 95-101.

²⁴*Census of 1871*, New Brunswick, Vol 2, Table 13, "Occupations", 333. Weavers reported an occupation in all but one of New Brunswick's fourteen counties.

Lakes, enumerator for Kings County in 1861.²⁵

I always *as near as possible* gave an *estimated* value of female labour,...in some cases I found more butter, & made by the wife of an individual farmer than in some houses where 3 or 4 women were employed.... I *calculated to the best of my ability* to get the average value of those actually employed in the family.²⁶

Triple reporting also confuses the accurate measurement of weaving production.

Some weavers on the Nominal Schedule, as well as members of weaving families on the Home-made Schedule, also reported cloth production on the Industrial Schedule.

After a manual search of all schedules, this data was then compared to check for duplication. Forty five weavers reported weaving on both the Industrial and Home-made schedules. It is likely safe to assume that some weavers wove for two different purposes - for their own family's use as well as the market.

Weavers appearing in the following table all noted cloth destined for the market on the Industrial Schedule. Since family income was a major consideration for the analysis, the number of Market Weavers on the table represents the total number of households and not necessarily the number of weavers. In thirteen cases there was more than one weaver in the same family.

²⁵Alan A. Brookes, "Doing the Best I Can": The Taking of the 1861 New Brunswick Census," *Historie Sociale/Social History* 9, # 17 (May 1976): 79-80. Residents were sometimes reticent in furnishing information to enumerators since they feared the purpose of the census was to raise taxes.

²⁶Enumerator's emphasis. Enumerators recorded the dollar value of butter, cloth and other home-made products in 1861 and not the yardage or the pounds of these commodities.

Table 5.1. Market Weavers Reporting on the Industrial Schedule in Northumberland County, 1871

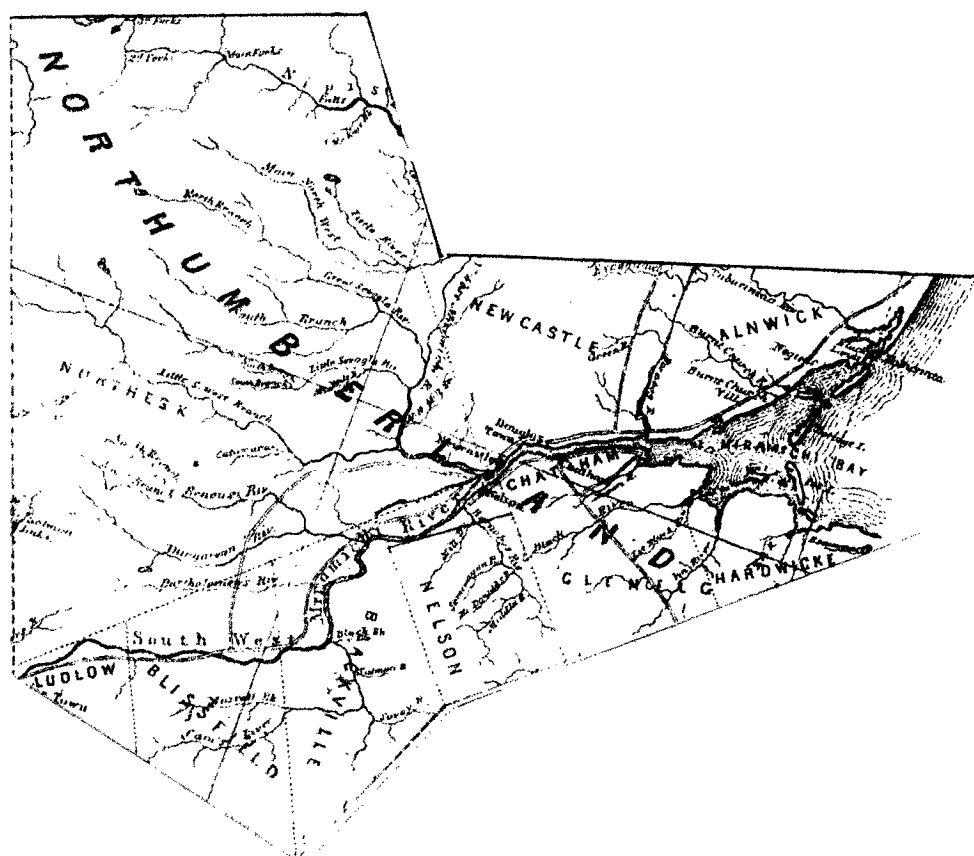
Districts	# Market Weavers	# Families in	% Weaving
Alnwick	135	348	38.7
Newcastle	10	603	1.6
Northesk	33	347	9.5
Ludlow	35	101	34.6
Blissfield	31	109	28.4
Blackville	79	246	32.1
Derby	0	94	0
Nelson	24	272	8.8
Chatham	9	729	1.2
Glenelg	16	204	7.8
Hardwick	3	138	2.1
Total	375	3191	11.7

Source: 1871 *Census of Canada*, New Brunswick, Northumberland County, NAC films #C10388-90.

Weaving was more often practised in rural districts than the more urban areas surrounding Newcastle or Chatham.²⁷ This was especially evident in the rural western districts of Ludlow, Blissfield and Blackville and the northeastern district of Alnwick. Derby and Hardwick were exceptions in this rural distribution of weavers.

²⁷Hutchinson's New Brunswick directory for Newcastle listed only three individuals, all women, as weavers in 1865-66; in James A. Fraser, *By Favourable Winds: A History of Chatham, New Brunswick* (Chatham: Town of Chatham, 1975), 315-320. No weavers were found within the urban confines of either Newcastle or Chatham in 1871.

MAP 5.1. Northumberland County Census Districts, by Moses Perley, 1853.²⁸



Which particular weavers' families and their neighbours to include in the case study initially presented a dilemma. After discarding a number of options, such as an

²⁸The small parish of Derby was hived off from the parish of Chatham some time between 1853 and 1861. It does not appear on the above map. Map published by Henry Chubb, Saint John, 1853. Map library, Carleton University.

urban/rural split, a sub-urban/urban split, or using only one district, a more manageable set of three criteria was chosen.²⁹ The first criterion was a concentration of more than 20% of all households involved in market weaving in a particular sub-district. Known gender, age, and marital status was a second criterion. This eliminated some sub-districts where the male head of household's name was affixed to the majority of weaving businesses. Many of these families had a number of females, including spinster aunts, grandmothers, teenage daughters, as well as the mother who could have been the weaver. Only about two thirds of all market weavers in Northumberland County fitted the second criterion.³⁰ Ethnic diversity was the third criterion. This would show whether ethnicity had any influence on handweaving.

These three criteria limited the choice to 161 market weavers, 93 home weavers, and 201 of their neighbours in five sub-districts: Alnwick-1, Alnwick-2, Blissfield-2, Blackville-2 and Glenelg-2. Some districts offered additional reasons for inclusion. Since French-speaking weavers lived in two of the Alnwick sub-districts, both these sub-districts were included. Three merchant account books from the

²⁹Since all market weavers lived in rural areas, this eliminated the urban/rural choice. The second option, a sub-urban/urban split, involved choosing a group of weavers living within a twenty mile radius of Chatham or Newcastle and comparing them to a group of more "isolated" weavers and their neighbours. This would have been an enormous statistical task since there were only 43 market weavers among the nearly 1700 residents in the sub-urban area alone. Choosing an entire district would have been another option, but this would be less representative of the different types of topography and occupational choices in the county. As well, some districts had no market weavers living in one of the sub-districts.

³⁰Of the 375 market weavers, only 238 of them were identifiable. The other 145 market weavers had either the head of household's name affixed to the business, illegible handwriting, or in a few cases, more than one weaver with the same name.

Blissfield area made it a good choice.³¹ One of these merchants, Ann Doak, of Blissfield-2, also left information about her market weaving business. Enumerators in Blackville-2 had entered comments about market weavers' reasons for weaving. Although few market weavers resided in Glenelg, its predominantly Scottish population and large number of home weavers made it an obvious choice for comparison purposes. In order to lessen confusion with census district numbers, the name of the largest village or river in each sub-district will be used instead. Alnwick sub-district 1 will be known as Tabsintac, Alnwick sub-district 2 as Néguac, Blissfield sub-district 2 as Doaktown, Blackville sub-district 2 as Blackville, and Glenelg sub-district 2 simply as Glenelg.

Assessing market influences was also challenging since no extant ledgers existed for city merchants in either Saint John, Fredericton, Newcastle or Chatham. However, their advertisements in provincial newspapers gave some indication of the changes happening in the "homespun economy" and of their potential customers. A small number of business ledgers did exist for a few country merchants and lumber operators.³² These account books gave some notion of the business cycle for homespun cloth and other home textiles, as well as the prices merchants charged for these items.

³¹Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (hereafter PANB), MC 456 MS1, *Nancy Ann Harris Ledger*, Blissfield, 1858-1869; Central New Brunswick Woodsmen Museum, Boiestown, New Brunswick, L 980.34, *John Pond Ledger*, Boiestown, 1840-1872; PANB, MC 1055 *Doak Family Papers*, Doaktown: MS6/F2 Ann Doak's personal ledger, 1863-1872 and MS6/F3 Account Book 1866-1888.

³²See previous footnote as well as Kings Landing Historical Settlement, Prince Williams, *Henry Grant Ledger*, Hampton, 1872-76; New Brunswick Museum (hereafter NBM), MS 5038, F23-2, *James Russell Lumber Company Papers*, Newcastle, 1864-5; Centre des Études Acadiennes, Université de Moncton, F1123-1-2, *Richard Bell Ledger*, 1837-1879.

5.2. SETTING THE SCENE: Northumberland County, 1870

Northumberland was one of the largest counties in the province, with nearly 4 million acres of timber blanketing the region. Flanked by the Gulf of Saint Lawrence on its eastern side, Miramichi Bay was shaped like a large funnel with the Miramichi River at the narrowest end. Nearly forty kilometres from the mouth of the Bay, but on opposite sides, sat the two major hubs of the county. The small shiretown of Newcastle was on the north side of the river, while the much larger mercantile town of Chatham was on the south bank. Both towns were centers of commerce with banks, custom houses, wharves, ship yards, and mercantile establishments. Residents had a choice of churches in which to worship and lived in numerous "neat private cottages" and large Victorian houses.³³ Two newspapers, the *Chatham Gleaner* and the *Newcastle Union Advocate*, informed residents in the surrounding communities of both local and international events.

Near Newcastle, the Miramichi River splits into its two major tributaries, the South West Miramichi and the North West Miramichi. This latter river was part of a vast watershed draining a largely uninhabited hinterland. The South West Miramichi was the main transportation corridor for residents living in the forested interior districts of the southern half of the county. The Miramichi River also divided the county administratively into eleven districts.³⁴ Nearly two thirds of all Northumberland

³³Alexander Monro, *New Brunswick with a Brief Outline of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island* (Halifax: Nugent Press, 1855; reprint, Belleville, Ontario: Mika Studio, 1972), 204-5; James Fraser, 71-101.

³⁴These districts included, in a clock wise fashion, Newcastle, Alnwick, Chatham, Derby, Hardwick, Glenelg, Nelson, Blackville, Blissfield, Ludlow, and Northesk.

families lived in the eight districts on the south side of the South West Miramichi River or along the south side of Miramichi Bay. The remaining third lived in the three largely unsettled northern districts of Alnwick, Newcastle and Northesk. Much of this back country was still undeveloped, with less than ten percent of its land occupied by farmers, fishermen and lumberers who cultivated small tracts of second class soil.

Many years of intensive logging had already stripped much of the valuable white pine from the forests leaving mostly smaller softwoods and lesser desirable hardwoods. Even these trees were harder to harvest since many lumber camps were a distance from waterways needed to transport logs to sawmills. The wood trade continued to occupy many residents in the 1870s but this industry was again in decline with a downturn in the market. A report in one local newspaper in the fall of 1870 noted that an oversupply of timber "must operate detrimentally on sales for some time to come," making lumbering operations an even more dubious venture.³⁵ In the winter men felled spruce logs and yellow pine for the export market, firewood for themselves and the local urban market, and harvested tan bark for the local shoe making industry. Many lumberers now worked for wages under formal and informal contracts for large timber merchants instead of on their own accounts as they had done in the past.³⁶

Fresh water fishing, but especially salmon and gaspereau, was suffering as well. Saw mill effluent and off season fishing had already compromised the viability

³⁵"Our Wood Trade," *Union Advocate*, 24 November, 1870.

³⁶Graeme Wynn, *Timber Colony* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 113-137.

of the rich salmon fishery in many districts of the Miramichi.³⁷ The decline in the fishery and the precariousness and fluctuations in the lumbering industry were forcing many families to reconsider farming as a full time occupation. In the 1850s farming had been only a secondary occupation for many residents. The secretary of the Northumberland County Agricultural Society had noted in the 1850s that, "some were *fishing* farmers, some were *lumbering* farmers, even *stevedore*, *logging*, or *hired-out* farmers; but very few were really and truly farmers and that only."³⁸ James McLenaghan, for instance, reported the dual occupation of *farmer-weaver* when census officials in Glenelg called in 1851.³⁹ John Mitchell, enumerator in the Blissfield district, also had a difficult time determining residents' principal occupations in 1861. Most farmers pursued a variety of seasonal activities, supplementing household expenses with "lumbering on a small scale, trading, hunting, tracking, and fishing," noted Mitchell.⁴⁰ This changed dramatically by 1871 with an increase of 37% in the number of men declaring farming as an occupation, as well as an additional 18,600 acres of land under cultivation.⁴¹

Seeking a comfortable independence through farming was now becoming a

³⁷Monro, 206.

³⁸Quoted by Monro, 205. Author's emphasis.

³⁹1851 Compiled Census of Northumberland County, Glenelg district, 26.

⁴⁰*Census of New Brunswick 1861*, NAC, film #C1003, Blissfield, Northumberland County, 27. Marginal note of John Mitchell, enumerator. See also Bruce Curtis for an evaluation of difficulties in designing the census schedules.

⁴¹The number of farmers increased by 880 men to 2397 in 1871. "1861 Census" in *JHANB*, 149; *1871 Census of Canada*, vol 2, 325 and vol 4, 226.

worth while goal. At mid-century agronomist Dr. James Johnston, and travel writer Alexander Monro had both deplored plural occupations practised by most New Brunswick residents. Johnston had noted farming was the only occupation that could provide a fair return as well as a "comfortable maintenance" and keep "all above poverty or care".⁴² Alexander Monro echoed Johnston's comments in 1855 when he noted, "those who have confined themselves to their farms have lived much more comfortably than those who have followed lumbering and fishing, or have united all three."⁴³ An editorial in the *Gleaner* in 1856, had also cautioned residents of Northumberland County to not place their entire livelihood on the timbering trade since it was a "hazardous and uncertain business".⁴⁴ The editorial further noted, "Thousands have embarked in it ... and after many years of toil and much anxiety, few, very few, have reaped a competency, or secured any thing like a remuneration for the capital invested or the labour expended."

The idea that families should labour together on their own land to provide more than mere subsistence was gaining currency in the late 1860s and early 1870s.⁴⁵

⁴²James F. W. Johnston, *Notes on America: Agricultural, Economical and Social*, Vol. 2 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1851), 196-7. As a Scottish agronomist, Johnston was perhaps biased in his views on agriculture. Hired by the provincial government in 1849 to assess its agricultural capabilities, he had travelled extensively throughout the province, observing farming practices and interviewing residents.

⁴³Monro, 206.

⁴⁴*Gleaner*, 8 November, 1856, 1.

⁴⁵Early modern Englishmen used the term "competency" to denote a degree of well being that was both "desirable and morally legitimate," according to Daniel Vickers. Graeme Wynn used "family-centred independence" as a synonym for "comfortable independence." Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, 3rd Series (January 1990): 3-29. Graeme Wynn, "The Maritimes: The Geography of Fragmentation and Underdevelopment," in *Heartland and Hinterland*, 2nd ed., ed. Larry McCann (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada, 1987),

Such farmers were not necessarily wealthy, but more often had achieved a certain level of prosperity due to good luck, hard work, or simply superior business skills. Although many men still resorted to lumbering as a means to make quick cash, more were turning to farming as a full time activity and a more viable alternative. Many had stopped going to the lumbering woods and were spending more time on their farms preparing for the next planting season.

New markets for farm produce and the continuing uncertainty of the lumbering trade were both factors for this increased interest in farming.⁴⁶ One of these obvious markets was the lumber woods, noted Charles Lurgin in his report to government in 1869. As he observed, "The object and design of our farmers should be to supply those engaged in lumbering, and thus avail themselves of a home market for their surplus produce."⁴⁷ The needs and volume of this market were reinforced in 1879 in an article in the *Agriculturist*. Lumbermen consume "immense quantities of pork, oats, corn, blankets, woollens, iron, hardware and steel", in their general business, noted this anonymous writer.⁴⁸ John Rowan had suggested another potential market on his trip through New Brunswick in 1876. Not only should farmers consider a local New Brunswick market but they could send surpluses to New England where farm produce

212.

⁴⁶See especially the work of T.W. Acheson, "New Brunswick Agriculture at the End of the Colonial Era: A Reassessment," in *Farm, Factory and Fortune: New Studies in the Economic History of the Maritime Provinces*, ed. Kris Inwood (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993), 37-60.

⁴⁷Charles Lurgin, owner of the *Colonial Farmer*, was also the new Secretary of the Provincial Board of Agriculture. *JHANB* 1869, 73.

⁴⁸"The Lumber Trade," *The Agriculturist* (Fredericton), 22 February 1879.

"can never be overstocked [and] would absorb any surplus agricultural production."⁴⁹

Neither an authority on farming nor on lumbering, this traveller's observations were, nonetheless, useful in assessing prevailing conditions in the province. However, he also noticed that some men looked upon farming as "too slow a means of making money," and preferred other occupations even though the "risks were greater."⁵⁰

Three new agricultural societies were the tangible results of this increased interest in agriculture in Northumberland County. These societies promoted scientific farming, made communal purchases of new breeding stock, cheaper and improved seed varieties, new agricultural implements, as well as fertilizers. Societies' yearly ploughing matches and agricultural fairs were not only community social events but opportunities to display agricultural products, livestock and domestic manufactures. However, membership in some societies was on the wane in the early 1870s due to increased apathy from many farmers. Samuel Freeze, secretary of the Blissfield and Ludlow Agricultural Society, commented on this lack of interest in 1870. Since there was a "falling off of many of our old subscribers, we find considerable difficulty in obtaining the necessary amount of subscriptions to entitle us to the Government allowance" to purchase improved breeding stock and hold exhibitions in the future. However, the Blackville and Derby Society was "in a vigorous condition", reported William Parker.⁵¹

⁴⁹Rowan, 92-5.

⁵⁰Ibid., 92.

⁵¹"Report of the Blissfield and Ludlow Agricultural Society"; "Report of the Blackville and Derby Agricultural Society"; *JHANB* 1870, Agricultural Reports, 133, 137-8.

Out migration was perhaps the biggest challenge in many parts of the county. An exodus of families, which had started in the late 1840s and continued into the 1860s, still plagued potential population growth. In the Ludlow district, for instance, many families had deserted their farms for the lumbering woods of the Aroostook Valley in Maine in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Three generations of lumbering skills left with them. These men now contributed their expertise to enhancing the Maine economy.⁵²

Between 1840 and 1851, Northumberland County experienced the lowest population change of all counties in the province, with only a slight increase of 3%.

Table 5.2. Number of Families and Population of Northumberland County

Year	Population	Change	# Families	Change
1840	14620	----	2282	----
1851	15064	+444	2282	0
1861	18801	+3737	2777	+495
1871	20052	+1315	3191	+414

1871 Census of Canada, "Recapitulation of 1840 New Brunswick Census," Vol 4, 129; *Ibid.*, "Recapitulation of 1851 New Brunswick Census," Vol 4, 224; *Ibid.*, "1861 Census of New Brunswick," Vol 4, 332; *Ibid.*, "1871 Census of New Brunswick," Vol 1, 71.

Even with this small increase, it was the only county showing no change in the total number of families between 1840 and 1851. Young men and women were more

⁵²William MacKinnon, *Over the Portage: Early History of the Upper Miramichi* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1984), 54-66; James F.W. Johnston, *Notes on America: Agricultural, Economic and Social*, Vol I (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1851), 99; "Letter to the Editor", *Union Advocate* (Newcastle), 17 December 1868, 2; Richard Judd, *Aroostook: A Century of Logging in Northern Maine* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1989), 110-112. Men from the Maritimes continued to seek seasonal lumbering work in northern Maine in the post-Civil War period.

often leaving the county than forming new families. In the 1860s and 1870s, some young women sought work as teachers, as factory workers in the small boot and shoe factories in Chatham and Newcastle, as servants or weavers, or as missionaries.

Manufacturing jobs in America were also a tempting lure for both young men and women.⁵³ Older settled areas, dependent on the "wind, wood and sail" economy, such as Northumberland County, would continue to experience population losses through out-migration throughout the 1870s.⁵⁴

Table 5.3. Ethnic Composition of Northumberland County, 1871

English	3,002	14.9 %
French	1,377	6.8 %
Irish	8,009	39.9 %
Scots	6,895	34.3 %
Native people	436	2.1 %
Other*	333	1.6 %
Total population	20,052	99.6

Source: *1871 Census of Canada*, Vol 1, 320-1; Vol 3, 89. *Other ethnic groups included 105 Germans, 83 Dutch, 49 Welsh, 29 Swiss, 24 Scandinavians, 24 Africans, and 19 Spanish/Portuguese.

⁵³See, for example, Betsy Beattie, *Obligation and Opportunity: Single Maritime Women in Boston, 1870-1930* (Montreal McGill-Queens University Press, 2000), 25-64; Margaret Conrad, Toni Laidlaw and Donna Smyth, eds., *No Place Like Home: Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women, 1771-1938* (Halifax: Formac Publishing Company, 1988), 119-133, 153-167, and 189-202 for women going off to the mission fields and New England. An advertisement seeking girls for a Massachusetts mill appeared in the *St John Globe* in 26 July 1867.

⁵⁴See also Alan Brookes, "Out-migration from the Maritime Provinces, 1860-1900: Some Preliminary Considerations," *Acadiensis* Vol. 5, # 2 (Spring 1976), 31-32; Patricia A. Thornton, "The Problem of Out-Migration from Atlantic Canada, 1871-1921: A New Look," *Acadiensis* 15, #1 (Autumn 1985), 3-34.

Northumberland County also had a more diverse ethnic character by the 1870s. Originally settled by French Acadians and British Loyalists in the eighteenth century, many in the county now claimed either Scottish or Irish heritage. French Acadian residents were now a distinct minority at only 6.8%. The Irish were particularly dominant in the three South West Miramichi districts of Blackville, Blissfield and Ludlow.⁵⁵ Most Irish families had arrived in the pre-famine years, from the mid 1820s to the early 1840s, and had bought up lands vacated by Loyalist families.⁵⁶ Irish famine immigrants had disembarked in both Chatham and Newcastle in the late 1840s but few remained in the county. Many Scottish families also arrived prior to 1830 and continued to live mainly in the Newcastle and Chatham areas. French families resided only in the north eastern sector of the county where they had received land grants earlier in the century. Other ethnic groups included small numbers of Europeans, but especially Dutch, Swiss, German and Welsh, while Native people resided primarily in the Northesk and Alnwick districts.

New means of communication were an important change in the county. Steam ferry boats now linked Newcastle and Chatham, while the *Princess Royal* made regular runs to Point du Chêne in Westmorland County. Another steamer, the *Lady*

⁵⁵Graeme Wynn noted that Doaktown was a Scottish settlement in the early part of the 19th century. This has been disproved by William MacKinnon's work. Wynn, *Timber Colony*, 102; MacKinnon, especially Chapter 3, "All in the Family." Census of New Brunswick 1851, compiled data. Only 13 Scottish families settled in the Blissfield district between 1800-1840 as compared to 40 families from Ireland in the same period.

⁵⁶1851 Census of Northumberland County, compiled edition. Leo J. Hynes, *The Catholic Irish in New Brunswick, 1783-1900* (Self published, 1992), 222, 242; see also Cecil J. Houston and William Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 192-204. In Blackville 32 Irish families arrived between 1800-1820, 124 families between 1820-1830, with an additional 44 families prior to 1840.

Head, stopped in Chatham on its way from Pictou to Quebec City. The Miramichi Steamer Navigation Company, formed in 1871, included eight investors from Chatham. This boat made weekly seasonal runs along the South West Miramichi River to Doaktown.⁵⁷ Stage coaches however, were still the usual means of twice weekly transportation to Fredericton, Saint John and the two Miramichi port towns.

Railways would not traverse the county until 1874 when the Intercolonial Railway opened a station in Newcastle. Although 700 miles of rail track had already been laid in the province, there was little railway building going on in the county. Transportation in the more rural sectors of the county was still underdeveloped. Residents in the central part of the county would not be linked with rail lines until 1884 when Boss Gibson and Senator Jabez Snowball joined forces to build the 150 mile Canadian Eastern Railway line between Newcastle and Devon, near Fredericton.⁵⁸ Residents along the South West Miramichi River could finally travel in comfort and ease. Until then these communities often remained cut off in the winter time and had to rely on horses and sleds in bad weather. These stagecoaches and ferries also brought mail and newspapers as part of their baggage. Many farmers subscribed to the two weekly newspapers published in the county, the new agricultural newspaper, the *Colonial Farmer*, published in Fredericton, as well as other provincial newspapers from the major cities of Saint John and Fredericton.

⁵⁷James Fraser, 76.

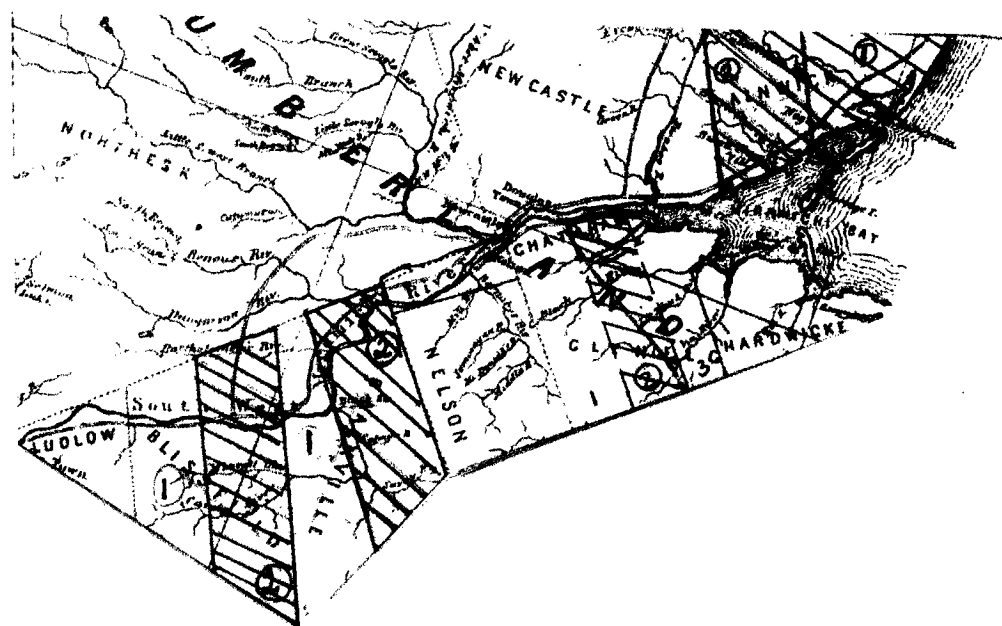
⁵⁸David Nason, *Railways of New Brunswick* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1992), 90. See also Shirley E. Woods, *Cinders and Saltwater: the Story of Atlantic Canada's Railways*, Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1992 for a general discussion of railways in Atlantic Canada.

5.3. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY SAMPLE FAMILIES

Introduction

Diversity was the hallmark of many communities in the Maritimes in the 19th century.⁵⁹ Family structures, occupations and economic situations were hardly homogeneous even within a small area such as Northumberland County. A brief description of each of the five weaving sub-districts will be useful in understanding the analysis.⁶⁰

MAP 5.2. Sub-districts in case study. Hatched lines indicate the particular districts.



⁵⁹Catherine Wilson, "Outstanding in the Field: Recent Rural History in Canada," *Acadiensis* 20, #2 (Spring 1991): 185; Robert MacKinnon, "Agriculture and Rural Change in Nova Scotia, 1851-1951," in *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 10, ed. Donald Akenson (Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1996), 232.

⁶⁰See the Methodology section for the criteria influencing the choice of sub-districts.

Tabasintac and Néguaac were part of the Alnwick census district in the northeastern sector of the county facing Miramichi Bay.⁶¹ Plural occupations were the norm in both districts with most men working seasonally in the fishery, agriculture, or lumbering, as well as harvesting tan bark or firewood to supply an urban market. Small islands of peat, known as the Blacklands, occupied a number of acres between Tabasintac and Néguaac, but there was no indication whether peat was harvested as an alternate source of fuel. The soil was only moderately fertile with farmers specializing in hay, oats and root vegetables.

Lucrative business opportunities in the fishery enticed many entrepreneurs to set up fish curing plants, barrel making shops, and small boat building yards. The fishery in Néguaac employed 90 men who sold part of their catches to fish plant owners David Petrie, Alexander McDiarmid, and Henry Duff. Herring, salmon, cod, mackerel, oysters, and lobsters were either salt cured, canned, or shipped on ice for sale in Boston.⁶² A few artisans, including blacksmiths, coopers, carpenters and shoemakers supplied residents' needs, while three traders responded to mercantile requests.

The Glenelg district was primarily a farming and fishing settlement in the southeastern sector of the county. Scottish residents owned many of the larger farms which were "flourishing", according to Alexander Monro in 1855. These farm families lived

⁶¹W. F. Ganong, "The History of Tabasintac," *Acadiensis* 7 (1907): 315; Ganong, "History of Néguaac and Burnt Church," *Acadiensis* 8 (1908): 268.

⁶²1871 *New Brunswick Census*, NAC, film # C10389, Northumberland County, Alnwick district-1 and -2, Industrial Schedule, marginal notes. These three fish curing operations employed nearly a dozen men.

"comfortably and [were] in independent circumstances" because of their attention to their land.⁶³ Fishing, as well, occupied many residents with easy access to Miramichi Bay along both the Black as well as the Vin rivers. Since almost a third of all families owned one or more fishing boats, this activity, instead of lumbering became the secondary occupation of most male residents.⁶⁴

Doaktown and Blackville were in the western interior of the county and had limited access to the two larger port towns of Chatham and Newcastle. Families in both districts lived on the tributaries of the South West Miramichi River which provided ample opportunities for lumbering, fishing and agriculture. Some residents in Blackville district reported dual occupations of farmer-lumberer or farmer-trader; others worked as labourers on other peoples' farms or in the lumber camps. Doaktown, approximately thirty kilometres west of Blackville, had only half as many families. Residents here also worked in the woods, on large farms or as artisan carpenters, shoemakers, blacksmiths or in one case, stone mason. They were fortunate to have ready access to three mills to grind their oats, card their wool, and saw their lumber. Widow Ann Doak owned all three, as well as a small store, a boarding house, and a small weaving business.

⁶³Monro, 205-7.

⁶⁴Thirteen men in the district reported the dual occupation of "farmer-fisherman".

5.3.1 Demographic Assessment

The demographics of New Brunswick's weavers and their neighbours varied along ethnic lines, and with family composition, age, and marital status. In 1851 foreign born and male weavers had dominated this trade.⁶⁵ By 1871 there was a complete shift in the gender and place of birth of weavers.⁶⁶ Weaving was now a female occupation, practised by women of all ages whether single, married or widowed.⁶⁷ Among the 375 market weavers in Northumberland County in 1871, only six were men. All but one were older and foreign born, and were likely winding up their careers after passing on their skills to their daughters. There were no younger male weavers, since men now had ample opportunities for more lucrative work in other trades.

⁶⁵A comprehensive survey of all manuscripts of the 1851 census revealed 56 men and 42 women reporting weaving as their primary occupation. This did not represent all working weavers since nominal data was missing for a number of districts. Many residents might have only woven occasionally and did not bother to report their weaving activity. However tabulated reports noted 5475 looms in the province. *1851 Census of New Brunswick*, manuscript schedules.

⁶⁶In 1851 over one third of reported practising weavers in New Brunswick lived in Northumberland County. Among the 19 male weavers only two were New Brunswick born; only two of the 16 female weavers were foreign born. By 1861, there was a decrease in the number of men reporting weaving and an increase in the number of women. All eleven male weavers were foreign born while all 38 women were New Brunswick born. Manuscript census of New Brunswick 1851, 1861.

⁶⁷Harold and Dorothy Burnham noted that only one percent of "professional" weavers in Ontario were women. They did not elaborate on the criteria for "professional" status. Burnham and Burnham, 11.

Table 5.4. Size of 1871 Weaving Case Study, Northumberland County

District	# Market weavers	# Home weavers	# Non weavers	Total families	% Weaving
Tabstintac	45	17	35	97	57.2
Néguac	70	5	56	131	63.9
Doaktown	17	13	19	49	61.2
Blackville	21	2	79	102	22.5
Glenelg	8	56	12	76	84.2
Total	161	93	201	455	55.8

Percentage weaving includes both market weavers and home weavers.

Place of birth was the most striking difference between market weavers in Northumberland County and their Leeds County counterparts. Eighty five percent of the Northumberland sample group were born in the province while nearly all market weavers in the Leeds County study were foreign born.⁶⁸ Among both home weavers and non-weavers in Northumberland County, many more heads of households were foreign born, either in Ireland, Scotland or England.⁶⁹ This represented 29% of head of households among home weavers and nearly 25% of non-weavers.

Census enumerators asked respondents to identify their cultural backgrounds along with the country or province of their birth in 1871. These questions provide information to build an ethnic profile of weavers and their neighbours. Almost all residents, except Acadians and Native people, indicated a European cultural

⁶⁸The Leeds County study included 99 market weaving families in four townships west of Brockville. Inwood and Roelens, 223, 228. Among the foreign born weavers in the Northumberland County study, thirteen came from Ireland, nine from Scotland and one from England.

⁶⁹Inwood and Roelens only considered market weavers in their analysis and not home weavers or their non-weaving neighbours.

background with Scottish, Irish, and English predominating.

Table 5.5 Ethnic Profile of All Residents in Sample Districts

1871	Scottish %	Irish %	English %	French %	Other %	Total families
Tabsintac	44.3	9.2	11.3	30.9	4.1	97
Néguac	20.6	9.1	4.5	60.0	5.3	131
Doaktown	26.5	34.6	32.6	0	4.0	49
Blackville	18.8	54.4	19.8	2.9	3.9	102
Glenelg	76.3	22.3	1.3	0	0	76
County	34.4	40.0	15.0	6.8	3.5*	3191

Source: *Census of Canada, 1871*, Vol 1, 320-1; Vol 3, 88.

*Other (in the county) includes 436 Native people, 105 Germans, 83 Dutch, 49 Welsh, and 29 Swiss. Bolded numbers refer to large ethnic concentrations.

Most ethnic groups tended to cluster in particular districts where they shared a common language or religion. This was especially true of groups whose mother tongue was not English. Irish predominated in the county, as well as the two sub-districts of Doaktown and Blackville.⁷⁰ Scots preferred living near their kin in both Glenelg and Tabsintac. French speakers were a distinct minority in the county. Nearly all them lived in the Alnwick districts of Tabsintac and Néguac. These Acadians had been early settlers to the area, coming from the Peticodiac and Shepody areas, and returning to the upper reaches of Alnwick district after the 1755 expulsion.⁷¹

⁷⁰Whether Gaelic was spoken in the Blackville district was unknown.

⁷¹1871 *Census of Canada*, Vol 1, 320; Vol 3, 88. Ganong, "Néguac and Burnt Church," 280-282. Also see Ganong, "A Monograph on the Origins of Settlements in the Province of New Brunswick," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 10, Section 2 (1904): 3-185; and Cedric L. Haines, "The Acadian Settlement of Northeastern New Brunswick," MA thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1979.

The ethnic heritage of each component of the sample group, however, was somewhat different from the general population of the sub-districts. The percentage of French people in the market weaving group exceeded the county average by a high margin. Only 6.8% of residents in the county were Acadians compared to 43.4% of market weavers in the sample group. Scottish people in Glenelg, as well, represented a much higher proportion than the county average of 34%. Both the Irish and the English were under-represented in all three components of the sample group. Eleven families from other cultural groups included three Dutch families, one Welsh and seven Native families.

Table 5.6. Ethnic Heritage of Each Component of the Sample Group

Ethnicity	# Market weavers	%	# Home weavers	%	# Non weavers	%
Scottish	49	30.4	58	62.3	55	27.5
French	70	43.4	9	9.6	32	16.0
Irish	27	16.7	19	20.4	64	32.0
English	11	6.8	6	6.4	37	18.5
German	1	0.6	0	1.0	5	2.5
Other	3	1.8	1	0	7	3.5
Unknown	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	161	99.7	93	99.7	201	100

Bolded numbers refer to the highest ethnic concentration.

Two other major differences from the Leeds County study were the marital status and age of market weavers. In Leeds County, the majority of market weavers were middle aged, married men and women. Inwood and Roelens noted that younger

married women were "relatively unlikely to weave" since their time was taken up with child care.⁷² In Northumberland County, nearly two thirds of market weavers were married, less than a third were single, and a small portion were widows.

Table 5.7. Marital Status of Market Weavers, Northumberland County, 1871

Sub-district	Number	Single	Married	Widows	*Unknown
Tabstintac	45	6	34	3	2
Néguac	70	25	38	5	2
Blissfield	17	0	7	2	8
Blackville	21	5	13	3	0
Glenelg	8	5	2	1	0
Total	161	41	94	14	12
Percentage	---	25.4	58.3	8.6	7.4

In the case of "Unknown", the identity of the weaver was uncertain, due to either illegible writing or a male head of household reporting the weaving business.

Most married market weavers in Leeds County were over the age of 40 years, while those in Northumberland averaged only 36.4 years. Almost half of them were under age 35, the prime child bearing years; unmarried market weavers averaged 25 years of age. The small number of widows was surprising. Averaging 50 years of age, these fourteen women made up less than 10% of the weaving cohort.⁷³

⁷²Inwood and Roelens did not divide their study into separate marital groups. Inwood and Roelens, 227.

⁷³Dorothy and Harold Burnham noted the small number of women [weavers] in Ontario were "unmarried and of a certain age, or widows with dependent children who were forced by their circumstances to earn their livelihood." Burnham and Burnham, 11; Cohen, 81.

Table 5.8. Age of Market Weavers, Northumberland County

Age	# Single	#Married	#Widows
Less than 20	7	---	---
20-25	20	11	---
26-30	7	16	---
31-35	3	19	---
36-40	2	22	4
41-45	2	10	1
46-50	---	9	5
51-55	---	5	---
56-60	---	1	1
+61	---	1	3
Total	41	94	14
Average Age	25.2	36.4	50.2

Ethnicity made little difference in marital status. However, the average age of weavers was different among the major cultural groups. Francophone and Scottish girls under the age of 25 were more likely to be weavers, while this was uncommon among either the Irish or the English. Among married women, however, there were few Scottish or Irish market weavers still weaving past the age of 40. Weaving was popular among all age groups of Francophone women with some still recording output into their 50s.

As in Leeds County, market weavers in Northumberland County tended to have larger households. In many cases nuclear families lived under the same roof with in-laws, unmarried siblings, servants, and grandparents. In Leeds County these families

averaged 6.8 people, while in Northumberland they averaged 8.0 people, much higher than the county average of 6.2 people. Both home weavers and non-weavers alike had smaller families than market weavers in the sample group.⁷⁴ Ethnicity definitely had a bearing on family size.

Table 5.9 Average Family Size Based on Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Market Weavers	Home Weavers	Non-weavers
Scots	8.1	6.2	5.8
Irish	7.3	6.6	5.7
French	8.2	7.3	6.4
English	6.9	7.6	6.7
German*	11	11	5.8
Other	12.6	---	4.0
Average	8.0	7.0	6.0

*There was one large German family of eleven people in both the market and home weavers groups.

Francophone market weavers had the largest families of all, averaging 8.2 people, while Scottish families were a close second with 8.1 people. Among both home weavers and non-weavers, those of English heritage had the largest families, with 6.7 people, followed by the French with 6.4 people.

A large family did not necessarily mean having extra hands to weave cloth or spin wool. Extra women in the family, such as spinster aunts, widowed mothers, servants, or teenage daughters could make the task of cloth making much easier.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Home weavers in Northumberland County averaged seven people, non-weavers were much closer to the county norm of six people.

⁷⁵Extra women included only those over 16 years.

According to Inwood and Roelens, families with a disproportionate number of women were likely to weave since there were few other employment opportunities and the family needed their income.⁷⁶

The number of extra women in market weaving families in both Leeds and Northumberland counties was similar. In Leeds County, market weaving families had on average 2.20 extra women, while those in Northumberland County averaged 2.27 extra females able to supply "woman" power for textile and other tasks. Both home weavers and non-weavers alike in Northumberland County had much smaller numbers of extra females.⁷⁷ Non-weavers were also more likely to live in households with no women at all since a number of them were widowers or lived in lumber shanties. Ethnicity again was revealing. Scottish and French families tended to have larger numbers of extra females among both market weavers and non-weavers; among home weavers, Scottish families again had larger numbers of extra females.

The demographic trend for market weavers in Northumberland County was thus one where native born, younger women, representing all marital statuses, dominated the occupation.⁷⁸ These weavers lived in larger families which often had extra women to help in textile production. No one ethnic group dominated weaving activity, although weaving was more common among both Scottish and French families.

⁷⁶Inwood and Roelens, 225-6.

⁷⁷This averaged 1.88 for home weavers and 1.47 for non weavers.

⁷⁸ Only one married man in his 70s was part of the sample group.

5.3.2 Economic Assessment

Families' economic situations were hardly homogeneous either. Like a patchwork quilt, well off households resided next to those in extreme poverty. Land ownership, improved acres, and the number of farm implements were the most important indicators of relative wealth among farm families.⁷⁹ Surplus crop production and surplus animals used for food are two other indicators of relative wealth. Both of these indicators, however, require a complicated set of calculations and could be misleading since both prices and food requirements fluctuated seasonally. There was also no indication if families were actually able to dispose of any surplus or if adverse weather conditions spoiled the harvest. Since most family heads worked at seasonal jobs fishing or lumbering, their fishing boats and gear, as well as hay production, and the number of draft animals could also generate wealth. Lumber camps frequently purchased hay to feed draft animals, as well as hired farmers with their horses or oxen to work seasonally in the woods.⁸⁰

Market and home weavers in Northumberland County sample households were not land poor and were more likely to own more land than non-weavers.

⁷⁹See especially the work of Acheson, "New Brunswick Agriculture...", 46-47; Béatrice Craig, "Agriculture in a Pioneer Region: The Upper Saint John River Valley in the first half of the 19th Century," in *Farm, Factory and Fortune*, ed. Kris Inwood (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993), 25-32; Jeremy Atack and Fred Bateman, *To Their Own Soil: Agriculture in the Antebellum North* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1987), 201-224; and Marvin McNis, "Market Surpluses in Ontario Farming, 1860," *Social Science History* 8, #4 (Fall 1984), 395-424.

⁸⁰For the role of horses in the lumbering woods see Judd, 81-88; Wynn, *Timber Colony*, 54-86; John W. Hughson and Courtney Bond, *Hurling Down the Pine* (Chelsea, Quebec: The Historical Society of the Gatineau, 1987), 66, 80; Donald MacKay, *The Lumberjacks* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History Inc., 1998), numerous references. For a different view of the lumbering industry see Graeme Wynn, "Deplorably Dark and Demoralized Lumberers?": Rhetoric and Reality in Early Nineteenth-Century New Brunswick," *Journal of Forest History* 24, # 4 (October 1980): 168-187.

Table 5.10. Percentage of Those Owning Land in Sample Group

District	%Market weavers n=152	%Home weavers n=86	%Non-weavers n=136
Tabstintac	93	70.3	60
Néguac	100	100	67.8
Doaktown	88	84	47.3
Blackville	100	100	100
Glenelg	80.9	100	72.1
% Owning land	94.4	92.4	67.6

Tenancy was more common among younger non-weavers, especially in the lumbering districts such as Doaktown, where young men worked in the woods seasonally or as farm labourers in the off season.⁸¹ Only nine market weaving families rented their farms, along with seven families among home weavers. However, almost a third of all non-weavers did not own their land.

The average amount of land owned differed considerably among the three groups. While the average amount of land owned by all market and home weavers was similar, those in the non-weaving group owned substantially less land than the others. Even between districts, the amount of land among each group differed considerably.

⁸¹1871 *Census of Canada*, Vol. 3, 88. In the county less than 6% of families rented their farms or houses; this held true as well in the two major towns of Newcastle and Chatham.

Table 5.11. Average Number of Acres Owned by Residents in Sample Groups

District	Market Weavers	N	Home Weavers	N	Non-weavers	N
Tab sintac	155.3	42	123.7	12	108.7	20
Néguac	136	70	88	5	84.3	38
Doaktown	263.6	15	170.3	11	149	9
Blackville	211.2	17	230	2	132.3	57
Glenelg	318	8	177	56	135	12
Average	172.0	152	165.9	86	117.6	136

In both Glenelg and Doaktown, for example, market weaving families owned much larger parcels of land than those in the other three districts. However, these averages are deceiving as both these sub-districts had the smallest numbers of weavers.

Weavers' farms were also generally larger in Northumberland County than in Leeds County. Leeds County market weavers resided on small to medium sized farms of less than 50 acres. With too little land, agricultural production often suffered on these smaller farms. In Northumberland County three quarters of market weavers lived on farms of more than 75 acres. Forty percent of these were large farms of over 200 acres. Only three families lived on farms of less than 50 acres. Lack of land does not appear to have been a contributing factor for their weaving activity. Even the home weavers and the non-weavers in Northumberland County owned substantially more land than Leeds County market weavers.

While land ownership offers some idea of a family's relative prosperity, it was often a less useful criterion than the number of improved acres under cultivation. Two

hundred acres of rock and swamp could hardly feed a family.

Table 5.12. Average Number of Improved Acres

District	Market weavers	Home Weavers	Non weavers
Tabstintac	23.8	17.0	21.2
Néguac	18.8	9.2	12.4
Doaktown	41.2	22.5	36.0
Blackville	33.0	30.0	18.8
Glenelg	37.7	33.9	21.1
Average	25.0	28.5	18.7

According to T. W. Acheson, ten acres of improved land was the minimum size needed to sustain a farm family and provide at least a marginal subsistence.⁸² Market weavers owned on average more than twice the minimum requirement. A fairer evaluation of relative wealth is to compare market weavers with their immediate neighbours within the same sub-district. Market weavers in all sub-districts occupied more improved land than either their home weaving or non-weaving neighbours. Sometimes the margin was quite small, as in the case of Tabstintac, where non-weavers and market weavers had similar amounts of improved acres. As well, some non-weavers surpassed their home weaving neighbours in amount of improved land. In Doaktown, for instance, non-weaving households occupied on average 36 acres of improved land while their home weaving neighbours only 22.5 acres.

Acheson used these improved acres, as well as ownership of draft animals and

⁸²Acheson, "New Brunswick Agriculture...", 53.

farm implements to classify families into four economic strata.⁸³ The first level included marginal farms of less than ten improved acres, followed by a group of modest farmers with 10-30 improved acres, then two sub-groups of more prosperous farms. Applying his criteria to Northumberland County yields some remarkable results. Among market weaving households less than 10% occupied marginal farms and had to depend on off-farm income. The rest were either modestly well off farmers or belonged to elite farm families. Nearly two thirds of market weaving households cultivated between 20-40 acres of improved land, owned one or more ploughs and had horses or oxen. They averaged 25 acres of improved land, which allowed a modest level of prosperity, unlike their non-weaving neighbours who only cultivated an average of 18.7 acres. Obviously those who cultivated 30-40 acres were better off than those at the bottom of the scale.

What was surprising were the number of market weavers who owned what Acheson considered elite farms. Twenty eight families, or 18.4%, had in excess of 40 acres of improved land, produced surpluses for the market, and rationalized their decisions about farm labour requirements. They often owned specialized farms, equipment, and draft animals but often had adult sons to help with farm chores.

⁸³Acheson, "New Brunswick Agriculture...", 55-57. Cottage farmers had less than 10 improved acres, no draft animals or ploughs, lived a marginal lifestyle and had to depend on off-farm work for a living. Modest farmers had cleared land in the 10-30 acre range, a few draft animals, cut about 12 cords of firewood but seldom owned ploughs or wagons. Most of what they produced they also consumed, leaving only about 10% of production available for the market. The third and fourth groups both produced surpluses, but the magnitude of these surpluses and the diversification of their operations set them apart from their neighbours. Families in the third category typically had 30-40 acres of improved land, owned ploughs and animals, and ran a diversified operation. Those in the fourth category had in excess of 40 improved acres, a major surplus of many commodities, owned numerous animals and more sophisticated farm machinery, such as threshers, hay rakes and fanning mills. This fourth group were the elite farmers.

Hay production was one chore which was common among both market weavers and home weavers. According to Acheson, hay production in New Brunswick was a sign of prosperity since it often passed as "a form of common currency."⁸⁴ Lumber camps bought large volumes of hay for their winter's work, while small farmers needed more modest amounts to feed livestock. Over 85% of all market and home weavers reported hay production averaging between 9.5-11 tons. This fell within Acheson's median range for prosperity. Among non-weavers, only 56% produced hay, averaging 7.7 tons, only slightly above Acheson's 25th percentile.

Since many residents in the two coastal sub-districts included inshore fishing among their plural occupations, ownership of boats and nets could also be an indicator of relative wealth. In Tabsintac, 70% of all households fished, while in Néguaac, 47% spent some part of their working time on the sea. Some owned only boats, some owned only nets and fished with others, while another group owned both boats and nets. Among market weavers in both sub-districts, fishing was an important component of the family income since 66% owned boats and 83% owned nets. Among non-weavers, less than 44% owned either boats or nets while nearly 60% of home weavers owned fishing equipment. Estimating the value of both boats and fishing gear was not feasible since the Census Manual did not include specific instructions how to place a value on them, nor give standardized sizes.⁸⁵

Using ethnicity to compare land holding and improved acres among the three

⁸⁴Acheson, "New Brunswick Agriculture...", 53.

⁸⁵*Census Manual*, 140-1.

groups gives a completely different impression of prosperity. While market weavers of Scottish heritage owned the most land, English market weavers had the largest number of improved acres. Those of Irish heritage both owned the most land among home weavers and had done the best job improving it. Scots both owned and improved the most amount of land among non-weavers. The French, however, owned the least amount of land as well as the smallest amount of improved land among all three groups.

At mid century Abraham Gesner had noticed the particular way Acadians practised agriculture in the county. Acadian French, he noted, "were not an enterprising people...and it is scarcely possible to wean them from the [traditional] customs of their forefathers."⁸⁶ Their yields will not be prolific since "they are not readily moved to adopt modern improvements."⁸⁷ During the next twenty years Acadian farmers still clung to their traditions although a few, like Bonaventure Savoy of Néguaac, had joined agricultural societies and knew about scientific farming.⁸⁸

If improved acres are the only criteria for wealth, Régis Brun's assessment of Acadians' economic deprivation is well founded. It was true that most Acadian farmers and fishermen were less well off than their Anglophone neighbours. However, weaving might have made a difference.

⁸⁶Abraham Gesner, *New Brunswick with Notes for Emigrants* (London: Simmonds and Ward, 1847), 333.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 239.

⁸⁸*Gleaner*, 4 March 1854. "Report of the Alnwick Agricultural Society". Savoy's family won seven prizes for both grains and domestic cloth manufacturing.

Table 5.13 Improved Acres Among Acadians in Northumberland County

# Improved Acres	Market Weavers	Home Weavers	Non-weavers
0-9	8	4	23
10-19	33	2	5
20-29	16	1	2
30-39	11	1	2
+40	2	---	---
Total	70	8	32

Among market weaving households, Charles St Ceor in Tabsintac, and widow Anastasie Robicheau in Néguac, could both claim elite farm status with respectively 40 and 50 improved acres. Only eight market weaving families in the two Alnwick sub-districts lived on what could be considered marginal farms of less than ten acres. The remaining 60 market weavers had more than the minimal requirement and were modestly prosperous. Many owned between ten and thirty acres of improved land, had ploughs or threshers and draft animals.⁸⁹ Non-weaving Acadian families were the least well off with twenty three owning no land at all or only cultivating a very small number of improved acres. Fishing gear, however, must also be considered among signs of wealth for these Acadians. Among the 110 Francophone families in the two Alnwick sub-districts, 79% of them owned nets and at least one boat. Including fishing gear in assessing Acadians' relative wealth changes Régis Brun's assessment of their assumed poverty.

⁸⁹There were 114 French families living in the two north eastern districts. Thirty three of these families lived on marginal farms.

The total economic picture of market weavers in Northumberland County was thus somewhat rosy compared to the Leeds County study. Almost all owned land and had enough improved acres to grow sufficient crops as well as some surplus. They also owned both ploughs and draft animals, and sometimes threshing machines to assist them in their agricultural production. With the addition of fishing gear to the economic assessment, most market weavers in Northumberland County were able to assure their families of a comfortable independence. Poverty was not a factor in their motivation to include market weaving among their household activities. In Leeds County this was not the case.

5.3.3 Business Profile of Market Weavers

The Industrial Schedule offers a rare look at market weavers' business activities. Enumerators recorded the number of months worked, number of employees, amount of fixed capital, value of raw materials, and the kind, value and amount of finished product. In the rare case of the Blackville weavers, enumerators also added marginal comments about their weaving activity. Weaving was a part time activity usually done on a seasonal basis among other chores such as housework, child care, cooking, canning and preserving and the myriad of other household tasks. Although nearly all market weavers reported only one "employee", in essence themselves, many likely had unreported extra women helping in the business. Most spent an average of 1.33 months weaving, with only 37 of them working for longer periods. Eight of these weavers wove for more than four months.

Marital status was a determining factor in the amount of time spent on

weaving. Single women spent more time weaving than either married women or widows. They wove on average for 42 days and produced 106 yards of cloth. Married women spent nearly one week less on their weaving and averaged 93 yards of cloth. Widows were least productive and wove for nearly the same amount of time as single women but produced only 83 yards.

Compared to weavers in Leeds County, Northumberland County weavers spent less than half as much time on weaving. Difficult financial circumstances likely pushed weavers in Leeds to spend more time weaving. However, they were also more productive, weaving almost a third more per month than their counterparts in New Brunswick. The Irish were the most productive weavers in Northumberland County, weaving almost as much per month as those in Leeds County.

Weavers placed different values on their homespun cloth even within the same district. Calculating the average value of cloth gave no sense of the wide variation of values placed on homespun, only that the average price per yard was 74.3 cents. For example, in Doaktown, weavers who wove under 50 yards of cloth valued it from a high of 81 cents per yard to a low of 66 cents per yard. In Leeds County, Inwood and Roelens noted that cloth with the "highest value per yard originated with the very small and the very large weavers."⁹⁰ Amy Arbo wove the largest amount of cloth in Doaktown but valued her cloth far below those making much smaller amounts. Her 200 yards of cloth was worth only 63 cents a yard, while Elizabeth Lyons, who made only 37 yards, valued hers at 81 cents per yard. This same trend was the norm in the

⁹⁰Inwood and Roelens, 231.

other sub-districts. Ellen Porter, the most prolific weaver in Blackville, wove 550 yards of cloth and valued it at 70 cents per yard, while her neighbour, Margaret Quinn, valued her 50 yards at 80 cents per yard. Nearly all weavers in the Néguaac sub-district valued their cloth at the uniform price of 80 cents per yard.

This price per yard gave a false sense of how much money a weaver actually earned for her labour. The cost of raw materials had to come out of her pocket before any money was realized. This net income per yard, sometimes called *value added*, was substantially less than the price per yard. Again this value added varied wildly within a district and from one district to the other. Using Doaktown again for example, value added went from a low of 24 cents per yard to a high of 61 per yard. This also had no relationship to the amount of cloth made. The most prolific weaver in Doaktown, Amy Arbo, earned 43 cents per yard for her labour while George Jardine, from Glenelg, earned only 19 cents per yard for his 1000 yards of cloth. The average net income for all weavers was 35 cents per yard.

If weaving was a response to poverty, then those living on small holdings should have been making the most cloth in order to supplement the family income. This was the case in Leeds County but not in Northumberland County or elsewhere.⁹¹ According to Atack and Bateman, weavers on large farms in both the northeast and midwest of America tended to make large amounts of cloth while those on small holdings made small amounts.⁹² In Northumberland County there was no linear

⁹¹Inwood and Roelens, 230.

⁹²Atack and Bateman, 206.

increase between amount of cloth and number of improved acres. Those with 25-29 improved acres wove almost the same amount as those with 60-69 improved acres. Weavers in Northumberland County were not weaving because they were poor.

5.3.4 Profiles of Four Market Weavers

Quantitative data gives no sense of individual households, family dynamics, nor motivations for weaving. Both individual census data and business accounts were equally dry but did furnish another dimension to weavers' lives. Four particular market weavers in four different sub-districts were chosen to examine in depth the wide variations in family composition and economic well being. **Ann Doak** was the only weaver with significant documentation; for the others, there was only census data.

Robert Harvie and Mary Strahorn, with their five year old daughter Ann emigrated from Ayr, Scotland in 1831 and eventually settled in Nash Creek, Restigouche County.⁹³ Ann married James Andrew Doak, a family acquaintance and fellow Scot, in 1849 and left to set up housekeeping with her in-laws, Robert and Jane Doak, in Doaktown, Northumberland County.⁹⁴ She and James had two children and eventually had their own place, although James continued to work on his father's farm. The senior Doaks also owned the only milling businesses in the district where

⁹³Flemming Holm, *A History of the United Church of Charlo, New Mills and Jacquet River* (Dalhousie, 1961), 15, UNB Special Archives; George H. Cook, *Memorial to the Arran Clearances*, (Saint John, 1977), 17, UNB Special Archives; *1851 Census of New Brunswick*, Durham, Restigouche County; obituary for Robert Harvie, *The Evening Gazette* (Saint John), 25 March 1889.

⁹⁴Marriage licence for Ann Harvie and James Andrew Doak, 20 March, 1849; PANB, *Doak Family Papers* MC 1055, MS5 B/7.

residents could have their wool carded, oats ground into flour, and logs sawn.⁹⁵ Where Ann learned her textile skills was unknown but each year the senior Doaks hired local women to live for a few months in the household and spin and weave for them.

By 1863, Ann and her family went to live on the Doak homestead with James' widowed mother. Tax records for 1863 showed James Doak as the most prosperous man in the community with \$4000 worth of real estate and another \$700 in personal assets.⁹⁶ However, adversity suddenly changed their lives. James died of heat stroke while "taking in the hay" in August of 1863.⁹⁷ Ann was left to run the milling businesses and raise her two young children.

Ann's personal memoranda between 1863-1868 showed her "cunning and cleverness", as well as her use of textile skills to supply some level of comfort for her family.⁹⁸ She collected a large number of outstanding debts owed the family, ran a boarding house, wove cloth for a few customers, such as Horace Austin, her hired man, and sold homespun socks and mitts. She also hired local weaver, Margaret J. Lyons from the neighbouring community of Ludlow, to come to her house during the summer months to weave and spin for her.⁹⁹ Margaret was 23 years old in 1871 when

⁹⁵PANB, MC 1055, *Doak Family Papers*; Account Books MS1 K/1, 1819-1848 and MS1 K/3, 1852-1857.

⁹⁶Tax records for Blissfield, Northumberland County. Extant tax records were only available for the period ending in 1863. Those for other years were illegible. PANB, film # 1269.

⁹⁷Obituary for James Doak; *Gleaner*, 29 August, 1863.

⁹⁸PANB, MC 1055, *Doak Family Papers*; Account Book MS6 F/3, 1866-1888 and Account Book MS8 F/1, 1873-1920.

⁹⁹PANB, *Doak Family Papers*, MC 1055; Account Book MS5 F/3, Margaret J. Lyons 1868-1878, various pages.

she and two unmarried older sisters all listed themselves as market weavers.¹⁰⁰ Their father, William, was a widower with five children and it was likely that the three older daughters not only wove but also ran his household. Margaret continued to work for Ann every summer until 1876.

Illustration 5.1. Photo of Ann Doak, nd.¹⁰¹



¹⁰⁰Northumberland County, Ludlow district-2, family # 46. The three girls, Frances, age 36, Mary, age 30 and Margaret wove in all 380 yards of cloth of which 30 remained in their household.

¹⁰¹UNB Special Collection, MG L7, *Annie Harvey Ross Foster Hanley Fonds, 1885-1974*, Series 4, photographs. This photo, along with one of her husband, James A. Doak, was taken prior to August 1863 when James died.

On the 1871 census Ann Doak reported 220 acres of land, including 40 improved acres, two houses, a threshing machine, a fanning mill, three horses and fifteen tons of hay.¹⁰² These signs of wealth placed her into the elite category of farm households. She also reported 50 yards of cloth as a market weaver and another 84 yards for her use. Most of the cloth was wool but receipts from stores in Newcastle showed she frequently bought cotton warps and dyes for weaving. Ann publicly turned over her milling businesses to her son Harvie in 1875 by placing a small ad in the Newcastle *Union Advocate*.¹⁰³ Since her son did not marry until 1885, Ann continued to maintain the business accounts and the practice of hiring local women to spin and weave for the family. Her new daughter-in-law, Christine Cameron Doak, then took over Ann's accounting duties in the family businesses.¹⁰⁴

In 1871 **Ellen Porter** and her Irish born husband James owned 200 acres of land near the Cains River in the hinterland of the Blackville district.¹⁰⁵ Ellen had married James before she was 20 years old and, at the age of 40, had recently delivered her seventh living child. This last baby had been born the previous September when she was finishing her season's canning and preserving as well as her weaving for the upcoming fall market. The Porters had many Irish friends in the

¹⁰²1871 Census, Northumberland County, Blissfield district-2, family #39, Ann Doak.

¹⁰³*Union Advocate*, 27 October 1875, 1.

¹⁰⁴Ann Doak left her son's household and went to live with her daughter Margaret Jane and son-in-law Thomas Flett in Nelson in the late 1880s. She died at the age of 91 and is buried in the Presbyterian cemetery in Doaktown. Obituary for Ann Doak, *The Commercial* (Chatham), 22 January 1918.

¹⁰⁵1871 Census, Northumberland County, Blackville district-2, family #58, James Porter.

district who, like them, had about 20 acres under cultivation and were able to provide their family with a decent living. They grew hops for beer, as well as wheat, oats, beans and buckwheat and had a quarter acre kitchen garden. There were three cows for milk and Ellen had churned 180 pounds of butter. James did not own a horse, but used his two oxen and his two ploughs to cultivate his land. He also cut firewood, and frequently went fishing for salmon in the Cains River with his 17 year old son.

During 1870 Ellen spent five and half months "[weaving] for a number of persons," noted enumerator Thomas Newman. Not only did she weave 550 yards of cotton and wool cloth for the market but an additional 500 yards for her family's clothing and bedding needs. The Porters' thirteen sheep only produced 33 pounds of wool, hardly enough for her weaving needs. She had to buy fleece from her neighbours but some of her local customers also supplied their own handspun yarn in exchange for her services. Her raw material costs were fairly reasonable, amounting to \$169. Cotton warps and dyes were likely purchased from one of the three traders in the district or from itinerant pedlars. The only help with her chores likely came from her thirteen year old eldest daughter. Income from Ellen's weaving business amounted to \$216 for her labour alone, a tidy sum to help sustain the family.

George Jardine, of Glenelg, was the only male weaver in the sample group.¹⁰⁶ He and his 58 year old wife, Jannet[sic], had a large household of eleven people. Six of these were adult children still living at home and helping their parents with both farm and household chores. The four adult sons were either farmers or labours while

¹⁰⁶1871 Census, Northumberland County, Glenelg district-2, family #16, George Jardine.

the two adult daughters, both in their late twenties, likely helped their mother or looked after the three small children, including two infants, living with the family. Whether these were grandchildren was unknown since none of the adult children were married or widowed. Two other sons had already left home to set up their own households.

Jardine noted he was a tenant on his 300 acre farm in 1871. On the 1861 census he was not included among landowning farmers, perhaps because of his weaving trade. However, the number of acres he cultivated, as well as the number of specialized pieces of agricultural equipment he owned, placed him well within the better off in this farming community. On his 35 improved acres he primarily grew oats, potatoes, buckwheat and peas. He also owned a horse, ten head of cattle, ten sheep and two pigs. His hay and oat production, as well as twelve acres of pasture land, were both more than adequate to feed his livestock.

This 74 year old weaver had arrived from Ecclefechan, Dumphries, Scotland in 1823 and was still practising his occupation in 1871. He had likely learned his weaving trade from his father, Joseph Jardine, also a weaver in Scotland.¹⁰⁷ In both 1851 and 1861, Jardine reported his weaving business to census enumerators. Many of his fellow male weavers had long since given up their weaving businesses with only six male weavers still practising in the county. George worked at his loom for six months a year and wove 1000 yards of cotton and wool cloth for the market.

¹⁰⁷George's father, Joseph, his wife, Janet, and seven of their nine children arrived in Napan, Northumberland County in 1824. Donald Whyte, *Dictionary of Scottish Emigration to Canada Before Confederation* (Toronto: Ontario Genealogy Society, 1986), 135.

Our fourth market weaver, Acadian **Emélie Savoy**, lived with her husband, Jules, and their large extended family in the Néguaac sub-district.¹⁰⁸ The rest of her family included her 78 year old widowed mother-in-law, Julie, a 21 year old servant girl, Mary Breau, 18 year old Susanne, "of unsound mind", and five young children. Fifty year old Jules had inherited his father's 180 acre prosperous farm sometime in the 1860s. His father, Bonaventure, had been one of the few Acadian farmers active in the local Alnwick Agricultural Society in the 1850s.¹⁰⁹ Scientific farming was often a topic of discussion at Society meetings. It was more than likely that Bonaventure then applied some of these ideas to his own farming practices. In 1861 he valued his farm at \$1600 and farm implements worth \$120.¹¹⁰ By inheriting the farm, Emélie and Jules were among the more prosperous members of their community.

Jules worked at three part time occupations. He farmed 30 acres of land where he grew wheat, oats, barley, potatoes, hay and flax, a crop common among French-speaking families in the province. He also ran a shingle making shop for two months a year and fished for herring. The family owned a number of farm animals including a horse and a new colt, four cows, nine young cattle, 24 sheep and a few pigs. They also owned a carriage, two wagons and two ploughs.

Thirty year old Emélie was a busy mother, weaving in her spare moments,

¹⁰⁸1871 Census, Northumberland County, Alnwick district- 2, family # 12, Jules Savoy.

¹⁰⁹"Report of the Alnwick Agricultural Society 1854," *Gleaner*. 4 March 1854.

¹¹⁰1861 Census of Northumberland County, Alnwick district; NAC, film C1003.

carrying for her two toddlers, and completing her other numerous chores.¹¹¹ She reported weaving 150 yards of wool and cotton homespun and 39 yards of linen cloth in only six weeks, a large production in such a short time. Perhaps her mother-in-law or the servant helped by carding and spinning the 60 pounds of wool and ten pounds of flax produced on the farm. Emélie likely wove similar fabrics to the prize winning ones submitted by her mother-in-law or one of her sisters-in-law at the Alnwick Agricultural Society Fair in 1854. These prize fabrics included a plain tartan of cotton and wool, a pair of woollen blankets, three comforters, and plain cotton and wool flannel.¹¹² All would be welcome during cold New Brunswick winters. The linen cloth would be useful for her husband's work shirts, aprons or dish towels, while the homespun cloth was possibly available for the market.

5.3.5 Tradition

Tradition as a factor in persistence is difficult to demonstrate solely with census data. Some cultural groups, however, wove particular types of traditional textiles or used particular colours.¹¹³ While it is difficult to discern differences between Irish or Scottish weaving patterns, Acadian weaving was quite distinctive in both colours and types of weave structures. Both blue and red were favourite colours among Acadians, especially for women's homespun woollen petticoats.¹¹⁴ Acadians

¹¹¹The other children included two boys, age nine and thirteen, and a ten year old girl.

¹¹²"Report of the Alnwick Agricultural Society 1854," *Gleaner*. 4 March 1854.

¹¹³See in particular Burnham and Burnham for examples of German, Acadian and Scottish styles of weaving..

¹¹⁴Gesner, 333. For details on traditional Acadian costume see also Paul Doucet, *Vie de Nos Ancêtres en Acadie: Le vêtement*, Moncton: Éditions d'Acadie, 1979; and Burnham and Burnham, 63-64,

also owned simpler types of looms and often used plain weave stripes, specific yarn constructions, and hand techniques to create patterns. A traditional type of striped rag carpeting, striped wool skirting material, and *Boutonné* bedspreads were uncommon among Anglophone weaving families.¹¹⁵

Linen weaving, such as Emélie Savoy was doing, was also another cultural tradition. In Ireland many weavers wove linen cloth and particular styles of woolen fabrics. However, in Canada linen weaving was rarely practised by Anglophone weavers but mostly by Francophones.¹¹⁶ This was evident in the sample districts in Northumberland County where linen weaving was common in both Francophone districts. Among 56 weavers making linen cloth in Tabsintac and Néguac, 84% were Francophones, with only two Irish and seven Scottish weavers reporting this activity. Acadians used linen cloth frequently for traditional men's work shirts, household linens, table cloths, or possibly women's bonnets. Linen warps had been used in the past for women's skirts, but by the mid 19th century most Acadians used cotton instead.

144, 149-156.

¹¹⁵For additional discussion of traditional Acadian textile traditions see Jean-Claude Dupont, *Histoire Populaire de L'Acadie* (Montmagny, Quebec: Leméac, 1979), 193-223.

¹¹⁶Lamontagne and Harvey, 30.

Illustration 5.2. Boutonné bedspread from an Acadian area on Prince Edward Island¹¹⁷

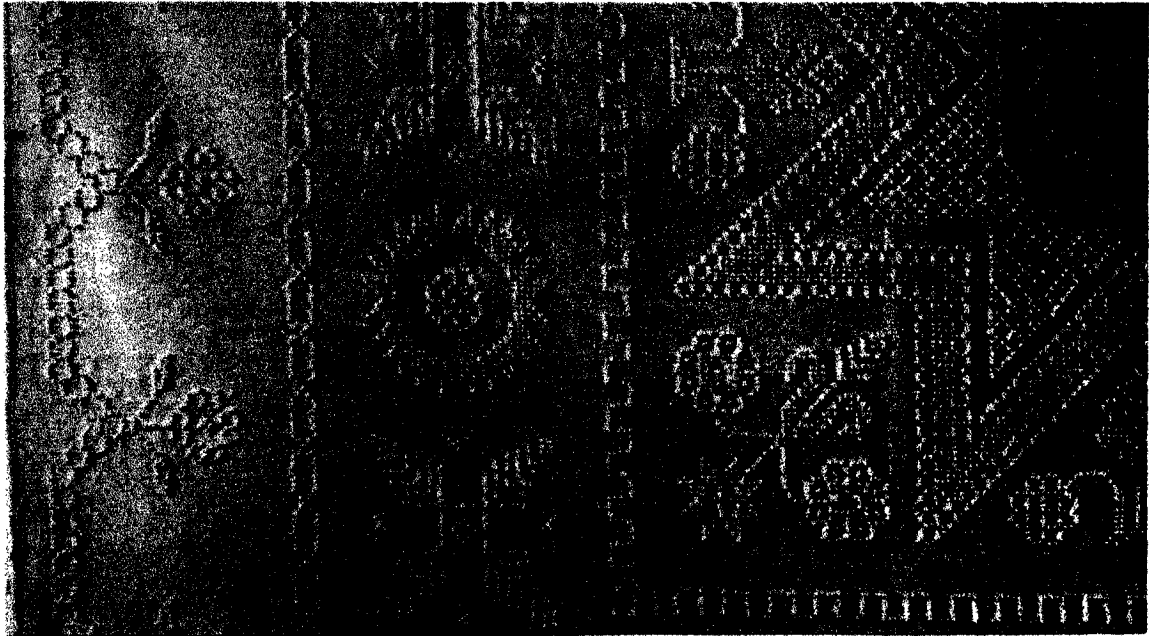
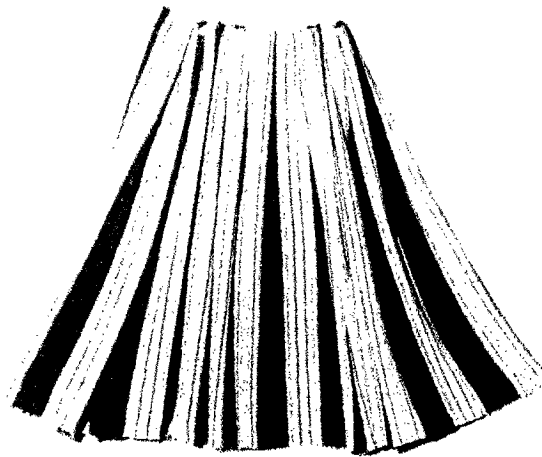


Illustration 5.3 Striped Acadian skirt from Memramcook, New Brunswick¹¹⁸



¹¹⁷Burnham and Burnham, 148, # 196.

¹¹⁸Burnham and Burnham, 63, #75.

5.4. MARKETS FOR HOMESPUN

Market was common factor among these four weavers. Both country and city merchants sold homespun cloth and handknit socks and mitts throughout most of the second half of the nineteenth century. Ellen Porter's and George Jardine's homespun was likely destined for city merchants, while Emélie Savoy and Ann Doak likely supplied only their immediate neighbours.¹¹⁹ Only a small number of entries for homespun cloth appear in both Ann Doak's and Nancy Ann Harris' account books for the Doaktown area although 50 other market weavers lived in the immediate area.¹²⁰ Other general merchants likely also carried homespun, such as Sarah McClosky, owner of a general store and tavern in nearby Boiestown. Unfortunately fire destroyed these ledgers in the early twentieth century.¹²¹

City merchants started advertising in local newspapers for home textiles in the 1840s. Fredericton merchant, Stafford Barker, placed such an advertisement for "Good, all wool homespun cloth, trowsers, socks and mittens Wanted" in 1849. His plea was only the first of many merchants' solicitations for home made textile products.¹²²

¹¹⁹No extant ledgers surfaced for the Alnwick area of Northumberland County. However, Shediac merchant Richard Bell has a few entries for Acadians settling their accounts with cloth, or buying homespun and cotton warps. Centre des Études Acadiennes, Université de Moncton, F1123-1-2, *Richard Bell Ledger*, 1837-1877, 275, 330, 332; Daybook, 1842-1876, 5.

¹²⁰*Nancy Ann Harris Ledger*, Cash Book #1, 30 July 1858 to 25 April 1869, Central New Brunswick Woodsman Museum, Boiestown, New Brunswick, Ledger L.981.1387. PANB, MC 1055, *Doak Family Papers*; Account Book MS6 F/3, 1866-1888 and Account Book MS8 F/1, 1873-1920.

¹²¹This was conveyed by relatives of Sarah McClosky on a visit to Boiestown in 2000.

¹²²*New Brunswick Reporter* (Fredericton), 28 September 1849.

Merchants in Fredericton, Chatham, Newcastle and Saint John continued to place these types of advertisements in the newspapers in the 1850s, enticing potential suppliers with the "Highest prices paid for Country Homespun, Socks, Mitts, etc."¹²³

Amounts of homespun cloth and handknit socks and mitts requested by merchants were not insignificant. Fredericton merchant, Hugh Nealis wanted "immediately ... 1000 yards of Country Homespun, 300 dozen Socks, and 100 dozen Wool Mitts," in late 1858.¹²⁴ Numerous merchants competed for suppliers willing to exchange their homespun for store goods in the 1860s and 1870s.

Illustration 5.4. Advertisements for Miller and Edgecombe, Fredericton, 1870, and P. McPeake, Fredericton, 1860¹²⁵

Miller & Edgecombe
want to purchase 100 doz,
COUNTRY SOCKS,
75 dozen
COUNTRY MITTS,
20 lbs. Grey and White
WOOLLEN YARN,
COTTON and WOOL,
and
ALL WOOL CLOTH
taken in any quantity.
The above will be taken in exchange for goods at cash prices.
ALBION HOUSE

WANTED,
1000 YARDS Country Homespun, 100
 Socks and Mittens, for which the
 highest prices will be given at the *British House*.
P. McPEAKE.
 F^rton, Oct. 19, 1860.

¹²³*The Gleaner* (Chatham), 16 October 1858. Ad for Michael Ryan, Glasgow House.

¹²⁴Ad for Hugh Nealis; *New Brunswick Reporter*, 26 November 1858.

¹²⁵P. McPeake's advertisement; *New Brunswick Reporter* 26 October 1860; Miller's advertisement, *Colonial Farmer*, 9 September 1870.

Fredericton merchant, Andrew Anderson, surprised his competitors in October 1872 by requesting 10,000 yards of homespun "for which the highest prices will be given."¹²⁶ Hopefully suppliers noticed his small advertisement since they would need considerable time to fill this one order. Other Fredericton merchants, such as P. McPeake and Dever Brothers, both solicited similar amounts in November 1877.¹²⁷

In the 1880s some merchants increased the size of their advertisements to reflect demand and gave suppliers some advance notice about their requirements..

Illustration 5.5. Advertisement for A. A. Miller, Fredericton, June, 1880¹²⁸

PARKS'
COTTON WARPS
 HOMESPUN,
 SOCKS  MITTS.

Purchase Cotton Warps at
 A. A. Miller & Co.'s, and make
 up your cloth early in the sea-
 son. Between now and Fall
 we will require to purchase
 large quantities of

ALL WOOL CLOTH,
 Cotton and Wool Cloth,
Plaid Shirtings,
SOCKS, MITTS, &C.,
 in exchange for Dry Goods.

A. A. MILLER & CO.
 Opposite City Hall.
 Fredericton, June 10-8 1880.

12 x 9

¹²⁶Ad for Andrew Anderson; *Colonial Farmer*, 9 September 1872 and 8 December 1872.

¹²⁷*Colonial Farmer*, 05 and 12 November 1877.

¹²⁸A. A. Miller's advertisement, *New Brunswick Reporter*, 10 June 1880.

Miller subsequently indicated the volume of goods he needed in his September campaign.

Illustration 5.6 Advertisement for A. A. Miller, September, 1880¹²⁹

WOOLEN GOODS IN GREAT DEMAND.

A. A. Miller & Co. wish to purchase Homespun Cloth of all kinds in large quantities, also 2000 pairs of Socks and Mitts, 1-2 ton Woolen Yarn, Over Socks, Home Knit Drawers, Shirts, Pants, &c., &c. in exchange for Dry Goods. We are daily opening New Goods for the Fall and Winter Trade, and claim to have one of the Newest, Freshest, Cleanest and Best Assorted Stocks in Canada.

A. A. MILLER & Co.
Opposite City Hall, Fredericton.

Miller's need for socks and mitts was the largest volume yet noted for any Fredericton merchant. Some of these were handknit, but the rest were likely made on one of the new knitting machines now available in New Brunswick stores. Guarantee to knit a pair of socks in "less than a half hour," these \$30 machines could substantially increase production and create an even greater amount of supplementary income.¹³⁰ With a retail value of twenty five cents a pair, farm women could use their free time to advantage.¹³¹ The Maritime Knitting Machine Company also promoted their new piece of household equipment for other uses than simply utilitarian articles. Housewives could also make "articles intended for Ornament", such as purses, hoods, "Smoking Caps", shawls, fringes, and chair tidies, all items destined for upcoming

¹²⁹Advertisement for A. A. Miller, *New Brunswick Reporter*, 08 September 1880.

¹³⁰Ad for "Maritime Family Knitting Machine," *Union Advocate*, 13 October 1873; ad for "Bickford and Branson Knitting Machine," *Colonial Farmer*, 11 December 1876; ad for "Lamb Knitting Machine", *Colonial Farmer*, 20 November 1876.

¹³¹See also the market potential of machine knit socks and mitts in eastern Maine in Deborah Pulliam, "Mitten Production in Nineteenth-Century Downeast Maine," in *Textiles in Early New England: Design, Production, and Consumption: Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife*, ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University, 1999): 127-134.

agricultural fairs.

Outside workers were the main customers for home made textiles. In the early 1860s Thomas Jones, of Saint John, targeted lumberers, mill owners and shipbuilders as potential customers. Chatham merchant, William Murray included farmers, fishermen, lumber and railway men for his large stock of homespuns, flannels, shirting, linders (undershirts), pants, and mitts in his fall 1872 campaign.¹³²

Illustration 5.7. Ads for T.R. Jones, Saint John, 1862 and 1866¹³³

LUMBERERS ATTENTION

WE are prepared to furnish and supply for the Fall Season the Best Assorted Stock of Goods for Lumbermen in the Lower Provinces, at the Lowest Prices and easy terms to responsible parties.

Heavy Reefers; Overcoats; Homespun Shirts; Frocks; Pants; Drawers; Socks and Mitts; Knitted Over and Inside Shirts; Felt Hats and Heavy Caps; Homespuns of all Qualities; Willow Grove & York Mills Blankets Camp Blanketing; Homespun Drawer Stuff; Camp Small Wares of Every Description.

T. R. JONES & CO.,
St. John, Sep 12. /62 Canterbury Street

To Lumbermen, Mill Owners and Shipbuilders.

THE largest stock of Camp Blankets, Flannel Shirts, Reefing Jackets, Homespun Pants, Woolen Socks, Mitts, and every article suited to the wants of the above. For sale (wholesale only) by the subscriber.

THOMAS R. JONES,
Oct 17 1866 Market Square.

Some of these railway workers were likely unemployed lumbermen who were used to wearing homespun pants and shirts, and hand knit socks and mitts made by local weavers and knitters. P. Purcell, contractor for the Intercolonial Railway, was seeking

¹³²*Gleaner* (Chatham), 4 January 1873 ad for William Murray. Murray also requested "Oats, Country Socks, Mitts and Homespun Wear" from potential suppliers as part of the same advertisement.

¹³³Ads for T. R. Jones, Saint John; *Union Advocate*, 12 September 1862; *Saint John Globe* 17 October 1866.

500 of these labourers in late winter of 1871 to work on the line going through the Newcastle area.¹³⁴ Even during the 1870s recession, outside workers still needed warm durable clothing for the cold snowy winters typical of New Brunswick. Handweavers could easily and quickly supply the needs of this niche market.

In 1876, Saint John merchants, Everitt and Butler, expanded the potential customer base to include millmen, ship builders, and pedlars¹³⁵, while Dever Brothers, in Fredericton, added river drivers in 1880.¹³⁶ Sutherland and Creaghan, of Newcastle, had already targeted these types of customers for "Lumbering suits" in 1876.¹³⁷

Illustration 5.8. Advertisement for Sutherland and Creaghan, Newcastle, 1876

SEPTEMBER 20th, 1876.

LATEST ARRIVALS.

Sutherland, Creaghan & Co.,
NEWCASTLE,

BEG respectfully to notify that they are just opening a beautiful variety of FELT SKIRTS, Shawls and Sacques, Tweeds, Flannels, Prints &c., MEN'S CLOTHING, being the first instalment of

FALL GOODS.

We are expecting by next STEAMER from Great Britain the Largest, most Select and Varied Stock of **DRY GOODS**, ever introduced in Newcastle, which we will sell at the lowest profits.

Sutherland, Creaghan & Co.

N. B.—We have received this week from the Country 1500 yards plain and double twilled HOMESPUN, for Lumbering Suits. Also, 150 doz. Homespun Socks and Mitts, Shirts and Jumpers. Parties going to the woods should call soon and secure Bargains.

Newcastle, Sept. 18, 1876. 20 *Union Adv.* S. C. & Co.

¹³⁴*Union Advocate*, 22 February 1871.

¹³⁵Ad for Everitt and Butler; *St Lawrence Advance* 07 October 1876.

¹³⁶Ad for Dever Brothers; *New Brunswick Reporter*, 10 March 1880.

¹³⁷Ad for Sutherland and Creaghan; *Union Advocate*, 20 September 1876.

Handknit wool drawers, another item often sought by some merchants, were probably scratchy but they were warm, more sturdy and long wearing than commercially made imported varieties. But workers also bought the commercially made variety since home knitters could not supply the demand.

Some workers bought their work clothes directly from lumber camp owners. James Russell, from the Newcastle area, purchased small amounts of homespun from seventeen Northumberland County weavers in the mid 1860s. Since only four pages of this ledger survive, it was unknown whether this was an ongoing part of his business or if he purchased cloth from other weavers as well.¹³⁸ Russell paid weavers only about 12 cents a yard for their cloth, a rate suggesting he might be supplying raw materials as well. Without additional information there is insufficient evidence to make a case for a putting out system operating in New Brunswick.

Another lumber camp operator, John Pond from Boiestown in the Ludlow district, frequently sold homespun yardage, wool socks and mittens, wool drawers, and jumpers to workers in his Cains River camp in the late 1860s and early 1870s.¹³⁹ As one Doaktown resident noted in 1877, "there were upwards of 2000 men engaged in

¹³⁸*James Russell Lumber Company Papers*. New Brunswick Museum, file #5038 F23-2. Most transactions were for 12 to 30 yards of cloth. Since Russell was a common name in the district, it was difficult to link these 17 weavers to the census without knowing exactly where he operated.

¹³⁹*John Pond Ledger*, Boiestown, New Brunswick, 1840-1872, Central New Brunswick Woodsman Museum, Boiestown, New Brunswick, Ledger # 980.34. Pond had two ledgers, one starting in 1840, the second in 1852. A relative, Lloyd A. Pond, compiled the names of Pond's customers along with the dates of their transactions and donated this research to the Woodsman Museum.

the lumber woods within a twenty five mile radius of Boiestown".¹⁴⁰ Numerous women in both the Ludlow and Blissfield districts, including Pond's wife, Susannah, were kept busy for many months weaving cloth and knitting for these workers.¹⁴¹ Pond also sold finished garments, such as homespun shirts and pants, items appearing for sale as well in the Harris family ledger in the Blissfield district.¹⁴² There were likely seamstresses or tailors in the vicinity sewing up these garments. Unfortunately, Pond's receiving ledger was unavailable to locate the source of his suppliers.

Homespun sold in stores and through timber operators was not cheap. The going retail price for homespun ranged from 70 cents to \$1.00 per yard, more expensive than comparable commercial varieties available for 35-40 cents per yard in the major towns. One yard of homespun was equivalent to two days work in the woods, while a homespun shirt would cost a lumberer almost a week's wages.¹⁴³

All this weaving production would have been less feasible without the presence of two types of industrial inputs. Carding and fulling mills relieved textile workers of some of the more tedious parts of production. Ann Doak ran the only carding mill in the study districts but spinners could just as easily send their wool to one of the other

¹⁴⁰"Steam Navigation on the Miramichi," *Miramichi Advance* (Chatham), 17 May 1877. This article was likely written by Samuel Freeze since he was the only resident who matched the author's initials of S.F.

¹⁴¹Arbuckle, 63.

¹⁴²*Nancy Ann Harris Ledger*, Cash Book #1, 30 July 1858 to 25 April 1876, Central New Brunswick Woodsman Museum, Boiestown, New Brunswick, Ledger L.981.1387.

¹⁴³*Pond Ledger*, 246-250; *Nancy Ann Harris Account Book*, 12 November 1863, account of Thomas Conway, 466. Lumberers earned about 50 cents a day, while a homespun shirt cost \$3 and homespun pants \$4.

four carding mills in the county. Miles MacMillan of Ludlow, and Francis McKnight of Alnwick subdistrict-3 ran small operations while William Wilson of Derby and John Flett of Nelson both advertised their services in the *Chatham Gleaner*.¹⁴⁴ John Flett had been one of few petitioners to receive government monies in the early 1850s to set up his carding and fulling mill. His mill offered a full range of services including carding, dyeing, fulling and dressing cloth.¹⁴⁵ Residents could also send their wool by steamboat to nearby Prince Edward Island, or Pictou, Nova Scotia for processing, or do the work by hand.¹⁴⁶

Most weavers also purchased cotton warp thread as part of labour saving measures and to supplement the lack of wool in the county.¹⁴⁷ Although there were over 17,000 sheep in the county, their fleece supplied only 41,303 pounds of wool.¹⁴⁸ This was only about half the amount needed if all weavers decided to weave only

¹⁴⁴Advertisements for William Wilson's carding mill, Upper Nelson and John and William Flett's of Nelson. Both mill owners had a number agents who collected raw wool and returned finished products to customers in different localities in the vicinity. *Gleaner*, 23 June 1860.

¹⁴⁵Mills charged between three to five cents per pound for carding, six cents a yard for fulling and ten to twelve cents a yard for dressing cloth (stretching and pressing). Advertisements for John Flett's Carding Mill. *Gleaner*, June 29 and 22 July 1851.

¹⁴⁶See especially, James Johnston's advertisements in the *Gleaner* 23 June 1843, and 11 July 1846 for wool shipped to PEI mills for carding. See also advertisements for D.A. McLeod and for Patrick Long, in the *Gleaner* 24 August 1841 and 20 May 1843 for their Boiestown carding mills.

¹⁴⁷Most stores referred to cotton thread used for weaving as "warps". Technically this was incorrect since a warp is the lengthwise threads placed on a loom for weaving. Most of the warps were sold as skeins in five pound lots.

¹⁴⁸1871 *Census of Canada*, Vol. 3, 117. The census recorded the amount of *unwashed* fleece and not the weight after cleaning. Since this fleece often contains twigs, chaff, sand, manure or other debris, as well as lanolin, the usable part is often less than half the initial weight. One yard of all wool cloth would require nearly a pound of *raw* wool. Most weavers in the four districts noted using cotton and wool as their basic supplies.

wool cloth. Dry goods stores, such as those run by Ann Doak and Nancy Harris, and even lumber merchants, such as John Pond, sold both white and coloured warps to their customers. Some of these cotton warps were imported from America but John Park's new cotton mill in Saint John was receiving a lot of weavers' custom.

This demographic and economic case study of handweaving was undertaken to explore how generalizations about the persistence of a traditional craft rarely fit a universal form. The study of Leeds County handweavers by Kris Inwood and Janine Roelens arrived at one particular weaving profile, while this one presents a somewhat different view. Many interlocking factors contributed to weaving persistence in New Brunswick, but market, climate and the presence of large numbers of outdoor workers were the most compelling. Poverty and lack of other opportunities likely encouraged many weavers to continue this occupation in isolated corners of Ontario. In New Brunswick, however, weaving was one rational decision among other choices to provide the highest return for householders' efforts.¹⁴⁹ As one of a number of plural occupations it contributed to securing a competency and a more comfortable lifestyle.

In Leeds County, Inwood and Roelens used wheat production and improved acres as indices of family prosperity. Since wheat was not extensively grown in New Brunswick, using it to determine relative wealth was inappropriate. However, using alternate indices to calculate relative wealth were more appropriate in areas where cold climates and primary resource extraction were the mainstays. Fishing gear, hay sold to lumber camps, horses, or the cost and space needed for looms would also be part of

¹⁴⁹This idea of weaving as a rational decision was first mentioned by Acheson, "New Brunswick Agriculture...", 41.

relative wealth.

The parameters for persistence are complex and fluctuate with both economic conditions and family life cycle. Young families might weave for different reasons than those of an older generation. This case study only provides a capsule view of some of the reasons for weaving persistence in New Brunswick in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Choosing a different group of districts might have given a slightly different picture. Like a photograph or the census, this view of handweaving is only a moment in time.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

This study offered a new regional interpretation of rural nineteenth century society through an evaluation of forces affecting traditional craft work. Reasons for persistence of hand weaving and hand knitting until the 1880s are complex and interrelated. In New Brunswick, climate, persistence of traditional outdoor jobs, and lack of local competition were among the most compelling. Men working at lumbering, farming, or fishing during the long, cold, and harsh winters needed warm and durable work clothes. Handweavers and knitters responded to this niche market by providing them with rugged handwoven pants and shirts, and handknit mitts, socks and underwear. Rural outdoor jobs predominated in the province throughout most of the nineteenth century. Coupled with a lack of local competition, this assured weavers and knitters a viable market for their work.

From the beginning of the century until the 1880s, hand production dominated the market for warm and durable outdoor textiles. In the early years of the colony, availability and timely arrival of imports was not always certain. When cloth did arrive it was often unsuitable for rural workers' occupational needs. In the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century, domestic cloth production was basically a self-contained industry. Textile producers employed hand production techniques to process most raw materials for both weaving and knitting. All weaving was done on hand looms, with only a few carding and fulling mills relieving weavers and knitters of some of the tedium and labour of textile preparation and finishing.

By the late 1840s new water powered industrial textile technology started to

make inroads into handweavers' hold of the niche market. Three small weaving mills began manufacturing limited amounts of cloth resembling homespun made only by home weavers. However, more carding and fulling mills also appeared in the countryside allowing home producers to substantially increase production. Most counties in the province boasted two or more of these mills to process farmers' wool, with Kings County alone having nine carding mills.¹⁵⁰ Government bounties had provided start-up funds and some financial assistance to a few of these carding and weaving mills at mid century, but most entrepreneurs capitalized their own operations.

The golden age of handweaving occurred in the 1870s. Since the six small weaving mills produced less than 15% of all cloth made in the province, handweavers still captured the majority of the niche market for rugged durable products. Imported cloth was only a second best choice.¹⁵¹ Merchants demanded increased volumes of homespun cloth and handknit socks and mitts throughout the 1870s to satisfy both railway workers and other traditional outside workers needing weavers' and knitters' products.

The introduction of steam powered technology in the 1880s was a new innovation which changed the face of weaving production and handweavers traditional place in the market. Some carding and fulling mills, like the Humphrey Mill in Moncton, diversified by adding steam powered weaving looms which could operate

¹⁵⁰Although the census noted 52 undifferentiated carding and weaving mills, there were only three known weaving mills in operation. *1871 Census of Canada, "Recapitulation of 1851 Census of New Brunswick,"* Vol 4, 229.

¹⁵¹This was cloth reported only on the Home-made schedules of the 1871 census. With the addition of unreported market weavers' production, home made cloth predominated the domestic market.

year round in a bid to capture part of the traditional market.¹⁵² Trains also changed how rural residents conducted their affairs. The York Woollen Mill, among others, advised them they could now send their fleeces to the mill by train and receive cloth in return.¹⁵³ Both the Harvey Woollen Mill in York County and the Humphrey Woollen Mill in Moncton noted the terms of this novel arrangement. Customers would receive "one yard of heavy all wool cloth for [every] two pounds of wool" they sent by train.¹⁵⁴ Agents from the Humphrey Mill also travelled around eastern Canada to solicit business for their cloth and yarn in exchange for farmer's fleeces and a small cash sum. Some of these Humphrey Mill customers were from Northumberland County and as far away as the Gaspé and other parts of eastern Quebec.¹⁵⁵ Thus there was no need to patronize local carding mills since both Humphrey's and Harvey's would both card a customer's wool and supply a woven or spun product. Competition also came from mills outside the province. Cloth from both Nova Scotia and Ontario entered the local New Brunswick market on a regular basis due to increased train traffic.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵²Lloyd Machum, *A History of Moncton: Town and City, 1855-1965* (Moncton: City of Moncton, 1965), 129.

¹⁵³See the advertisement for York Woollen Mills in Harvey, York County; *Maritime Farmer*, 14 April 1886.

¹⁵⁴Advertisement for Humphrey Woollen Mill, *Union Advocate*, 4 August 1880; advertisement for Harvey Woollen Mills, *Colonial Farmer*, 21 February 1876.

¹⁵⁵PANB, MC 1850, *Humphrey Woollen Mill Records, 1878-1895*, Boxes 62, 87 and 88. Humphrey woollen mill cloth became so popular among working men that it became a household word and was known throughout the twentieth century as "Humphrey cloth."

¹⁵⁶See for example, advertisements for merchant T.R. Jones, in Saint John carrying Nova Scotia's "Colchester Mills" and "Oxford Mills" homespun; John Ferguson, of Newcastle carrying both Oxford homespun and "Canadian Tweeds and Blankets" in 1881-2. *Union Advocate*, 31 August 1881

Hand production still continued in the 1880s but at a reduced rate. In some isolated counties, such as Northumberland and Gloucester, hand production remained strong and actually increased in the 1880s. In Northumberland County production levels for wool cloth in 1891 matched volumes produced during the 1871 golden age.¹⁵⁷ In Gloucester County, as well, wool cloth production increased by 33% between 1881 and 1891. However, counties offering new opportunities for women's employment in both mills and factories experienced a dramatic drop in home production. This was most evident in Westmorland, York, and Charlotte counties where three new cotton mills opened in the mid 1880s.¹⁵⁸ Home production in York County, location of the Gibson Cotton Mill, fell by nearly 70% between 1881 and 1891.

Even after the 1890s handweaving still persisted in many isolated areas of the province.¹⁵⁹ Women in rural households still made home textiles for their families and for others. Some of this work was lightened by carding mills such Harvie Doak's in Doaktown. In 1895 he notified potential customers they could drop off their wool at

and 25 January 1882.

¹⁵⁷In Northumberland County, weavers reported 37,782 yards of cloth in 1891, only a slight decrease from the 39,120 made in 1871. It is unknown whether cloth made by market weavers in both 1881 and 1891 were included since manuscript schedules needed for analysis were destroyed. *1871 Census of Canada*, Vol 3, 218; *1881 Census of Canada*, Vol 3, 236; *1891 Census of Canada*, Vol 3, 365.

¹⁵⁸See also Judith Anne Rygiel, "Women of the Cloth: Weavers in Westmorland and Charlotte Counties, New Brunswick, 1871-1891," MA thesis, Carleton University, 1998.

¹⁵⁹1891 was the last census which included statistics on home production.

four convenient locations or send it to any station on the Canadian Eastern Railway.¹⁶⁰

Doak continued operating his carding mill after the turn of the century since there were sufficient customers to make it viable. In 1902, his wife, Christina, received a letter informing her that a Mrs Thibideau was willing to spin wool then weave it into blankets for the Doak family.¹⁶¹ Customers still wanted homespun products and were willing to hire others to make them.

Using relative wealth as a criteria in evaluating weaving families is an innovation of this study. Only by looking at local conditions and weavers' standing within their communities can poverty even be considered a factor in persistence. Some weaving families might have been poorer than their neighbours, but the case study of weavers in Northumberland County shows most had enough land and livestock to sustain a modest but comfortable lifestyle. Families continued to weave because market forces rationalized this activity as a means to secure a competency.

By examining weaving traditions of one cultural group this study also contributes to a better understanding of Acadian society. French-speaking Acadians both wove and wore distinctive textiles and clothing which often set them apart from their English speaking neighbours. Gloucester, a distinctly Acadian county, was one of the few where woollen cloth production actually increased from 1881 to 1891.

Isolation and few economic opportunities for women were likely factors since home woollen cloth production decreased in the three other counties with strong numbers of

¹⁶⁰Doak Carding Mill flyer, private collection.

¹⁶¹PANB, MC 1055, *Doak Family Papers*, MS 9A, "Correspondence of Mrs Harvie Doak, 1885-1920."

Acadians.¹⁶² Linen production, usually vigorous in Acadian counties, dropped by over 50% between 1881 and 1891.¹⁶³ Labour costs were too high to process flax, and similar cotton fabrics were cheap and readily available. Young Acadian women, who had traditionally done these tasks, but especially those in Westmorland and Kent counties, had more opportunities for waged employment at the cotton mill, knitting mill, and small factories in nearby Moncton. Some Acadian women had already left for mills in New England as well.¹⁶⁴

By examining unusual sources this study also tracks new ideas about women's roles in the household. Agricultural society reports, for instance, offer an entirely new dimension to both traditional textile crafts and rural women's interest in new leisure activities. Even if rural women spent more time on fancy work and other decorative home items, they still continued to weave. That women even had more time for needlework on rural farms was partially due to increased prosperity and entrepreneurial attitudes. Even though society expected young farm girls to learn needlework and other genteel practices, the presence of a market for home textiles was more compelling than embroidered cushions. Rural women did not give up their looms and knitting needles between 1850-1880, but balanced market activity with ornamental

¹⁶²In Westmorland County, for instance, home woollen production decreased by 42%, in Kent County by 23%, and in Victoria by 27%.

¹⁶³The total linen cloth made in the predominantly Acadian counties of Victoria, Westmorland, Kent and Gloucester in 1881 amounted to 48,471 yards. This fell to 23,724 yards in 1891. *1881 Census of Canada*, Vol 3, 236; *1891 Census of Canada*, Vol 3, 365.

¹⁶⁴Ginette Lafleur, "L'industrialisation et le travail rémunéré des femmes: Moncton, 1881-1891," in *Moncton, 1871-1929: Changements socio-économiques dans une ville ferroviaire*, ed. Daniel Hickey (Moncton: Éditions d'Acadie, 1990), 74-78.

work.

The study of persistence of traditional household crafts performed mainly by women is only recent. Kris Inwood and Janine Roelens were pioneers in the 1990s by suggesting factors for one Ontario county. This study enlarges their work by exploring other dimensions for a better understanding of both regional factors and changes in rural society. The politics influencing or curtailing home production are one significant regional contribution while new ideas of women's work starting in the 1850s was a trend common in many communities in Canada. This study also shows that although weaving was becoming a cultural artifact by the end of the century, in the 1870s it offered families an opportunity to actively participate in a vigorous homespun market economy. Climate, traditional occupations and lack of competition fuelled this homespun economy in New Brunswick. Transposing these ideas to other locations in rural Canada would substantially enhance our understanding of nineteenth century rural society and the place of women's work within their families and the larger community.

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