

**Accounting for Legitimacy:  
Leading Retailers, Petty Shopkeepers, and Itinerant Vendors  
in Halifax, Nova Scotia, c. 1871 to 1901**

**Tanya Lee Gogan**

**Department of History  
McGill University, Montreal**

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## **Abstract**

By combining the tools of social history, poststructural analysis, and cultural studies, this dissertation explores the perceptions and realities of late nineteenth-century retailing within Halifax, Nova Scotia. The study places business within a social, cultural, economic, and political framework, while presenting an uncommon case study in professionalization, emphasizing the heterogeneity of retailers, and redefining petty enterprise as commercial activity worthy of research. Additionally, the dissertation addresses a region and occupational group often neglected by Canadian historians.

Specifically, the following study examines the late-Victorian drive for commercial professionalization, middle-class discourse on legitimacy, and recruitment of urban shopkeepers. In an era obsessed with modernity, decades plagued with financial recession, and a region haunted by a conservative reputation, prominent shopkeepers desired an elevated status for themselves, their trade, and their city. Besides the self-representations of leading proprietors, discussions of legitimacy rested upon the views offered by credit-reporting agents, supplying wholesalers, state officials, and social reformers. The external perceptions of retailing ‘others’--marginal shopkeepers and itinerant traders--also helped distinguish the ‘legitimate’ retailer. Contributors to the discourse may have promoted the education of professional business standards, but exclusion remained an essential strategy in designating legitimacy.

Although participants in the discourse never applied the criteria consistently, the identity of the ‘legitimate’ retailer involved the practice of up-to-date business methods and the application of contemporary notions regarding class, gender, race, ethnicity, and religion.

Unfortunately for individuals concerned with promoting professionalization, no consensus emerged for the exact definition of legitimacy. Thus, most attempts to create a homogeneous and professional shopkeeping identity failed.

Despite this failure, retailers demonstrated a remarkable degree of active agency. Women, minorities, immigrants, and Roman Catholics engaged in business in surprisingly large numbers. Meanwhile, leading shopkeepers were not a population of politically impotent inhabitants who blindly accepted Halifax's reputation for unprogressive enterprise. Finally, whether a retailer confronted modernity willingly or chose to reject the dictates of professionalism, all proprietors actively negotiated a course for success or pursued strategies lessening the burden of financial failure.



## Résumé

Cette dissertation utilise l'histoire sociale, l'analyse poststructurale et les études culturelles pour explorer les conceptions et les réalités du commerce de détail à Halifax (Nouvelle-Écosse) à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle. Dans un contexte social, culturel, économique et politique, elle présente une étude de cas peu commune de la professionnalisation, fait ressortir l'hétérogénéité des détaillants et redéfinit la petite entreprise comme un sujet digne de recherches. Elle s'intéresse également à une région et un groupe professionnel souvent négligés par les historiens canadiens.

L'étude examine le mouvement vers la professionnalisation du commerce, le discours de la classe moyenne sur la légitimité et le recrutement de commerçants urbains. À une époque obsédée par le modernisme, après des décennies de récession et dans une région hantée par une réputation de conservatisme, les marchands en vue voulaient élever leur statut, celui de leur métier et celui de leur ville. Outre les principaux propriétaires mêmes, les agences de crédit, les grossistes, les agents de l'État et les réformateurs de la société participèrent au débat sur la légitimité. L'impression qu'on avait des « autres » marchands--petits boutiquiers et colporteurs--aidait aussi à distinguer les commerçants « légitimes ». Même si certains préconisaient des normes professionnelles, l'exclusion demeura une stratégie essentielle dans la qualification de la légitimité.

Bien que ce critère n'ait jamais été appliqué uniformément, l'identité du commerçant « légitime » résidait dans l'emploi des plus récentes méthodes commerciales et l'application de notions contemporaines de classe, de sexe, de race, d'ethnicité et de religion. Malheureusement pour les tenants de la professionnalisation, on ne s'entendit pas sur une définition exacte de légitimité. Par conséquent, la plupart des tentatives d'établir une identité

commerçante homogène et professionnelle échouèrent.

Les détaillants manifestèrent néanmoins un degré remarquable d'initiative. Un nombre surprenant de femmes, de minorités, d'immigrés et de catholiques se lancèrent dans le commerce. Entre-temps, les principaux marchands n'étaient pas un groupe de citoyens impuissants résignés à la réputation rétrograde d'Halifax. Qu'ils aient épousé le modernisme ou rejeté les dictats du professionnalisme, tous les propriétaires avaient une stratégie pour réussir ou du moins atténuer les effets d'un éventuel échec financier.

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## Abbreviations

<i>AR</i>	<i>(Halifax) Acadian Recorder</i>
<i>CG</i>	<i>(Toronto) Canadian Grocer and General Storekeeper</i>
<i>CPJ</i>	<i>(Toronto) Canadian Pharmaceutical Journal</i>
<i>DGR</i>	<i>(Toronto) Dry Goods Review</i>
<i>EE</i>	<i>Halifax Evening Express</i>
<i>EM</i>	<i>(Halifax) Evening Mail</i>
<i>ER</i>	<i>Halifax Evening Reporter</i>
<i>HC</i>	<i>Halifax Chronicle</i>
<i>HH</i>	<i>Halifax Herald</i>
<i>MC</i>	<i>(Halifax) Morning Chronicle</i>
<i>MG</i>	<i>(Halifax) Maritime Grocer and Commercial Review</i>
<i>MH</i>	<i>(Halifax) Morning Herald</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>(Halifax) Maritime Merchant and Commercial Review</i>
<i>MT</i>	<i>(Toronto) Monetary Times, Trade Review and Insurance Chronicle</i>
<i>NAC</i>	National Archives of Canada
<i>NSARM</i>	Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management
<i>NSJHA</i>	<i>Journal and Proceedings of the House of Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia</i>
<i>QUA</i>	Queen's University Archives
<i>RG</i>	<i>(Halifax) Royal Gazette</i>

## Introduction

### *Legitimate Business!*

*On truly honest, fair and commercial principles!* Taylor, “the Barrington street Druggist” desires to do business thusly: He has no wish to dabble in Dry Goods, Selling of Books, Fancy Christmas, New Year, or other Cards or Booklets, Fancy Goods, Toys or Groceries -- but to adhere as closely as possible to *his own profession*, viz.: Drugs, Medicines, Patent Medicines, Perfumery, Fancy Soaps, Sponges, Brushes, and all sorts of Fancy articles usually kept in a well arranged Drug and Prescription Store -- leaving Dry Goods to the Haberdasher, Booklets and Fancy Cards to the Bookseller and Stationer, and Family Groceries to the legitimate Grocer, and those who will sell Liquors, to the licensed Liquor seller. He is generally prepared to supply his numerous patrons, and the public at large, with the best of everything in his line, and at the *lowest living prices consistent with quality goods*.

*Morning Chronicle* (Halifax), 27 Dec. 1890, 2.<sup>1</sup>

In his always eye-catching advertisements, Henry A. Taylor, a popular Halifax pharmacist doing business in the fashionable shopping district of Barrington Street, captured well the commercial obsession with legitimacy.<sup>2</sup> What constituted proper and improper business practices consumed Haligonian shopkeepers who shared a variety of characteristics and circumstances with this well-known proprietor. Not only did Taylor cater to a middle-class clientele throughout his commercial career, he also served as the first president of the Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, formerly held a position on Halifax’s City Council, and acted as a high ranking official within the Order of Oddfellows, Sons of Temperance, and

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<sup>1</sup> The italics are mine. In 1870, fellow competitors had dubbed Taylor “the Barrington Street Druggist” because his shop was the only business in a predominantly residential area. When the street became a popular shopping district for the middle class, Taylor retained the name for advertising purposes. Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, *Fiftieth Anniversary of the Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society 1875-1925* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, 1925), 56.

<sup>2</sup> In G. A. White, *Halifax and its Business*. . . (Halifax: Nova Scotia Printing Co., 1876), 75, contemporaries noted Taylor’s popularity, professionalism, and panache for witty advertisements. See also his advertisement for temperance beverages in *AR* (Halifax), 25 March 1887, 1.

local masonic societies.<sup>3</sup> Taylor's desire to follow "his own profession" through the practice of "truly honest, fair and commercial principles" reflected the evolving definition of "legitimate business." According to Taylor's publicly-declared definition, quality goods at reasonable prices, a knowledgeable proprietor, and the avoidance of competition with retailers in unrelated lines, set his pharmacy apart as a legitimate establishment and himself as a truly professional pharmacist. Others would add further criteria to Taylor's definition of legitimate business, including the possession of an upright character, practice of adequate accounting procedures, occupancy of a permanent location, service of respectable clientele, maintenance of reasonable business hours, and payment of municipal taxes. Moreover, a proprietor's claim to legitimacy also become entangled with the competing identities of gender, class, race, ethnicity, and religion.

In the nineteenth-century world of commerce the discourse on legitimacy represented much more than the legal entitlement of an individual to pursue a specific trade and to practice that trade in a legal manner. What business proprietors such as Taylor often termed as legitimacy, scholars have identified as respectability and professionalism. The creation of a discourse on legitimacy followed these shopkeepers' desires for the attainment of middle-class respectability and status as professionals. While wishing to elevate the socio-economic status of themselves, their trade, and even their city, these shopkeepers sought to safeguard their businesses from the processes of deskilling and the ravages of unfair

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<sup>3</sup> For information on Taylor, see White, *Halifax and Its Business*, 75; *MH* (Halifax), 27 Oct. 1881, 1; *Our Dominion: Mercantile and Manufacturing Interests Historical and Commercial Sketches of Halifax and Environs*. . . (Toronto: Historical Publishing Company of Canada, 1887), 42; *HH* (Halifax), 20 June 1907, 3; and Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 56.

competition. To complicate matters further, all shopkeepers were negotiating a course for success through recurring economic downturns, evolving custom concerning commercial practices, and movements of legal and social reform.

As a segment of Maritime society wrestling with the emergence of modernity, Halifax shopkeepers were not alone in their creation of a discourse on legitimacy and their quest for respectable professional status. Besides middle-class retailers such as Taylor, an assortment of groups interested in transforming mercantile relations and establishing a progressive image for the city also contributed to the evolving discourse. The actions of credit agents, wholesalers, commercial editors, state authorities, and social reformers worked further to define who could and could not be considered a legitimate business person. Unfortunately for interested shopkeepers and these additional contributors, no one meaning of legitimacy emerged. Despite the use of creditor sanction, education, voluntary cooperation, formal exclusion, state regulation, and legislative reform, differences of opinion surfaced between retailers, suppliers, government members, and the general public. Indeed, conflict arose amongst retailers themselves, including tensions between fixed-shop and itinerant proprietors, associated retailers and non-members, and even within various retail associations.

The following study examines the social, cultural, economic, and political circumstances of retailing within the local context of Halifax, Nova Scotia to better understand the recruitment of urban shopkeepers, the multiple meanings of legitimacy, and the commercial drive for professionalization. Largely influenced by developments within the North American cross-disciplinary scholarship of 'new business history,' work by European

members of the Research Group on the Petite Bourgeoisie, recent investigations into the heterogeneous nature of shopkeeping, and quantitative studies of Victorian self-employment, the resulting examination leans heavily upon the fields of social and cultural history. Providing more than a statistical study of business ownership or a structural account of the change in retail distribution, the dissertation combines two common approaches in the historiography of shopkeeping, retailing, and self-employment.<sup>4</sup> On the one hand, the wider context of urban retailing provides qualitative material to appreciate the role each participant played in the discourse on legitimacy and the real life experiences of local retailers. On the other hand, the quantitative use of census records, city directories, and credit reports enables a measurable account of the shopkeeping population, the origins of professionalization, and the effects of the discourse on legitimacy.

Late-Victorian Halifax serves as an exceptionally appropriate setting for the study of urban retailing and the multiplicity of legitimate enterprise. Although experiencing a long

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<sup>4</sup> An earlier generation of marketing historians tended to focus on the structural and functional changes in retail and wholesale distribution. For British, American, and Canadian examples, see David Alexander, *Retailing in England During the Industrial Revolution* (London: Athlone Press, 1970); Janet Blackman, "The Development of the Retail Grocery Trade in the Nineteenth Century," *Business History* IX, 2 (1967): 110-17; J. M. Blackman, "The Cornershop: The Development of the Grocery and General Provisions Trade," in *The Making of the Modern British Diet*, eds. Derek Oddy and Derek Miller (London: Croom Helm, 1976), 148-60; Glenn Porter and Harold C. Livesay, *Merchants and Manufacturers: Studies in the Changing Structure of Nineteenth-Century Marketing* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971); and Brian S. Osbourne, "Trading on a Frontier: The Function of Peddlers, Markets, and Fairs in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," *Canadian Papers in Rural History* II (1980): 59-82. More recently, several British historians have called for greater cooperation between scholars of structural changes, geography, and culture. See Gareth Shaw, Andrew Alexander, John Benson, and John Jones, "Structural and Spatial Trends in British Retailing: The Importance of Firm-Level Studies," *Business History* 40, 4 (Oct. 1998): 79-93.



history of commerce, few historians have studied the city's retail distribution of goods and services, individuals undertaking self-employment in these trades, nor relations between retailers, the state, and the mercantile elite.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, this provincial capital suffered from an external reputation as being conservative in business, while local inhabitants complained or boasted of Halifax as being a "city of shopkeepers."<sup>6</sup> Certainly, residents found many opportunities for commercial enterprise in this wholesale-trading complex. An assortment of goods and services were needed for the city's mixed population by class, race, and ethnicity, including civilian inhabitants, visiting tourists, military personnel, and merchant marine. Additionally, the last three decades of the Victorian era, years most often studied by scholars interested in similar topics, incorporated periods of boom and bust, industrial expansion, and suburban growth.<sup>7</sup>

Informed from an international scholarship in several related fields and a knowledge in the history of late-Victorian Halifax, research hinged upon a series of preliminary questions. First, which residents became attracted to retailing and why? Did the recourse to self-employment result in socio-economic advancement? Were Haligonian shopkeepers a

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<sup>5</sup> Judith Fingard is the only historian to study an aspect of the local retail trade. In particular, she has produced published and non-published material on Haligonian saloon keepers. See Fingard, "'A Great Big Rum Shop': The Drink Trade in Victorian Halifax," in *Tempered By Rum: Rum in the History of the Maritime Provinces*, eds. James H. Morrison and James Moreira (Porters Lake, N. S.: Pottersfield Press, 1988), 89-101; *The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax* (Porters Lake, N.S.: Pottersfield Press, 1991), 61-75; and "Liquor and Hypocrisy: The Retail Drink Trade in Halifax, 1886-1916," (unpublished manuscript, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter One, 41-8.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter One for further historical background on Halifax.

homogenous group attempting to fashion a common class identity? What criteria determined a legitimate retailer? Did the recruitment of shopkeepers in this period reflect that discourse? Given the interest in professionalization, why were examples of cooperative action often short-lived? How were retailers affected by urban-industrialization, cyclical movements in the economy, changing commercial relations, and movements of social reform? Finally, how were Haligonian proprietors affected by the city's contemporary reputation for commercial conservatism? Research motivated by these inquiries formed the basis for the resulting study of urban retailing from approximately 1871 to 1901.

It should be emphasized that throughout this study I make a distinction between retailers and wholesalers, representing a division which often became obscured in historical records by the use of several nondescript terms. Notwithstanding the usual association of 'merchant' with the proprietors of wholesale establishments, contemporaries also used the term to refer to retailers, especially prosperous retailers operating on a larger scale than most commercial traders. 'Shopkeepers,' although usually meaning retailers, could be used generally to describe all business proprietors. 'Dealers' were normally retailers, while 'traders' could describe any individual engaged in commercial relations. For the sake of clarity, this study often uses the terms 'fixed-shop retailer' or 'shopkeeper' to describe those who sold goods and services to consumers from a separate store, adjacent shop, or location within their home. 'Leading,' 'elite,' or 'main-street' retailers refer to shopkeepers of respectable shopping districts in the city centre and growing suburbs who served as civic politicians, association members, and subscribers to commercial journals. 'Backstreet,' 'petty,' or 'marginal' retailers frequently refer to fixed-shop proprietors located off the main

thoroughfares of underclass, working-class, and racially-mixed neighbourhoods. The study also uses 'itinerant' vendors to refer to retailers who sold from door-to-door or from an open-air market.<sup>8</sup> Because of the problematic nature of 'merchant,' this dissertation avoids its use. Wholesalers, are accordingly referred to as 'wholesalers,' 'creditors,' 'suppliers' or 'the commercial elite.' The latter phrase designates those creditors who sponsored Halifax's commercial press and became members of the local Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade.

In spite of the confusion, the distinction between the retail and wholesale trade certainly existed in these years and even increased over time. As early as the 1870s, for instance, city directories separately listed retailers and wholesalers selling dry goods, groceries, and liquors.<sup>9</sup> By the twentieth century, industrial and retail expansion ensured that directory entries also distinguished between these two proprietors in the trades of footwear, ready-made clothing, tobacco, drugs, fish, and jewellery, while indicating differences between commercial establishments and manufacturing operations.<sup>10</sup> Although some wholesalers did sell goods at retail, the practice increasingly angered Halifax shopkeepers who formed independent retail trade associations by the 1890s. Significantly, census manuals instructed enumerators of the 1891 census to indicate proprietors as either retailers or

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<sup>8</sup> These retailers are not referred to as 'itinerants' to reinforce the stereotypical image of the vagrant peddler, but to emphasize their lack of a fixed shop. The itinerant retailers featured throughout this dissertation resided in Halifax and surrounding rural regions, as well as in the United States and other Canadian locales.

<sup>9</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2, 345-6, 351-3, 356-8.

<sup>10</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1, 61-2, 65-6, 69, 71, 79-80.

wholesalers. Unfortunately, these data collectors rarely made the distinction, thereby preventing the federal government from compiling separate statistics for each form of enterprise.<sup>11</sup> While most enumerators continued to neglect the emerging identity of at least some shopkeepers, Halifax's Board of Trade finally recognized the interests of retail in 1904.<sup>12</sup>

The following analysis of Halifax's retailing population has been influenced by an assortment of interrelated fields of study. These subjects include the processes of identity formation, the movement towards professionalization, interdisciplinary work in North American business history, shopkeeping as an element of the petite bourgeoisie, business ownership as a component of the middle class, and empirical studies of self-employment. Informed by these bodies of historical and sociological literature, the dissertation has been influenced by the theses and methodologies they represent, both by way of agreement and by way of revision. While some fields have been frequently addressed by Canadian researchers, others had been traditionally neglected until the 1990s. Canadian academics who have produced recent monographs in these topics, however, have done so by excluding the East Coast. Meanwhile, Atlantic Canadian scholars have had little or no interest in certain relevant fields of study, including for the most part, examinations in local retailing.

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<sup>11</sup> Canada, *Manual Containing "The Census Act," and the Instructions to Officers Employed in the Taking of the Third Census of Canada* (Ottawa: Department of Agriculture, Census Branch, 1891), 15.

<sup>12</sup> *MM* (Halifax), 3 Nov. 1904, 24; and *Annual Report of the Board of Trade of Halifax, N.S.*, 1904, 11.

The process of identity formation encompasses an overarching theme throughout this study, as well as several recent works in Canadian and international historical literature. Since the mid-twentieth century, researchers had used identity to understand ethnic culture and national character, or, since the 1970s, to examine the “limited identities” of Canadian regional and social history.<sup>13</sup> More recently, poststructural influences have turned this field of study from a quest of essentialism to an appreciation of shifting identities relative upon an opposing ‘other’ and conditional upon a particular context.<sup>14</sup> When exploring identities, researchers must understand internal and external influences upon the construction of various representations. As certain historians of shopkeeping, self-employment, and the middle class recently suggest, the local context also represents the best method to analyze

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<sup>13</sup> For a lamentation on the diffuse and often confusing use of identity since the mid-twentieth century, see Philip Gleason, “Identifying Identity: A Semantic History,” *Journal of American History* 69, 4 (March 1983): 910-31. Due to the article’s early date of publication, Gleason does not note the influence of poststructuralist theories. As an early example of historical literature interested in defining the national character, see W. L. Morton, *The Canadian Identity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1961). For the “limited identities” approach, see J. M. S. Careless, “‘Limited Identities’ in Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* 50, 1 (1969): 1-10; Ramsay Cook, “‘Identities Are Not Like Hats,’” *Canadian Historical Review* 81, 2 (June 2000): 260-5; and P. A. Buckner, “‘Limited Identities’ Revisited: Regionalism and Nationalism in Canadian History,” *Acadiensis* XXX, 1 (Autumn 2000): 4-15.

<sup>14</sup> Canadian historians who have reflected upon this change or used it within their work include Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994); David Monod, *Store Wars: Shopkeepers and the Culture of Mass Marketing, 1890-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Lynn Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), particularly pages 167-215; and Cook, “‘Identities Are Not Like Hats.’”

these multiplicities of identity.<sup>15</sup> Although few writers have explicitly defined their meaning of the term, Daniel J. Walkowitz describes identity concisely in his recent study of American social workers. For Walkowitz, and for the purposes of this dissertation, identity comprises, on the one hand, the material necessities and ambitions contributing to the construction of one's self-representation. On the other hand, identity involves how one negotiates that personal image with additional representations extended freely or through force by others.<sup>16</sup> In the case of this study, the identity in question becomes that of the legitimate retailer within Halifax. The views of fixed-shop and itinerant retailers concerning legitimacy are examined, as well as the representations offered by creditors, state officials, and the general public. Although many contemporaries discussed the meaning of commercial legitimacy and often derived that meaning from the 'others' of female proprietors, minority business owners, petty shopkeepers, and itinerant vendors, few shared the same definition, even those within similar socio-economic backgrounds. Most importantly, while the examination of shifting identities and the multiplicities of legitimacy form the core of this study, I have not used poststructuralism as a primary tool for comprehending late-Victorian retailers. As many historians of social history realize, elements from poststructural theory and cultural studies can be combined with the material realities of our subject's lives and the active agency they

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Jonathan Morris, *The Political Economy of Shopkeeping in Milan 1886-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 6-11, 285-6; David G. Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 12-13; and Andrew C. Holman, *A Sense of their Duty: Middle-Class Formation in Victorian Ontario Towns* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 7.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel J. Walkowitz, *Working with Class: Social Workers and the Politics of Middle-Class Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of Northern Carolina Press, 1999), xiii.

practiced.<sup>17</sup>

Besides contributing to an understanding of identity, an examination of Haligonian retailers in the last three decades of the nineteenth century provides an uncommon case study in the social, cultural, economic, and political processes of professionalization. The drive towards professionalization in many occupations during these years has resulted in a deluge of sociological and historical studies since the early twentieth century. Few scholars, however, have discussed the ambitions of middle-class shopkeepers in this light. In fact, as early as the 1960s, at least one sociologist warned researchers against considering the “professionalization of everyone.”<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, as Canadian historians R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar argue for nineteenth-century Ontario, a variety of occupational and class-specific groups combined after 1860 to defend collective skills, maintain present work conditions, or enhance personal power through the exploitation of recent social and technological advancement. This quest for protection, respectability and professional status occurred amongst a segment of retail shopkeepers, as it had among the mercantile and manufacturing elite, artisanal craftsmen, health care workers, legal experts, and educational

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, the following comments from British, Canadian, and American scholars: Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 9-10; Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, 9-10; and Walkowitz, *Working with Class*, xiii

<sup>18</sup> Harold Wilensky, “The Professionalization of Everyone?” *American Journal of Sociology* LXX, 2 (Sept. 1964): 137-58. For a review of sociological literature on the professions, see Eliot Freidson, “The Theory of Professions: State of the Art,” in *The Sociology of the Professions*, eds. Robert Dingwall and Philip Lewis (London: Macmillan, 1983), 19-37; and Thomas Brante, “Sociological Approaches to the Professions,” *Acta Sociologica* 31, 2 (1988): 119-42.

personnel.<sup>19</sup> In the middle to late decades of the nineteenth century, a myriad of collectives craved the approval of their peers, deference of their subordinates, and acknowledgment from local elites.

Despite their neglect of commercial proprietors, early sociological works concerning professionalization did make several important points which can be partly integrated to any study involving this process. Several sociologists from the mid-twentieth century, for example, have identified a series of attributes often associated with professional populations. These include the use of skills based on theoretical knowledge attained through education, the writing of examinations to ensure competence and control recruitment, the presence of codes of conduct and common values, the desire to serve the public good, and the development of associations to encourage these desired characteristics while fostering a communal identity.<sup>20</sup> Sociologists working within the Weberian-Marxist paradigm of the 1970s, also reminded readers that the ideology of professionalism embodied the enhancement of personal and group status with the added bonus of protection from harmful competition.<sup>21</sup> While problematic for their respective idealism and negativity, as well as their

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<sup>19</sup> R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, *Professional Gentlemen: The Professions in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 104. A decade earlier, sociologist Eliot Freidson had made a plea for further research into these collectives for determining the difference between professionalization and "the collective efforts of occupations in general to improve their job security, working conditions, income and prestige." Freidson, "The Theory of Professions," 36.

<sup>20</sup> Brante, "Sociological Approaches to the Professions," 122; Freidson, "The Theory of Professions," 19-20; and William J. Goode, "Community Within a Community: The Professions," *American Sociological Review*, 22, 2 (April 1957): 194.

<sup>21</sup> For neo-Weberians and neo-Marxists, professionalization involved a form of occupational control. See Brante, "Sociological Approaches to the Professions," 127,



ahistorical and "scorecard" approach to the field, both schools of thought offer an interpretive window into the examination of attempts towards the professionalization of the retail trade, particularly examples of cooperative action among middle-class shopkeepers. Of course, as Gidney and Millar indicate, and this dissertation puts into practice, it is also important to appreciate the historical context and internal pressures of each occupational group studied.<sup>22</sup>

Unfortunately, certain sociological and historical studies have directly precluded the evaluation of entrepreneurs as possible professionals since their writers establish a binary opposition where capitalist ideals have been superseded by professional values. Whether produced by early researchers such as Talcott Parsons or recent scholars such as Harold Perkin, no room is left for the coexistence or combination of both models in these examinations.<sup>23</sup> Alfred Chandler Jr.'s seminal history of the development of monopoly capitalism in the United States, however, did provide one exception to this flawed view. Chandler's illustration of an emerging cadre of corporate managers combined the

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129; and Freidson, "The Theory of Professions," 20, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Gidney and Millar rightfully denounce the earlier school of sociologists focusing upon the positive attributes of professional collectives as writing whiggish "scorecard" history. Gidney and Millar, *Professional Gentlemen*, 388-9.

<sup>23</sup> Talcott Parsons, "The Professions and Social Structure," in *Essays in Sociological Theory*, rev. ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1964), 34-49; and Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1989). Colin D. Howell argues against Perkin's theory that hierarchies of professional careers have eliminated inter-class relationships. According to Howell, professionalization has instead redefined those relationships. Howell, "Medical Professionalization and the Social Transformation of the Maritimes, 1850-1950," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 27, 1 (Spring 1992): 7.

sociological theories of professionalization with an understanding of American business history.<sup>24</sup> Notwithstanding Chandler's integration of capitalist ideals with professional values, his work does not explore this combination for independent entrepreneurs nor small-scale business.

Similarly, several Canadian historians have studied the politics of commercial organizations, but few have used these examples to shed light on the process of professionalization. In the early 1970s, Michael Bliss combined the insights of social and business history to chronicle the establishment of trade associations at the turn of the twentieth century. To legitimate these cooperative actions in the eyes of the state and the public, business proprietors argued that they had a right to an honest wage, or in their own words, to a "living profit." The retail and wholesale associations documented by Bliss failed to attain their desired goals because only voluntary agreements, which depended on the continued goodwill of participants, bound members.<sup>25</sup> Writing fifteen years later, Mark Cox portrays the interwar appearance of wholesale and retail trade associations as a failed attempt at self-regulation by small independent shopkeepers. These shopkeepers formed unions because they felt the disastrous effects of mass merchandising. In Cox's narrative, tensions surfaced between individual greed and associational cooperation, dooming the

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<sup>24</sup> Alfred Chandler, Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977). For more on the historiography of professionalization as it relates to business, see Louis Galambos, "Technology, Political Economy, and Professionalization: Central Themes of the Organizational Synthesis," *Business History Review* 57 (Winter 1983): 471-93.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Bliss, *A Living Profit: Studies in the Social History of Canadian Business 1883-1911* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 34-5, 53-4.

strategy of self-regulation to failure.<sup>26</sup> While Bliss and Cox both discuss associational activities of various commercial proprietors, neither does so explicitly within the context of professionalization.

In a more positive version concerning the fate of Canadian shopkeepers, and one which incorporates the processes of professionalization as a larger theme, David Monod recounts how modernity successfully transformed certain segments of independent retailing by examining the beliefs, divisions, and associations of urban shopkeepers. Whereas many historians have argued that commercial proprietors initiated formal cooperation to eliminate unfair competition, Monod further proves that retailers established organizations to promote the recognition of merchandising as a professional occupation worthy of the same respect accorded to practitioners of law and medicine.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, Monod's emphasis on the divisions between organized retailers and unaffiliated shopkeepers leaves little explanation for the failure of many cooperative efforts. As Monod explains, once organized retailers resolved an issue requiring formal cooperation, "main-street shopkeepers simply returned

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<sup>26</sup> Mark Cox, "The Transformation of Regulation: Private Property and the Problem of Government Control in Canada, 1919-1939" (Ph.D. diss., York University, 1990), iv, 7-8, 127-8. Cox discusses the organizational activity of retailers mainly in Chapter Three, "The War Against the Chains: Small Business and the Price Spreads Problem, 1923-1934," 120-86. His published work deals more extensively with the associations of wholesalers and manufacturers. See, for example, Cox, "Associationalism Canadian Style: Flour Millers, Self-Regulation and the State, 1920-1935," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 1 (1990): 119-44.

<sup>27</sup> Monod, *Store Wars*, 82-4. A wealth of secondary literature exists in Europe for the associational life of shopkeepers, most of which is a sub-group in a much larger body of work examining the lower middle class. This literature is discussed below. Unlike Monod's study, these authors do not emphasize professionalization as a driving force toward the establishment of retail organizations and a trade press.

to the business of stealing each other's trade."<sup>28</sup> While this dissertation places the processes of professionalization within a wider context, not unlike the recent monographs by Monod, and Gidney and Millar, it also illustrates that the problems dividing retailers went beyond that of members versus non-members, and simple individual greed. Association members were placed at odds when their personal definitions of legitimacy clashed. These associational conflicts helped destroy the collaborative spirit of many commercial organizations. Competing definitions of legitimacy therefore helped drive a wedge through the illusory harmony of the shopkeepers' world.

Recent interdisciplinary work involving North American business history, like research concerning identity and professionalization, has also shaped the development of the following study. Traditionally, business history in North America has focused upon the mercantile and industrial magnates of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Research by Harold Innis, Donald Creighton, and J. M. S. Careless, culminating in the staples, Laurentian, and metropolitanism theses, respectively, dominated Canadian business history into the 1980s.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, when Atlantic Canadian scholarship emerged during the 1970s to challenge the Central Canadian bias of these popular themes, topics in business and

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<sup>28</sup> Monod, *Store Wars*, 98.

<sup>29</sup> For a description of Canadian business history in these years, see Frederick H. Armstrong, "Canadian Business History: Approaches and Publications to 1970," in *Canadian Business History: Selected Studies, 1497-1971*, ed. David S. Macmillan (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), 263-87; Glenn Porter, "Recent Trends in Canadian Business and Economic History," in *Enterprise and National Development: Essays in Canadian Business and Economic History*, eds. Glenn Porter and Robert D. Cuff (Toronto: Hakkert, 1973), 3-19; and Don Davis, Doug McCalla, Duncan McDowall, and Tom Traves, "Introduction," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 20, 3 (Autumn 1985): 3-4, 172-3.

economic history understandably predominated. Research published in the first two decades of the regional journal *Acadiensis* explored the local developments of mercantile capital, manufacturing growth, and deindustrialization.<sup>30</sup> While Atlantic Canadian historians have studied some aspects of commercial history, their attention has been focused primarily on proprietors in the shipping, wholesale, and West Indies trades.<sup>31</sup> In the United States during

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<sup>30</sup> For the beginnings and developments of a distinctive Atlantic Canadian scholarship encouraged in the early 1970s by the establishment of *Acadiensis* and the region's first graduate programs, see Alan Wilson, "Maritime Business History: A Reconnaissance of Records, Sources, and Prospects," in *Enterprise and National Development*, 122-38; Buckner, "'Limited Identities' Revisited"; Colin D. Howell, "Development, Deconstruction and Region: A Personal Memoir," *Acadiensis* XXX, 1 (Autumn 2000): 23-30; Judith Fingard, "Focusing on their Roots: University of New Brunswick Historians and Regional History," *Acadiensis* XXX, 1 (Autumn 2000): 38-44; and D. A. Muise, "Organizing Historical Memory in the Maritimes: A Reconnaissance," *Acadiensis* XXX, 1 (Autumn 2000): 50-60.

For examples of industrial and underdevelopment studies, see T. W. Acheson, "The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes, 1880-1910," *Acadiensis* I, 2 (Spring 1972): 3-28; D. A. Sutherland, "The Personnel and Policies of the Halifax Board of Trade, 1890-1914," in *The Enterprising Canadians: Entrepreneurs and Economic Development in Eastern Canada, 1820-1914*, eds. Lewis R. Fischer and Eric W. Sager (St. John's: Maritime History Group, M.U.N., 1979), 205-29; L. D. McCann, "Staples and the New Industrialism in the Growth of Post-Confederation Halifax," *Acadiensis* VIII, 2 (1979): 47-79; "Metropolitanism and Branch Businesses in the Maritimes, 1881-1931," *Acadiensis* XIII, 1 (Autumn 1983): 112-25; James D. Frost, "The 'Nationalization' of the Bank of Nova Scotia, 1880-1910," *Acadiensis* XII, I (Autumn 1982): 3-38; Ian McKay, "Capital and Labour in the Halifax Baking and Confectionery Industry During the Last Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Labour/ Le Travailleur* 3 (1978): 63-108; Kris Inwood and John Chamard, "Regional Industrial Growth During the 1890s: The Case of the Missing Artisans," *Acadiensis* XVI, 1 (Autumn 1986): 101-17; Del Muise, "'The Great Transformation': Changing the Urban Face of Nova Scotia, 1871-1921," *Nova Scotia Historical Review* 11, 2 (1991): 1-42; and Kris E. Inwood, "Maritime Industrialization From 1870-1910," *Acadiensis* XXI, 1 (Autumn 1991): 132-55.

<sup>31</sup> For example, see D. A. Sutherland, "The Merchants of Halifax, 1815-1850: A Commercial Class in Pursuit of Metropolitan Status" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1975); David Sutherland, "Halifax Merchants and the Pursuit of Development, 1783-1850," *Canadian Historical Review* LIX, 1 (1978): 1-17; T. W. Acheson, "The Great

the same period, Chandler's organizational synthesis, a theory which accounted for the concentration of industrial capital at the turn of the twentieth century, shaped the development of American business history. As a result, American students of business often confined their examinations to the structural and functional aspects of large-scale industrial firms.<sup>32</sup>

By the 1990s, in both the United States and Canada, many scholars began writing what can be described as 'new business history.' Influenced by developments in social history and cultural studies, this expanding body of research incorporates an interdisciplinary approach while placing topics in business history within a wider social, cultural, economic, and political framework. In the last decade, scholars have paid particular attention to small and petty enterprise, entrepreneurial activities of women and minority populations, as well

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Merchant and Economic Development in St. John, 1820-1850," *Acadiensis* VIII, 2 (Spring 1979): 3-27; Allen Barry Robertson, "John Wesley's Nova Scotia Businessmen: Halifax Methodist Merchants 1815-1855" (Ph.D. diss., Queen's University, 1990); Eric W. Sager and Gerald E. Panting, *Maritime Capital: The Shipping Industry in Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990); and Rosemary Ommer, ed., *Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies in Historical Perspective* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1990).

<sup>32</sup> For the influence of Chandler on American business history, see Richard R. John, "Elaborations, Revisions, Dissents: Alfred D. Chandler, Jr.'s *The Visible Hand* after Twenty Years," *Business History Review* 71 (Summer 1997): 151-206. According to Douglas McCalla and Michael Bliss, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, Canadian historians were also showing signs of Chandlerian influence. Bliss accordingly warned readers to be wary of using the organizational theory in its entirety since it may not fit well with Canadian historical circumstances. See McCalla, "Introduction," in *The Development of Canadian Capitalism: Essays in Business History*, ed. McCalla (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1990), 1-9; and Bliss, "Canadian Business History at the Crossroads," *Business Quarterly* 56, 3 (Winter 1992): 33-7. For a modified example of the organizational approach in Canada, see Graham D. Taylor and Peter A. Baskerville, *A Concise History of Business in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994).

as gendered aspects of business in general. In the United States, this research has been particularly encouraged and represented by the Hagley Center for the History of Business, Technology, and Society as well as the American Business History Conference.<sup>33</sup> Conversely, in Canada, the lack of a specific journal has also encouraged interdisciplinary work. Such research has been well represented in various Canadian periodicals, the most recent synthesis

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<sup>33</sup> For a brief explanation of recent developments in the field of American business history, see Ivan Lansberg, Edith L. Perrow, and Sharon Rogolsky, "Family Business as an Emerging Field," *Family Business Review* 1, 1 (Spring 1988): 1-8; Philip Scranton and Roger Horowitz, "'The Future of Business History': An Introduction," *Business and Economic History* 26, 1 (Fall 1997): 1-4; Philip Scranton, "Introduction: Gender and Business History," *Business History Review* 72, 2 (Summer 1998): 185-7; and Angel Kwolek-Folland, "Gender and Business History," *Enterprise and Society* 2 (March 2001): 1-10. For selected examples of this new approach in the United States, see Mansel G. Blackford, *A History of Small Business in America* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1991); Wendy Gamber, "Gendered Concerns: Thoughts on the History of Business and the History of Women," *Business and Economic History* 23 (Fall 1994): 129-40; *The Female Economy: The Millinery and Dressmaking Trades, 1860-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); "A Gendered Enterprise: Placing Nineteenth-Century Businesswomen in History," *Business History Review* 72, 2 (Summer 1998): 188-218; Kenneth Lipartito, "Culture and the Practice of Business History," *Business and Economic History* 24, 2 (Winter 1995): 1-41; Susan Ingalls Lewis, "Beyond Horatio Alger: Breaking through Gendered Assumptions about Business 'Success' in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," *Business and Economic History* 24, 1 (Fall 1995): 97-105; Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Incorporating Women: A History of Women and Business in the United States* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998); and Joan W. Scott, "Conceptualizing Gender in American History," *Business History Review* 72, 2 (Summer 1998): 242-9. The new journal of the Business History Conference, *Enterprise and Society*, also reflects this change. The first issue appeared as *Enterprise and Society* 1, 1 (March 2000).

It is important to note that some American scholars before the late 1980s did study small business. These studies concern themselves with the myth of the self-made man or questions of social mobility. For selected examples, see Mabel Newcomer, "The Little Businessman: A Study of Business Proprietors in Poughkeepsie, New York," *Business History Review* XXXV, 4 (Winter 1961): 477-531; John H. Bunzel, *The American Small Businessman* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962); and Stuart W. Bruchey, ed., *Small Business in American Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

of business history, and the Fifth Canadian Business History Conference of 1998.<sup>34</sup> The following study of Haligonian retailers, a group largely neglected by Atlantic Canadian historians, contributes to this growing body of North American scholarship by its placement of business history within a wider context, attention to the retail sector, identities involving gender, class, race, and ethnicity, as well as a redefinition of petty enterprise as business activity worthy of examination.

While recent developments in the field of business history have proved useful for guiding a research program involving commercial enterprise, scholarship addressing the lower middle class, or the petite bourgeoisie, has been essential for understanding Halifax's shopkeeping population. Similar to the research of historians Christopher Hosgood and

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<sup>34</sup> Business historians noted the presence of cross-fertilization as early as 1985. See Davis, McCalla, McDowall, and Traves, "Introduction," 4. For a synthesis of newer developments and traditional themes within an organizational framework, see Taylor and Baskerville, *A Concise History of Business in Canada*. The Fifth Canadian Business History Conference held in Hamilton during October 1998, "Historical Perspectives on Business, Labour, Technology and Society," featured at least seven papers incorporating women's or gender history. For selected examples of the new direction, see Keith Walden, "Speaking Modern: Language, Culture and Hegemony in Grocery Window Displays, 1887-1920," *Canadian Historical Review* LXX, 3 (September 1989): 285-310; John Benson, *Entrepreneurism in Canada: A History of "Penny Capitalists"* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990); Peter A. Baskerville, "'She has already hinted at board': Enterprising Urban Women in British Columbia, 1863-1896," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXVI, 52 (Nov. 1993): 205-28; "Women and Investment in Late-Nineteenth-Century Urban Canada: Victoria and Hamilton, 1880-1901," *Canadian Historical Review* 80, 2 (June 1999): 191-218; Sylvie Taschereau, "L'arme favorite de l'épicier indépendant: éléments d'une histoire sociale du crédit (Montréal 1920-1940)," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 4 (1993): 265-92; Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*; "Frontier of Opportunity: The Social Organization of Self-Employment in Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1881-1901," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXXI, 61 (May 1998): 35-69; Monod, *Store Wars*; and Henry Trachtenberg, "Peddling, Politics, and Winnipeg's Jews, 1891-1895: The Political Acculturation of an Urban Immigrant Community," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXIX, 57 (May 1996): 159-86.



David Monod, this understanding has often been accomplished by way of contradiction with the prevalent view of shopkeepers as a stratum within the petite bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, whether historians of shopkeeping have accepted, adapted, or rejected this model, the choice of subject and methodological approach utilized by the participants of the Research Group on the Petite Bourgeoisie have shaped many European studies since 1979, Monod's work on Central Canadian shopkeepers, and the present study of urban Nova Scotian retailers.

According to early European researchers of the petite bourgeoisie, this group consisted of shopkeepers and master artisans who represented a heterogeneous population but possessed a variety of traits in common. These scholars argue that retailers and craftsmen held an ambiguous position in the market as proprietors of small enterprise using their own capital and labour. Additionally, these proprietors shared in the sanctity of independence, private property, family, and community, while remaining suspicious of state interference and conservative in business and political matters.<sup>35</sup> Corresponding to research dating back

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<sup>35</sup> Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz Gerhard-Haupt, *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe 1780-1914: Enterprise, Family and Independence* (London: Routledge, 1995), 6-9. For examples of this view, see Arno J. Mayer, "The Lower Middle Class as Historical Problem," *Journal of Modern History* 47, 3 (Sept. 1975): 409-36; Frank Bechhofer, Brian Elliott, et al., "The Petits Bourgeois in the Class Structure: the Case of the Small Shopkeepers" in *The Social Analysis of Class Structure*, ed. Frank Parkin (London: Tavistock Publications, 1974), 103-28; "Small Shopkeepers: Matters of Money and Meaning," *The Sociological Review* 22, 4 (Nov. 1974): 465-82; Frank Bechhofer and Brian Elliott, "Petty Property: the Survival of a Moral Economy" in *The Petite Bourgeoisie: Comparative Studies of the Uneasy Stratum*, eds. Frank Bechhofer and Brian Elliott (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 182-97; Geoffrey Crossick, "The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain: A Discussion," in *The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914*, ed. Geoffrey Crossick (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 11-60; Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz Gerhard-Haupt, "Shopkeepers, Master Artisans and the Historian: the Petite Bourgeoisie in Comparative Focus" in *Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz Gerhard-Haupt (London: Methuen, 1984), 3-34; and P. H. Gulliver and Marilyn Silverman, *Merchants*

to the mid-1970s, this grouping of individually-centred but like-minded proprietors acted as a single class in times of crisis by becoming increasingly politically aware.<sup>36</sup>

The historical approach followed by these collaborating scholars has encouraged further studies in small enterprise which go beyond the simple political actions of urban shopkeepers and master artisans.<sup>37</sup> Beginning in 1979 and continuing throughout the 1980s, a series of round tables organized by the Research Group on the Petite Bourgeoisie in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe promoted comparative and localized research in the social relations of the lower middle class. Moreover, the participants of these round tables encouraged a sophisticated analysis of political behaviour which involved the internal dynamics of petite bourgeoisie associations.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz

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*and Shopkeepers: A Historical Anthropology of an Irish Market Town, 1200-1991* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 355-6.

<sup>36</sup> Mayer, "The Lower Middle Class as Historical Problem," 411; Crossick and Gerhard-Haupt, "Shopkeepers, Master Artisans and the Historian," 6-8; and Crossick and Gerhard-Haupt, *The Petite Bourgeoisie*, 7-8.

<sup>37</sup> During the early 1970s, European studies on shopkeepers and the lower middle class focused mainly on this group's contribution to the emergence of fascism in continental Europe. See, for example, Robert Gellately's study on German shopkeepers which examines the economic position and political activity of shopkeepers of the *mittelstand*. Gellately, *The Politics of Economic Despair: Shopkeepers and German Politics 1890-1914* (London: Sage Publications, 1974). This point is made by Morris, *The Political Economy of Shopkeeping in Milan*, 3-6; and Crossick and Gerhard-Haupt, *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe*, 10-11.

<sup>38</sup> These works were represented in the edited collection of Crossick and Gerhard-Haupt in 1984, as well as several community studies exploring the wider context of urban shopkeeping within England, Paris, and Italy. See Crossick and Gerhard-Haupt, eds. *Shopkeepers and Master Artisans*; Philip G. Nord, *Paris Shopkeepers and the Politics of Resentment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); and Morris, *The Political Economy of Shopkeeping in Milan*. For information on these round tables and the approach utilized by its members, see Crossick and Gerhard-Haupt, eds., *Shopkeepers*

Gerhard-Haupt, founding members of the Research Group, acknowledge in a recent synthesis that many divisions existed within the lower middle class. Crossick and Gerhard-Haupt, however, continue to promote “the sources of common experience which might constitute the basis for identity.”<sup>39</sup>

Although many historians have followed the methodology advocated by various round table sessions, some have modified or even abandoned the notion that shopkeepers formed a stratum within a separate class positioned between the lower and middle orders. Jonathan Morris, for example, not only recognizes the fragmented nature of the Milanese shopkeeping population, but confines his examination to the individuals within that population who combined to create a common occupational identity. That identity, argues Morris, originated from shared circumstances arising from the local commercial environment.<sup>40</sup> Unlike Morris, Christopher Hosgood chooses to reject the model entirely. Hosgood’s numerous studies of Leicester, England make an important distinction between domestic general traders who supplied the working class and principal specialized shopkeepers who catered to the middle and upper classes. Rather than comprising a cohesive social stratum within the lower middle class, Hosgood argues that retailers assumed the class

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*and Master Artisans*, 6-8, 16, 26; David Blackbourn, “Economic Crisis and the Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” *Social History* 10, 1 (Jan. 1985): 95-104; Morris, *The Political Economy of Shopkeeping in Milan*, 4-6; and Crossick and Gerhard-Haupt, *The Petite Bourgeoisie*, ix, 10.

<sup>39</sup> Crossick and Gerhard-Haupt, *The Petite Bourgeoisie*, 217. For a recent assessment of artisans, see Geoffrey Crossick, ed., *The Artisan and the European Town, 1500-1900* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997).

<sup>40</sup> Morris, *The Political Economy of Shopkeeping in Milan*, 6-11, 285-6. See also Nord, *Paris Shopkeepers*, 23, 45, 58.

identity of their customers and community.<sup>41</sup> While occupational associations and a retail trade press encouraged a shopkeeping subculture, only principal retailers took part in its creation.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, unlike Crossick who earlier presented British retailers as a politically impotent sect of the lower middle class, Hosgood believes that at least one segment of Leicester shopkeepers participated willingly and effectively in the local political sphere.<sup>43</sup> Whereas a small number of European historians agree with Hosgood's assessment, the prevalent view of the petite bourgeoisie as a single stratum continues to gather adherents.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Christopher Hosgood, "The 'Pigmies of Commerce' and the Working-Class Community: Small Shopkeepers in England, 1870-1914," *Journal of Social History* 22, 3 (Spring 1989): 439-40. See also Hosgood, "Shopkeepers and Society: Domestic and Principle Shopkeepers in Leicester, 1860-1914" (Ph.D. diss., University of Manitoba, 1987); and "The 'Language of Business': Shopkeepers and the Business Community in Victorian England," *Victorian Studies* 17, 1 (Summer 1991): 35-50. Tom Ericsson argues against Hosgood's view that certain elements within the shopkeeping population could share close social relationships with the local working class. See Ericsson, "Kinship and Sociability: Urban Shopkeepers in Nineteenth-Century Sweden," *Journal of Family History* 14, 3 (1989): 229-39.

<sup>42</sup> See Christopher Hosgood, "'A Brave and Daring Folk'? Shopkeepers and Associational Life in Victorian and Edwardian England," *Journal of Social History* 26 (Winter 1992): 285-308; and "The Shopkeeper's 'Friend': the Retail Trade Press in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 25, 4 (Winter 1992): 164-72.

<sup>43</sup> Hosgood, "'Pigmies of Commerce,'" 440; and "'A 'Brave and Daring Folk'?," 285.

<sup>44</sup> For additional European works sharing Hosgood's viewpoint, see Michael J. Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper's World, 1830-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983); and Hoh-Cheung Mui and Lorna H. Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth-Century England* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989). In fact, as early as 1972, this assessment was made for retailers in northeastern England. See T. J. Nossiter, "Shopkeeper Radicalism in the Nineteenth Century," in *Imagination and Precision in the Social Sciences: Essays in Memory of Peter Nettl*, eds. T. J. Nossiter, et al. (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 407-38.

In Canada, Monod has written the only monograph exploring the social, political, and commercial world of retail shopkeeping. Like Hosgood, he addresses the literature of the petite bourgeoisie in Europe, but rejects the model presented by Crossick and his colleagues. By focusing on the history of Central Canadian retailers, Monod's revisionist approach portrays shopkeepers as a diverse group of individuals occupying a variety of socio-economic positions. Notwithstanding divisions by class, race, ethnicity, gender, and capitalization, these shopkeepers did share the notions of service, community, smallness and independence. The meaning of these symbols, however, changed depending on the speaker and the circumstance.<sup>45</sup> According to Monod, the differing interpretations of these shared concepts contributed to a widening gulf between associated retailers and non-members. Members considered retailers who did not accept the version of the folklore promoted by trade associations as non-entities, or in folkloric vocabulary as "illegitimate." These so-called illegitimate retailing establishments, in the minds of shopkeepers undergoing the processes of professionalization, included the commercial activities of women, immigrants, backstreet dealers and small family proprietors.<sup>46</sup> Monod also portrays the middle-class portion of the shopkeeping population as a progressive collective modernizing its operations to compete with the twentieth-century onslaught of mass marketing.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Monod, *Store Wars*, 17-98. See also David Monod, "Ontario Retailers in the Early Twentieth Century: Dismantling the Social Bridge," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1993): 207-27; and "Culture Without Class: Canada's Retailers and the Problem of Group Identification 1890-1940," *Journal of Social History* 28, 3 (Spring 1995): 521-45.

<sup>46</sup> Monod, *Store Wars*, 80.

<sup>47</sup> Monod, *Store Wars*, 9-11, 15.

Like their counterparts elsewhere, as described by Monod and Hosgood, Haligonian shopkeepers remained a divided population while certain segments of this occupational grouping actively sought voluntary cooperation and state-regulated assistance. Yet, while preferring the arguments offered by Monod and Hosgood, research on urban Nova Scotian retailers reveals fragmentation beyond general traders versus specialized retailers or associated shopkeepers versus non-members. Furthermore, the following study explores the wider historical setting of retailing within a localized context, similar to all historians influenced by the Research Group on the Petite Bourgeoisie. Finally, the present study of commercial enterprise differs from most research examining shopkeeping as an occupational category by its equal attention to both associated proprietors and seemingly illegitimate retailers, as well as its consideration of additional participants in the discourse on legitimacy.

In addition to the scholarship of the petite bourgeoisie and shopkeepers specifically, research examining middle-class formation during the nineteenth century has helped shape the form and content of the present study. Specifically, the historiography of middle-class identity provides further thought on the connection between socio-economic rank and occupational status. Since researchers must be wary of arbitrarily assigning shopkeepers to the lower middle class, historians must also be cautious in categorizing retailers within the wider middle class. Although writers have often presented business ownership as an essential component of the emerging bourgeoisie, many go beyond this simple equation while adding further criteria to the understanding of a middle-class identity.

Since the 1990s, Canadian historians have joined their American and British counterparts by taking part in this debate. Prior to the last decade, Canadian social historians

had tended to focus on the working class, refer to socio-economic rankings as a two-tier system, or write of the middle class in ambiguous terms.<sup>48</sup> While this new interest represents an important development in Canadian historiography, it has unfortunately produced rather mixed results.

Since the 1970s, social historians from various countries have argued whether middle-class construction occurred primarily within the workplace or within several social, economic, and political sites. Often in simultaneous production, these two theories represent very different concepts of class formation and the socio-economic standing of entrepreneurs.<sup>49</sup> Following in the empirical footsteps of social mobility studies from the 1960s and 1970s, some historians automatically associate particular occupations with a specific class affiliation.<sup>50</sup> Although American scholar Stuart M. Blumin warned researchers against using occupation as the sole determinant of class status in 1968, his synthesis of

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<sup>48</sup> In 1982, for instance, Michael B. Katz and his colleagues argued for a two-class system involving the labouring and entrepreneurial classes. See Michael B. Katz, Michael J. Doucet, and Mark J. Stern, *The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982). As late as 1989, David P. Gagan complained of the lack of middle-class studies in Canadian historiography. Gagan, "Class and Society in Victorian English Canada: An Historiographical Reassessment," *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 4, 1 (1989): 77.

<sup>49</sup> Andrew C. Holman has recently outlined three models present in the portrayal of middle-class history. The first two, social stratification based on objective criteria originating from the structural-functionalist approach in sociology and the socialist humanist approach influenced from Thompsonian historiography, roughly correspond to the two schools of thought described here. See Holman, *A Sense of their Duty*, 11-14.

<sup>50</sup> See, for instance, Clyde Griffen and Sally Griffen, *Natives and Newcomers: The Ordering of Opportunity in Mid-Nineteenth Century Poughkeepsie* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 51; and Peter R. Decker, *Fortunes and Failures: White-Collar Mobility in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), xi.

middle-class history published in 1989 somewhat contradicted his earlier appeal.<sup>51</sup> According to Blumin, the distinction between manual and non-manual labour, with its widening gap in wages, place of work, and location of residence, remained the crucial characteristic identifying the emerging middle class of urban America. Shopkeepers who sold ready-made goods belonged within this middling non-manual class. Artisan-vendors, however, occupied an ambiguous position which Blumin fails to adequately explain. Moreover, since he argues this group existed without the presence of class conflict, there exists little concept of the relationship between socio-economic hierarchies nor the divisions within each class.<sup>52</sup>

Recently, Canadian historian Andrew C. Holman attempts to explain the emergence of the Victorian middle class in small-town Ontario by criticizing these earlier portrayals of socio-economic hierarchies based on particular sets of criteria and possessing little understanding of social conflict or class consciousness. Unfortunately, Holman's monograph does not go as far in this analysis as his introduction suggests. For Holman, similar to Blumin's theory involving non-manual labour, occupation represented the principal

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<sup>51</sup> Stuart M. Blumin, "The Historical Study of Vertical Mobility," *Historical Methods Newsletter* 1, 4 (Sept. 1968): 2-3. For a similar argument made in the following decade, see Howard P. Chudacoff, "Mobility Studies at a Crossroads," *Reviews in American History* 2 (June 1974): 185; and Michael B. Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 139-40, 173.

<sup>52</sup> Stuart M. Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 10, 195, 137; and "The Hypothesis of Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century America: A Critique and Some Proposals," *American Historical Review* 90, 2 (April 1985): 299-338. See the following criticisms of Blumin and this historiographical model: Jonathan Barry, "The Making of the Middle Class?" *Past and Present* 145 (Nov. 1994): 203; and Holman, *A Sense of their Duty*, 12.



determinant of class status.<sup>53</sup> Holman therefore makes the preliminary assumption that all business owners, professionals, and white-collar clerks comprised the local middle class due to the practice of non-manual work or the ownership of their means of production. In this argument, middle-class identity formed first and most importantly within the workplace. Using both coercion and consensus, middle-class residents then translated their workplace authority into social influence via the local state, voluntary associations, moral reform movements, and domestic reproduction. Further, Holman's study presents little appreciation for the immense diversity and presence of intra-class conflict his categories represent. Although he believes residents engaged in enterprise consisted of the most important core of middle-class inhabitants, Holman lumps together merchants, manufacturers, and master artisans without further defining these entrepreneurial subjects, displaying the vast differences within each grouping, nor discussing occupational associations.<sup>54</sup>

Six years prior to the publication of Holman's work, David G. Burley produced a similar monograph exploring middle-class identity within Brantford, Ontario. Like Blumin and Holman, Burley regards the experience of work, especially self-employment, to be of

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<sup>53</sup> Not surprisingly, these two scholars both used a modified notion of Weberian class analysis developed by Anthony Giddens. According to Holman, this model of "class structuration" involves the study of social mobility (largely determined by the accessibility of property ownership and education), divisions of labour and relationships of authority within the workplace, and patterns of consumption. In this sociological model, class exists but need not be cohesive, overtly conscious, nor antagonistic. See Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class*, 10; and Holman, *A Sense of their Duty*, 14-15.

<sup>54</sup> Holman, *A Sense of their Duty*, ix-x, 11-15, 19-20, 28-49, 99. By contrast, Holman's analysis of professionals and clerical workers displays a better understanding of these problems. See Holman, *A Sense of their Duty*, 50-96.

prime importance in the development of a bourgeois mentality. Nonetheless, Burley defines persistence in self-employment as being a precondition for the creation of a local middle class. This modification allows for the study of occupational condition and class formation over time, while emphasizing individuals who encountered a greater chance to accumulate wealth, acquire a shared sense of belonging with fellow persisters, and attain a reputation from others as possessing a particular socio-economic status. Additionally, Burley recognizes certain differences within this class, most notably those relating to capitalization, success, trade, and generation. Importantly for this dissertation, Burley also understands, as does Monod, that working-class values could also lead to self-employment rather than an overwhelming desire to become middle class.<sup>55</sup>

While Burley adapted the relationship between class membership and work condition, a second group of historians have investigated the emergence of bourgeois identity within an even wider social, cultural, economic, and political setting. Rather than focusing on an overtly quantitative analysis, historians such as Mary P. Ryan, Leonore Davidoff, Catherine Hall, and Janet Guildford, study middle-class culture as represented in campaigns for moral and educational reform, adherence to the doctrine of separate spheres, belief in the necessity for the separation of home and the public workplace, enthusiasm for moral and material progress, participation in associational activity, and direct involvement with local

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<sup>55</sup> Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*, 7, 10-11, 173-4, 239. See also Monod, "Ontario Retailers in the Early Twentieth Century," 207-27. Likewise, John Benson has studied the "penny capitalist" entrepreneurial activities of the working class in Great Britain and Canada. See Benson, *The Penny Capitalists: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Entrepreneurs* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1983); and *Entrepreneurism in Canada*.

government.<sup>56</sup> Interestingly, many of these cultural aspects also appeared within certain elements of Canada's non-Euro-American populations. Research by Judith Fingard on Halifax's African-Nova Scotians, for instance, reminds readers that parallel formations were emerging elsewhere in Victorian Canada and that individuals could possess multiple and entangled identities involving class, race, ethnicity, and gender.<sup>57</sup> In this grouping of historians, class consciousness, with an understanding of diversity, conflict and consensus, becomes more important than identifying a series of objective criteria.

Notably, in the research of Ryan, Davidoff and Hall, and Guildford, this strategy for research allows for a gendered analysis of middle-class culture, including the material and ideological contribution of both men and women in the production of a distinctive middle-

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<sup>56</sup> Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987); Janet Guildford, "Public School Reform and the Halifax Middle Class, 1850-1870" (Ph.D. diss., Dalhousie University, 1990); and "'Whate'er the duty of the hour demands': The Work of Middle-Class Women in Halifax, 1840-1880," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXX, 59 (May 1997): 1-20. Similarly, see Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeepers Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); R. J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990); and David Sutherland, "Voluntary Societies and the Process of Middle-class Formation in Early-Victorian Halifax, Nova Scotia," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1994): 237-57.

<sup>57</sup> Judith Fingard, "Race and Respectability in Victorian Halifax," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* XX, 2 (May 1992): 169-95; and "Masculinity, Fraternity, and Respectability in Halifax at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," in *Gender and History in Canada*, eds. Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfield (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996), 211-24. See also Suzanne Morton, "Separate Spheres in a Separate World: African-Nova Scotian Women in Late-19th-Century Halifax County," in *Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19th-Century Maritimes*, eds. Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994), 61-83.

class identity.<sup>58</sup> In fact, Guildford's recent article provides one of the first assessments of women's contribution to the emergence of the middle class in Canadian historiography. While both Burley and Holman discuss masculinity and family organization, they chiefly neglect the participation of women in middle-class formation in general and self-employment in particular.<sup>59</sup>

In most of these works belonging to the second main strategy of middle-class research, with the addition of Burley and Holman, business proprietors figure prominently as a subset within the emerging middle class. For these proprietors, a respectable reputation within one's community, based upon the precepts of gender- and class-appropriate behaviour, remained especially important for the maintenance of a creditworthy reputation. Since this stratum included the operators of family enterprise, whether on a small or large scale, the intersection of domesticity and business encouraged the reproduction of further generations committed to the values of hard work, thrift, self-help, and sobriety.<sup>60</sup> Most importantly for this analysis of Halifax retailing, while many historians still associate business with middle-class membership, increasing acknowledgment exists that similar

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<sup>58</sup> Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*; and Guildford, "'Whate'er the duty of the hour demands.'"

<sup>59</sup> Burley's attention to mid-nineteenth-century empirical sources, success ideology, and masculinity, prevents a meaningful discussion on women proprietors. For his brief section on women entrepreneurs, see Burley, *A Particular Condition*, 99-102. Since Holman uses occupations to categorize the middle class, he also finds it difficult to discuss women in detail. Instead, he examines the gendered aspects of domesticity and middle-class deportment. See Holman, *A Sense of their Duty*, x, 150-69.

<sup>60</sup> See especially Johnson, *A Shopkeepers Millennium*; Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*; Guildford, "'Whate'er the duty of the hour demands'"; Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*; and Holman, *A Sense of their Duty*.

occupations could carry various meanings of wealth and status, whether these occupations involved self-employment or not.<sup>61</sup>

Besides research involving identity, professionalization, new business history, petit-bourgeois shopkeeping, and middle-class commerce, empirical studies analyzing the nature of Victorian self-employment comprised the final body of scholarship relating to this history of Haligonian retailing. In terms of sources and methodologies, with some modifications, works by North American scholars David G. Burley, Melanie Archer, and Wendy Gamber have greatly influenced the shape of the present dissertation.<sup>62</sup> These scholars of self-employment in Brantford, Winnipeg, Detroit, and Boston, have utilized a combination of nominal census returns, city directories, and credit agency reports to help reconstruct the contemporary business world. Specifically, each writer examines the socio-economic attributes of individuals within samples taken from certain years at regular intervals, or from a linked sample of individuals appearing in several cross sections. These methodologies reveal various characteristics of business recruits and display the successes or failures of proprietors through the calculation of persistence rates.

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<sup>61</sup> See, for instance, Guildford, "'Whate'er the duty of the hour demands,'" 4.

<sup>62</sup> Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*; "Frontier of Opportunity"; Melanie Archer, "Merchants and Proprietors in Late Nineteenth-Century Detroit: Family and Social Mobility in an Era of Industrial Change" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1988); "The Entrepreneurial Family Economy: Family Strategies and Self-Employment in Detroit, 1880," *Journal of Family History* 15, 3 (1990): 261-83; "Family Enterprise in an Industrial City: Strategies for the Family Organization of Business in Detroit, 1880," *Social Science History* 15, 1 (Spring 1991): 67-95; "Small Capitalism and Middle-Class Formation in Industrializing Detroit, 1880-1900," *Journal of Urban History* 21, 2 (January 1995): 218-55; Gamber, *The Female Economy*; and "A Gendered Enterprise."

The present study of Haligonian retailers likewise incorporates a statistical analysis of shopkeeping samples drawn from the manuscript census of 1891 and 1901. These samples contained self-employed residents from the middle, working, and underclass centres for retail trade. Fixed-shop retailers were identified as male and female business proprietors who sold goods and services to consumers from a separate store, adjacent shop, or location within their home, operating on a full-or part-time basis. These shopkeepers also included artisans selling their manufactured wares and/or offering repair services. Further information for each individual was gained through an examination of city directories and published credit manuals. In this way, shopkeepers who sold goods to retailers in whole or in part were discarded from the samples.

Three samples emerged from this data of fixed-shop retailers, including samples from 1891 and 1901, as well as a cross section of individuals linked between these years. The first two samples provided a survey of self-employed trades and a socio-economic analysis of shopkeepers by year, sex, and district. In addition, a study of the linked data provided a calculation of turnover rates by trade, pecuniary strength and general credit. For the purposes of this study, persistence can be defined as shopkeepers continuing to pursue the same self-employed trade a decade later.<sup>63</sup>

While Burley, Archer, and Gamber used similar strategies for illustrating the nature

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<sup>63</sup> A more detailed account of this methodology is explained in Chapter One and Chapter Three. Unlike shopkeepers, itinerant retailers were not sampled from the manuscript census for quantitative purposes, but were discussed qualitatively. Underenumeration experienced by this group of retailers and a lack of information concerning their place of business (whether operating in the city or outside its boundaries), made this decision necessary.

of Victorian business over time, important differences exist in each of their works in comparison with one another and in comparison with the present study. Archer's sociological research of family enterprise in late nineteenth-century Detroit, for example, utilizes multivariate analysis and logistic regression. No attempt has been made here to incorporate these methodologies. Instead, the strategies used by historians Burley and Gamber provide models for the following study which encourage the maximum accessibility for interested readers. Most importantly, these latter monographs also combine quantitative data with a qualitative approach. Whatever statistical methods were utilized by these and other researchers of Victorian self-employment, it should be remembered that the following study focuses only on retailers, not self-employment more generally.

Unfortunately, many empirical accounts of Victorian enterprise neglect the business activities of women proprietors and the gendered nature of self-employment. This oversight often originates from a failure to see women's economic contributions as valuable to the overall history of commerce or the use of a narrow definition for business.<sup>64</sup> Hence, the following dissertation adopts Gamber's definition of female proprietors as self-employed women running their own concerns "however minuscule or ephemeral."<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> These problems are well discussed in Gamber, "A Gendered Enterprise." See also Kwolek-Folland, *Incorporating Women*, 1-12. Besides research conducted by Burley and Archer which discuss women in a limited manner, studies by Hosgood describe women only as shoppers and clerks, while Monod's statistical material rarely deals with women and men separately. See Hosgood, "'Pigmies of Commerce'"; "A 'Brave and Daring Folk'"; "The Shopkeeper's 'Friend'"; "The 'Language of Business'"; "Mercantile Monasteries: Shops, Shop Assistants, and Shop Life in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 38, 3 (July 1999): 322-52; and Monod, *Store Wars*.

<sup>65</sup> Gamber, "A Gendered Enterprise," 190.

The extensive use of manuscript ledgers and published reference manuals, although crucial primary sources for business history, also contribute to the neglect of female proprietors. Not surprisingly, both Burley and Archer attempt only limited investigations into the entrepreneurial activities of women.<sup>66</sup> A careful reading of empirical sources and a greater reliance on nominal census returns helps to compile samples inclusive of male and female enterprise.<sup>67</sup> For this reason, shopkeepers appearing in the census for 1891 and 1901 were not rejected from the samples if they did not appear in the appropriate credit reports. In fact, because so few Halifax retailers appeared in these records, the reports were not utilized systematically to divide census samples by possession of capital and credit. Rather,

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<sup>66</sup> Although Archer's doctoral dissertation discussed female proprietors, most of her published works focus entirely on self-employed men. See, for instance, Archer, "The Entrepreneurial Family Economy"; and "Family Enterprise in an Industrial City." Similarly, Burley's research on Brantford and Winnipeg often relegates female proprietors to the margins of discussion. See Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*, 99-102; and "Frontier of Opportunity," 68-9.

<sup>67</sup> Of course, enumerators also underrepresented the business contributions women made to their family economies. However, nominal census returns still provide a more complete picture of women's self-employment than revealed in R. G. Dun and Company records. For works discussing the underenumeration of women's work and similar problems with census returns in general, see Eilidh M. Garrett, "The Dawning of a New Era? Women's Work in England and Wales at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXVIII, 56 (Nov. 1995): 421-464; Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager, "Finding the Work Force in the 1901 Census of Canada," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXVIII, 56 (Nov. 1995): 521-41; "Appendix A: The Census as a Historical Source," in *Unwilling Idlers: The Urban Unemployed and Their Families in Late Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 195-216; Kris Inwood and Richard Reid, "Industry, Occupation and Gender in a Canadian Census," paper presented at the Fifth Canadian Business History Conference, Hamilton, Ontario, Oct. 1998; and Lisa Geib-Gunderson, *Uncovering the Hidden Work of Women in Family Businesses: A History of Census Underenumeration* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998).



this study uses ledgers from the collection of R. G. Dun and Company as well as selected editions of *The Mercantile Agency Reference Book* to gain further material on individual shopkeepers, reject wholesalers from the overall samples, and explore the changing factors determining creditworthiness over time. In this way, female enterprise and a variety of marginal operations could be included within each sample.

For this analysis of urban retailing during the last three decades of the Victorian period, a wealth of records have been consulted to understand the diversity of Haligonian fixed-shop and itinerant retailers. To contribute to the quantitative portions of the following study, a wide assortment of primary records covering the late-Victorian era have been consulted. First, the sources contributing to the compilation of shopkeeper samples included the aforementioned manuscript census returns and published data for 1891 and 1901, city directories examined at five-year intervals, and selected years of *The Mercantile Agency Reference Book*. Meanwhile, a discussion of credit determination rested upon published reference manuals as well as earlier ledgers held in the R. G. Dun and Company collection. Finally, bankruptcy statistics and announcements printed in Halifax's *Royal Gazette*, Toronto's *Monetary Times*, and local newspapers aided in the tabular display of commercial failures, an understanding of economic cycles, and the changing impact of laws governing insolvency. Although these sources do not entirely represent all Halifax retailers, the combination of several records and an awareness of hidden biases, as discussed throughout the dissertation, ensure the inclusive nature of data derived from these materials.

Most importantly, the use of qualitative sources such as trade journals, newspapers, and miscellaneous government, legal, and associational records, further reveal the wider

context of Halifax retailing. National and local journals directed at a progressive retail audience and sponsored by interested wholesalers, discussed the effects of changing legal and economic conditions, encouraged the formation of retail collectives, printed the minutes of commercial associations, advised strategies for achieving success, and featured stories on individual shopkeepers. Halifax's *Maritime Grocer* and *Maritime Merchant*, as well as Toronto's *Canadian Grocer*, proved invaluable for unraveling the events and attitudes from the late 1880s to 1901. Although of less importance, Toronto's *Dry Goods Review* and *Canadian Pharmaceutical Journal* contributed useful information on the dry goods, clothing, and drug trades. Notwithstanding the crucial assistance provided by the Victorian trade press, these journals did carry a bias favouring wholesale creditors and prosperous retailers while their readership was restricted to literate shopkeepers able to afford the necessary subscription.

In addition to these journals, local newspapers aided in further research covering the years between 1870 and the early 1890s, with scattered references thereafter. The popular *Acadian Recorder*, a Liberal paper especially attractive to the masses, furnished the most inclusive material on all relevant topics, including those relating to petty enterprise and family shopkeeping in all its forms. Although each periodical carried a specific political bias, the combination of Liberal and Conservative newspapers helped balance the portrayal of opposing views.

Finally, miscellaneous documents arising from government, legal and associational sources, completed the picture of Halifax's changing world of commerce. These sources included the annual reports, publications, and archival records from the City Council, Nova

Scotia Legislature, House of Commons, Police Department, Magistrate Court, Nova Scotia Supreme Court, Halifax Chamber of Commerce, and Halifax Board of Trade. For the most part, personal and firm-centred records were not used in this study since helpful collections for Haligonian retailers do not exist for this period. Additionally, business sources originating from local wholesalers, mainly comprising account books, contributed little to the discussion of legitimacy.

A careful analysis of these diverse sources presents a multifaceted view of the material realities and shifting identities of urban retailers. Chapter One provides a further introduction to late-Victorian Halifax and nineteenth-century commerce, while presenting a statistical overview of the shopkeeping population. Chapter Two highlights the collaboration between credit agencies, local informants, and suppliers in creating the discourse on legitimacy through the determination of commercial worth. Chapter Three, on the one hand, studies the reform of mercantile relations to underline the contributions of the commercial elite, trade press, and state in attempts towards professionalization. On the other hand, the third chapter also explores the strategies individual retailers adopted to negotiate a course for success or lessen the burden of failure. Chapter Four presents retail initiatives in defining legitimacy and promoting professional standards through the strategies of education, cooperation, exclusion, and state regulation. Formal associations, in particular, could help fight illegitimate competition, restrictive government legislation, temperance interference, economic downturns, and destructive national markets. Ironically, such forms of cooperative action unleashed greater dissension among the ranks of Halifax retailers. Meanwhile, debates surrounding the meaning of legitimacy were most intense between

middle-class shopkeepers and the city's most vulnerable traders. Chapter Five accordingly examines retail and state initiatives to define legitimate enterprise and boost the commercial reputation of the city by attacking or appropriating the popular spectacle of street peddling and open-air market vending.

Henry A. Taylor, "the Barrington street Druggist" who promised middle-class consumers to honour the professional standards of "truly honest, fair and commercial principles," represents but one shopkeeper revealed throughout this study of late-Victorian enterprise. In addition to Taylor, the traders he considered as illegitimate, including petty entrepreneurs, minority shopkeepers, and female retailers, also grace the pages of this dissertation. Despite recent assertions by one Canadian historian that these figures can only be reclaimed by the talents of an oral historian, the agency of those who can no longer be reached through such methods continues to shine through the recorded sources examined here.<sup>68</sup> It is to be hoped that the following analysis of urban retailing contributes to the knowledge of the positive and negatives experiences of all shopkeepers, both those who confronted modernity willingly, and those who rejected the dictates of professionalism.

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<sup>68</sup> Monod, *Store Wars*, 350

## Chapter One

### "A City of Shopkeepers"

When contemplating the commercial development of Halifax in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, local and national observers remarked that Halifax had become "a city of shopkeepers."<sup>1</sup> Occasionally a source of pride, but more often expressed as a lament, such assertions reflected the belief that retailers had proportionately outstripped Halifax's often disappointing population growth while the city's aspirations for becoming a significant industrial centre had gone unrealized.<sup>2</sup> More importantly, members of the commercial elite deplored the city's overdone trade because it indicated the existence of seemingly illegitimate retailers.

Although Haligonians resided in "a community of traders," complaints concerning illegitimacy illustrated the contemporary understanding that shopkeepers did not comprise

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<sup>1</sup> *AR* (Halifax), 19 May 1900, 2. See also *CG* (Toronto), 19 June 1896, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Haligonians were frequently disappointed over their city's population growth as reported by the federal census. When complaining of the overcrowded retail business in Halifax during 1896, one writer complained that soon after Confederation residents had hoped the city's population would reach 100,000 by the end of the century. In 1901, however, the Canadian government estimated the population to be less than half that figure at 40,832. See *AR*, 7 March 1896, 2, reference from Ian McKay's *Social History Collection*, QUA; and "Table VII: Areas, Houses, Families, Population, Sex, Conjugal Condition" in *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1902), 42-3. Similar disappointments occurred after the reporting of the 1891 census. See *AR*, 19 Sept. 1891, 2. A more positive view of industrialization has been presented in a new synopsis of Halifax history. See Judith Fingard, Janet Guildford, and David Sutherland, *Halifax: The First 250 Years* (Halifax: Formac Publishing Co., 1999), 92-116. A positive reassessment of manufacturing in the Maritimes during the 1890s can be found in Kris Inwood and John Chamard, "Regional Industrial Growth During the 1890s: The Case of the Missing Artisans," *Acadiensis* XVI, 1 (Autumn 1986): 101-17.

a homogenous stratum within Halifax society.<sup>3</sup> Widespread recruitment produced a heterogenous group retailing along the main streets of respectable shopping districts as well as the backstreets of many civic neighbourhoods. While large numbers engaged in trade at a middle to lower socio-economic level, populations often believed to be disadvantaged were not prevented from some degree of commercial proprietorship. Notwithstanding evidence indicating a high business turnover and increased hostility originating from the elites of the wholesale and retail sectors, small-scale commerce survived into the twentieth century as one of many possible economic strategies available to Haligonian residents.

Despite statements in the local and commercial press concerning the city's innumerable retailers, late-Victorian Halifax has rarely been viewed as "a city of shopkeepers." In fact, throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, onlookers from outside the Maritime region frequently assumed that Halifax exemplified a "proverbially slow" city, "conservative" in every aspect, whose citizens were "utterly destitute of enterprise."<sup>4</sup> Some journalists internalized these external perceptions and used them for urging Haligonians to achieve greater material success through commerce and industry.<sup>5</sup> Other writers defended Halifax's sensible means of doing business according to one's capital

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<sup>3</sup> *CG*, 19 June 1896, 28.

<sup>4</sup> *MH* (Halifax), 24 May 1881, 2; 11 Oct. 1881, 1; *AR*, 4 Feb. 1891, 2; and 27 Jan. 1872, 3. For similar comments and local complaints against such attitudes, see Isabella Lucy Bird, *The Englishwoman in America* (London, 1856), 17, as cited in Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 5; *EE* (Halifax), 22 Sept. 1873, 2; *Critic* (Halifax), 12 Nov. 1886, 1; *HH* (Halifax), 13 July 1901, 1; *MM* (Halifax), 15 Feb. 1900, 26; 7 June 1900, 14; and 7 May 1903, 28.

<sup>5</sup> *AR*, 27 Jan. 1872, 3; *Critic*, 22 Jan. 1886, 8; *MM*, 2 Aug. 1900, 15; and 25 Oct. 1900, 54.

and capabilities, while arguing that much enterprise can be accomplished “in a quiet way with little demonstration.”<sup>6</sup> A third group rebelled against the entire notion of Halifax as an unprogressive city, declaring such damaging assertions as “pure rot.”<sup>7</sup> Members of the commercial elite, the middle-class retailing sector, and the municipal council, shared these writers’ concerns and worried frequently over the negative economic impact that could result.<sup>8</sup>

While contemporary images of Halifax focused paradoxically on its lack of commercial enterprise or its overabundance of trading, popular and academic historians have focused on the city’s military heritage, mercantile commerce, or industrial capitalism. Beginning in the mid-twentieth century and continuing in the popular imagination, Thomas Raddall’s *Halifax: Warden of the North* argued that the British military presence and successive periods of warfare represented the most important factors influencing the city’s social and economic development.<sup>9</sup> Although at least one Victorian lamented the attention

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<sup>6</sup> *EE*, 22 Sept. 1873, 2; and *MM*, 7 June 1900, 14. See also *MH*, triweekly, 11 Dec. 1875, 3; and *Evening Mail Carnival Number* (Halifax), Aug. 1889.

<sup>7</sup> *Critic*, 12 Nov. 1886, 1; *AR*, 4 Feb. 1891, 2; and *MM*, 15 Feb. 1900, 26.

<sup>8</sup> The stereotype of Halifax conservatism has been recently argued against in Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 5-7. Ernest R. Forbes, *Challenging the Regional Stereotype: Essays on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Maritimes* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1989), fights the image of Maritime conservatism more generally.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Raddall’s portrayal continues in the popular imagination through a revised edition in 1971 and several reprints of the same work thereafter. See, for instance, Raddall, *Halifax: Warden of the North*, rev. ed. (1971; reprint, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988). This image sometimes reappears in more recent popular works. See, for example, Peter C. Newman, *Canada--1892: Portrait of a Promised Land* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), 56-65.

British military officers received in fashionable Haligonian society at the expense of residents engaged in trade,<sup>10</sup> academic historians have argued against the pervasive influence of the military and the mistaken notion that Halifax's socio-economic development stagnated in times of peace.<sup>11</sup> Historian David Sutherland has portrayed Halifax as a city dominated by an enterprising mercantile gentry during the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> Although conceived as a city of commerce before 1870, historians of later decades have focused on Halifax's aspirations as an industrial centre and the underdevelopment it faced during the following century.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See *Critic*, 4 Feb. 1887, 1.

<sup>11</sup> David Sutherland, "Warden of the North Revisited: A Reexamination of Thomas Raddall's Assessment of Nineteenth-Century Halifax," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 4, 19 (1981): 81-91; and Fingard, Guildford and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 5-6.

<sup>12</sup> D. A. Sutherland, "The Merchants of Halifax, 1815-1850, A Commercial Class in Pursuit of Metropolitan Status" (Ph. D. diss., University of Toronto, 1975); David Sutherland, "Halifax 1815-1914: 'Colony to Colony,'" *Urban History Review* 1, 1-75 (June 1975): 7-11; "Halifax Merchants and the Pursuit of Development, 1783-1850," *Canadian Historical Review* LIX, 1 (March 1978): 1-17; and "Warden of the North Revisited."

<sup>13</sup> For examples of industrial and underdevelopment studies specifically on Halifax, see D. A. Sutherland, "The Personnel and Policies of the Halifax Board of Trade, 1890-1914," in *The Enterprising Canadians: Entrepreneurs and Economic Development in Eastern Canada, 1820-1914*, eds. Lewis R. Fischer and Eric W. Sager (St. John's: Maritime History Group, M.U.N., 1979), 205-29; L. D. McCann, "Staples and the New Industrialism in the Growth of Post-Confederation Halifax," *Acadiensis* VIII, 2 (1979): 47-79; James D. Frost, "The 'Nationalization' of the Bank of Nova Scotia, 1880-1910," *Acadiensis* XII, I (Autumn 1982): 3-38; Ian McKay, "Capital and Labour in the Halifax Baking and Confectionery Industry During the Last Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Labour/Le Travailleur* 3 (1978): 63-108; and Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 92-116. See also J. M. S. Careless, "Aspects of Metropolitanism in Atlantic Canada" in *Regionalism in the Canadian Community 1867-1967*, ed. Mason Wade (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 117-29; T. W. Acheson, "The



Aside from the historiographical attention devoted to late nineteenth-century manufacturing, both wholesale and retail commerce continued to shape the development of Halifax and its residents' lives. As a regional entrepot for commercial trade, Halifax's mercantile sector included wholesalers who supplied Nova Scotian retail establishments with domestic and imported goods, as well as shopkeepers who offered goods and services to city residents and visitors.<sup>14</sup> Halifax's permanent population, chiefly a mixture of Nova Scotian-born residents of British origin, grew slowly from 29,582 in 1871 to 40,832 in 1901.<sup>15</sup> Although somewhat homogenous, the population did differ by class, race, ethnicity, and

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National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes, 1880-1910," *Acadiensis* I, 2 (Spring 1972): 3-28; and Inwood and Chamard, "Regional Industrial Growth During the 1890s."

<sup>14</sup> For descriptions of Halifax as a regional entrepot where urban growth was stimulated by a "wholesale-trading complex," see McCann, "Staples and the New Industrialism," 48, 57, 63, 66; and Phillip A. Buckner, "The 1870s: Political Integration" in *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, eds. E. R. Forbes and D. A. Muise (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 62.

<sup>15</sup> For population numbers, see Appendix A, Table A.1. The slower growth in population resulted from relatively lower rates of immigration and regional out-migration. For the composition of Halifax's population during these years, see *Census of Canada 1870-71*, vol. I (Ottawa: I. B. Taylor, 1873), 326-7, 410-11; *Census of Canada 1880-81*, vol. I (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger and Co., 1882), 212-13; *Census of Canada 1890-91*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1893), 337; and *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1902), 302-3, 422. For Maritime out-migration, particularly to the eastern United States, see Betsy Beattie, "'Going up to Lynn': Single Maritime-born Women in Lynn, Massachusetts, 1879-1930," *Acadiensis* XXII,1 (Autumn 1992): 65-86; Alan Brookes, "Out-Migration From the Maritime Provinces, 1860-1900," *Acadiensis* V,2 (Spring 1976): 26-55; Patricia Thornton, "Some Preliminary Comments on the Extent and Consequences of Out-Migration from the Atlantic Region," in *Merchant Shipping and Economic Development in Atlantic Canada: Proceedings of the Atlantic Canada Shipping Project, June 25-June 27, 1981*, eds. Lewis R. Fischer and Eric W. Sager (St. John's: Maritime History Group, M.U.N., 1982), 185-218; and "The Problem of Out-Migration from Atlantic Canada, 1871-1921," *Acadiensis* XV,1 (Autumn 1985): 3-34.

religion, as noted by contemporary onlookers who observed the “lines of latitude and longitude” dividing Halifax society into “innumerable cliques and sets.”<sup>16</sup> Ample opportunities certainly existed for retailing in its various forms within a city populated and frequented by middle-class citizens, lower-class residents, ethnic and racial minorities, nearby farmers, military personnel, merchant mariners, transient workers, and Euro-American tourists.

Although retailers were not adversely affected by department stores and catalogue shopping in these years, keen competition from neighbouring shopkeepers, sellers in private and public markets, and street peddlers, did have a social, economic, and cultural impact on retailing in Halifax.<sup>17</sup> From 1871 to 1881, approximately one-quarter of the city’s labour force was engaged in trade.<sup>18</sup> Although contemporary literature promoted Halifax to visitors

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<sup>16</sup> *Critic*, 14 Jan. 1887, 2; *AR*, 25 July 1891, 2; and L. D. McCann, “Class, Ethnicity, and Residential Differentiation in Mid-Victorian Halifax,” in *Reflections and Visions: 25 Years of Geography at Waterloo*, University of Waterloo, Department of Geography Publication Series, No. 33, eds. Richard Preston and Bruce Mitchell (Waterloo, 1990), 258.

<sup>17</sup> During the late nineteenth century, no department stores opened in Halifax, but contemporaries occasionally heard rumours of their construction. While the Eaton’s catalogue had made an appearance in Nova Scotia during the 1890s, it proved more of a threat to the country store. Larry McCann, “The 1890s: Fragmentation and the New Social Order” in *Atlantic Provinces*, 129-30; *MG* (Halifax), 1 June 1893, 1; 23 Jan. 1896, 6; *MM*, 17 Sept. 1896, 9; 5 Aug. 1897, 12, 30; 14 April 1898, 16; 12 May 1898, 24; 13 April 1899, 40; and 22 June 1899, 40. The effects of non-fixed marketing will be discussed in Chapter Five.

<sup>18</sup> In 1871, 22 percent of working Haligonians were engaged in commerce (2,285 of 10,285). Ten years later, 26 percent of working citizens were in the commercial sector (3,293 of 12,933). Unfortunately, the 1871 and 1881 census did not make an attempt to separate business owners from their employees. “Table XIII: Occupations of the People” in *Census of Canada 1870-71*, vol. II (Ottawa: I. B. Taylor, 1873), 334-45; and “Table XIV: Occupations of the People” in *Census of Canada 1880-81*, vol. II (Ottawa:

as a “great commercial city,”<sup>19</sup> complaints soon surfaced in the local and commercial press concerning tense competition and small profits. Critics of “overdone business” particularly voiced these allegations when discussing the expansion of the grocery trade. By 1891, according to one daily newspaper, the number of grocers in Halifax had doubled since Confederation, making the writer wonder if Haligonians devoted their principal attention to eating. The city’s population, in comparison, had not increased by even one quarter.<sup>20</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, in the opinion of the *Acadian Recorder* and the *Maritime Merchant*, the incidences of shopkeeping had doubled, in certain lines trebled, during the last thirty years. Halifax was indeed “a city of shopkeepers,” in dire need of an influx of ten to twenty thousand residents whose presence would help reduce over competition and high business turnover.<sup>21</sup>

Halifax’s relatively small base for industry and the manufacturing sector’s reinforcement of the city’s wholesale and retail enterprise further contributed to Halifax being dubbed “a city of shopkeepers.” While the protective tariff of the National Policy did

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Maclean, Roger and Co., 1884), 243. Similar figures cannot be readily obtained for 1891 and 1901 since the published census statistics for occupational sectors were provided only for individual provinces.

<sup>19</sup> *A Guide to the City of Halifax, Nova Scotia 1884 and 1885: Its Past and Present* (Halifax: William McNab, 1884), 6.

<sup>20</sup> *AR*, 27 Jan. 1891, 2; and 3 Oct. 1891, 2. Between 1871 and 1891, for instance, Halifax’s population increased by only 8,913, or approximately 23 percent. As early as 1876, residents noted the especially keen competition in the grocery retail trade. See G. A. White, *Halifax and its Business*. . . (Halifax: N. S. Printing Co., 1876), 135.

<sup>21</sup> *MM*, 21 June 1900, 13; and *AR*, 19 May 1900, 2. For additional complaints, see *AR*, 6 Sept. 1875, 2; *MH*, triweekly, 8 Jan 1876, 3; *AR*, 30 March 1883, 2; and *Critic*, 16 Nov 1888, 8.

foster industrial growth after 1879, especially in the city's North End, most of the resulting manufactured products involved consumer goods, not the processing of staples.<sup>22</sup> Halifax's manufacturing sector also remained relatively small scale in comparison to other urban centres, reflecting the scattering of Nova Scotia's industry throughout the province's port, rail, and resource towns.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the industrial expansion which did occur reinforced differences between wealthy and working-class suburbs while stimulating the expansion of shopping districts for each class of residents. These developments helped Halifax remain an important centre for commercial trade into the twentieth century.<sup>24</sup>

Before discussing the changing commercial centres of late-Victorian Halifax and their affiliated clientele, it is first necessary to further understand the geography and population of each district. Although Halifax experienced slow population growth with an

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<sup>22</sup> McCann, "The 1890s," 149. For pre-1879 manufacture existing in Halifax, see Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 94; and White, *Halifax and its Business*, 79-105. Much of this industry was also focused on the manufacture of consumer goods, not the processing of staples. For the industrialization of the North End after 1879, noticeable as early as 1881, see Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 116; Paul A. Erickson, *Halifax's North End: An Anthropologist Looks at the City* (Hantsport, N.S.: Lancelot Press, 1986), 49; *MH*, 11 Nov. 1881, 1; and *HH*, 15 Nov. 1897, 2.

<sup>23</sup> For more on the scattering of Nova Scotia's industry, see Acheson, "The National Policy," 4-5; McCann, "Staples and the New Industrialism," 66, 70; Del Muise, "'The Great Transformation': Changing the Urban Face of Nova Scotia, 1871-1921," *Nova Scotia Historical Review* 11, 2 (1991): 1-42; and Judith Fingard, "The 1880s: Paradoxes of Progress" in *Atlantic Provinces*, 83.

<sup>24</sup> L. D. McCann, "Metropolitanism and Branch Businesses in the Maritimes, 1881-1931," *Acadiensis* XIII, 1 (Autumn 1983): 120-2; and "Staples and the New Industrialism," 79.

overall increase of slightly more than one-third between 1871 and 1901,<sup>25</sup> observers noted the movement of Haligonians from the city centre to the northern and southern suburbs as early as the 1870s.<sup>26</sup> During the next two decades, suburban expansion combined with improved transportation and industrial enterprise to speed the decline of population in the downtown core, creating bustling suburbs to the South, North, and eventually West of the city.<sup>27</sup> For much of the period under review, most residents lived near their place of work. Those who separated work and home to the greatest extent included wealthy capitalists, wholesalers, shipping merchants, and professionals in law and medicine who resided in the South End and the semi-rural North West Arm. One's socio-economic class, therefore, increasingly determined residential location.<sup>28</sup>

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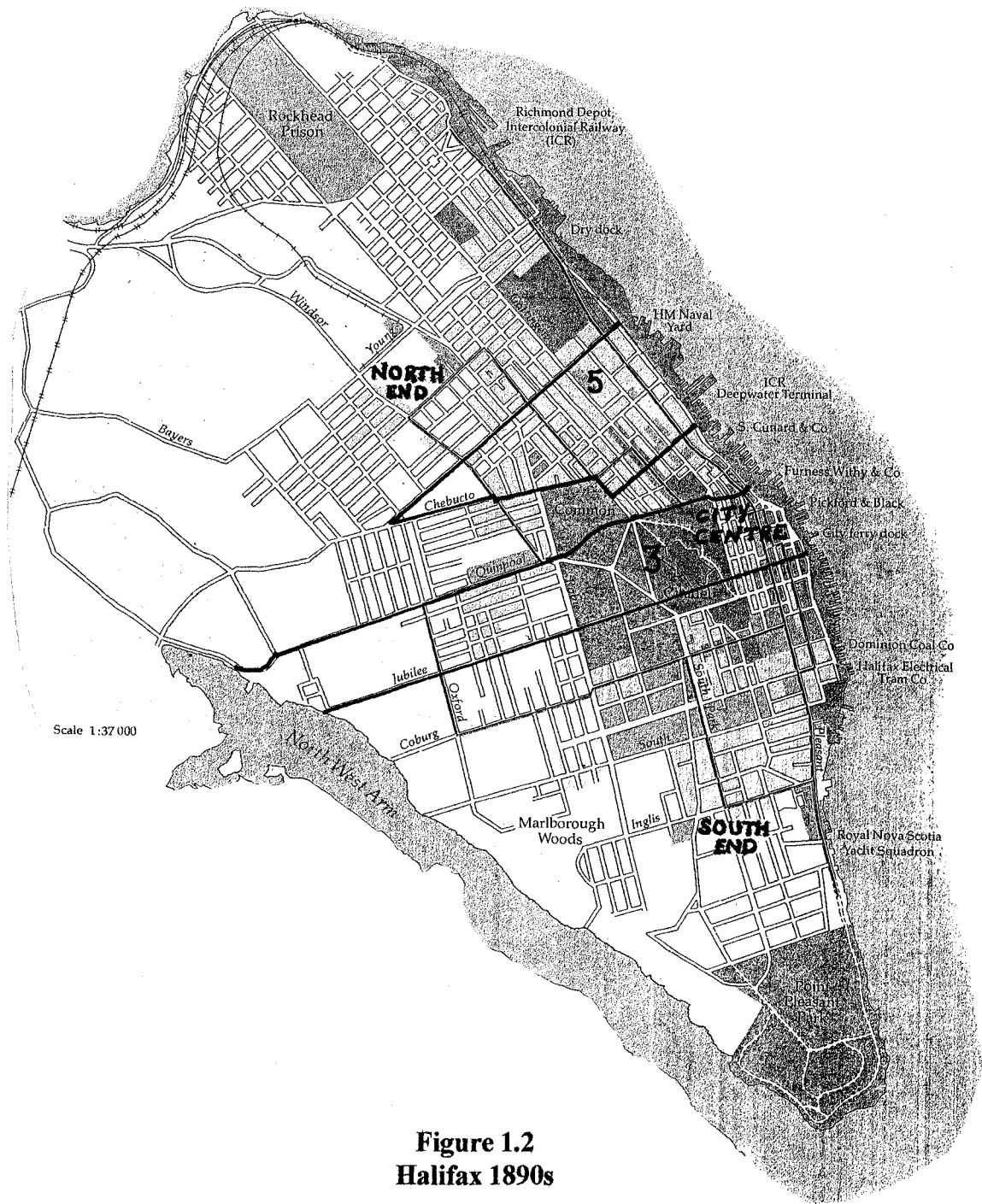
<sup>25</sup> *Census of Canada 1870-71*, vol. I, 77; *Census of Canada 1880-81*, vol. I, 9; *Census of Canada 1890-91*, vol. I, 26; and *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I, 42-3. While the population grew at a faster rate between 1871 and 1881, it gained less than 3,000 people every ten years between 1881 and 1901. Halifax's population in 1871 was 29,582. By 1901, it had increased to 40,832.

<sup>26</sup> *ER* (Halifax), 13 March 1873, 2; and Janet Guildford, "Public School Reform and the Halifax Middle Class, 1850-1870" (Ph.D. diss., Dalhousie University, 1990), 45-50.

<sup>27</sup> See *AR*, 7 March 1896, 2, reference from McKay, for an example of complaints concerning Halifax's dull centre streets. By 1886, Haligonians could travel along Barrington Street, the waterfront, and Spring Garden Road--all located in the city centre and southern suburbs--via a permanent horse railway. A decade later, electric tram cars appeared, adding routes to the western and northern suburbs. See Raddall, *Halifax*, 224; McCann, "Class, Ethnicity, and Residential Differentiation," 245; and Fingard, Guildford and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 114. For the development of the West End, a suburb neglected in this discussion since it was sparsely populated until after the turn of the twentieth century, see Fingard, Guildford and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 112; and McCann, "Class, Ethnicity, and Residential Differentiation," 263.

<sup>28</sup> McCann, "Class, Ethnicity, and Residential Differentiation," 260, 263.





**Figure 1.2**  
**Halifax 1890s**

This map shows the boundaries for Wards Three and Five in 1891 and 1901, as well as the City Centre, North End, and South End. [From: L. D. McCann, "Industrialization and the Maritimes," in *Historical Atlas of Canada, Volume III: Addressing the Twentieth Century, 1891-1961*, eds. Donald Kerr and Deryck W. Holdsworth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), Plate 25.]

Halifax's oldest district, the centre core, included residential, commercial, and industrial space as well as a varied mix of inhabitants. Located between the British garrison on Citadel Hill and the waterfront, the streets of Sackville and Jacob served as the district's southern and northern boundaries. Although the region contained 60 percent of the city's unskilled workers in 1871, many of whom were Irish, it also contained an intermingling of skilled and white-collar workers of English and Scottish descent. While Irish Catholic immigrants working as unskilled labourers dominated the waterfront, they also shared the space with merchant wharves, artisanal shops, ship chandleries, and sailor boarding houses.<sup>29</sup> Significantly, the city centre included the homes and temporary shelters of the British army and naval force, an average year-round presence of between 2,000 and 4,000 military personnel. The military's genteel officers and rowdy enlisted men reinforced the division of Halifax society between "rough" and "respectable."<sup>30</sup> The presence of the British garrison and naval squadron, as well as the merchant marine, created the sub-districts of "sailortown," an area running parallel with the waterfront, and "soldiertown," a region comprising the upper streets of the city centre nearest Citadel Hill.<sup>31</sup> Between these upper and lower streets, wholesalers, retailers, financiers, and local inhabitants worked, resided, and shopped. Before 1891, Wards Three and Four covered the downtown core. Thereafter most of the region was

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<sup>29</sup> McCann, "Class, Ethnicity, and Residential Differentiation," 244, 250, 258.

<sup>30</sup> Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 98; Judith Fingard, *The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax* (Porters Lake, N.S.: Pottersfield Press, 1991), 16; and McCann, "Class, Ethnicity, and Residential Differentiation," 249.

<sup>31</sup> For a description of these areas, see Fingard, *The Dark Side of Life*, 15-28; M. K. Morrison, "The 'Social Evil' in Halifax in the Late Nineteenth Century" (B. A. honours essay, Dalhousie University, 1979); and *MH*, triweekly, 25 Sept. 1875, 3.



included within the expanded boundaries of Ward Three and a tiny portion of Ward Two.<sup>32</sup> Despite the changing electoral boundaries, by 1901 the city centre had retained much of its earlier rough and respectable flavour, as well as its unique mixture of peoples and places.

One of Halifax's first expansions from the centre core included the northern suburbs located beyond Jacob Street. An area where pigs and geese wandered the streets and low rents predominated, the North End contained large numbers of the Haligonian working class.<sup>33</sup> As early as 1871, the suburb included almost 60 percent of the city's skilled labourers, many of whom held positions in the building trades.<sup>34</sup> By the 1880s, growth encouraged by the Dominion government's National Policy helped create the working-class sub-district of Richmond located near dock facilities, an Intercolonial Rail terminus, and several industrial factories.<sup>35</sup> Besides being home to a variety of ethnic groups, the region also contained much of Halifax's African-Nova Scotian population in a racially mixed neighbourhood surrounding Creighton Street and in the largely segregated community of

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<sup>32</sup> For Ward Three's previous boundaries, see *The Charter and Ordinances of the City of Halifax* (Halifax: Alpin Grant, 1864), 2; H. W. Hopkins, *City Atlas of Halifax, Nova Scotia from Actual Surveys and Records* ([Halifax]: Provincial Surveying and Publishing Co., 1878); and *Halifax City Charter and Ordinances* (Halifax: Queen's Printer, 1885), 3-4. For the changes made in 1891, see *AR*, 30 Nov. 1891, 2; and *Laws Relating to the City of Halifax* (Halifax: N. S. Printing Co., 1891), 8-9. Note that in the Hopkins atlas, Hopkins mislabels Ward Three as Ward Four.

<sup>33</sup> *EE*, 16 Sept. 1872, 2; and *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in Canada, 1889, Volume 6: Nova Scotia Evidence* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1889), 197.

<sup>34</sup> McCann, "Class, Ethnicity, and Residential Differentiation," 244-5, 250, 258.

<sup>35</sup> Erickson, *Halifax's North End*, 41-54.

Africville.<sup>36</sup> Although many working-class residents lived, worked, and shopped in these northern streets, a combination of differing socio-economic groups resided in this district.<sup>37</sup> Prior to 1891, portions of Wards Five and Six covered the northern suburbs, while Wards Four, Five, and Six largely comprised the region thereafter.<sup>38</sup>

Halifax's South End, lying south of Sackville Street, represented the final major suburb developed during the later decades of the nineteenth century. Although the region closest to the Citadel contained both homes and businesses, the southern most portion of the district included mainly residential space for wealthy merchants, professionals, and government officials of English and Scottish descent. During the early years, almost one half of these high white-collar workers lived in this region, while additional inhabitants included prosperous skilled workers of the building trades. By the turn of the twentieth century, the South End continued to be associated with wealth and upper middle-class vocations.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> For further information on African-Nova Scotians in Halifax, see Don H. Clairmont and Dennis W. McGill, eds., *Africville: The Life and Death of a Canadian Black Community* (Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, 1987); Bridglal Pachai, *Beneath the Clouds of the Promised Land: The Survival of Nova Scotia's Blacks Volume II 1800-1989* (Hantsport, N.S.: Lancelot Press, 1990); Judith Fingard, "Race and Respectability in Victorian Halifax," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20,2 (May 1992): 169-95; and Suzanne Morton, "Separate Spheres in a Separate World: African-Nova Scotian Women in Late-19th-Century Halifax County," in *Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19th-Century Maritimes*, eds. Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994), 185-210.

<sup>37</sup> McCann, "Class, Ethnicity, and Residential Differentiation," 249.

<sup>38</sup> See these changing ward boundaries in *The Charter and Ordinances of the City of Halifax* (1864); Hopkins, *City Atlas of Halifax; Halifax City Charter and Ordinances* (1885); *AR*, 30 Nov. 1891, 2; and *Laws Relating to the City of Halifax* (1891).

<sup>39</sup> McCann, "Class, Ethnicity, and Residential Differentiation," 244-5, 249-50.

Throughout the late nineteenth century, the southern suburbs corresponded with Wards One and Two, with only a slight shifting of their respective boundaries in 1891.<sup>40</sup>

Inhabitants of Halifax's various regions often shopped in retail centres in or adjacent to their home district. In the middle decades of the nineteenth century, however, retailing was primarily concentrated in the city centre. Many customers visited shops along the lower and middle streets of Water, Bedford Row, Hollis, and Barrington. Granville Street became the most elegant shopping district for Halifax's wealthiest citizens, mainly for its cluster of prestigious dry goods houses. Smaller-scale shops for residents of lesser financial means were located in the upper streets of Barrack, Albermarle, Starr, Grafton, and Poplar Grove, as well as the upper portions of their associated cross streets, Sackville, Prince, George, Duke, Buckingham and Jacob.<sup>41</sup>

As the city expanded from the central core, these retailing centres shifted as citizens and resident shopkeepers scattered throughout the city. By the late 1870s, Barrington Street had surpassed Granville Street as the most prestigious retail district, while a myriad of shops expanded into the suburbs.<sup>42</sup> Less elegant shops, for example, appeared along the streets of the increasingly working-class northern suburbs, particularly Gottingen and Brunswick. As

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<sup>40</sup> Pre-and post-1891 boundaries were described in *The Charter and Ordinances of the City of Halifax* (1864); Hopkins, *City Atlas of Halifax*; *Halifax City Charter and Ordinances* (1885); *AR*, 30 Nov. 1891, 2; and *Laws Relating to the City of Halifax* (1891).

<sup>41</sup> Guildford, "Public School Reform and the Halifax Middle Class," 48; *MH*, triweekly, 23 Dec. 1875, 2; 2 July 1880, 1; *AR*, 8 June 1889, 2; *Commercial News* (Halifax), Aug. 1934, 1, 4; Sept. 1934, 1-4; Oct. 1934, 4-5; and Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 88.

<sup>42</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 23 Dec. 1875, 2.

well, the northern portion of Argyle Street, a thoroughfare lying between the upper and middle streets of the centre core, also began catering to the consumer needs of Halifax's North End residents. The retail growth of Gottingen and Argyle had been particularly spurred by the establishment of two private food markets in their immediate vicinity, the North End Market and the Colonial Market.<sup>43</sup>

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, shops continued to expand throughout the city, creating two discernible centres for the respectable retail of goods and services. Citadel Hill physically divided these two commercial hubs while Halifax's residential patterns socially divided their consuming clientele. In the downtown core, inhabitants of the South End shopped along the streets of Barrington and Granville, and sought the financial services of businesses along Hollis Street.<sup>44</sup> Many middle-class shoppers also visited the centre city's long standing open-air market.<sup>45</sup> For Haligonians living north of the Citadel, Gottingen Street had become a self-contained consumer mecca, or what Halifax's *Maritime Merchant* described as "a veritable town within a city."<sup>46</sup> Although a centre for working-class consumerism, the North End also contained increasingly impressive stores, mimicking the decor of prestigious shops in the downtown core, for those shoppers aspiring to middle-class

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<sup>43</sup> *AR*, 8 Sept. 1871, 2; *MH*, triweekly, 23 Dec. 1875, 2; *MH*, 2 July 1880, 1; and *Commercial News*, Feb. 1935, 1.

<sup>44</sup> *AR*, 8 June 1889, 2; and *MM*, 7 May 1903, 28. By 1889, Granville Street had regained much of its former grandeur.

<sup>45</sup> Chapter Five, 283-6, 304-30, discusses the Green Market in more detail.

<sup>46</sup> *MM*, 7 May 1903, 28.

respectability or at least taking part in the beginnings of mass consumerism.<sup>47</sup>

Besides the main shopping districts for the residents of the north and south suburbs, goods and services for Halifax's underclass, an impoverished and criminalized grouping, were still offered along the city centre's upper streets.<sup>48</sup> This lower-class, racially- and ethnically-mixed community of civilian and military residents continued to exist despite the reform efforts of urban renewal advocates.<sup>49</sup> Although by 1901 these efforts failed to eradicate the abodes of the underclass and their shopkeeping neighbours, they did succeed in reducing its members to an ever decreasing circumference.

If the prevalence of retail commerce did indeed distinguish Halifax from its more industrialized urban counterparts, several questions arise concerning these proprietors of the late nineteenth century. For instance, what characteristics typified the city's numerous and disparate shopkeepers? Secondly, did these factors differ between the two main centres of respectable consumerism, notably the middle and working-class shops for customers of the south and north suburbs? Finally, had a change occurred in the recruitment of retailers which would account for the heightened focus on defining legitimacy and encouraging professionalization during the last decade of the nineteenth century? To better understand

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<sup>47</sup> For a description of the North End shopping district and its shops, see *AR*, 20 June 1891, 3; *CG*, 5 June 1896, 32; 4 Sept. 1896, 17; and *MM*, 7 May 1903, 28.

<sup>48</sup> For an introduction to Halifax's underclass, see Fingard, *The Dark Side of Life*, particularly pages 15-116.

<sup>49</sup> For examples of late-Victorian urban renewal efforts, see Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 109-111; and Fingard, *The Dark Side of Life*, 24-5. See Chapter Four for further detail on the results these reform efforts had on certain trades, association formation, and concerns for professionalization.

Halifax's retailing sector, the remainder of the chapter presents information garnered from an analysis of the nominal census returns from 1891 and 1901.

To create a cross section of shopkeepers for investigation which appeared in the city centre and portions of the North End, 508 and 456 fixed-shop retailers were selected from Wards Three and Five in 1891 and 1901, respectively. Fixed-shop retailers were identified as business proprietors who sold goods and services to consumers from a separate store, adjacent shop, or location within their home. Special attention was therefore paid to individuals whom enumerators determined to be employers and own account proprietors. In cases where enumerators identified a retailer as a wage earner or employee, their status as a retail shopkeeper was confirmed through additional sources. Appropriate city directories were then consulted for all shopkeepers to gather further business and residential information.

Throughout the process, shopkeepers who sold goods to retailers in whole or in part were discarded to compile samples only comprised of retailers. Although census manuals advised data collectors to distinguish between wholesalers and retailers, enumerators seldom bothered to make the distinction.<sup>50</sup> Fortunately, a shopkeeper's status as a wholesaler could be discerned through an analysis of advertisements and business listings within an appropriate edition of *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*. If needed, an individual was searched through a contemporary credit-reporting publication issued by Dun, Wiman and Company, or its successor, R. G. Dun and Company. Although these credit listings did not

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<sup>50</sup> These instructions appeared as early as 1891 in Canada, *Manual Containing "The Census Act," and the Instructions to Officers Employed in the Taking of the Third Census of Canada* (Ottawa: Department of Agriculture, Census Branch, 1891), 15.

usually separate retailers from wholesalers, on rare occasions they did identify a particular business as a supplying establishment.<sup>51</sup>

The information collected from the 1891 and 1901 census provides two representative samples of all Haligonian shopkeepers, comprising approximately 1 percent of the total population for the city.<sup>52</sup> Wards Three and Five covered the aforementioned middle, working, and underclass centres for retail trade, while encompassing residential neighbourhoods, industrial space, and peri-urban terrain. Shopkeepers taken from these districts therefore included the main-street retailer, backstreet variety storekeeper, and semi-rural general trader. Wards Three and Five also contained a significant portion of Halifax's population and landscape. Although the inhabitants of Ward Three represented less than 10 percent of the city's total population in 1901, the residents of Ward Five, the most populated civic ward, contained almost a quarter of Halifax's population.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, Ward Three's boundaries by 1891 stretched across the Halifax peninsula from the harbour front in the city centre to the Northwest Arm and beyond to the northern shore of Horse Shoe Island. Its southern borders included Prince Street, through Citadel Hill, and Jubilee Road, while the

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<sup>51</sup> *The Mercantile Agency Reference Book (and Key) for the Dominion of Canada*, July 1890, Jan. 1901. Directories most frequently consulted include *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1891-2, 1895-6, 1900-1, and 1901-2.

<sup>52</sup> The sample for 1891 comprises 1.3 percent of the total city population (508 shopkeepers from a city population of 38,437). Similarly, the sample for 1901 comprises 1.1 percent of the total population of Halifax (456 shopkeepers from a city population of 40,832).

<sup>53</sup> "Table VII: Areas, Houses, Families, Population, Sex, Conjugal Condition" in *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I, 42-3.

ward's northern borders comprised the streets of Jacob, Cogswell, and Quinpool Road.<sup>54</sup> The more crowded Ward Five included the region bounded by the Harbour in the North End, and the thoroughfares of North, Chebucto, Windsor, Cunard, North Park, and Cornwallis.<sup>55</sup> While both wards contained large numbers of residents claiming British descent, almost half of whom were Roman Catholic, each district included a variety of ethnic and racial origins. African-Nova Scotians lived among the inhabitants of both electoral districts, for example, with the larger black community living along Ward Five's Maitland, Gottingen, Creighton and Maynard streets.<sup>56</sup> In terms of wealth, both wards represented a range of experiences. According to city assessments of personal and real property, Ward Three ranked second of

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<sup>54</sup> By 1891, the civic government had expanded Ward Three to include most of the original Ward Three, most of the original Ward Four, and parts of the earlier Ward Two. Prior to 1891, Ward Three included approximately half of the city centre, including the area bounded by the harbour, Duke Street, Halifax Citadel, a small portion of the Commons, Bell Road and Sackville Street. See *The Charter and Ordinances of the City of Halifax* (1864), 2; Hopkins, *City Atlas of Halifax*; *Halifax City Charter and Ordinances* (1885), 3-4; *AR*, 30 Nov. 1891, 2; and *Laws Relating to the City of Halifax* (1891), 8-9. See Figures 1.1 and 1.2.

<sup>55</sup> Prior to 1891, Ward Five, one of the largest and most populated wards, stretched across the waterfront to the semi-rural region of North West Arm. Its additional borders consisted of Quinpool Road, Cogswell Street, and Jacob Street to the south, and Chebucto Road, North Street, and Gerrish Street to the north. When the ward boundaries changed in 1891, the municipal government decreased Ward Five's land mass significantly. Its new borders remained within much of the crowded portions of the original Ward Five and a tiny section of the earlier Ward Six. See *The Charter and Ordinances of the City of Halifax* (1864), 2; *Halifax City Charter and Ordinances* (1885), 3-4; Hopkins, *City Atlas of Halifax*; *AR*, 30 Nov. 1891, 2; and *Laws Relating to the City of Halifax* (1891), 8-9. See Figures 1.1 and 1.2.

<sup>56</sup> During the late nineteenth century, an important African-Nova Scotian community resided in an area bounded by the streets of Brunswick, Cogswell, Robie and North. Within this region existed two African-Nova Scotian churches and a segregated school. See Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 106.



all electoral districts, while Ward Five ranked fourth.<sup>57</sup> Hence, in matters of shop numbers, location, proprietor background, and clientele features, Wards Three and Five provide reasonably characteristic samples of late nineteenth-century retail commerce.

Notwithstanding the general representative nature of these districts, methodological procedures may have inadvertently included one group of proprietors while excluding another group from the samples. Because the nominal census listed households not commercial shops, some retailers were included who owned businesses outside the chosen wards. Fortunately, research on the residential patterns of shopkeepers suggests that these retailers were only a small minority.<sup>58</sup> Conversely, retailers who owned businesses within Wards Three or Five but lived elsewhere, do not appear in this chapter's study. Since proprietors within this category may have lived in the affluent South End, the samples neglect the most prosperous shopkeepers from the following analysis. Despite these methodological quirks, the study serves as a corrective to secondary literature on self-employment and retailing which often neglects the lower echelons of commercial enterprise.

Nominal census returns for 1891 and 1901 were consulted for their relative comparability as well as the era of financial strain and retail activism they represent. For the first time in these years, census enumerators questioned residents concerning their occupational status. Such queries allow researchers to readily identify self-employed individuals from wage-earning employees. Clerks could therefore be distinguished from their

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<sup>57</sup> *Annual Report of the Several Departments of the City Government of Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1890-1 to 1900-1.*

<sup>58</sup> See the discussion of residential patterns below.

employers, and factory operatives from artisanal shopkeepers.<sup>59</sup> Equally important for ensuring the maximum comparability of samples, Wards Three and Five maintained identical boundaries during both census years. Finally, during the 1890s, a Haligonian publisher established the popular commercial journal, the *Maritime Grocer*, later renamed as the *Maritime Merchant*; while retail trade associations formed in Halifax's most numerous shopkeeping trades. Such occurrences heightened complaints against increased competition and illegitimate trade from associated retailers, supplying wholesalers, and commercial columnists. These same sources urged retailers to professionalize their particular lines of mercantile trade. Economic hard times during the decade in question also make these years beneficial for analysis. After suffering from the economic depressions of the 1870s and mid-1880s, Nova Scotians continued to face financial difficulties. A commercial depression raged throughout the province until approximately 1899.<sup>60</sup> In fact, one year after the 1891

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<sup>59</sup> Some researchers have used earlier census records in combination with directories and credit-reporting publications to obtain samples of business proprietors. For one of the most recent examples in Canadian business history, see David G. Burley, "Frontier of Opportunity: The Social Organization of Self-Employment in Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1881-1901," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXXI, 61 (May 1998): 35-69. Unfortunately, this practice may underrepresent self-employment among the least fortunate since marginal proprietors rarely appeared in Dun reports and sometimes were ignored by the compilers of city directories. Unlike Burley, Peter Baskerville uses later census records to minimize potential errors. See Baskerville, "Gender, Family and Self-Employment in Urban Canada: 1901 and 1996 Compared," paper presented at the Fifth Canadian Business History Conference, Hamilton, Ontario, Oct. 1998. This paper utilizes data from the 1891 and 1901 manuscript census, as well as material from the 1996 published census.

<sup>60</sup> For a description of harsh economic times in Canada and Halifax, see E. J. Chambers, "Late Nineteenth Century Business Cycles in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 47 (1964): 395, 406; *AR*, 7 Jan. 1892, 2; *MG*, 12 Jan. 1893, 2; *MM*, 7 Jan. 1897, 43; 7 Jan 1897, 11; 18 March 1897, 45; 1 April 1897, 46-9; 21 Jan. 1897, 42; and *AR*, 4 Dec 1897, 2, reference from McKay. For improvements by

census, 48 Halifax failures were recorded, a number equalled only during the severe economic stress of the 1870s depression.<sup>61</sup> The 1891 and 1901 census years thus provide the most sensible and informative snapshot of late-Victorian shopkeeping in Halifax.

An analysis of both samples reveal that Haligonian shopkeepers had ample reason to complain of the city's "overdone" trade. In both samples, between 31 and 34 shopkeepers existed for every 1,000 inhabitants in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Not surprisingly, the district including the city centre represented the most concentrated retail sector for both census years. In 1891, for example, Ward Three possessed almost twice the rate of shopkeepers as Ward Five. Accordingly, dealers in the city centre may have felt greater competition than retailers operating elsewhere within Halifax. Nevertheless, the shopping district of the North End also experienced growing pressures by 1901 since population changes within Ward Five allowed the rate of shopkeeping to rise slightly by the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>62</sup> While these figures illustrate the presence of close competition, they represent only an estimate. On the one hand, some proprietors retailing within each district may have lived elsewhere in the city. On the other hand, a small number of retailers residing in these wards may have possessed shops outside the sampled districts.

Just as retailers correctly noted the keen competition in shopkeeping trades, justification also exists for indicating a problem in the lines related to food and apparel

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1899, see *MM*, 6 July 1899, 40; 5 July 1900, 14; *Annual Report of the Board of Trade of Halifax, N. S.*, 1900, 7-8; and *Annual Report of the Board of Trade of Halifax, N.S.*, 1901, 8. For further information on economic cycles, see Chapter Three.

<sup>61</sup> See Appendix C, Tables C.1 and C.2.

<sup>62</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.2.

distribution.<sup>63</sup> During the 1890s, prominent grocers and dry goods dealers established retail trade associations to help counteract tense commercial rivalry.<sup>64</sup> Accordingly, in 1891 and 1901, the largest percentage of shopkeepers were engaged in the food, drink, and pharmacy trades, ranging from almost one-half to more than one-third, respectively. Within this category, grocers represented the most numerous of all commercial proprietors.<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile, shopkeepers in the apparel trades represented the second most numerous retail grouping in this decade, comprising approximately one-quarter of all retailers.<sup>66</sup> Within this category, enterprising individuals especially turned to the clothing and dry goods trades. Proprietors who did not engage in the above categories tended to concentrate in the provision of personal services, most of whom kept hotels and boarding houses.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.3, A.4, A.5, and A.6.

<sup>64</sup> See Chapter Four, 248-66.

<sup>65</sup> Shopkeepers in the food, drink and pharmacy trades included the following retailers: grocers; grocery and liquor dealers; grocery and feed dealers; sellers of tea, coffee, and spices; fruiterers; fruit and confection retailers; flour dealers; butchers; victuallers; fish mongers; milk dealers; sellers of pork, sausages, and provisions; bakers; confectioners; fancy bakers; liquor sellers; saloon keepers; temperate bar keepers; restaurant proprietors; chemists; druggists; and pharmacists.

<sup>66</sup> Shopkeepers in the apparel trades included the following retailers: dry goods dealers; retailers in gentlemen's furnishings; sellers of ready-made clothing; merchant tailors; hat and cap dealers; self-employed dressmakers, tailoresses, and milliners; and sellers of boots and shoes.

<sup>67</sup> In both census years, approximately one-eighth of sampled shopkeepers provided personal services. Although some historians have recently noted the importance of including boarding house keepers whom enumerators failed to identify as such, I included only those who were specifically described in the manuscript census as boarding house keepers and hotel proprietors. If unnamed lodging houses had been included in the study, their numbers and percentages would have been far greater. Since these unnamed establishments often contained relatives of the household head, it is

Although grocery and dry goods comprised the most numerous retail lines in these years, male and female shopkeepers pursued these and other trades in differing proportions. Whereas both samples included an unchanging male-female ratio of two-thirds to one-third, many men engaged in the categories of food, drink, and pharmacy, while many women operated shops in the apparel trades.<sup>68</sup> Specifically, grocers were the most numerous of all male shopkeepers, representing close to one-quarter of the male sample for both census years. Conversely, women were overwhelmingly engaged in the clothing and dry goods trades. In fact, the proportion of women self-employed in these trades increased from over one-third of female shopkeepers in 1891 to almost one-half by 1901. Finally, the retailing careers of men and women also differed by the involvement of women in fewer trades. Although male shopkeepers engaged in a wide variety of lines, over three-quarters of women in both years established shops in the businesses of clothing and dry goods, grocery, and accommodation.<sup>69</sup>

Large numbers of men and women became attracted to the grocery, clothing, and dry goods lines because they demanded little capital, required limited skills or knowledge already possessed, and offered the opportunity to combine home and shop. Regardless of

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difficult to determine whether these individuals could be labelled accurately as shopkeepers. For a differing point of view, see Baskerville, "Gender, Family and Self-Employment," 7-8, 12, 23.

<sup>68</sup> In 1891, 66.3 percent of shopkeepers were men and 33.7 percent of shopkeepers were women. Similarly, in 1901, 66.2 percent of shopkeepers were men, while 33.8 of shopkeepers were women. See Chapter Two, 123-5, for a discussion of criticisms against women shopkeepers by the 1890s.

<sup>69</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.3, A.4, A.5, and A.6.

occupational differences by sex, in both census years, enumerators reported approximately one-quarter of male and female shopkeepers as grocers.<sup>70</sup> Unlike artisanal manufacture and sale, the grocery trade represented an easy route to self-employment since small capital and little expertise were required at the outset.<sup>71</sup> Aside from the defensive postures of commercial journals promoting grocery retail as a skilled profession, anyone could engage in the trade at a level corresponding to their extent of knowledge and economic resources. Grocery retailing represented an important strategy to supplement an inadequate wage, relieve seasonal unemployment, or support oneself after widowhood and retirement. Ellen McFarlane, who appeared in the 1891 census, ran a small grocery shop in the northern suburbs since the death of her husband, a former master mariner, in 1874.<sup>72</sup> Ellen could have also resorted to the clothing and dry goods trades. As many historians have recently argued, women engaged in these trades because they drew upon skills already required, allowed working women a degree of respectability, and provided the opportunity to combine self-

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<sup>70</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.5 and A.6.

<sup>71</sup> This point has been made by many researchers. See, for example, Clyde Griffen and Sally Griffen, *Natives and Newcomers: The Ordering of Opportunity in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Poughkeepsie* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 106; Michael J. Winstanley, *The Shopkeepers World, 1830-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 44; Alain Fauvre, "The Grocery Trade in Nineteenth-Century Paris: A Fragmented Corporation," in *Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz Gerhard-Haupt (London: Methuen, 1984), 166-7; and David Monod, "Ontario Retailers in the Early Twentieth Century: Dismantling the Social Bridge," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1993): 211.

<sup>72</sup> 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec.1, Div.2 (E2),88; 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div.3 (E3),55; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory, 1874-5, 1880-1, 1890-1*.

employment with unpaid labour in the home.<sup>73</sup> Mary Anne Booth, also appearing the 1891 census, operated a dry goods business within her home on Gottingen Street, tended to a lodger, and cared for children ranging in age from six months to seven years, only one of which attended school. During Mary Anne's busy day, her husband Thomas Booth ran his own business as a manufacturer of mineral waters.<sup>74</sup>

Although informative, general descriptions of retail categories and lines of trade disguise the differences in social and financial standing within each grouping. Unlike researchers who assume that self-employment denoted middle or lower-middle-class status, this study assumes that shopkeepers fell into a broad spectrum of socio-economic experiences.<sup>75</sup> Unfortunately, if occupation cannot be strictly relied upon to indicate size,

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<sup>73</sup> For the work of women in these trades in Canada, the United States, and England, see Janet Guildford, "'Whate'er the duty of the hour demands'": The Work of Middle-Class Women in Halifax, 1840-1880," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXX, 59 (May 1997): 1-20; Wendy Gamber, *The Female Economy: The Millinery and Dressmaking Trades, 1860-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); and Beverly Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade Before the Factory, 1660-1800* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). In assessing women's involvement of these trades, Gamber criticizes the common assumption of both nineteenth-century contemporaries and twentieth-century historians that such trades represented only women's work. See, for example, Wendy Gamber, "A Gendered Enterprise: Placing Nineteenth-Century Businesswomen in History," *Business History Review* 72, 2 (Summer 1998): 204-9.

<sup>74</sup> 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 6 (E6), 25; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1891-2.

<sup>75</sup> Those who view occupation as the crucial indicator of social class include Stephan Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis 1880-1970* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973); Griffens, *Natives and Newcomers*, 51; and Peter R. Decker, *Fortunes and Failures: White-Collar Mobility in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), xi. See also Andrew C. Holman, *A Sense of Their Duty: Middle-Class Formation in Victorian Ontario Towns* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press,

wealth, or social origin, it is difficult to uncover systematic characteristics researchers can use for this determination. Many projects of a similar nature, for example, have used credit-reporting publications to estimate the monetary strength of individual proprietors.<sup>76</sup> While these sources can be invaluable to understand the determination of creditworthiness, such a small percentage of the present samples appeared in these books it is difficult to systematically illustrate a meaningful hierarchy within Haligonian retailing.<sup>77</sup> Instead, I have utilized the alternative indices available through census and directory information, namely, the reporting of income, presence of servants, status of employment, patterns of shop and home location, levels of literacy, and reliance on additional economic strategies.

Fortunately for researchers, enumerators in 1901 asked Canadians to estimate their yearly income. Although this question applied mainly to those who worked as employees, sampled Haligonian shopkeepers answered the query in surprisingly large numbers since slightly more than one-half provided an estimate of their yearly earnings.<sup>78</sup> According to their

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<sup>76</sup> The most recent Canadian examples include David G. Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment and Social Mobility in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); and "Frontier of Opportunity."

<sup>77</sup> In Chapter Three, almost three-quarters of persisters from the 1891 and 1901 samples received no estimate of pecuniary strength in an issue of the *Mercantile Agency Reference Book* for 1890. See Appendix C, Table C.6.

<sup>78</sup> Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager explain that the instructions to census enumerators in 1901 encouraged self-employed individuals to ignore questions concerning income. A higher percentage of these sampled Haligonian shopkeepers answered this query than a sample of self-employed individuals from across Canada. See Baskerville and Sager, "Finding the Workforce in the 1901 Census of Canada," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXVIII, 56 (Nov. 1995): 528, 534.



reports, annual incomes ranged widely from \$18 to \$4,000, but less than 15 percent declared earnings more than \$1,000. Meanwhile, shopkeepers in the North End reported slightly lower incomes.<sup>79</sup> Whereas 45 percent of Ward Three shopkeepers who reported an income claimed to earn between \$500 and \$999 annually, 53 percent of their counterparts in Ward Five disclosed earnings between \$100 and \$499.

Within each trade, shopkeepers also expressed a broad distribution of annual incomes. Proprietors in the clothing and dry goods trades, for example, reported income levels quite different from those of grocers. Whereas grocers revealed an income distribution similar to those for all sampled shopkeepers, over three-quarters of retailers in clothing and dry goods earned between \$100 and \$499.<sup>80</sup> These lower earnings represent the high percentage of female shopkeepers who laboured in the clothing and dry goods trades, particularly those who operated from their homes selling small notions and made-to-order women's clothing. In contrast, the small percentage who disclosed higher earnings in the category of clothing and dry goods tended to be male proprietors in the higher status lines of dry goods, merchant tailoring, and gentlemen's furnishings.

As reported earnings reveal only small numbers in the upper echelons of retail commerce, an analysis in the employment of servants illustrates a similar conclusion. For

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<sup>79</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.7. For comparison, the average incomes reported from a sample of the urban Canadian labour force revealed annual earnings of male household heads to be between \$493 and \$620, depending on age. As well, the average yearly earnings of male employees in Halifax was \$407, while the average reported income for female employees was \$171. See Peter Baskerville and Eric W. Sager, *Unwilling Idlers: The Urban Unemployed and Their Families in Late Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 115, 130.

<sup>80</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.8.

example, only 16 percent of sampled retailers hired at least one domestic servant during 1891. Enumerators often referred to these retailers as “merchants,” indicating their claim to a higher status. Several proprietors who hired domestics were also hotel keepers or operators of large boarding houses. It is unclear in these cases if the servants were actually employees catering to guests or domestics hired to care for the self-employed family. Interestingly, the percentage of shopkeepers employing servants dropped significantly by 1901. These results may reflect the movement of prosperous retailers to the wealthier South End. Such proprietors may have moved their families from the city centre and north suburbs, but maintained their businesses in one of Halifax’s main commercial hubs. Additionally, the decrease in hired domestic help may reflect the growing “servant problem” as noted by middle-class Haligonians during these years.<sup>81</sup>

A survey of the employment status of sampled retailers also reveals a prevalence for smaller-scale commerce, particularly by 1901. Although few scholars have studied own account proprietors and employers separately, these differing forms of self-employment imply a variance in size and prosperity.<sup>82</sup> By definition, employers hired labour, whereas

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<sup>81</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.9 and A.10. Unfortunately, it is not known quantitatively if this decrease in servants occurred as a city-wide phenomenon since comparable statistics were not available for each census year. By 1907, however, the Halifax Local Council of Women established an employment bureau to help recruit domestics for middle-class residents. Colin Howell, “The 1900s: Industry, Urbanization, and Reform,” in *Atlantic Provinces*, 189-90. See also Helen Lenskyj, “A ‘Servant Problem’ or a ‘Servant-Mistress Problem’? Domestic Service in Canada, 1890-1930,” *Atlantis* 7, 1 (1981): 3-11.

<sup>82</sup> In 1991 Angela Dale advised scholars to study these two forms of self-employment separately. See Dale, “Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship: Notes on Two Problematic Concepts,” in *Deciphering the Enterprise Culture: Entrepreneurship, Petty Capitalism and the Restructuring of Britain*, ed. Roger Burrows (London:

individuals working on their own account could only depend on themselves and the unpaid work of family members. Since retailers working on their own account may not have possessed adequate funds to offer formal wages, their businesses became integral components in a shopkeeping family economy where several relatives took part in the business in return for a collective profit. Regardless of sex or district, the presence of individuals operating on their own account rose from almost one-half in 1891 to three-quarters of all sampled shopkeepers ten years later. Female retailers in both census years, however, reported being on their own account in higher percentages than men. In fact, women who retailed goods and services without the formal hiring of wage earners represented 89 percent of all female shopkeepers by 1901.<sup>83</sup>

Besides possibly reflecting the continued movement of wealthier retailers to the South End, an earlier underenumeration of own account shopkeepers may have contributed to the increase in small-scale retailing a decade later. In 1891, census officials were primarily interested in the relations between capital and labour. Enumerators therefore asked individuals if they were employers or wage earners. If a resident reported an occupation but the employment status category remained blank, historians have assumed that these individuals were self-employed on their own account. By 1901, the employer/wage-earner dichotomy disappeared when enumerators asked more specific questions regarding

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Routledge, 1991), 35. See also the British study by Richard Scase and Robert Goffee, *The Entrepreneurial Middle Class* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 23-6. At a recent Canadian business history conference, Peter Baskerville presented an analysis of the 1891 and 1901 census which maintains the importance of this distinction. See Baskerville, "Gender, Family and Self-Employment."

<sup>83</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.11, A.12, and A.13.

employment.<sup>84</sup> Whatever the cause, concerned contemporaries certainly noted large numbers of marginal shops established throughout the backstreets of Halifax's city centre and the expanding suburbs.

Aside from employment status, an investigation into business and residential location provides a clue to the variations in size, wealth and social origin of late-Victorian retailers. As many proprietors operated shops without paid employees, large numbers of retailers also operated businesses within or adjacent to their homes. Nevertheless, as early as 1873, local newspapers noted the growing separation between a proprietor's home and mercantile business.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, historians of middle-class formation argue that the separation between home and shop reflected the bourgeois values of domesticity and respectability. Scholars of shopkeeping likewise argue that retailing without this separation became increasingly associated with marginal commerce.<sup>86</sup> Despite such notions, approximately three-quarters of all sampled grocers operated shops within or next-door to their homes, with a slight

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<sup>84</sup> For a similar view and problems associated with the 1891 and 1901 census, see Baskerville, "Gender, Family and Self-Employment"; and Baskerville and Sager, "Finding the Work Force."

<sup>85</sup> *ER*, 13 March 1873, 2; and *EE*, 21 June 1873, 2, reference from McKay. See also this reminiscence of the 1860s published during the 1890s, *AR*, 4 Dec 1897, 2, reference from McKay.

<sup>86</sup> For instance, see Catherine Hall, "The Butcher, the Baker, the Candlestickmaker: the Shop and the Family in the Industrial Revolution," in *The Changing Experience of Women*, ed. Elizabeth Whitelegg (Oxford: Martin Robertson and Co., 1982), 2-16; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987); David Monod, *Store Wars: Shopkeepers and the Culture of Mass Marketing, 1890-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 35; and Guildford, "Public School Reform and the Halifax Middle Class," 45-9.

increase of grocers in this category appearing over the decade.<sup>87</sup> Regardless of district residence, female grocers particularly demonstrated a close association between residence and business. During 1891, 92 percent of female grocers demonstrated no separation between home and shop, but only 60 percent of male grocers demonstrated the same. Similar percentages appeared for female and male grocers ten years later.<sup>88</sup>

Although the tendency of grocers to live near their place of business may further indicate the residential movement of wealthier retailers to the southern suburbs, it would be a mistake to characterize all such shopkeepers as engaging in marginal enterprise. While not conforming to the ideal of middle-class domesticity, many grocers who seemed relatively prosperous combined home and shop in this manner. Isaiah Moser, a grocer and provision dealer in Ward Five, lived beside his shop on the corner of Gottingen and Gerrish. Despite his status as corner shop proprietor in Halifax's North End, Moser owned property, employed at least one wage-earning clerk, reported earning \$1,000 annually, and kept a domestic servant. Unfortunately for Moser, wholesale creditors and wealthier retailers who had previously relocated their families may have looked down upon these close living and business quarters. The *Mercantile Agency Reference Book* for 1901, for instance, estimated Moser's business to be worth less than \$1,000 and recommended that he be deserving of only

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<sup>87</sup> It is important to note that the study investigated the addresses of corner shops carefully since many grocers appearing in the city directories as having a separate address for home and shop were actually located in the same building as their home on the corner of a street.

<sup>88</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.14, A.15, and A.16.

limited credit.<sup>89</sup>

Whether shopkeepers like Moser were perceived as marginal shopkeepers or not, home and business location does help reveal the varieties of retailing commerce present in late nineteenth-century Halifax. Those that possessed a shop within their home and those who separated living and business quarters represent two extremes in a broad spectrum of possibilities. Shopkeepers could begin retailing from a front room in their home, open a shop adjacent to their dwelling, move the shop further down the street, or separate their residence still further by moving into a separate district. Unlike men who had a variety of options from which to choose depending on their financial resources, women with families could only combine residence and self-employment in the most convenient manner possible.

While the combination of the domestic and commercial sphere did not always signify a shopkeeper's reliance on marginal enterprise, the inability to read and/or write was associated in these samples with retailers of reduced economic resources and particular disadvantages. Although the vast majority of sampled proprietors reported being literate, a tiny percentage in both census years were unable to either read or write, or reported the inability to do neither. Given the small sample size of illiterate and partially literate retailers, conclusions can only be tentative. Nevertheless, these less educated shopkeepers included more women retailers, residents of the city centre, and proprietors of businesses requiring little skill and start-up capital, particularly small groceries, variety shops, boarding houses, and used goods stores. Additionally, by 1901, several of these shopkeepers were physically

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<sup>89</sup> 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 4 (E4), 1; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1901-2; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Jan. 1901. See Chapter Two for a detailed discussion on the determination of creditworthiness.

disabled and members of minority populations including African-Nova Scotian, Jewish, or non-English speakers.<sup>90</sup> Notwithstanding their small numbers, this visible group of proprietors bore much of the backlash against illegitimate competition from retailers who feared their numbers much higher but certainly had nothing to worry from their strained attempts to make ends meet.<sup>91</sup>

Retailers who experienced partial or complete illiteracy coped, at least for a brief period, through a variety of means.<sup>92</sup> Although unable to read or write, less fortunate shopkeepers may have relied on rudimentary accounting systems needing only an understanding of numbers and tallies. Additionally, literate household members may have lent a hand by maintaining records and corresponding with suppliers. Sixty-year-old Johanna Weatherdon, who operated a variety shop and boarding house at her home on Albermarle Street, for instance, could rely on the assistance of her educated daughter and literate

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<sup>90</sup> Of course, shopkeepers whose mother tongues were not English may have been fully literate in their own language. In 1901, ten of the 20 shopkeepers appearing to possess a limited education originated from various disadvantaged and minority groups. For example, these ten shopkeepers included residents who were deaf, African-Nova Scotian, or French, as well as recent immigrants who were Jewish-Russian and Italian.

<sup>91</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.17, A.18, A.19, and A.20.

<sup>92</sup> Most sampled shopkeepers with a limited education maintained a business for only a short time. Only two such retailers from 1891 appeared in either Ward Three or Five as a shopkeeper ten years later. One of these retailers had learned to read and write in the interim. See William Mollison in the 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 7 (E7), 53; and 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 8 (E8), 2. See Johanna Fahie in the 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 24; and 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 1 (C1), 14.

husband, a self-employed truckman.<sup>93</sup> As the case of the Weatherdon family also illustrates, these shops often represented only one strategy within a collective family economy.

Enterprising families and individuals possessing limited education were not the only commercial proprietors to depend on multiple financial strategies. Indeed, Haligonian shopkeepers and their families used as many survival strategies as Bettina Bradbury's working-class residents of Montreal in the same period.<sup>94</sup> Although the notion of the family economy has received some criticism for its neglect of intra-family conflict, it is still an important concept to understand how many late-Victorians made ends meet or even prospered.<sup>95</sup> This concept is especially important in Halifax where a recent study of the 1901 census revealed that more Haligonian families lived below or on the minimum living standard than in Montreal, the city most associated with working-class poverty.<sup>96</sup> Whether

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<sup>93</sup> 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 19; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1891-2.

<sup>94</sup> Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993). Works by the American researcher Melanie Archer also describe how family businesses, both lower and middle class, formed an important component of the family economy. See Archer, "The Entrepreneurial Family Economy: Family Strategies and Self-Employment in Detroit, 1880," *Journal of Family History* 15, 3 (1990): 261-83; and "Family Enterprise in an Industrial City: Strategies for the Family Organization of Business in Detroit, 1880," *Social Science History* 15, 1 (Spring 1991): 67-95. For a recent statistical analysis of the family economy in Canadian cities, see Baskerville and Sager, *Unwilling Idlers*, especially chapters six and seven, pages 112-160.

<sup>95</sup> For a debate on this concept, see Leslie Page Moch, Nancy Folbre, Daniel Scott Smith, Laurel L. Cornell, and Louise A. Tilly, "Family Strategy: A Dialogue," *Historical Methods* 20, 3 (Summer 1987): 113-25.

<sup>96</sup> In 1901, 26.2 percent of Halifax families lived under the poverty line (only 13.3 percent in Montreal), while another 11.2 percent lived on its margins (as compared to 10.4 percent in Montreal). See Baskerville and Sager, *Unwilling Idlers*, 134.



working, middle, or lower middle class, over one-half of sampled shopkeepers practiced occupational pluralism or possessed fellow household members who probably contributed to the total family income.<sup>97</sup>

Shopkeepers who practiced occupational pluralism may have done so through additional self-employment or wage labour. The elderly John O'Hearn, for example, kept a dry goods shop adjacent to his home on Ward Five's North Street while peddling on the side to support his wife and extended family. Likewise, James L. Fleming manufactured and retailed shoes from his home in the city centre's Argyle Street but made ends meet by earning a wage in a nearby shoe factory.<sup>98</sup> Although O'Hearn practiced self-employment and Fleming pursued a wage as a factory operative to achieve a second income, both men took advantage of the same knowledge and skills required in their shopkeeping careers. Moreover, O'Hearn probably peddled goods from his shop, while Fleming may have used materials from the factory in his own shoemaking venture.

In the case of another family, male household members worked in a variety of occupations, including shopkeeping, to help support several female relatives. Nineteen-year-old Charles Melvin, a self-employed tobacconist with a shop in the North End, contributed to the household economy to help support his middle-aged mother, three younger sisters, and a maternal grandmother. Additionally, Charles' father Ruben worked as a printer for the

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<sup>97</sup> In 1891, for example, 43.7 percent of sampled shopkeepers (222 of 508) possessed no visible alternative to make ends meet besides commercial enterprise.

<sup>98</sup> For O'Hearn see the 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 8 (E8), 3; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1, 1901-2. For Fleming see the 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 24; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1, 1901-2.

*Acadian Recorder*, while an older brother laboured as a steward, and a younger brother worked as a clerk.<sup>99</sup>

As Halifax retailer Mary O'Malley discovered in 1891, shopkeeping could also fill a financial void when household members faced unemployment. While her wage-earning husband and three children were unemployed, O'Malley ran a candy shop from her home in the upper streets of Ward Three. O'Malley's venture into confectionery may have benefitted from the skills of an unemployed child who usually worked as a baker. Within five years, however, O'Malley's Brunswick Street store had turned from confection to selling beer and now operated under the supervision of her husband who abandoned his former occupation as a common labourer. As Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager have recently determined, of any occupation, labourers appeared most often among the ranks of the unemployed.<sup>100</sup>

Haligonian retailers thus represented myriad levels of socio-economic standing, but only a small percentage could be placed within each extreme. On the one hand, few retailers could report an annual income more than \$1,000, the hiring of servants, a separate location for home and shop, and an economic reliance entirely on retailing. On the other hand, few shopkeepers reported annual earnings less than \$100 and below average education levels. Most shopkeepers within the samples earned between \$100 and \$999 a year, performed their own domestic labour, engaged in self-employment on their own account from a location

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<sup>99</sup> 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 9 (E9), 4; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1901-2.

<sup>100</sup> Baskerville and Sager, *Unwilling Idlers*, 77. For the O'Malley family, see 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 1 (C1), 40; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1891-2, 1896-7.

within or adjacent to their home, depended on additional economic strategies, and possessed the ability to both read and write. Importantly, shifting trends over the decade involving fewer retailers with servants, higher percentages of own account employment, and fewer shopkeepers having separate addresses for home and shop, illustrates the continued existence of small-scale commerce. Furthermore, the disdain expressed against women and other disadvantaged groups by retailers of higher status can be explained by the greater percentages of women in occupations earning fewer profits and working on their own account within or near their home, as well as small portions of various disadvantaged populations engaging in commerce without the benefit of an elementary education.

Regardless of socio-economic standing, retailing recruits during the last decade of the nineteenth century reflected Halifax's long settled population, its close connection to the British Isles, and its lower rates of attracting immigrants as compared to other Canadian urban centres.<sup>101</sup> In these samples, the majority of Halifax shopkeepers were Nova Scotian-born with significant but smaller numbers reporting birth in Great Britain, both of whom largely claimed English or Irish descent and adherence to Roman Catholicism or the Church of England. In both census years, for example, almost three-quarters of sampled retailers

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<sup>101</sup> In Burley's study of Winnipeg, a city recently established and with a tradition of higher immigration rates, far fewer Canadian-born individuals within the self-employed population appear than present in this sample of Haligonian retailers. For 1891 and 1901, approximately one-half of the self-employed in Winnipeg were born in Canada with almost one-third from Great Britain. The latter immigrants were underrepresented among shopkeepers in both years, especially in 1891. See Burley, "Frontier of Opportunity," 47. According to the 1901 census, only 12 percent of Halifax's population were immigrants, a lower proportion than could be found in cities such as Montreal, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Victoria. This point is made in Baskerville and Sager, *Unwilling Idlers*, 18.

were born in Canada, most of whom reported their birth place to be Nova Scotia.<sup>102</sup> Contrary to the continuous complaints that inexperienced rural migrants were setting up shop in Halifax, by 1901, less than 25 percent of Nova Scotian retailers had moved from rural regions to the city.<sup>103</sup> Although the 1891 census did not inquire into a resident's ethnic or racial origin beyond asking the inhabitant's place of birth, enumerators were required to determine origin ten years later. As a result, almost one-half of sampled shopkeepers claimed English heritage, approximately one-quarter reported Irish origin, and almost one-eighth declared Scottish descent. While the vast majority of retailers traced their origin to Great Britain, those declaring German, African, and French ancestry each represented between 4 and 5 percent of all shopkeepers.<sup>104</sup> Meanwhile, the largest percentage of retailers in both census years declared an adherence to Roman Catholicism, representing well over one-third of sampled retailers.<sup>105</sup> Not surprisingly, given Halifax's ties to Britain, Church of England

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<sup>102</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.21.

<sup>103</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.24. Unfortunately, the 1891 census provided no information on urban and rural births to use as a comparison. See Chapter Three for complaints against rural migrants. In 1901, enumerators recorded that 17.3 percent of sampled shopkeepers (79 of 456) had been born in rural Nova Scotia. Since 35 Nova Scotian-born shopkeepers could not provide information on rural or urban origins, the number of shopkeepers reporting a birthplace in rural Nova Scotia could not be higher than 25 percent of all sampled shopkeepers (114 of 456).

<sup>104</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.25.

<sup>105</sup> In mid-nineteenth-century Brantford, Catholics comprised the most underrepresented group amongst a sample of self-employed inhabitants. In mid-nineteenth-century Saint John, Irish residents, including Catholics, were also underrepresented amongst a sample of local merchants. In Winnipeg, only a small percentage of the self-employed were Roman Catholics, ranging between 9 and 12 percent from 1881 to 1901. Unlike Brantford and Saint John, however, Winnipeg's Catholic business proprietors were in proportion to their percentage within the wider

adherents comprised the second largest group of shopkeepers, representing approximately one-quarter of all sampled retailers during both census years. Smaller but significant numbers of shopkeepers reported belief in the Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian faiths.<sup>106</sup>

Although the vast majority of shopkeepers disclosed information indicating British origins, by 1901 a decrease occurred in retailers born in traditional regions which had acted as important sources of immigration. While decreases occurred in shopkeepers from Britain, Northern Europe, and Western Europe, small increases occurred in retailers from Southern Europe and the West Indies. Furthermore, for the first time, recruits into retailing reported births in Africa, Syria, and even Australia.<sup>107</sup> As American researcher Ivan H. Light argues when discussing ethnic enterprise, some immigrants turned to self-employment in the retail

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population. In mid-nineteenth-century Hamilton, Irish Catholic business owners were concentrated within the confines of petty proprietorship. See Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*, 71-73; "Frontier of Opportunity," 47-8; T. W. Acheson, *Saint John: The Making of a Colonial Urban Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 49-50; and Michael B. Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 65-6, 183-4, 201.

<sup>106</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.29. See also Tables A.30 and A.31. In the early to mid-nineteenth century, Methodists also comprised a small but important group within the wealthier Halifax mercantile class. See Allen Barry Robertson, "John Wesley's Nova Scotia Businessmen: Halifax Methodist Merchants 1815-1855" (Ph.D. diss., Queen's University, 1990). Most merchants in these early years, however, were adherents to the Church of England or Presbyterianism. See D. A. Sutherland, "The Merchants of Halifax, 1815-1850: A Commercial Class in Pursuit of Metropolitan Status" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1975). Historians of the middle class have argued that the Baptist and Presbyterian sects encouraged self-denial and congregational unity, making them especially prolific in business. See Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 12-13; and Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*, 73-8.

<sup>107</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.21 and A.22.

trades because they possessed their own culturally derived consumer preferences and their own culturally preferred strategies to earn a living.<sup>108</sup>

Notwithstanding this wider variety of recruitment by 1901, female shopkeepers remained relatively homogeneous in place of birth and family origin. Women retailers were concentrated in the categories of Atlantic- and Irish-born, and within a limited variety of corresponding ethnic and racial denominations.<sup>109</sup> In fact, a significantly less percentage of women retailers were immigrants as compared to their male counterparts. These native-born women may have possessed greater emotional and financial support from friends and family, allowing for their turn to self-employment. As well, many male migrants who originated from non-traditional sources of Canadian immigration travelled to Canada without female relatives. Women who did accompany these male immigrants, or joined them shortly after, did not engage in fixed-shop retailing. Nevertheless, such women probably aided their fathers, brothers, and husbands in their self-employed ventures.

Unlike most studies of nineteenth-century business populations, newcomers to Nova Scotia, members of minority ethnic and racial groups, and even Roman Catholic adherents were not prevented from engaging in business within late-Victorian Halifax. In 1891, newcomers were noticeably overrepresented in the shopkeeping population, especially those emigrating from Britain.<sup>110</sup> In a city less affected by immigration than other Canadian urban

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<sup>108</sup> Ivan H. Light, *Ethnic Enterprise in America: Business and Welfare Among Chinese, Japanese, and Blacks* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 18.

<sup>109</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.22 and A.27.

<sup>110</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.21. In mid-nineteenth-century Hamilton, Saint John, Poughkeepsie, and San Francisco, newcomers were underrepresented within the ranks of

centres, newcomers were not disadvantaged for business ownership and credit access, while shopkeeping became an important economic strategy for immigrant survival and acculturation. Irish immigrants, in particular, benefitted from a large clientele of fellow Irish residents, whether newcomers or native-born. Although a lack of information for the birth origins of Halifax's population make it impossible to determine if this trend continued, no significant over- or underrepresentation of any one ethnic or racial group existed by 1901.<sup>111</sup> Thus, no particular group faced insurmountable obstacles to engage in retail commerce. Likewise, despite the historiographical attention paid to Protestant proprietors, Catholics comprised the largest percentage of sampled retailers in both census years and were overrepresented within the sampled retail trades during 1891.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, Roman Catholic

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the self-employed. Burley explains this point well in *A Particular Condition in Life*, 83. Like Halifax, however, Burley's study of mid-nineteenth-century Brantford reveals that native-born residents were underrepresented in business. See Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*, 82. A study of late nineteenth-century Detroit shows a similar circumstance where immigrants comprised almost three-quarters of the self-employed population. See Melanie Archer, "Small Capitalism and Middle-Class Formation in Industrializing Detroit, 1880-1900," *Journal of Urban History* 21, 2 (Jan. 1995): 240; and "Family Enterprise in an Industrial City," 73. The nativity of Winnipeg's self-employed inhabitants represents a situation similar to Halifax in 1891, but changes by 1901 reveal no significant under- or overrepresentation involving Canadian and British-born residents. See Burley, "Frontier of Opportunity," 47.

<sup>111</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.25. In the 1901 published volumes of census data, the federal government provided information regarding place of birth for the city and county of Halifax combined, rendering it useless for a meaningful comparison with a sample of urban shopkeepers. See "Table XIV: Birthplace of the People by Districts" in *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I, 422. By 1901, however, a difference of only 1 percent or less existed in most cases between the percentage of shopkeepers within a particular ethnic or racial group and the percentage of that group within the general population for both districts.

<sup>112</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.29.

shopkeepers were involved in all categories of retail trade and their distribution within certain income ranges during 1901 did not differ considerably from the distribution of all shopkeepers.<sup>113</sup> According to one Haligonian columnist, Catholics and Protestants did not mix socially, but religion mattered little in the sphere of business.<sup>114</sup> As Judith Fingard has remarked, however, sectarianism frequently influenced how the Protestant middle class perceived the city's numerous Roman Catholics.<sup>115</sup> Certainly, Catholics did lose ground to Protestant retailers by 1901, making Roman Catholics underrepresented among sampled retailers. This trend probably represented a loss in the most vulnerable Catholic retailers, namely women and the marginal retailers of the city centre, as well as a possible move of wealthier Catholics to the southern suburbs.<sup>116</sup>

Although no significant over- and underrepresentation existed of any ethnic or racial group by 1901, exceptions did occur for some groups of shopkeepers within certain lines. While the largest percentage of individuals in the grocery trade were of British origin, grocers of English ancestry were significantly underrepresented during 1901. Instead, grocers of Irish and Italian descent were overrepresented.<sup>117</sup> The overrepresentation of Irish grocers stemmed from the pervasive backstreet shop often operated by proprietors of Irish Catholic heritage, such as the shop established by Richard and Margaret Cahill on Grafton Street who

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<sup>113</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.7 and A.32.

<sup>114</sup> *Critic*, 14 Jan. 1887, 2.

<sup>115</sup> Fingard, *The Dark Side of Life*, 28.

<sup>116</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.29, A.30, and A.31.

<sup>117</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.26.



catered to a neighbourhood clientele of immigrant and fellow Irish residents originating from the city centre and the near North End.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, several Italian immigrants engaged in the stereotypical fruit, confection, and ice cream trade, helping to establish their overrepresentation in the grocery business. These Italian shopkeepers included fruiterer and confectioner Carl Casci who boarded with fellow Italians in the upper streets while running a shop on Jacob Street, as well as Poteri Gaspero who lived and retailed from North Park Street while boarding the Italian ice cream dealer Casboisini Pasquili. Casci and Gaspero exemplified the ethnic-based cooperation of Italian immigrant grocers located in both the upper streets of the city centre and the working-class northern suburbs.<sup>119</sup>

Whereas Irish and Italian residents were overrepresented within the city's grocery trade, African-Nova Scotians were significantly overrepresented within the retail trade of Halifax's city centre.<sup>120</sup> Since African-Nova Scotians often faced racial prejudice from local

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<sup>118</sup> 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 17; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1, 1901-2. Others have noted the association between Irish descent and the retail distribution of foodstuffs throughout the nineteenth century. For Poughkeepsie, New York, see Griffens, *Natives and Newcomers*, 120; for Hamilton, see Katz, *The People of Hamilton*, 65; and for Brantford, see Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*, 80. Conversely, Thernstrom discovered that Irish immigrants to Boston rarely engaged in retail commerce. See Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians*, 143, 160.

<sup>119</sup> 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 18; 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 3 (E3), 16; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1, 1901-2. In late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Canada, Italians have been noted for their ethnic concentration and cooperation in the fruit and confection trade as wholesalers, fixed-shop retailers, and peddlers. See Monod, *Store Wars*, 38, 40; and John Zucchi, *Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity, 1875-1935* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 71-4, 86-99.

<sup>120</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.28. In Ward Three, 4.9 percent of the population (174 of 3,561) claimed to be of African descent, while 7.6 percent of the shopkeeping population reported to be of the same heritage. By comparison, in Ward Five, 3.5 percent

shops, hotels, and restaurants, it is not surprising that members of Halifax's black population would offer goods and services to their own community members.<sup>121</sup> Certainly, African-Nova Scotians took part in various economic strategies involving self-employment throughout these years.<sup>122</sup> Nevertheless, it is unexpected that they would do so to a greater extent outside of the city's main African-Nova Scotian population located within the North End. Black shopkeepers that did reside in the downtown district lived and retailed along the parallel streets of Albermarle and Grafton, as well as their associated side streets between Prince on the south and Jacob on the north. Established within the notorious upper streets of the city centre, these shopkeepers probably catered to a working-class military and civilian population of both African and Euro-American origin. Many of these African-Nova Scotians kept small shops within or adjacent to their homes. Here they sold a variety of articles, provided lodging and barbering services, and may have operated illicit bars and brothels. As

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of the population (336 of 9,706) reported African roots, whereas only 2.7 percent of the shopkeeping sample claimed the same ancestry. See "Table XI: Origins of the People," in *Fourth Census of Canada*, vol. I, 302-3.

<sup>121</sup> Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 106.

<sup>122</sup> African-Nova Scotian self-employment is discussed in Fingard, "Race and Respectability"; and Morton, "Separate Spheres." Although historians have often noted the overrepresentation of blacks in the trade of barbering, African-Nova Scotians in Halifax were engaged in a variety of lines. See, for instance, Katz, *The People of Hamilton*, 65; and Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*, 81-2. Recent work in the United States has recognized the importance of African-American self-employment and the variety of trades pursued. See Robert C. Kenzer, "The Black Businessman in the Postwar South: North Carolina, 1865-1880," *Business History Review* 63, 1 (Spring 1989): 61-87; Loren Schweninger, "Black-Owned Businesses in the South, 1790-1880," *Business History Review* 63, 1 (Spring 1989): 22-60; and John Sibley Butler, *Entrepreneurship and Self-Help Among Black Americans: A Reconsideration of Race and Economics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

the examples of Benjamin N. Davis and James Williams illustrate, however, some black proprietors operating in the upper streets did engage in profitable and respectable businesses while advertising their wares to a wider population through the Halifax city directory.<sup>123</sup>

As Halifax differed from its counterparts for the business opportunities provided to immigrants, minorities, and Roman Catholics, the city also differed by the ages disclosed by its sampled retailers. Although shopkeepers reported ages ranging from their late teens to the 80s with the largest percentages of retailers being middle-aged, Halifax's retailing population did not age over time. Approximately half of all shopkeepers in both census years reported ages between 30 and 49 years. Moreover, the average age of all shopkeepers and retailers of both sexes remained in the mid-40s during both 1891 and 1901. Unlike mid-nineteenth-century Brantford and late nineteenth-century Winnipeg whose self-employed populations indicated increasingly limited opportunities for newcomers, the age structure of Haligonian shopkeepers demonstrates a constant supply of new recruits and a low persistence rate for earlier entrants.<sup>124</sup> When analyzed according to sex, however, differences occurred for Haligonian male and female shopkeepers between 1891 and 1901. Whereas the most significant change for male shopkeepers involved an increase in those reporting to be

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<sup>123</sup> For more information on the African-Nova Scotian dealers of the upper streets, see Chapter Two, 113-15. Davis, a tinsmith who dealt in hardware and crockery, and Williams, a custom tailor, both appeared in the 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 14; and both advertised in *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1901-2.

<sup>124</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.33 and A.35. Of all shopkeepers residing in these wards during 1891, slightly more than one-eighth continued to live in these communities while pursuing the same trade a decade later (14 percent persistence rate). For the low persistence rate of this sample, see Appendix C, Table C.5. For information on the age structure of the self-employed populations in Brantford and Winnipeg, see Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*, 85, 87; and "Frontier of Opportunity," 55-6.

in their 60s, the most dramatic change for women shopkeepers involved an increase in those claiming to be 20 to 29 years old. Nevertheless, the overall age structure for each sex still revealed a high turnover in retailing recruits.<sup>125</sup>

Marital status represents the final noteworthy characteristic of fixed-shop retailers and provides one of the greatest sources of difference between male and female shopkeepers in late-Victorian Halifax. Although the majority of sampled shopkeepers were married, a wide discrepancy in marital status occurred between men and women in both 1891 and 1901. At least three-quarters of male shopkeepers reported being married in both census years. Reflecting their smaller numbers in the total population, only 5 percent or less claimed their marital status as widowers.<sup>126</sup> While male shopkeepers were concentrated within the ranks of married men, large percentages of women were distributed in all three categories. In both years, between 43 percent and 52 percent of female retailers lived without a spouse through widowhood or separation, and another one-quarter to one-third lived without a spouse by maintaining their single status. Surprisingly, in both years, 21 percent of female shopkeepers represented married women with husbands present within the same household.<sup>127</sup>

Besides these important differences, changes in marital status also arose between the two years in question. By 1901, a significant increase in shopkeepers reported to be single.

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<sup>125</sup> See Appendix A, Table A.34.

<sup>126</sup> In 1891 and 1901, almost four times as many widowed women (804 and 548) existed in the regular population of both wards combined than widowed men (208 and 148). See "Table III: Civil Condition" in *Census of Canada 1890-91*, vol. I, 134-5; and "Table VII: Areas, Houses, Families, Population, Sex, Conjugal Condition" in *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I, 43.

<sup>127</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.36 and A.37.

When combined with a slight decrease in the population of single men and women overall, this increase in single shopkeepers indicated a growing opportunity for retail self-employment before marriage and for those residents who never married.<sup>128</sup> Although both unmarried male and female shopkeepers increased, a larger growth in single women retailers reflected the aforementioned increased percentage of younger female recruits by 1901.

Unfortunately, few community studies of self-employment, social mobility, or shopkeeping have analyzed the enterprising efforts of female proprietors.<sup>129</sup> Fortunately, a growing literature focused on female enterprise has recognized women's ambitions as well

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<sup>128</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.36 and A.37. The increase in single shopkeepers did not arise from a growth in single residents within the population of both sampled districts. Whereas singles represented 62.4 percent of the population in Wards Three and Five combined during 1891 (10,415 of 16,679), they comprised only 60.5 percent of this population ten years later (8,024 of 13,267). These statistics include both children and adult singles. See "Table III: Civil Condition" in *Census of Canada 1890-91*, vol. I, 134-5; and "Table VII: Areas, Houses, Families, Population, Sex, Conjugal Condition" in *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I, 43.

<sup>129</sup> These historians base their decision to avoid women on the observation that few women in their samples appear to be self-employed and on the difficulty of placing female inhabitants within a particular socio-economic class. The latter explanation is especially used by researchers who utilize occupation as a measure of class affiliation. For examples, see Howard P. Chudacoff, *Mobile Americans: Residential and Social Mobility in Omaha, 1880-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians*; Decker, *Fortunes and Failures*; Archer, "The Entrepreneurial Family Economy"; and Holman, *A Sense of their Duty*. Burley's scholarship mentions businesswomen, but they are often confined to the margins of discussion. See Burley, "Appendix A: Women and Self-Employment" in "Frontier of Opportunity," 68-9. Even some recent work on shopkeepers neglects female retailers. Instead, women are portrayed only as consumers. Studies by Christopher Hosgood, although excellent in other respects, provide one example of this common oversight. See Hosgood, "The 'Pigmies of Commerce' and the Working-Class Community: Small Shopkeepers in England, 1870-1914," *Journal of Social History* 22, 3 (Spring 1989): 439-60; and "The 'Language of Business': Shopkeepers and the Business Community in Victorian England," *Victorian Review* 17, 1 (Summer 1991): 35-50.

as their contributions to family and business economies.<sup>130</sup> In Halifax, the large percentage of women retailers who lived without a spouse for whatever reason certainly highlighted the importance of shopkeeping for women making ends meet, especially those who faced widowhood and desertion. In fact, widowed women were grossly overrepresented in the retail trades compared to their proportion within the population of these wards overall.<sup>131</sup> Regardless of their initial reason for pursuing commercial proprietorship, however, widowhood could offer women independence through business and capital inheritance.

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<sup>130</sup> For works on female enterprise in Canada, see Peter A. Baskerville, "She has Already Hinted at Board': Enterprising Urban Women in British Columbia, 1863-1896," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXVI, 52 (Nov. 1993): 205-28; "Women and Investment in Late-Nineteenth-Century Urban Canada: Victoria and Hamilton, 1880-1901," *Canadian Historical Review* 80, 2 (June 1999): 191-218; Janet Guildford, "'Whate'er the duty of the hour demands': The Work of Middle-Class Women in Halifax, 1840-1880," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXX, 59 (May 1997): 1-20; and Lori Chambers, *Married Women and Property Law in Victorian Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997). For international literature, see Leonore Davidoff, "The Separation of Home and Work? Landladies and Lodgers in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century England," *Fit Work For Women*, ed. Sandra Burman (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 64-97; Lisa Wilson Waciega, "A 'Man of Business': The Widow of Means in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1750-1850," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser. XLIV, 1 (Jan. 1987): 40-62; Lucy E. Murphy, "Business Ladies: Midwestern Women and Enterprise, 1850-1880," *Journal of Women's History* 3, 1 (Spring 1991): 65-89; Gamber, *The Female Economy*; and Angel Kwolek-Folland, *Incorporating Women: A History of Women and Business in the United States* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998).

<sup>131</sup> In 1891 and 1901, widowed women represented 9.4 percent (804 of 8,531) and 8.0 percent (548 of 6,841) of the female population of both wards combined, respectively. Table A.37, however, demonstrates that widowed and separated women represented 52.0 percent and 42.9 percent of the sampled female shopkeeping population in 1891 and 1901, respectively. The addition of separated women within this category does not account for the difference since the vast majority were widowed, not separated. See "Table III: Civil Condition" in *Census of Canada 1890-91*, vol. I, 134-5; "Table VII: Areas, Houses, Families, Population, Sex, Conjugal Condition" in *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I, 43; and Appendix A, Table A.37.

When Julia Meagher's husband died in the mid-1880s, for example, she succeeded in operating a grocery in the North End for at least 15 years while maintaining ownership of two rental properties. The grocery business and real estate had been inherited from her husband Nicholas and were reportedly worth \$4,800. Julia's ventures helped support two children throughout the late 1880s and 1890s. By 1901 she supported herself without recourse to additional employment or strategies involving shared accommodation.<sup>132</sup>

Aside from the enterprise of widowed retailers, a surprisingly large percentage of married women with husbands engaged in commerce. Almost one-quarter of female shopkeepers within these samples used retailing to help their husbands contribute to the family economy or were themselves the sole breadwinner of the household. As in the case of Patrick Kidney and his wife Elizabeth, many women's contributions derived from retail commerce were equal to the earnings of their spouse. Both Patrick and Elizabeth supported several school-age children by each earning \$300 annually. Patrick worked as a bricklaying labourer, while Elizabeth operated a second-hand clothing shop at their home on Grafton Street in the upper streets of the city centre. Contemporaries recognized Elizabeth's contributions in both the 1901 census and the city directory of the same year.<sup>133</sup> The high recruitment of women like Elizabeth stands in sharp contrast to self-employment studies

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<sup>132</sup> 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 1 (F1), 166; 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 7 (E7), 17; 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 9 (E9), 11; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1880-1 to 1901-2; and Tanya Gogan, "Surviving as a Widow in Late Nineteenth-Century Halifax" (M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1994), 89.

<sup>133</sup> 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 16; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1901-2.

heavily reliant on credit-reporting data which argue that married women rarely took part in the nineteenth-century world of business.<sup>134</sup> Certainly, the shops of Julia Meagher and Elizabeth Kidney never appeared on the pages of the *Mercantile Agency Reference Books*.<sup>135</sup>

Whether suppliers, credit-reporting agencies, or fellow retailers deemed all Haligonian shopkeepers worthy of recognition or not, the city's numerous retailers ensured that Halifax remained "a city of shopkeepers" throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century. Profiles of representative retailers illustrate the vast numbers of residents who sought both survival and success by retailing at a middling to lower socio-economic level. Both male and female shopkeepers who lived and retailed throughout Halifax generally performed their own household labour, earned less than \$1,000 annually, utilized shopkeeping in combination with multiple economic strategies, and offered goods and services from a location within or adjacent to their home. On the one hand, men tended to be Nova Scotian grocers of British and Roman Catholic heritage who supported a family during the middle years of life. Women retailers, on the other hand, often included middle-aged widows in the clothing and dry goods trade, born in Nova Scotia, of British origin, and Roman Catholic extraction. Representative profiles, however, conceal much of the diversity

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<sup>134</sup> For instance, in Winnipeg from 1881 to 1901, Burley estimates that between 10.9 and 17.5 percent of self-employed women were married with husbands present in the household at the time of enumeration. Similarly, statistics presented by Baskerville for Victoria and Vancouver combined in 1891, show that 15.4 percent of women in business were married with husbands present. Baskerville, however, does admit that his sample represents an underestimation of married businesswomen. See Burley, "Frontier of Opportunity," 69; and Baskerville, "'She has Already Hinted at Board,'" 218, 223, 227.

<sup>135</sup> *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, March 1887, July 1890, Jan. 1901.



within and between each retail trade.

As contemporaries understood and these samples illustrate, widespread recruitment into the ranks of retailing produced a heterogeneous group who reflected Halifax's majority population, but also surprisingly revealed self-employment opportunities for seemingly disadvantaged individuals. The continued existence of diversity and small-scale commerce, including its possible increase by 1901, underscored the folly of placing all proprietors within the same socio-economic ranking. By the turn of the twentieth century, shopkeepers demonstrated a greater variety of ethnicities, an increase in younger women and single individuals, a growth in home-based shops, a decrease in the possession of domestic servants, and a constant supply of new recruits to take the place of earlier entrants. Most importantly, by 1901, three-quarters of all sampled shopkeepers worked on their own account without the benefit of paid employees. Whether these changes reflected the residential removal of wealthier mercantile families to the southern suburbs or the realities of economic hardship, the perception of a growing illegitimate trade became most visible within the city centre where commerce remained polarized between the shopkeepers of the upper streets and the wealthier main-street retailers of the downtown core. This latter group of shopkeepers, as well as increasingly prosperous retailers of the main suburban streets, actively promoted professionalization in an effort to identify its members as *the* retailing stratum. Although Halifax appeared unique for providing self-employment opportunities to its ethnic and racial minorities, newcomers, Catholic residents, and female inhabitants, the following chapters illustrate that many of these groups did not find the road to success easy, if at all. Furthermore, such shopkeepers often faced discrimination from credit-reporting

agents, suppliers, and associated retailers who devalued their attempts to find financial well-being through commercial proprietorship.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Rating Legitimacy**

Throughout the late-Victorian era, credit-reporting agencies, local informants, and wholesale suppliers collaborated to offer external representations of the so-called legitimate retailer. These participants in the discourse on legitimacy used creditor sanction as one strategy towards the desired goal of professionalization. Although credit-reporting agencies were concerned with reducing financial risk, their decisions were not restricted to considerations regarding economic status, business acumen, nor success based on the achievements of a living profit and commercial longevity. When agents did consider these factors, they rarely did so in an objective manner. Experience, skill, and success were relative terms which the assessors of legitimacy failed to apply evenly across the business community nor consistently through time.

First created in 1841 by American Lewis Tappan in response to a financial crash of the late 1830s and the burgeoning business of New York wholesalers, the credit-reporting firm R. G. Dun and Company quickly expanded to assess businesses throughout the United States and Canada. Once the agency opened an office in Halifax by the middle decades of the nineteenth century, decisions concerning the granting of credit to city entrepreneurs could rely on reports from local informants and agency representatives who received personal and financial information through individual retailers, supplying wholesalers, press announcements, and circulating rumours.<sup>1</sup> Initially involving a system of hand-written

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<sup>1</sup> By 1869, Dun, Wiman and Company had located a branch office in Halifax. Despite changes in the firm's name throughout the nineteenth century, scholars generally refer to the agency as R. G. Dun and Company. To avoid confusion, this study adopts the

ledgers, assessments became increasingly standardized with the introduction of a rating system for credit approval and capital estimation. Despite increased coverage of city enterprises and a growing veneer of objectivity, an analysis of the agency's manuscript ledgers and published reference books reveal an ongoing practice of selected prejudice in the evaluation of commercial worth.

Between 1851 and 1877, R. G. Dun and Company maintained two volumes of manuscript ledgers providing information on approximately 860 Halifax businesses. Potential creditors visited the company's branch office to access these proprietors' personal and commercial information. Included in the ledgers were 376 shopkeepers, most of whom operated as retailers; 222 self-employed artisans, many of whom established shops of various kinds; 115 wholesalers designated as merchants, importers, and auctioneers; six individuals

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conventional name of the firm. Bradstreet's Mercantile Agency, Dun's main competitor, established a local office by 1890. See *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1869-70, 1890-1; and James H. Madison, "The Evolution of Commercial Credit Reporting Agencies in Nineteenth-Century America," *Business History Review* XLVIII, 2 (Summer 1974): 170. For the evolution of credit-reporting agencies in the United States, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "God and Dun and Bradstreet," *Business History Review* XL, 4 (Winter 1966): 432-50; James H. Madison, "The Credit Reports of R. G. Dun and Co. As Historical Sources," *Historical Methods Newsletter* 8, 4 (Sept. 1975): 128-31; "The Evolution of Commercial Credit Reporting Agencies," 164-86; and James D. Norris, *R. G. Dun and Co., 1841-1900: The Development of Credit Reporting in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978). For information on these agencies within a Canadian context, see Carla Wheaton, "'The Trade in this Place is in a Very Critical State': R. G. Dun and Company and the St. John's Business Community, 1855-1874," *Acadiensis* XXIX, 2 (Spring 2000): 120-37; David G. Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment and Social Mobility in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); Gerald J. J. Tulchinsky, "'Said to be a very honest Jew': The R. G. Dun Credit Reports and Jewish Business Activity in Mid-19th Century Montreal," *Urban History Review* XVIII, 3 (Feb. 1990): 200-9; and D. A. Muise, "The Dun and Bradstreet Collection: A Report," *Urban History Review* 3 (1975): 23-6.

offering lodging services; 44 miscellaneous proprietors; and 97 business owners of unknown occupation.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately for researchers, shopkeepers included in the Dun ledgers were not entirely representative of Halifax's business population. To illustrate, 99 local grocers received entries in the manuscript ledgers for a period covering more than twenty years, but at least 219 grocers operated within the confines of Halifax during the single year of 1871.<sup>3</sup> Under-reporting by credit agents became more serious by the late 1860s and 1870s when entries were sporadic at best.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the non-inclusive nature of the ledger system, enough entries exist for the late 1860s and 1870s to understand what factors determined creditworthiness in these years. Although David G. Burley argues that wealth and business prospects became crucial factors for determining commercial worth after the economic crash of 1857 in Brantford, Ontario,

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<sup>2</sup> Individuals in the "other" category included bankers, brokers, insurance agents, physicians, dentists, owners of express services and livery stables, proprietors of various vessels, and a manager of an employment agency. Of the 376 shopkeepers reported, the majority distributed dry goods and foodstuffs, 114 and 99, respectively. Another 48 sold fancy goods, china, jewellery, musical instruments and/or sewing machines. Of the 222 self-employed artisans recorded in the ledgers, the largest categories included 36 boot and shoemakers, 26 tailors and clothiers, 19 cabinetmakers, and 19 stove manufacturers. Most of the 115 wholesale merchants included 62 commission merchants and auctioneers, as well as 24 West Indies merchants. These numbers were compiled from the index for Nova Scotian businesses at the beginning of Volume 11 and from a perusal of both Volumes 11 and 12. See R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vols. 11-12 (Nova Scotia), MG 28 III 106, NAC.

<sup>3</sup> "Table XIII: Occupations of the People, Nova Scotia" in *Census of Canada 1870-71*, vol. II (Ottawa: I. B. Taylor, 1873); and R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vols. 11-12.

<sup>4</sup> Most recorded reports represent the years from 1853 to 1868. Reports were especially frequent during the 1850s and early 1860s when local informants supplied information at least once a year. See R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vols. 11-12.

and Carla Wheaton argues that ethnicity, religion, and gender mattered little in determining credit approval in mid-nineteenth-century St. John's, Newfoundland, an individual's credit rating in Halifax often depended on a series of subjective factors.<sup>5</sup> Differences in argument between those presented here and previous Canadian researchers, may derive from an examination of Halifax's larger business community which allows one to analyze a greater number of varied reports and clearly recognize the significant portion of proprietors who never received entries of any kind. Who the company chose to include in its manuscript ledgers and the eventual report each proprietor received, reflected prior assumptions concerning commercial legitimacy and helped define appropriate behaviour in the nineteenth-century world of commerce.<sup>6</sup>

In at least one case drawn from manuscript ledgers, considerations of commercial competence combined with concerns of personal character during a time of widespread financial stress. Reporters rated Emmett W. Sutcliffe's North End grocery and tea shop as favourable despite his "small means," because he and his partner were "shrewd Methodists connected with good families." Soon after, however, the shopkeeper's partner, Henry Wethersby, left the business when reports of Sutcliffe's excessive drinking began to emerge. Throughout the late 1860s his reputation continued to be somewhat favourable despite his

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<sup>5</sup> Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*, 106-7, 116; and Wheaton, "The Trade in this Place is in a Very Critical State," 135-6.

<sup>6</sup> The use of credit to impose or sanction appropriate behaviour in Victorian commercial relations is argued in Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*, 103; and David A. Gerber, "Cutting Out Shylock: Elite Anti-Semitism and the Quest for Moral Order in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century American Marketplace" in David A. Gerber, ed. *Anti-Semitism in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 201-32.

well-known intemperate habits. When the economic depression of the 1870s struck and Halifax business failures almost doubled in one year, the agent reported him as “drinking again” and advised suppliers for the first time to refuse Sutcliffe credit. When the shopkeeper died in 1879, his wife was unable to significantly improve the shop’s credit rating before going out of business. From the late 1860s until the business collapsed in the 1880s, the agency repeatedly estimated the shop to be worth no more than \$1,000 and advised only limited credit or less. Marital status, family connections, religious affiliation, and temperate behaviour could all contribute towards the valuation of moral character. Nevertheless, in the case of Sutcliffe, earlier business competence, respectable family membership, and religious adherence ensured positive evaluations despite habits of free drinking. In the end, the onset of the depression forced the agency to finally reject him as a safe candidate for credit.<sup>7</sup>

Besides evaluations affected by moral character, personal circumstances, and financial concerns, comments regarding ethnicity featured prominently throughout the manuscript records of R. G. Dun and Company. In Halifax, credit agents frequently viewed Irish shopkeepers in the grocery trade with contempt. Informants reported Michael Scanlan, an Irish Catholic grocer on Maynard Street in the North End, for example, as having a

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<sup>7</sup> R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 11, 667; *The Mercantile Agency Reference Book (and Key) for the Dominion of Canada*, Feb. 1873, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, March 1887; 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 1 (E1), 35-6; 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 1 (F1), 154-5; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2, 1876-7, 1881-2, 1886-7. See Appendix C, Table C.1 for Halifax business failures in the 1870s. For information on Nova Scotian Methodist business proprietors in an earlier period, see Allen Barry Robertson, “John Wesley’s Nova Scotia Businessmen: Halifax Methodist Merchants 1815-1855” (Ph.D. diss., Queen’s University, 1990).

“small Irish shop” and “some trifling means.” Scanlan’s “trifling means” allowed him and his wife to employ a servant, but prevented his listing in the city directory as a grocer or further mention by Dun agents.<sup>8</sup> Irish grocers who stood apart from the crowd by doing well in business were noted accordingly. In 1866, agents described James Butler as “one of the better sort of Irish grocers.” Indeed, Butler rose from the liquor and boarding house trade in the mid-nineteenth century to become a wealthy West Indies trader by the 1880s.<sup>9</sup> Notwithstanding Butler’s rise, the scorn associated with the Irish grocery trade originated from the large number of small shops established in working-class districts, particularly by Irish Catholic proprietors, many of whom did not warrant ratings by credit reporters.<sup>10</sup>

The poor commercial reputation of the Della Torre family throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century also illustrated the influence of ethnicity, religion, and community approval on the determination of creditworthiness, regardless of indications suggesting financial success. While some scholars argue that Jewish ethnicity had little impact on credit ratings beyond observations leading to ethnic-based stereotypes, the Della Torre case

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<sup>8</sup> R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 11, 218; 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 3 (F1), 27; and *McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory*, 1869-70, 1871-2.

<sup>9</sup> R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 11, 294. A West Indies merchant also trading in fish by 1887, Dun estimated Butler’s worth to be between \$300,000 and \$500,000. Within three years, however, his firm was controlled by William J. Butler, the company’s capital estimation had been significantly reduced, and its credit rating lowered. By this time, James may have died or retired from business. See *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, March 1887, July 1890; and *McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1.

<sup>10</sup> Burley notes similar attitudes towards the Irish Catholic grocery trade in Brantford during the mid-nineteenth century. See Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*, 80.



provides an illustration of the contrary.<sup>11</sup> The city's business circles knew little of the quiet family and suspected them to be English Jews, a label synonymous at the time with deception in business dealings. In 1874, informants reporting on the fancy goods shop Della Torre and Company noted the general dislike against the family in Halifax business circles. Much of the community's dislike originated from the Della Torre's tendency to deal only with a London wholesaler of the same family, an unusual business practice for retailers in Halifax prior to 1880. Additionally, the family's unwillingness to disclose their financial circumstances and public uncertainty over the ownership of their firm did not help their reputation and certainly played a large part in the suspicions surrounding their ethnicity.<sup>12</sup> Suppliers in Halifax and R. G. Dun therefore considered the company to have a poor credit rating despite suggestions of wealth.<sup>13</sup>

Surprisingly, credit reports in the Dun ledgers for Louis Rosenblum, a German

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<sup>11</sup> See Tulchinsky, "Said to be a very honest Jew," 200; and Rowena Olegario, "That Mysterious People': Jewish Merchants, Transparency, and Community in Mid-Nineteenth Century America," *Business History Review* 73, 2 (Summer 1999): 163. According to Gerber, the negative evaluation of Jewish business people helped reformulate society's understanding of commercial morality. See Gerber, "Cutting out Shylock," 211, 216, 219.

<sup>12</sup> Credit-reporting agencies in the United States frequently noted these problems with Jewish businesses. See Olegario, "That Mysterious People," 161-89; and Gerber, "Cutting Out Shylock," 201-32.

<sup>13</sup> R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol.11, 233 and Vol. 12, 590. The true ethnicity of the Della Torre family escaped Haligonian observers. In several instances they were suspected to be English Jews, but one Dun reporter did consider them to be Roman Catholics of Irish extraction. Indeed, in the 1881 census an enumerator described Charles Della Torre as being born in England and of Irish Catholic origin. Conversely, a comment in a local paper in 1888 revealed the family to have ties in England, but relatives in Italy. See 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec. 1, Subd. 1 (E1), 83; and *AR* (Halifax), 26 June 1888, 3.

jewellery peddler in the 1860s who established a liquor and cigar store by the mid-1870s, made no mention of his possible Jewish descent. In 1876, for example, the agent merely commented that Rosenblum was “a decent German of good standing.” Almost ten years earlier, however, reporters expressed concern that Rosenblum would make his money in Nova Scotia then quickly move on. Such comments were typical complaints of both immigrant peddlers and Jewish proprietors who the Victorian business community frequently viewed as parasites preying upon legitimate trade.<sup>14</sup> As seen with the Della Torre’s experience in Halifax, these fears also revealed the importance of forging community ties and reflected the high rates of transiency in nineteenth-century urban society.

While credit agents often commented on the ethnic and religious heritage of Halifax’s business entrepreneurs, no entry ever mentioned a proprietor being African-Nova Scotian. Noticeably absent from manuscript ledgers was the Victoria Confectionery, established by Charles R. Morris on Barrington Street between St. Paul’s Anglican Church and Province House, a respectable middle-class location within the city centre. When Morris died in 1868, his obituary praised him as a “highly esteemed member of the community” who “proved that a colored man can be as respectable as a white one.” Such recognition

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<sup>14</sup> Tulchinsky notes the large Jewish presence in jewellery retailing, particularly those individuals from Germany. Tulchinsky, “Said to be a very honest Jew,” 204. In 1876, Dun estimated Rosenblum to be worth between \$5,000 and \$10,000, and to have a good credit rating. In the 1871 census, like his English-born wife, Rosenblum declared himself to be a German of the Church of England faith. R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 12, 727, 741; *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Jan. 1876; and 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 1 (E1), 35. Besides the literature previously noted concerning Jewish business owners in the United States and Canada, researchers have also illustrated the contemporary metaphoric association between immigrant peddlers and parasites. See Walter P. Zenner, *Minorities in the Middle: A Cross-Cultural Analysis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 10-11.

originated not only from his status as a well-known confectioner, but also from his membership in the city's respected Union Lodge, a masonic order established by the leaders of Halifax's African-Nova Scotian population. Despite the obituary's claim of Morris attaining respectability in the eyes of black and white Haligonians, he never received any comment by credit agents nor did his wife who continued the shop after his death until at least 1870.<sup>15</sup>

Although agents missed African-Nova Scotian businesses in credit-reporting ledgers maintained prior to 1877, a small number of businesses established by women of Euro-American origin were included in Dun assessments. Those women who did warrant a credit investigation laboured mainly in the dry goods and millinery business--a prestigious trade Victorian contemporaries considered appropriate for respectable single and widowed women. As a result, Dun ledgers recorded eight Haligonian women in this retail line.<sup>16</sup> The trade's association with respectability, particularly for female proprietors, derived from its connection to a newly-formed middle class, the transference of domestic arts to the public

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<sup>15</sup>After selling her business on Barrington Street to E. Kinsman, Charles' widow may have set up shop elsewhere in Ward Three. According to the 1871 census, a widowed African-Nova Scotian named Catherine Morris worked as a confectioner. Unfortunately, she never appeared in the city directories during that decade. *MC* (Halifax), 1 Jan. 1868, 3; *ER* (Halifax), 30 May 1868, 2; 2 June 1868, 2; *Citizen* (Halifax), 4 Jan. 1870, 1; 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 71; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1869-70, 1871-2, 1876-7. For information on African-Nova Scotian respectability and the masonic Union Lodge, see Judith Fingard, "Race and Respectability in Victorian Halifax," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* XX, 2 (May 1992): 169-95; and "Masculinity, Fraternity, and Respectability in Halifax at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," in *Gender and History in Canada*, eds. Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfield (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996), 211-24.

<sup>16</sup> R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vols. 11-12.

realm, and the generally high reputation accorded to dry goods dealers in the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> These factors probably increased the chances of female shopkeepers in this business to be included in credit-reporting ventures, no matter how well their shops fared. As historian Wendy Gamber notes, a woman's respectability could produce small profits despite her possible lack of concrete assets.<sup>18</sup>

Informants often commended these eight women, as well as other female retailers receiving reports, for their respectability, industry, intelligence, and commercial instincts.<sup>19</sup> Credit agents evaluated these entrepreneurs justly, never using their sex as a weapon to declare them unfit for self-employed commerce. Although her business could not be considered brisk, Dun reporters regarded Ellen M. Buckley as a cautious, shrewd, industrious, and "deserving young woman" who was "quite good for any reasonable credit she may ask." Buckley had embarked on her lifelong career as a dry goods and millinery shopkeeper in the mid-1860s with small means, no real estate, and assistance provided by

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<sup>17</sup> Wendy Gamber, *The Female Economy: The Millinery and Dressmaking Trades, 1860-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Janet Guildford, "'Whate'er the duty of the hour demands': The Work of Middle-Class Women in Halifax, 1840-1880," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXX, 59 (May 1997); and David Monod, *Store Wars: Shopkeepers and the Culture of Mass Marketing, 1890-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 47.

<sup>18</sup> Wendy Gamber, "A Gendered Enterprise: Placing Nineteenth-Century Businesswomen in History," *Business History Review* 72, 2 (Summer 1998): 212.

<sup>19</sup> See the entries for the following milliners, dry goods dealers, and stationer: Mrs. Mary Ann Burke, Mrs. G. Tulloch, Miss Ellen Hodges, Mrs. Johanna Kennedy, Miss Isabel McMurray, Mrs. M.C. McIntosh, and Miss A. P. Katzman. R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 11, 546, 249, 295, 221, 267, 225; and Vol. 12, 699. Further information on Ellen Hodges and A. P. Katzman can be found in Guildford, "'Whate'er the duty of the hour demands,'" 7-8, 10, 12, 18-19.

a sister. In seeking self-employment as a way to earn a living until the turn of the twentieth century, Buckley followed in the footsteps of her brother John, a self-employed locksmith, and her father, a self-employed cabinetmaker. When Buckley received an unpromising report in the mid-1870s, it was not due to her inferiority as a businesswoman, but to the informant's fears that she had unwisely purchased real estate and opened a second store in 1872. The reporter thus grew suspicious of a mounting debt, particularly in the face of the widespread economic downturn of the 1870s.<sup>20</sup>

Women who initially lacked capital and real estate especially received approving reports if their good business sense and fine feminine character had been combined with monetary support from friends and family. Such was the case with Ann P. Katzman whose book and stationery shop on Granville Street in the 1870s probably received the support from two brothers-in-law, George Morton, a printer and publisher, and William Lawson, the son of a wealthy wholesaler.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, during the mid-1860s, agents commented approvingly

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<sup>20</sup> Buckley also received standardized ratings in the reference books published by the agency throughout the period under review. Although in 1873 the agency regarded her assets to be worth between \$2,000 and \$5,000 and estimated her credit risk to be fair, the agency reduced her assessment and credit rating by 1885. No record of an assignment could be found, however, despite the fears of Dun reporters. Moreover, Buckley continued to operate her shop until at least 1901. She remained unmarried and resided with her brother and widowed father throughout her career. R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 12, 678; *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, March 1887, July 1890; 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 17; 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 1 (C1), 10; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2, 1900-1.

<sup>21</sup> Although the ledger only recorded Katzman's suspected support from Lawson, Morton had helped establish the shop with its first owner Mary Jane Katzman, Ann's sister. Moreover, Ann resided with Morton in 1871. Ann P. Katzman took over the ownership of the shop when her sister married Lawson in 1869. Ann remained the shop's proprietor until her death in 1876. Guildford, "Whate'er the duty of the hour demands,"

of wholesaler Robert McMurray's support for retail dry goods dealer Isabel McMurray. Unfortunately, Isabel's shop disappeared during the next decade probably as a result of Robert's financial problems in 1869 and his assignment in 1874.<sup>22</sup>

Not only did agents refrain from comments alluding to the inappropriate nature of a woman in commerce, several men received ratings based upon the business acumen of their wives. Matthew Scanlan's dry goods business benefitted greatly from his wife's assistance who, according to a credit reporter in 1873, was the real business person in the family. By 1890, his central shop on Duke Street became "an ornament to the street" and reportedly doubled its assets from his initial establishment two decades earlier.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Dennis Hayden, a North End dry goods dealer on Brunswick Street, maintained a fair credit rating and a capital estimation over \$2,000 prior to 1877 because Dun informants believed that his wife Catherine kept careful accounts and bought goods judiciously.<sup>24</sup>

Notwithstanding the presence of a small number of Euro-American women in Dun ledgers and the favourable ratings many received, certain lines were noticeable for their absence. Throughout the period covered by the manuscript ledger system, no female grocers

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12; R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 12, 699; and 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 1 (C1), 3.

<sup>22</sup> R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 11, 267; Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 2, No. 15, NSARM; *RG* (Halifax), 4 March 1874, 102; and 10 March 1875, 105.

<sup>23</sup> R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 12, 20, 768; *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873, Sept. 1879, July 1890; and *AR*, 24 Oct. 1889, 3.

<sup>24</sup> R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 11, 311; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873, Jan. 1876.

or provision dealers achieved an entry by local and company informants. This neglect did not stem from the lack of women earning a living through food distribution within the confines of Halifax. During 1871, women ran at least 40 grocery and provision shops in the city's busy commercial and residential districts of the downtown core and northern suburbs.<sup>25</sup> Credit reporters failed to mention Ellen Delaney's grocery and liquor store on Brunswick Street, for instance, although the shop had been inherited from her husband with goods valued over \$1,000, operated for more than ten years, employed a son as a clerk, assisted another son to seek a medical career, and helped pay the wages of a servant.<sup>26</sup> Unlike female proprietors in the dry goods and millinery trade, women such as Delaney may have been missed because they were not operating an appropriate business for respectable single and widowed women.

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<sup>25</sup> Specifically, the city centre and northern suburbs described here refers to the 1871 districts of Wards Three and Five. While credit agents assessed no female grocers, they did report on approximately 35 males in the grocery retail line. Meanwhile, census enumerators for 1871 located 130 male grocers and provision dealers in Wards Three and Five. 1871 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5; and R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vols. 11-12.

<sup>26</sup> Assessors of Patrick Delaney's estate in 1868 estimated Ellen's late husband to be worth \$11,820. Ellen inherited the shop at Patrick's request, keeping one-third of its profits for herself and two-thirds in trust for her minor children. Not only did Ellen not appear in the Dun manuscript ledgers prior to 1877, agents also neglected her business in the published reference books before the late 1870s. Nevertheless, by 1879, she appeared with a capital estimation of \$2,000 to \$5,000, and a credit rating deemed as fair. Judging from her husband's estate records and Halifax city directories, Ellen remained a grocer from 1868 until the mid-1880s. Tanya Gogan, "Surviving as a Widow in Late Nineteenth-Century Halifax" (M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1994), 93-4; Estate Papers, 5 March 1868, No. 1529, Halifax County Probate Court; Halifax County Wills, RG 48, Vol. 7, No. 475, March 1868, NSARM; 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 2 (E2), 22-3; 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 1 (F1), 70-1; *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2, 1881-2, 1885-6.

In addition to recording information through the ledger system which reflected prior assumptions concerning commercial legitimacy, R. G. Dun and Company began publishing reference manuals providing estimated capital and credit using a standardized key. When ledgers were discontinued in the late 1870s from the introduction of typewriters, the use of carbon paper, and the expansion of branch offices, Halifax creditors were forced to rely on the quarterly editions of these published reports.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately for contemporary creditors and historians alike, no long-term records exist to reveal the factors determining creditworthiness during this post-1877 period. Despite the growing professionalization of credit determination and greater coverage of local businesses, Dun reports continued to neglect certain individuals while the evaluation of commercial worth continued to be influenced by a variety of subjective factors.

Unlike entries in the manuscript ledgers, a perusal through Dun's published reports reveals a preoccupation with classification as well as a relation between size and credit assessments. Although information was not always complete or accurate, local subscribers to *The Mercantile Agency Reference Book* could consult an individual's occupation, trade classification from at least twenty-four commercial or industrial categories, credit evaluation ranging from limited to high, and approximate pecuniary strength extending from less than \$500 to more than \$1,000,000.<sup>28</sup> Significantly, these standardized reference journals began

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<sup>27</sup> The firm began publishing these manuals in 1859, but they did not replace the ledger system until the 1870s. Thereafter records were no longer maintained nor stored for long periods of time. Madison, "The Evolution of Commercial Credit Reporting Agencies in Nineteenth-Century America," 173-6.

<sup>28</sup> This description is based on the reference book for September 1885. Slight changes occurred in the standardized key throughout the years under review.



linking credit evaluations with estimations of assets. According to the key for 1885, individuals worth less than \$2,000 could only be granted a credit rating of “fair” or “limited.” Meanwhile, entrepreneurs possessing assets between \$2,000 and \$10,000 had the additional possibility of achieving a rating of “good.” Similarly, business owners with an estimated pecuniary strength over \$10,000 could be granted a rating of “high.” Thus, at first glance, the cessation of the ledger system reflected a growing interest in size and prosperity for determining creditworthiness and success in the late nineteenth century.

Besides the interest in classification and monetary strength, published reference manuals allowed for an increase in the number of businesses included in Dun reports. Whereas the ledgers for Halifax covering a quarter century contained only 860 businesses, the periodical for January 1876 alone included 808 establishments.<sup>29</sup> Despite this initial growth in evaluations, however, credit-reporting periodicals did not significantly increase their coverage of local businesses between the 1870s and the 1890s. In some cases, the number of enterprises actually decreased. In 1885, for example, Dun’s periodical included 726 Halifax businesses, a decrease of 82 from 1876. By 1890, a slight increase from 1885 occurred when the credit agency listed at least 787 city businesses.<sup>30</sup> Variations occurring in these years may have been linked to changing economic times as well as actual fluctuations in Halifax’s business population. The increase in assessments for 1876 no doubt reflected heightened creditor interest during a year of widespread financial depression.

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<sup>29</sup> R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vols. 11-12; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Jan. 1876. Both figures represent a variety of businesses, including retailers, wholesalers, and manufacturers.

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix B, Table B.1.

Likewise, the drop a decade later may have been linked to less interest due to a rising Canadian economy after severe dips in 1883 and 1884, and perhaps a decrease in actual businesses resulting from the number of Nova Scotian bankruptcies almost tripling between 1882 and 1884.<sup>31</sup>

While the numbers of businesses receiving evaluations may have fluctuated throughout the era, little difference occurred in the distribution of small, medium and large enterprises. Over one-third of all business listed between the years of 1876 and 1890 could be considered small firms, meaning agents estimated their monetary worth less than \$2,000.<sup>32</sup> Approximately one-quarter of all Haligonian businesses listed in these manuals fell within the medium range of \$2,001 to \$10,000. Finally, agents granted another one-quarter of listed businesses a capital estimation of more than \$10,000.<sup>33</sup> Judging by the fluctuating numbers of proprietors receiving a rating and the lack of significant change in the distribution of small, medium and large businesses, the inclusiveness of credit assessments remained suspect even after the switch to regularly published reports. Indeed, sensing the inadequate nature of Dun coverage by 1900, Halifax's commercial journal, the *Maritime Merchant*, called for the establishment of a credit-rating body controlled by local

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<sup>31</sup> See Appendix C, Table C.4. For material on the late nineteenth-century economy and business cycles, see Chapter Three and Appendix C.

<sup>32</sup> This study uses Dun's pecuniary strength classification, as well as comments made in the *Canadian Grocer*, for placing businesses in the categories of small, medium, or large. In 1900, the *Canadian Grocer* considered a shop worth less than \$2,000 to be a "small" business. See *CG* (Toronto), 30 March 1900, 7.

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix B, Table B.1.

wholesalers.<sup>34</sup>

Aside from research emphasizing the increased emphasis on more tangible qualities when determining commercial worth, character still remained an important consideration for achieving a favourable credit rating in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. As late as 1900, the *Maritime Merchant* commented that lack of capital need not matter if a retailer possessed responsibility, good judgement, caution, steady habits, and diligence.<sup>35</sup> In fact, while Dun periodicals appeared to link capital and credit, business manuals and commercial trade papers continued to voice the desirability of integrity, even when creditors examined education, shop location, capital, and the manner of making settlements.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *MM* (Halifax), 22 Nov. 1900, 52. In 1895, wholesalers and manufacturers residing throughout the region had formed the Maritime Board of Trade. By 1901, however, columnists complained that the local business community did not express enough interest in the Board. Although in June 1901 the Maritime Wholesale Grocers' Guild had also formed, fixing sugar prices entailed the Guild's main purpose. *CG*, 12 Oct. 1894, 9; *MM*, 12 Sept. 1901, 25; and 6 June 1901, 26.

<sup>35</sup> *MM*, 22 Nov. 1900, 52.

<sup>36</sup> For discussions on credit and character, see the following: *DGR* (Toronto) 2, 2 (Feb. 1892): 6; *MM*, 28 Oct. 1897, 62; and 22 Nov. 1900, 52. Additional determinants (education, shop location, capital, manner of making settlements), as well as moral character, appeared in *MG* (Halifax), 12 Jan. 1893, 5; *CG*, 4 Aug. 1893, 30; and *MM*, 27 April 1899, 40. Of the many Canadian advice manuals surveyed, only John Allan's *Useful Hints to Storekeepers and Salesmen with Business Rules and Mottoes also Ideas for Advertising and Window Dressing, etc.* (Montreal: n.p., [1900]), failed to mention the desirability of fine character or ethical business methods. Allan's neglect of morality did not stem from the late period in which he wrote, but from his effort "to compress into the smallest possible space the elementary principles and practical rules for running a retail business successfully." Allan, *Useful Hints*, 3. For examples of business manuals published in Canada mentioning the importance of moral character, see Thomas S. Milner, *How to Make Money; or, The Principles of Success in Trade* (Montreal: George Nolan, 1865); *Practical Hints to the Retail Merchant, or, How to Make Business Successful. . .* (Toronto: E. T. Bromfield and Co., 1867); Barrister-at-Law, *Foundations of Success and Laws of Trade; A Book Devoted to Business and its Successful*

The possession of character, as understood by late-Victorians, involved more than simply avoiding dangerous speculation, excessive drinking, and needless extravagance; while practising industry, perseverance, self-reliance, and honesty. Respectability was implicit in the late nineteenth-century definition of commercial character. Often described in business circles as legitimacy, respectability intertwined with contemporary considerations of class, gender, race, ethnicity, and religion, as well as community acceptance, permanency, trade line, size, location, and clientele. These factors not only predicted a proprietor's likelihood to be included in Dun manuals, they also helped determine creditworthiness in the post-1877 period.

In the early 1880s, R. G. Dun and Company made an effort to represent a greater number of businesses containing only minimal assets when its less than \$1,000 category was modified by the inclusion of a below \$500 classification. Nonetheless, credit agents still failed to report many of these very small establishments. Despite historiography indicating the popularity of petty entrepreneurship, Dun estimated that only 65 businesses in September 1885 were worth less than \$500, or 9 percent of the total enterprises listed in the manual for Halifax.<sup>37</sup> Although a fair evaluation remained possible for this category, no shopkeeper

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*Prosecution*, 6th rev. ed. (London, Ont.: Schuyler Smith and Co., 1880); Edwin T. Freedley, *The Secret of Success in Life; or, Common Sense in Business and The Home* (Whitby: J. S. Robertson and Bros., 1881); William Wickliffe Johnson, *Sketches of the Late Depression; Its Cause, Effect and Lessons* (Montreal: J. Theo. Robinson, 1882); and J. E. Hansford, *The Business Guide; or, Safe Methods of Business* (1892; reprint, Toronto: Coles Publishing, 1972).

<sup>37</sup> For examples of works discussing penny capitalism, petty entrepreneurship, or small-scale retailing in Canada, see John Benson, *Entrepreneurism in Canada: A History of "Penny Capitalists"* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990); Judith Fingard, *The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax* (Porters Lake, N.S.: Pottersfield Press, 1991); Bettina

achieved this favourable assessment. The vast majority of these businesses were granted no evaluation while a much smaller number received a limited rating.<sup>38</sup> The agency simply assumed these shops were a poor financial risk because of their small size. Demonstrated success mattered little when considering such enterprises.

If businesses estimated as having assets totalling less than \$500 were very small, enterprises completely ignored by credit-reporting agencies were viewed as representing the most marginal form of self-employment. R. G. Dun and Company neglected to include shops such as those operated in the rough upper streets by widowed African-Nova Scotian Mary A. Clark and her son Charles. Described variously over its thirty years of existence as a grocery, saloon, confectionery, variety, and boarding house, by 1901 the Albermarle Street shop provided Charles with an income of \$500 annually through the lodging of four white tailoresses as well as the possible illicit sale of alcohol and sex. Haligonian authorities had banned public bars within the city in 1886, and the presence of boarding tailoresses, particularly in a place of a business involving liquor, often indicated prostitution. Although the shop's illicit nature may have prevented its inclusion within credit reference publications, the Clarks' neighbours, a racially-mixed group of working-class or underclass proprietors

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Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993); David Monod, "Ontario Retailers in the Early Twentieth Century: Dismantling the Social Bridge," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1993): 207- 27; and *Store Wars*.

<sup>38</sup> According to the *Mercantile Agency Reference Book* for September 1885, 9.0 percent of listed Halifax enterprises received less than \$500 as an estimate of pecuniary strength (65 of 726 businesses). Although a fair credit rating was possible, 53 received no rating and 12 received a rating of limited.

keeping saloons, varieties, and lodging houses, were also overlooked by Dun reporters.<sup>39</sup> In these cases, race, class, size, trade, location, and clientele all played a part in judging creditworthiness.

As indicated by credit-reporting agencies and expressed in the local trade press, racial background contributed to the determination of commercial respectability in the city of Halifax during the post-ledger period. Of the 14 African-Nova Scotian shopkeepers offering a variety of goods and services in the districts of the city centre and North End during the census of 1901, only one appeared in the Dun publication for January of the same year.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> In 1871, only Mary operated the business. A decade later, both Mary and her son were self-employed shopkeepers. By the mid-1880s, Charles took over the business on his own account and Mary disappeared from the nominal returns of later years. 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 9; 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 1 (C1), 57; 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 42; 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 1 (C1), 15; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2, 1881-2, 1886-7, 1890-1, 1891-2, 1896-7, 1900-1; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, March 1887, July 1890, Jan. 1901. The streets of Albermarle and Grafton comprised the city's most likely location for brothels. See M. K. Morrison, "The 'Social Evil' in Halifax in the Late Nineteenth Century" (B.A. honours essay, Dalhousie University, 1979); Fingard, *The Dark Side of Life*, 95-113; Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 111-43; and Gamber, "A Gendered Enterprise," 211-12. For further information on the Halifax ban on the bar, see Chapter Four, 233-4.

Clarks' enterprising neighbours in 1901, those closest to 121-123 Albermarle, included saloon keeper Samuel Breen, variety store owners Mrs. Robert O'Brien and Edward Greenhill, as well shopkeeper Emma Williams. The latter proprietor, like Clark, lodged several dressmakers at her home and shop. *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1, 1901-2; and 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 1 (C1), 2.

<sup>40</sup> Sarah Jane Austin, a boarding house keeper and variety store owner on Grafton Street, was the only African-Nova Scotian not missed. According to the 1901 census, she earned only \$350 from the income of six boarders and sale of goods from her small shop. Her husband, Lewis, a barber, had died ten years previously. In January 1901, the *Mercantile Agency Reference Book* placed Austin's establishment in the under \$500 category and rated her as having limited credit. 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div 2,

Besides missing Charles H. Clark and his neighbours, Dun reporters also neglected to include Benjamin N. Davis, a tinsmith and sheet iron worker who sold tinware, crockery and hardware at a shop adjacent to his home on Grafton Street. Although he owned no real estate, Davis's commercial venture proved successful enough to warrant an advertisement in the city directory and a separate listing under tinsmiths.<sup>41</sup>

Thomas and Company, a firm selling hats, caps, and furs, became one of the few African-Nova Scotian establishments to appear in Dun's reference manuals. Owners of this small to medium-sized shop included the Welsh-born minister of the African Baptist Church, Rev. Mr. James Thomas, and his equally prominent West Indian son-in-law, Peter E. McKerrow. While their mixed-race heritage and leading role in the local black community probably helped these proprietors receive a fair credit rating throughout the 1870s, the firm only achieved scattered coverage thereafter. By the mid-1880s, the shop continued to be listed in Dun manuals but reports provided no additional information. Furthermore, the serial neglected to list Thomas and Company by 1890 even though the firm continued its operation according to city directories and nominal census returns. The haphazard inclusion of African-Nova Scotian shopkeepers likely reflected an indifference for these minority retailers on the

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(C2), 17; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1891-2, 1900-1, 1901-2; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Jan. 1901. It is difficult to say why Austin received a listing and others in similar or better circumstances did not.

<sup>41</sup> Only a select few ever received separate listings in the city's business directories. 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 14; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1, 1901-2; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Jan. 1901. Fingard's research on Halifax's African-Nova Scotian community reveals that individuals owning no real property still considered themselves to be worthy tax-paying citizens and wished to be seen as such by the majority population. See Fingard, "Race and Respectability," 177.

part of the Haligonian business population and the outside credit-reporting agency.<sup>42</sup>

Although contributors to the *Maritime Grocer*, and its successor the *Maritime Merchant*, were silent on the issue of African-Nova Scotian business proprietors, editors frequently published articles from the United States poking fun at uneducated African-Americans who handled shoestring operations. These stories reinforced racism while providing readers with the impression that black proprietors were simply not creditworthy.<sup>43</sup> In the eyes of Dun agents and the local business population, little difference could be seen from the saloon run by Charles H. Clark and the hardware shop operated by Benjamin N. Davis.

If contemporaries deemed Halifax's African-Nova Scotian retailers generally unfit for credit consideration, how then were so many able to engage in a variety of survival strategies involving self-employment?<sup>44</sup> Family support, close ties to black community leaders, property ownership, and more than one enterprising venture could all contribute to

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<sup>42</sup> *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, March 1887, July 1890; 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 7 (E7), 16; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1896-7. For additional information on the Thomas-McKerrow family, see Fingard, "Race and Respectability," 175-8; and Suzanne Morton, "Separate Spheres in a Separate World: African-Nova Scotian Women in Late-19th-Century Halifax County," in *Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19th-Century Maritimes*, eds. Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994), 189, 198-200, 208-9.

<sup>43</sup> Examples appear in *MG*, 15 June 1893, 7; and *MM*, 25 May 1899, 40.

<sup>44</sup> Articles by Suzanne Morton and Judith Fingard discuss African-Nova Scotian self-employment at some length. See Morton, "Separate Spheres"; and Fingard, "Race and Respectability." American researchers also note the presence of self-employment and self-help among inhabitants of African descent. See, for example, John Sibley Butler, *Entrepreneurship and Self-Help Among Black Americans: A Reconsideration of Race and Economics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).



their success as a retailer. In the case of at least two women who received no listing from the credit-reporting agency, these factors combined with their status as widows to contribute to commercial longevity and the achievement of a living profit.

Esther Allison, described by Judith Fingard as one of Halifax's respected black matriarchs, owned a crockeryware shop adjacent to her North End home on Creighton Street for at least 20 years. After the death of Esther's husband Thomas during the 1870s, she continued her small shop, shared her home with her son's family, rented another portion of her house to a Jamaican tailor in 1881, and managed an inheritance of real estate worth approximately \$1,000. Undaunted by her lack of a credit rating throughout these years, Esther's shop may have been stocked by rejects from the china and glass firm Baldwin and Company which employed her son Robert. By 1894, Esther and Robert had died, leaving the family shop to her son's widow Mary. Not to be outdone by the success of her mother-in-law, Mary Allison stayed in the crockeryware business until 1910.<sup>45</sup>

Similar to Esther Allison, Louisa Bailey's ventures into retailing escaped notice by R. G. Dun and Company despite the longevity of her business, her possession of real estate, and her prominent status within the African-Nova Scotian population. Self-employed as a variety store owner, herbalist, and huckster for at least 15 years, Louisa had inherited real estate from her husband in 1886 on the northern streets of Gottingen, Creighton, and Gerrish Lane. By 1891, Louisa owned at least \$1,500 in property and rented to tenants on Gerrish

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<sup>45</sup> 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 4 (F2), 28; 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 1 (F1), 165; 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 7 (E7), 18; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2 to 1910; 1891 Ward 5 Valuation Book, RG 35A, Vol. 7, 129, NSARM; Estate Papers, 1894, No. 4590; *AR*, 21 March 1892, 3; Gogan, "Surviving as a Widow," 125-6; and Fingard, "Race and Respectability," 173.

Lane for additional income. Besides entrepreneurship and possession of property, Louisa participated in the leadership of the African-Nova Scotian community in Halifax through her important family connections and ties to the African Baptist Church. Louisa's former husband, Alexander Bailey, had served as a prominent Baptist preacher and truckman. Her step daughter Eliza had married a son of Baptist minister Rev. Mr. James Thomas, the patriarch of the highly respected mixed-race family and part owner of the aforementioned furrier business, Thomas and Company. Her nephew, James R. Johnston, became the city's first black lawyer in 1898. Louisa even became an indispensable member of the Cornwallis Street Baptist Church and participated in the lay leadership of the African Baptist Church Association. When she died in 1911 as Louisa Bailey Tillman, she left money to several individuals, including donations to African Baptist churches in Halifax, Preston, Cherry Brook, and Beech Hill, as well as the Zion Methodist Church of Halifax.<sup>46</sup> Like Allison, Louisa Bailey's success as a shopkeeper rested upon her family support, respectability within the African-Nova Scotian community, connections to other black businesses, real property ownership, occupational plurality, and status as a widow.

Proprietors of Jewish heritage may have faced as many problems with credit-reporting discrimination in the post-1877 period as African-Nova Scotians. Perceptions involving religion, ethnicity, itinerancy, and stereotyped behaviour combined to create both positive and negative feelings concerning the growing presence of Jewish shopkeepers. At

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<sup>46</sup> 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 5 (E5), 27; 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 2 (E2), 4; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1885-6, 1890-1, 1891-2, 1900-1; Halifax County Wills, RG 48, Vol. 14, No. 7260, 242; 1891 Ward 5 Valuation Book, 149, 156; *AR*, 19 Jan. 1886, 3; Morton, "Separate Spheres," 193, 204, 207-9; and Gogan, "Surviving as a Widow," 89, 118, 141-3.

times, this presence helped reinforce the meaning of personal and commercial character as an element of progressive Christianity. In 1895, for instance, critiques questioning the honesty of the “Jewish race” appeared in Canada’s leading dry goods and clothing journal, a paper also read by Halifax shopkeepers. Although the following edition apologized for such unkind treatment, the original publication strengthened the value of honest progress as a central component in the Christian Anglo-American world view. Moreover, the retraction argued that the most deceitful Jewish business owners were those from continental Europe, not the British Jews who the writer seldom heard of “going wrong.”<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, the apology from the editor of the *Dry Goods Review* demonstrated the realization that some Jewish proprietors were becoming leading tradesmen, not to mention readers of commercial publications.<sup>48</sup>

When Halifax residents noted a growing presence of Jewish wholesale and retail shopkeepers, similar mixed feelings were expressed. In the fall of 1889, the *Acadian Recorder* reported that Haligonians reacted with surprise to a recent influx of Jewish immigrants who quickly set up shop throughout the city. To the surprise of residents and the reporter, these “shrewd, bargain-loving business men” appeared to be “well-to-do gentlemen” who dressed neatly and seemed respectable. Initially a population of men, these newcomers operated a book and silverware establishment supplying Jewish peddlers, auction

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<sup>47</sup> *DGR* 5, 4 (April 1895): 5; and 5, 5 (May 1895): 3.

<sup>48</sup> In the retraction printed by the *Dry Goods Review*, the editor noted that many Jewish merchants were readers of the journal. See also an article appearing in the *Canadian Grocer* which advised suppliers not to base credit decisions on religious or ethnic-based prejudices. *DGR* 5, 5 (May 1895): 3; and *CG*, 2 June 1899, 40.

houses selling silver and plated goods, and a second-hand clothing and trinket shop similar to those dotting New York's fashionable working-class district known as the Bowery.<sup>49</sup> While the article did not display hostility for the growing Jewish community of shopkeepers, negative stereotypes surfaced along with a surprise that appearances of respectability could accompany immigrants of Jewish extraction. These attitudes indicated that memories of the suspected Jewish family so hated in Halifax during the middle decades of the nineteenth century--the Della Torres--had not entirely faded.<sup>50</sup>

Conflicting sentiments surrounding Jewish commercial ventures contributed to their underrepresentation in the published reference books of R. G. Dun and Company. In 1890, one year after the appearance of several Jewish proprietors, only one firm--a prosperous wholesale jewellery establishment--appeared in Dun's periodical.<sup>51</sup> Jewish retailers such as John Lewis, tailor and clothier on Upper Water Street in the northern suburbs, did not merit a listing. Lewis, a Polish-born immigrant supporting a wife and large family, employed two

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<sup>49</sup> *AR*, 16 Nov. 1889, 3. The reporter stated the comparison with Bowery shops, describing them as being of "the three golden ball" variety. For an explanation of this New York district, see Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York 1789-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 89-101.

<sup>50</sup> In fact, a year earlier, Anthony Della Torre had returned to Halifax to visit remaining family members in the city. A reporter remarked on his visit, that he "will be well remembered as doing business here for a number of years." Whether such memories would be pleasant or not, the reporter did not say. *AR*, 26 June 1888, 3. A decade later, a large portion of Halifax's business community rebelled against a possible Jewish newcomer who established a trading stamp company. See Chapter Four, 267-71.

<sup>51</sup> Dun estimated the monetary strength of Levy and Michaels on Hollis Street, owned by Morris Levy and Abram L. Michaels, to be from \$20,000 to \$40,000. The agency also deemed the firm as having a high credit rating. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, July 1890; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1.

individuals, kept a servant, advertised in the city directory, and quickly became an integral component of Halifax's developing Jewish community. Admittedly, his shop, "The Red Flag House," may have been missed by Dun reporters due to Lewis' itinerant habits. Having lived previously in Poland, England, Ontario and Nova Scotia, he arrived in Halifax by 1890 and disappeared soon after 1896 when he registered his wife to do business in her own name. Yet, many of his colleagues received similar treatment. Additional Jewish retailers omitted from published reports in 1890 included Henry B. Blumenthal, fancy goods shopkeeper; Charles F. F. Von Schoppe, packer and variety storekeeper; and Max W. Cohn, clothier.<sup>52</sup>

The neglect of Jewish shopkeepers by credit-reporting agencies may have mattered little to the fortunes of these Halifax proprietors. Close social and business ties knit together a community of shopkeepers who often provided their friends and relatives with emotional support and financial credit. By 1892, these Jewish entrepreneurs lived, worked, and celebrated together. At least four Jewish clothiers resided or operated shops along Upper Water Street, particularly on the three adjacent blocks between Bell's Lane and Roast's Lane.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, Benjamin Benson, a clothing dealer with a shop in this district, boarded with a Jewish packer and variety storekeeper on Albermarle Street, Charles F. F. Von

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<sup>52</sup> Lewis began advertising his shop in the 1891-2 city directory. In the same period, according to the *Acadian Recorder*, he hosted a Jewish wedding ceremony for two Russian immigrants. Present at the ceremony were several other Jewish businessmen. The birth places of Lewis and his many children, as enumerated by the 1891 census, revealed his travels throughout Europe and Canada. 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 1 (E1), 8; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1891-2, 1896-7; *AR*, 28 Oct. 1891, 3; and *MM*, 28 May 1896, 45.

<sup>53</sup> These included John Lewis, Lewis Cohn, Benjamin Benson, and Solomon Glube. *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2.

Schoppe. In 1892, Benson married Von Schoppe's eldest daughter. The ceremony was officiated by Soloman Glube, a Rabbi and clothier, also located on Upper Water Street.<sup>54</sup> Besides marriage ties linking fellow shopkeepers, personal relationships also tied wholesalers to retailers. Wholesale jewellery partners Levy and Michaels, for instance, had married the daughters of Julius J. Cohn, a cigar store proprietor on Barrington Street.<sup>55</sup> Weddings were not only between and officiated by Jewish shopkeepers, they were also held in their homes within the presence of fellow Jewish guests in various mercantile trades.<sup>56</sup> The processes creating a close-knit community were no doubt aided by the construction of a synagogue by the mid-1890s.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, important bonds extended beyond this local community to their counterparts in larger cities, providing a credit source for Halifax retailers from Jewish wholesalers in Montreal and elsewhere.<sup>58</sup>

Like the experiences of small working-class shopkeepers, African-Nova Scotian retailers, and Jewish proprietors, subjective factors defining proper character and

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<sup>54</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2; and *AR*, 27 April 1892, 3.

<sup>55</sup> *AR*, 8 March 1892, 3.

<sup>56</sup> *AR*, 28 Oct. 1891, 3; 8 March 1892, 3; and 27 April 1892, 3.

<sup>57</sup> In 1895, a local newspaper reported a dedication to a new Jewish synagogue. See *AR*, 20 Feb. 1895, 3.

<sup>58</sup> This pattern has been described in Gerber, "Cutting Out Shylock," 215; and Olegario, "That Mysterious People," 162-3. Furthermore, Andrew Godley argues that Jewish immigrants organized their own financial institutions in the form of soft loan societies. See Godley, "Jewish Soft Loan Societies in New York and London and Immigrant Entrepreneurship, 1880-1914," *Business History* 38, 3 (July 1996): 101-16. In Halifax, similar credit patterns would seem to be evident by the presence of Jewish ready-made clothing shops such as "The Montreal House," owned by Jacob Goldberg in the mid-1890s. *DGR* 5, 11 (Nov. 1895): 14.

commercial worth also affected women in the post-1877 period. While Halifax's female retailers enjoyed greater credit-reporting coverage in these years than previously, trade papers frequently equated commercial character with masculinity. By the 1890s, comments concerning female shopkeepers contrasted sharply with the enthusiastic reports recorded in Dun's manuscript ledgers a generation earlier. The feminization of clerical work and legislative changes concerning the property of married women enacted in the intervening years had made their contributions to business more identifiable, making them easy targets for those wishing to restrict retailing to so-called legitimate businessmen.

In the late-Victorian era, popular notions of masculinity and femininity defined acceptable roles for both men and women. Conceptions of masculinity were inextricably linked to the achievement of commercial ascendancy.<sup>59</sup> According to a columnist for Halifax's *Maritime Merchant* in 1898:

A man's business does more to make him than anything else. It hardens his muscles, strengthens his body, quickens his blood, sharpens his mind, corrects his judgement, wakes up his inventive genius, puts his wits to work, starts him on the race of life, arouses his ambition, makes him feel that he is a man and must fill a man's shoes, do a man's work, bear a man's part in life, and show himself a man in that part.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> For discussions of masculinity, business, and success, see Michael Bliss, *A Living Profit: Studies in the Social History of Canadian Business, 1883-1911* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 15-32; Allan Smith, "The Myth of the Self-Made Man in English Canada, 1850-1914," *Canadian Historical Review* LIX, 2 (1978): 189-219; Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life*; Gamber, "A Gendered Enterprise," 188-91; and Susan Ingalls Lewis, "Beyond Horatio Alger: Breaking Through Gendered Assumptions about Business 'Success' in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," *Business and Economic History* 24, 1 (Fall 1995): 97-105.

<sup>60</sup> *MM*, 28 April 1898, 20. See also *CG*, 18 Sept. 1891, 18, for an earlier example entitled "Make Men of Your Boys."

Trade journalists writing in the last decade of the nineteenth century believed if business ownership helped establish manly character, then stereotypically feminine qualities precluded women from the world of commerce. Such journalists boldly asserted that “women as a rule possess little or no business capacity” and that commerce was particularly “distasteful to the sensitive feminine mind and fine womanly temperament.”<sup>61</sup> Even shopkeeping wives were blamed for neglecting domestic responsibilities.<sup>62</sup>

Fears over the feminization of clerical work partly sparked these and other complaints against businesswomen. Growing numbers of female clerks employed in retail establishments worried the contributors and subscribers of the *Maritime Merchant* and the *Canadian Grocer* who believed these women would harm the business opportunities of aspiring young men.<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, the *Maritime Merchant*’s column for the benefit of clerks, “Behind the Counter,” never offered advice for enterprising female assistants. Its refusal to acknowledge the presence of women clerical workers not only indicated the journal’s hostility towards female shop assistants, but also its attitude that only male clerks deserved edification for their future career as self-employed shopkeepers.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *MM*, 11 May 1899, 27; *CG*, 23 March 1900, 30; and *MM*, 14 March 1901, 22. One of the few positive articles concerning women in business entailed a reprint from an American journal which argued that women could be successful in commerce because they possessed the stereotypically-feminine qualities of thrift, caution, and attention to detail. See *CG*, 4 March 1892, 24.

<sup>62</sup> *CG*, 19 July 1889, 4-5.

<sup>63</sup> *CG*, 23 March 1900, 30; and *MM*, 14 March 1901, 22.

<sup>64</sup> The *Maritime Grocer* began its clerk’s column in *MG*, 19 April 1894, 28. For the feminization of retail clerical work at the turn of the twentieth century, see Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American*



Worries over the official prominence of married women operating businesses also initiated complaints against women in commerce. Both the Nova Scotia Married Women's Property Act of 1884, and its more liberal version in 1898, required husbands to provide consent for wives to operate a business and permitted wives to hold property separate from their husbands. In the case of female proprietors, this property could include the shop, goods, and profits. Written consents were filed with both the registry of deeds and the municipal clerk.<sup>65</sup> Within ten years of the act's first passage in 1884, 132 husbands filed 152 certificates with the Halifax municipality.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, Halifax's *Maritime Grocer* printed these consents upon its establishment in 1893, a tradition which the *Maritime Merchant* continued. The *Canadian Grocer* likewise printed these consents by 1892, creating a separate section within its "Business Changes" column.<sup>67</sup> Even writers in Halifax's daily press complained of new legislation permitting married women to operate businesses in their own names. These women purportedly knew nothing of commerce since their enterprises merely protected insolvent husbands.<sup>68</sup>

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*Department Stores, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

<sup>65</sup> For a discussion on property legislation affecting married women in Nova Scotia during these years, see Philip Girard and Rebecca Veinott, "Married Women's Property Law in Nova Scotia, 1850-1910" in *Separate Spheres*, 67-91.

<sup>66</sup> Index to Entries Under the Married Women's Property Act of 1884 (1884-1895), RG 35-102, Ser. 14C, Vol. 1, NSARM.

<sup>67</sup> *CG*, 24 June 1892, 24.

<sup>68</sup> *AR*, 11 Sept. 1897, 2, reference from Ian McKay's Social History Collection, QUA. See also *CG*, 28 Sept. 1894, 8. For the debt-avoidance possibilities permitted by the Acts of 1884 and 1898, see Chapter Three, 194-6.

Husbands certainly used this legislation to protect their own businesses from creditors or to continue in business after becoming insolvent, but the official registry process also brought a public face to the work many women had already been doing. In 1881, Ellen Foley operated a shop from her home in the northern suburbs while her husband John earned a living as a self-employed shoemaker. Soon after the passage of the 1884 Act, Ellen's husband registered consent for his wife to transact business in her own name. By the mid-1880s, *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory* recognized Ellen's contributions as a grocer for the first time even though she had been previously self-employed. While Ellen's activities had not changed, new legislation acknowledged her labour as an independent proprietor responsible for her own debts and solely entitled to the profits her business generated.<sup>69</sup>

Although a change in attitude had occurred within the male-dominated commercial sector concerning women shopkeepers, R. G. Dun and Company did cover an increased number of women in its reference manuals as compared to its previous ledger system. Between 28 and 48 Halifax businesses were attributed to women in published reports ranging from 1876 to 1890, fluctuating from 4 to 6 percent of all entries.<sup>70</sup> In spite of the Married Women's Property Act of 1884 which helped make women's contributions more visible, it is unlikely it significantly increased the number of women reported. In fact, appropriate reference manuals listed few women receiving consent from their husbands. Between 1889 and mid-1890, for example, Dun's July 1890 edition included only five of 22 ventures

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<sup>69</sup> 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 1 (F1), 26; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1880-1, 1881-2, 1886-7; and Index To Entries Under the Married Women's Property Act of 1884 (1884-95).

<sup>70</sup> See Appendix B, Table B.3.

established by married women with consent from their husbands.<sup>71</sup>

Published reference books likewise included a greater variety of businesswomen than agents had previously represented in the ledger system. Even though one-half to two-thirds of the businesses attributed to women in selected manuals between 1876 and 1890 included female retailers of the dry goods, millinery and clothing trades, alternative lines of retail were also represented.<sup>72</sup> Female grocers, a category of women omitted from manuscript ledgers, consistently comprised the second most common trade for women, fluctuating between 11 and 26 percent throughout the post-ledger period.<sup>73</sup> A small number of female-owned businesses included in these manuals additionally represented unconventional trades according to the gender precepts of the late-Victorian era. Mrs. O'Connell, for example, inherited her husband's fishing tackle and tobacco shop after his death in the early 1870s. By 1876, Dun rated her business as one of the most prosperous enterprises owned by a woman in Halifax. O'Connell's favourable assessment stemmed largely from the reputation of her husband who had catered to a high-class clientele and supplied officers in the army

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<sup>71</sup> Index To Entries Under the Married Women's Property Act of 1884 (1884-95); and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, July 1890.

<sup>72</sup> In January 1876, 50.0 percent of women were engaged in dry goods, millinery, and clothing distribution (15 of 30). In September 1879, 48.7 percent owned shops in this line (19 of 39). This percentage increased in September 1885, when 67.9 percent were listed (19 of 28). By 1890, 52.1 percent of women were engaged in these trades (25 of 48).

<sup>73</sup> In January 1876, 16.7 percent of establishments attributed to women were grocery businesses (5 of 30). By September 1879 this percentage had increased when 25.6 percent of female-owned businesses were shops in the grocery line (10 of 39). The percentage dropped in September 1885 when 10.7 percent of businesswomen ran grocery stores (3 of 28). By July 1890 the percentage increased slightly when 12.5 percent of enterprises attributed to female proprietorship represented groceries (6 of 48).

and navy.<sup>74</sup> In the following decade, Dun assessed another female-owned tackle and tobacco shop. Elizabeth Rodgers had inherited her business on Upper Water Street from her husband William, a self-employed gunsmith. To help support a family of daughters, Rodgers operated the retail shop for over ten years and succeeded in doubling its assets according to Dun estimates. Despite the shop's longevity and improvement in its pecuniary strength, she received only a fair credit rating, an evaluation which remained unchanged from the time of her husband's control.<sup>75</sup>

Notwithstanding the larger number of women assessed and better representation of a wider variety of trades, credit reporters still considered the self-employed activities of certain women unworthy of inclusion. According to the city directory for 1890-1, a Dun report covering this period assessed approximately one-sixth of all Halifax businesses owned by women, a fraction far lower than at least one other Canadian city for the same year.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Dun estimated the sporting goods shop to be worth between \$5,000 and \$10,000, while granting Mrs. O'Connell a good credit rating. Only two other Halifax women received such a high credit rating in this edition of the reference manual. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Jan. 1876; and R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 11, 302.

<sup>75</sup> In 1879, Dun had estimated William Rodgers, gunsmith, to be worth less than \$1,000. By 1901, the company estimated Elizabeth's pecuniary strength to be between \$2000 and \$3,000. It is interesting to note that the compilers of the city directory referred to Elizabeth Rodgers as a "gunsmith" for many years after the death of her husband. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Sept. 1879, July 1890, Jan. 1901; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1886-7, 1890-1, 1900-1; and 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec. 1, Subd. 2 (E2), 23.

<sup>76</sup> According to *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory* for 1890-1, 302 businesses were owned by women. The *Mercantile Agency Reference Book* for July 1890, however, listed only 48 women proprietors. Evidence from Hamilton, Ontario, shows that in 1890, the company was listing one-third of all women-owned businesses. See Monod, *Store Wars*, 47.

When one considers that directories often failed to accurately portray the ownership and operation of many small shops, the underrepresentation of female proprietors becomes more serious. To illustrate, in the early 1880s, city directories described Edward Cashen as keeping a grocery next to his home on Gottingen Street. Yet, it was his wife Mary who kept shop, according to the 1881 census, while he worked as a labourer.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, Maggie B. Ross ran a hotel on North Street known as Cameron House, an establishment named after her first husband. According to herself, her employees, and her lodgers, Maggie owned and operated the hotel independently of her second husband. She ran the hotel prior to her second marriage, bought the supplies and furniture, hand-made the quilts, and collected the board. Her husband repeatedly ignored his wife's contributions, publicly claimed the business as his own venture, and insisted he alone paid the bills. Although city directories and Dun reference books included the hotel, both sources attributed its ownership to Maggie's husband, Nathaniel A. Ross.<sup>78</sup>

Regardless of the continued non-inclusive nature of credit reporting in Halifax, certain factors helped women guarantee a listing and a relatively accurate assessment. In the case of Catherine Dunne, a Dublin-born clothier turned liquor retailer, the possession of property, long experience as a shopkeeper, and assistance from a respected son helped her

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<sup>77</sup> 1881 Halifax Census, Ward 5, Sec. 2 Subd. 1 (F1), 144; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1880-1, 1881-2.

<sup>78</sup> Facts concerning the hotel's proprietorship came to light during a court case for arson involving Edward Fenton, a disgruntled boarder and former employee. By 1890-1, Mrs. Catherine H. Thomas owned the hotel and the Ross couple had disappeared. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Sept. 1885, March 1887; Halifax City Court Cases, RG 42, Ser. A, Vol. 1, No. 31, NSARM; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1881-2, 1890-1.

receive a listing and an agreeable report for many years. Widowed prior to the 1860s, Catherine worked as a clothier in 1864. Two years later, she established a dry goods business at her North End home on Upper Water Street. Despite Dunne's early business activity, she never received assessments in the ledger system before 1877. During the 1880s, Catherine expanded her dry goods business, took her son Michael on as a partner, and switched from dry goods to liquor retail. Michael, a member of the Charitable Irish Society, was reportedly "highly respected in a large circle of acquaintances." The profits from this shop, C. and Son Dunne Liquors, enabled them to help support their family and hire a servant. Even after her son died in 1889, Catherine continued operating her shop with the help of her daughter-in-law. In the early 1890s, according to Ward Five's municipal tax assessment book, Catherine owned two properties on Upper Water Street worth \$6,500 and possessed another \$500 in personal property. The *Mercantile Agency Reference Book* for 1890 therefore correctly assessed Catherine at \$5,000 to \$10,000 and granted her a fair credit evaluation, an assessment she had maintained since her appearance in the books by 1879. When Catherine died in 1893, appraised with possessing \$5,000, she left her entire estate to her widowed daughter-in-law Margaret. Within two years, however, the business closed and Margaret was also gone, choosing to remarry or seek her fortune elsewhere.<sup>79</sup>

Not all women who received credit ratings were as lucky as Catherine Dunne. The

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<sup>79</sup> 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec. 1, Subd. 2 (E2), 5-6; 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 2 (E2), 16; *Hutchinson's Nova Scotia Directory*, 1864-5, 1866-7; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1880-1, 1890-1 to 1895-6; *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, March 1887, July 1890; 1891 Ward 5 Valuation Book; and Estate Papers, 1893, No. 4369; *AR*, 25 July 1889, 3; and Gogan, "Surviving as a Widow," 79, 98-9, 105.

backlash against women may still have affected their assessment of creditworthiness by R. G. Dun and Company. Opinions changed in the 1880s for Catherine Hayden, for instance, who Dun reporters had congratulated before 1877 for her crucial assistance to her husband Dennis, the North End dry goods dealer on Brunswick Street. When her husband's death prompted Catherine to officially take over the business by 1881, the shop soon suffered from a decline in its credit and capital estimation as recorded in published reference books. Judging from municipal tax assessments, this represented an unwarranted reduction of the business in the eyes of Dun agents. Whereas R. G. Dun and Company regarded Catherine to be worth less than \$500 in 1887, Halifax's assessors recorded her personal property as being \$1,000. The situation did not improve until her son Frank inherited the dry goods shop in 1901.<sup>80</sup> In all probability, more women than Catherine Hayden suffered the fate of incorrect assessments. Businesswomen listed within agency periodicals were generally overrepresented in the lowest categories of pecuniary strength and credit evaluations, while being underrepresented in the highest categories.<sup>81</sup>

In the post-ledger years, therefore, R. G. Dun and Company evaluated a larger number of Halifax women in a greater variety of trades, but with questionable results. The *Mercantile Agency Reference Books* continued to underrepresent women's self-employment

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<sup>80</sup> 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 1 (E1), 41; 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec. 1, Subd. 2 (E2), 57-8; *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, March 1887, Jan. 1901; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1; R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 11, 311; 1891 Ward 5 Valuation Book; and Gogan, "Surviving as a Widow," 76.

<sup>81</sup> Compare Tables B.4 and B.1, then Tables B.5 and B.2, in Appendix B. Monod makes comparable observations for Hamilton in 1890. See Monod, *Store Wars*, 47.

while granting only cautious assessments for those women its compilers saw fit to include. Meanwhile, the introduction of local and national trade papers in the lines of grocery and dry goods retailing, the two most common self-employed occupations of shopkeeping women, helped create a backlash against both female proprietors and shop assistants. Women favourably assessed in Dun's periodicals, and thus considered creditworthy, tended be respected widows with lengthy commercial experience who possessed property and received essential family support. While these factors helped Catherine Dunne achieve notice by R. G. Dun and Company, they did not help Esther Allison nor Louisa Bailey whose African origin threatened their status as potentially creditworthy shopkeepers.

By the early 1890s, the inaccuracies of credit reports and the haphazard coverage of small-scale, backstreet, minority, and female businesses, were readily apparent. In 1893, the Member of Parliament for East Grey, T.S. Sproule, introduced a bill in the House of Commons to federally regulate the activities of mercantile agencies and force these companies to be held responsible for the commercial damage suffered by both retailers and creditors caused by such errors. Sproule's initiative failed, however, because he lacked support not only from mercantile agencies, but also from boards of trade and financial institutions.<sup>82</sup> Whether retailers would have supported the cause is unknown. Throughout much of the period under review, shopkeepers at the local, provincial, and national levels possessed no organized voice with which to raise a protest. Boards of trade did not generally

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<sup>82</sup> Sproule expressed apprehension at voluntary reporters who willingly provided misinformation on certain businesses as an act of revenge. He also worried over the occurrence of many unexpected bankruptcies. House of Commons, *Debates*, 23 March 1893, 2873.



include retailers within their membership and commercial journals often supported wholesale interests at the expense of retail.<sup>83</sup> Columnists for the general and commercial press did express annoyance at the appearance of surprise bankruptcies, but rarely directed their anger at credit-reporting agencies. Instead, these critics placed the blame upon the irresponsible practices of failing shopkeepers, hard economic times, and inadequate creditor protection through existing debtor legislation.<sup>84</sup> Halifax's retail associations in the grocery and dry goods trades, which had formed by the 1890s, certainly launched no opposition against the judgement of credit ratings assessed by mercantile agencies. Regardless, those shopkeepers most affected by erroneous ratings were not likely to be included in the membership of associations dedicated to defining legitimate proprietors and professionalizing the retail trade.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, because credit-reporting serials were only available through subscription, affected retailers were likely unaware of whether they had received an assessment by R. G. Dun and Company or if the agency had misrepresented their shop.

If seemingly disadvantaged individuals were not prevented from some degree of retail proprietorship in late-Victorian Halifax, they rarely met with equitable treatment in matters relating to credit. Even in the last decade of the twentieth century, rating legitimacy entailed more than the assessment of financial condition, commercial skill, and successful persistence. In both the pre- and post-1877 era of credit-reporting, contemporary constructs

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<sup>83</sup> See Chapter Three, 145-6; and Chapter Four, 212-13.

<sup>84</sup> See Chapter Three, 135-209.

<sup>85</sup> See Chapter Four, 226-82 .

involving respectable character and legitimate business governed the determination of commercial worth. In turn, both constructs derived from perceptions of gender- and class-appropriate behaviour, as well as religious-, ethnic-, and racial-based stereotypes. Additional factors determining commercial worth included community acceptance, family support, permanent residence, occupational trade, clientele character, shop location, and relative size. Proprietors deemed unworthy faced haphazard inclusion at best, or worse, misrepresentation and outright omission. Whatever the specific circumstance, many shopkeepers actively negotiated a course for success or lessened the burden of failure, while suppliers and their allies continued attempts towards the commercial reform of creditor-debtor relations.

## Chapter Three

### Fortunes, Failures, and Commercial Reform

In the fall of 1873, W. H. Bauld, a dry goods shopkeeper operating on a cash basis and located in the aging but still elegant retail shopping district of Granville Street, assigned his estate under the Dominion Insolvency Act of 1869. After recognizing a business loss of \$9,000 in 1871 while first established on Barrington Street, Bauld moved his shop and continued in business until acquiring an unmanageable debt of \$23,000. Substantial financial aid from close relatives and extended family members failed to prevent commercial ruin. His insolvency, a surprise to the Halifax business community, resulted from inadequate accounting, incompetent employees, and two bouts of serious illness. Moreover, an economic depression ensured that Bauld did not stand alone in his financial failure as a retail shopkeeper. In 1873, at least 45 Halifax business owners assigned, almost double the number of assignments for the previous year.<sup>1</sup>

W. H. Bauld's brief experiences in Halifax's dry goods trade was not unusual in the nineteenth-century world of commerce. Late-Victorian retailers attempted to negotiate a course for success through an unpredictable economy, erratic commercial legislation, and

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<sup>1</sup> When Bauld assigned in 1873, Nova Scotia's *Royal Gazette* reported at least 44 additional failures in Halifax. In 1872, however, only 25 city businesses had announced their assignments under the Dominion Insolvency Act. See Appendix C, Table C.1. Despite Bauld's knowledge of his financial troubles as early as 1871, his creditors were probably unaware of his descent into debt. In February 1873, the credit-reporting agency R. G. Dun and Company estimated his worth to be between \$5,000 and \$10,000, and advised interested parties that Bauld held a good credit rating. The Supreme Court granted Bauld a discharge in 1876 after he had paid his creditors 24 cents on every dollar. Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 1, No. 3, NSARM; *Citizen* (Halifax), 4 Jan. 1870, 2; *The Mercantile Agency Reference Book (and Key) for the Dominion of Canada*, Feb. 1873; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1869-70; and *RG* (Halifax), 1872-1873.

evolving custom regulating credit and cash transactions. Moreover, a complex web of interconnections existed between shopkeepers, creditors, and customers, making the 'independent retailer' anything but independent. Although some retailers found success by improving their original circumstances, maintaining a business for many years, and earning enough money to support themselves later in life, other retailers ended their commercial careers in failure. Increasingly concerned with the thin line between fortunes and failures, creditors and their allies campaigned to reform retail practice and commercial legislation while defining the meaning of success.

Not all shopkeepers, however, succumbed easily to financial ruin or willingly followed the dictates of professionalism increasingly preached by the commercial, political, and legal elite. Halifax retailers took advantage of many strategies to lessen the economic burdens of shopkeeping. Whether these strategies involved legitimate avenues of assistance or the practising of deception, they enabled retailers to find success or at least escape a bewildering array of financial obligations. Although Bauld's use of family assistance failed to prevent his eventual assignment, the sympathy engendered by his failing health and dishonest clerks allowed him to receive a discharge from his debts after paying less than a quarter of their worth. His surprisingly inadequate accounting procedures had little affect on the proceedings which could find no evidence of positive fraud, even though he "did not keep such books as to enable his creditors to comprehend the state of his affairs, the losses he had sustained, how he had conducted his business, or the way in which he had disposed of his property."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 1, No. 3.

Throughout the late nineteenth century, the fortunes and failures of Halifax retailers relied largely on the generous credit terms afforded by local wholesalers. From the 1870s to the turn of the twentieth century, city suppliers traditionally offered longer billing periods than their counterparts elsewhere in Canada. Longer credit terms allowed Halifax suppliers to remain competitive when the creation of national markets threatened the monopoly local wholesalers held over city shopkeepers, but also opened both supplier and retailer to possible financial ruin. The latter fear increasingly motivated representatives of the city's commercial elite, a group comprised largely of prosperous wholesalers, to promote shorter credit terms as a sensible alternative to the ideal of cash sales, and a means to attract the business of 'progressive' shopkeepers and respectable middle-class consumers. As it had accomplished in Central Canada, reduced billing periods represented an important step towards professionalizing the Halifax mercantile trade.<sup>3</sup>

During the early 1870s, Halifax wholesalers offered shopkeepers especially long terms in return for remaining loyal to one city firm. Retailers purchased goods on credit twice a year with billing periods coming due every six months. In the spring, proprietors eagerly stocked their shops with the latest imports from Halifax wholesalers. At the same time, these wholesalers expected cash payment for the goods bought in the previous fall. In the summer, retailers benefitted somewhat from the custom of residents, visitors, and members of the British fleet, but the season proved slower than the previous spring and autumn trade. During the winter, shopkeepers did not gain additional custom, settle accounts,

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<sup>3</sup> For the restriction and reform of credit from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, see David Monod, *Store Wars: Shopkeepers and the Culture of Mass Marketing, 1890-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 161-8.

nor order further stock. In these inclement months, the temporary halt of long-distance shipping, poor transportation over land, and absence of the British fleet in Halifax waters, ensured slow business for retailers and wholesalers alike, forging the need for long-term credit.<sup>4</sup>

Beginning in the mid-1870s, the onset of depression and the advent of commercial travellers from Central Canadian firms encouraged city wholesalers to reform the local credit system. In doing so, Halifax firms followed the example of wholesalers from outside the Maritime region by offering retailers credit for three to four months. The severe economic downturn between 1873 and 1879 prompted a restriction of credit in the hopes of reducing further financial risk. Halifax wholesalers also worried over the possible loss of business to outside competition. City papers warned retailers not to abandon local suppliers whose previous long credits and liberal dealings allowed hundreds of enterprising men and women the opportunity to set up shop.<sup>5</sup> Despite economic and commercial pressures, however, Halifax shopkeepers continued to obtain renewals on accounts for nine, 12, or even 18

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<sup>4</sup> For the annual trade cycle and credit terms in Halifax's grocery and dry goods businesses during the 1870s, see *MM* (Halifax), 25 April 1935, 17, 42, 44, 46; 14 Jan. 1904, 21-2; and 7 March 1929, 85, 166. See also Janet Guildford, "Public School Reform and the Halifax Middle Class, 1850-1870" (Ph.D. diss., Dalhousie University, 1990), 32; *MH* (Halifax), triweekly, 19 June 1875, 3; and 20 Feb. 1875, 3. For wholesale distribution and credit terms in nineteenth-century North America generally, see Douglas McCalla, "The Buchanan Businesses, 1834-1872: A Study in the Organization and Development of Canadian Trade" (D.Phil. diss., University of Oxford, 1972); and Glenn Porter and Harold C. Livesay, *Merchants and Manufacturers: Studies in the Changing Structure of Nineteenth Century Marketing* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971).

<sup>5</sup> *MH*, 31 May 1875, 2.

months.<sup>6</sup>

Halifax commerce underwent a variety of changes in the following decade. Terms of three months had become standard by the mid-1880s for both retailers who obtained credit from suppliers and wholesalers who secured loans from local financial institutions.<sup>7</sup> The completion of the Intercolonial Railway in 1876 and its Short Line linking Saint John and Montreal in 1889, increased the business between Halifax retailers and wholesalers from Central Canada.<sup>8</sup> Halifax suppliers established their own circuit of travellers who visited retailers in the city, provincial towns, and rural communities to compete with the representatives of outside firms who the *Morning Chronicle* complained wore diamond rings, smoked fat cigars, and prospered at the expense of Maritime wholesalers.<sup>9</sup>

By the 1890s, increased competition for the business of retailers, improved transportation, and lax enforcement of a city ordinance requiring outside commercial travellers to pay licence fees, allowed Halifax shopkeepers to purchase supplies more

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<sup>6</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 11 May 1875, 4; and *AR* (Halifax), 1 Sept. 1875, 2.

<sup>7</sup> In the mid-1880s, as a result of a commercial downturn, the Bank of Nova Scotia standardized its process for granting loans while encouraging short-term financing. See James D. Frost, "The 'Nationalization' of the Bank of Nova Scotia, 1880-1910," *Acadiensis* XII, 1 (Autumn 1982): 4-11.

<sup>8</sup> Shirley E. Woods, *Cinders & Saltwater: The Story of Atlantic Canada's Railways* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1992), 68-89, 167-9; and E. R. Forbes and D. A. Muis, eds. *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 62-7, 93-4.

<sup>9</sup> As cited in J. Murray Beck, *Politics of Nova Scotia: Volume One 1710-1896* (Tantallon, N. S. : Four East Publications, 1985), 230. The comment originally appeared in *MC* (Halifax), 10 May 1886. For descriptions of Halifax commercial travellers, see *MM*, 25 April 1935, 17, 42, 44, 46; 14 Jan. 1904, 21-2; and 7 March 1929, 85, 166.

frequently and from a wider variety of wholesalers.<sup>10</sup> Retailers thus had the option of choosing stock for the best prices and at the most favourable terms. While Halifax suppliers continued to offer retailers relatively long billing periods throughout the decade, Montreal, Toronto, Saint John and even Dartmouth grocery wholesalers had begun reducing credit terms to thirty days with discounts for earlier settlements or for cash upfront.<sup>11</sup> Such terms were available to city shopkeepers purchasing goods from outside firms who offered a 1 percent discount for goods paid in cash within ten days or from Halifax dealers who offered a 2 percent discount for goods paid in cash within thirty days.<sup>12</sup> Even though Halifax wholesalers had traditionally offered longer credit terms, their discounts enabled them to remain competitive with outside firms. Halifax's standard longer terms also enabled aspiring retailers with little capital greater opportunity for self-employment. Of course, generous terms could also lead to ruin for inexperienced proprietors.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, July 1890, 678. This municipal legislation prohibited commercial travellers from selling or demonstrating goods without paying \$100 for a licence. The ordinance did not apply to Halifax rate payers nor market vendors. *Ordinances of the City of Halifax* (Halifax: n.p., [1876?]), 240; and Halifax County Supreme Court Cases, RG 39, Ser. C, No. 11483.5a, NSARM.

<sup>11</sup> In 1891, the Dominion Guild of Wholesale Grocers, which did not include Maritime wholesalers, agreed to offer terms of 30 days for most staples, with a 1 percent discount for bills paid within ten days. This was a reduction from their previous 60 day custom. Other foodstuffs were available for three months credit with a 3 percent discount if paid in ten days. By 1894, Dartmouth wholesale grocers were selling for 30 days with discounts for upfront cash. In the latter half of the 1890s, Saint John grocery merchants had also adopted this practice. See *CG* (Toronto), 13 March 1891, 1; 2 Oct. 1891, 10; *MG* (Halifax), 9 Aug. 1894, 4; and *MM*, 2 Aug. 1900, 16.

<sup>12</sup> *CG*, 13 March 1891, 1; and *MG*, 9 Aug. 1894, 4.

<sup>13</sup> *MM*, 2 Aug. 1900, 16.



Conversely, shorter terms were beneficial to retailers able to afford early cash settlements and enabled wholesalers to attract a “better class” of retailers--shopkeepers operating solely on a cash basis, for example.<sup>14</sup> Prior to 1890, however, few retailers offered goods for cash payment only. Shopkeepers who switched to cash in the early 1870s, such as the dry goods store operated by W. H. Bauld and the grocery store run by the Halifax Cooperative Society, failed miserably.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, advancement of the cash system did occur during the depression of the 1870s. In 1875, one observer noted the large number of middle-class shopkeepers refusing credit along Halifax’s main shopping districts.<sup>16</sup> A decade later, many retailers abandoned this system, but continued to offer discounts for cash transactions.<sup>17</sup>

During the 1890s, retail grocers led the way in selling goods for cash. Cash payments helped set middle-class grocers apart from backstreet shops catering to a working-class or underclass clientele who dealt mainly in credit.<sup>18</sup> In fact, the term, ‘cash grocer’ became one

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<sup>14</sup> *CG*, 13 March 1891, 1; and 2 Oct. 1891, 10-11.

<sup>15</sup> In 1866, the Halifax Cooperative Society formed to benefit the working class by offering inexpensive groceries for cash sale only. Unable to obtain enough sales, the Society accepted credit in violation of its charter and recorded these sales as cash transactions. By April 1870 the Society declared insolvency. See *Sun and Advertiser* (Halifax), 19 Jan. 1866, 2; 18 Jan. 1867, 2; *Unionist and Halifax Journal*, 21 Jan. 1867, 2; *MC*, 13 Jan. 1870, 3; 28 April 1870, 3; 6 May 1870, 3; 3 June 1870, 3; and *Rules of the Halifax Cooperative Society* (Halifax, [1866?]).

<sup>16</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 9 Oct. 1875, 3.

<sup>17</sup> In 1886, an American tourist noted with surprise the 5 percent discount for cash sales common in Halifax’s retail trade. *Critic* (Halifax), 5 Nov. 1886, 7.

<sup>18</sup> As late as the 1920s and 1930s, credit sales remained important to small urban groceries operating in Canadian working-class neighbourhoods. For example, see Sylvie

of prestige.<sup>19</sup> The president of the Halifax Retail Grocers' Association in the early 1890s, James A. Gass, and the president of its successor in 1896, W. E. Crowe, both sold to consumers only on a cash basis.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, R. Urquhart and Son on Spring Garden Road, known for its prosperity, longevity, and prestigious South End location, switched to cash in 1897.<sup>21</sup> By 1899, Halifax's trade journal announced that six local retailers had experienced a successful passage from credit to cash.<sup>22</sup>

The transition from credit to cash by successful retailers generally warranted congratulatory but cautious comments from the editor of the local trade paper who at times doubted the viability of cash sales in a city as small as Halifax.<sup>23</sup> Instead, the paper considered a move to shorter billing periods as an appropriate compromise. Taking note of reforms elsewhere and the economic recession of the early 1890s, Halifax's *Maritime*

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Taschereau, "L'arme favorite de l'épicier indépendant: éléments d'une histoire sociale du crédit (Montréal 1920-1940)," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 4 (1993): 265-92; and Monod, *Store Wars*, 163.

<sup>19</sup> Ironically, the decade of the 1890s also witnessed the creation of the seven-cent store which sold a variety of inexpensive goods, including groceries for cash at bargain prices. In Halifax, these shops had appeared by 1892 on the city centre and North End streets of Granville and Gottingen. For further information see *MC*, 6 Oct. 1891, 3; *AR*, 18 Nov. 1892, 2; and *CG*, 8 July 1892, 2. According to the *Canadian Grocer*, these stores sold lower-class woodenware, tinware, combs, toilet soaps, small household items, and popular toys.

<sup>20</sup> *CG*, 27 Sept. 1895, 33; and *MM*, 15 Sept. 1898, 76. For information on the retail grocers' associations, see Chapter Four.

<sup>21</sup> *MG*, 9 Feb. 1893, 2; and *MM*, 5 Aug. 1897, 27. R. Urquhart and Son had been in business for 43 years.

<sup>22</sup> *MM*, 6 July 1899, 12.

<sup>23</sup> *MM*, 5 Aug. 1897, 27.

*Grocer* launched a campaign for shorter credit settlements between retailers and wholesalers in 1894, hoping a discount for goods paid in ten days would be reasonable.<sup>24</sup> Soon after, when business representatives throughout the Maritime provinces met in New Brunswick to discuss the establishment of a permanent Maritime Board of Trade, participants, many of whom were wholesalers, debated the need for shorter terms for both retailers and consumers.<sup>25</sup> In 1897, the city's renamed commercial journal, the *Maritime Merchant*, again took the initiative by encouraging city wholesalers to operate on terms of 30 days and offering free space for any subscriber to discuss the issue. Despite the compromise this solution presented, the journal received mixed responses and no public debate ensued.<sup>26</sup>

Long billing periods characteristic in the dry goods trade represented the worst stumbling block for shortening credit terms in Halifax's commercial sphere. As opposed to the city's leading grocers, no prosperous dry goods dealers dealt solely in cash. As late as 1901, Halifax's largest retail dry goods house, Mahon Brothers, offered both credit and cash discounts.<sup>27</sup> Abnormally long credit terms existed in the dry goods business throughout the 1890s. Generally, Halifax wholesalers sent supplies to retailers in January, dated the bill for May, and expected payment in December. Meanwhile, retail customers paid their bills to city

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<sup>24</sup> *MG*, 9 Aug. 1894, 4.

<sup>25</sup> *CG*, 12 Oct. 1894, 9.

<sup>26</sup> *MM*, 21 Jan. 1897, 12, 42; and 4 Feb. 1897, 11. Unfortunately, the journal never explained the content of these mixed responses.

<sup>27</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1.

dry goods dealers within six months.<sup>28</sup> In 1899, dry goods wholesalers in the Halifax Board of Trade tried unsuccessfully to establish four-month credit terms to retailers throughout the Maritime region. When suppliers in Saint John considered the proposed terms “too revolutionary to be seriously considered at the present time,” the Halifax Board set the idea aside.<sup>29</sup> These unusually long settlements made even well-known dry goods firms, both wholesale and retail, vulnerable to unexpected failures.

Aside from difficulties in the dry goods business, the *Maritime Merchant* did help to modernize Halifax’s grocery trade in the last decade of the nineteenth century through the revolution of reduced billing periods. After campaigning with support from grocery wholesalers, the journal succeeded in convincing shopkeepers to buy goods regularly throughout the year in smaller amounts. In turn, smaller bills allowed retailers to pay cash within 30 days and receive a discount of at least 2 percent. Frequent buying allowed shopkeepers to better gauge customer preferences, control stock deterioration and avoid large debts while destroying seasonal fluctuations in Halifax’s grocery trade.<sup>30</sup> In 1901, one popular grocery supplier, H. G. Bauld, announced that three-quarters of his customers paid cash within 30 days rather than the previous standard of three months. Given the close profits at the time, Bauld believed shorter credit terms ensured “a very pleasant way of doing

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<sup>28</sup> *MM*, 1 April 1897, 38.

<sup>29</sup> *MM*, 2 March 1899, 32; and 22 June 1899, 42.

<sup>30</sup> For changes in the trade, see *MM*, 18 March 1897, 43; 13 May 1897, 52; 14 Sept 1899, 38; 4 Jan 1900, 66; 15 Feb. 1900, 64; 13 Sept. 1900, 42; 17 Jan. 1901, 15; and 31 Jan. 1901, 48.

business.”<sup>31</sup> In fact, by the turn of the century, doing business any other way signified an inability to maintain an up-to-date wholesale or retail grocery and illustrated an indifference for professional merchandising.

It is important to note that much of the drive behind shorter credit terms encouraged by the Halifax trade press originated from the city’s wholesale commercial sector. In addition to advertising dollars, suppliers backed the *Maritime Grocer* and its successor, the *Maritime Merchant*, by maintaining close connections to its editorial board. Since the journal’s inception, board members included the employees and relatives of local wholesalers. Of the seven individuals appointed to the board during its first year of operation, five were commercial travellers, the traditional go-between of wholesalers and retailers since the 1870s.<sup>32</sup> A sixth board member worked as an accountant for a local wholesale grocer.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, at least one of the seven worked for his father Frederick P. Ronnan, a prominent commission and hardware merchant. Moreover, the journal’s contributor and soon-to-be managing editor, I. C. Stewart, had been a traveller in the local

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<sup>31</sup> *MM*, 2 Aug 1900, 16; and 19 Dec. 1901, 32.

<sup>32</sup> The publisher and editor for the paper may have approached the local commercial travellers’ association for the recruitment of board members. This association had been established in 1881 and involved both wholesalers and their travelling employees. *MH*, 17 Oct. 1881, 3; and 18 Oct. 1881, 3. For the role of commercial travellers as a wholesaler-retailer intermediary, see Christopher Hosgood, “The ‘Knights of the Road’: Commercial Travellers and the Culture of the Commercial Room in Late-Victorian and Edwardian England,” *Victorian Studies* 37, 4 (Summer 1994): 519-47.

<sup>33</sup> *MG*, 12 Jan. 1893, 1; and *McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1891-2, 1900-1.

grocery trade.<sup>34</sup> Similar connections continued throughout the remainder of the decade.<sup>35</sup>

The necessity for credit in commercial transactions, whether on a long or short-term basis, made debt unavoidable throughout the nineteenth century. Credit and debt represented two sides of the same coin, both of which forged links between family, friends, wholesalers, retailers, and customers. While such links could create positive ties, the non-payment of debt hastened business failure and legal punishment on the part of the offending shopkeeper. Fortunately, the propriety of debt raised little comment from contemporaries if financial obligations were responsibly managed, particularly after 1890 when the abolition of debtor imprisonment produced a redefinition of creditor-debtor relations in Nova Scotia. This legislative innovation rendered debt more than a simple moral failing. The reform reinforced proper commercial behaviour through the continued punishment of fraud and eventual forgiveness for uncontrollable misfortune experienced by shopkeepers otherwise considered legitimate.

Shopkeepers experienced debt as a natural course in their retailing careers, including aid from family and friends who offered help in times of financial need. In some circumstances, familial ties through female relations provided loans for shopkeepers requiring assistance. W. H. Bauld, for example, embarked on self-employment in the dry goods line with £312 borrowed from his mother in 1866, support in kind from his mother-in-

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<sup>34</sup> *MG*, 13 July 1893, 1; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2.

<sup>35</sup> In 1897, for instance, the eight directors of the *Maritime Merchant* included four travellers, two commission merchants, one accountant for a wholesale grocer, and one insurance broker. *MM*, 7 Jan. 1897, 11; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2, 1900-1.

law, more than £200 from the sale of his wife's bank stocks, and an annual income of £600 also belonging to his wife.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, Mrs. Hannah Graham, a Halifax dry goods dealer thirty years later, borrowed \$1,500 from her daughter's husband to establish her shop selling gentlemen's furnishings and fancy dry goods.<sup>37</sup> Fathers possessing more experience in business also offered invaluable assistance as the case of Patrick A. Connolly illustrated. Patrick's father, a former neighbourhood grocer in the southern suburbs, provided a \$1,000 loan to establish his son in business during the late 1870s. The initial aid from his father then helped Patrick convince a local wholesaler to offer him credit for eight months, while a further endorsement from the elder Mr. Connolly made a loan for \$400 possible.<sup>38</sup> Long-time friends placed in a situation to offer financial aid also helped shopkeepers short on cash. John Allison Bell, a former dry goods proprietor and prominent municipal official, for instance, loaned his good friend Henry S. Laurillard money for his clothing and tailoring business in the 1880s.<sup>39</sup> Despite the generosity of friends and family, these four cases of borrowed assistance failed to prevent impending failure. Unfortunately for historians, the origin of such funding was most visible in contemporary accounts of business failures, undermining the indispensable help these sources no doubt provided.

Shopkeepers especially acquired debt when ready cash had been used to pay for more

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<sup>36</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 1, No. 3.

<sup>37</sup> *MG*, 24 Jan. 1895, 14; *MM*, 4 Feb. 1897, 54; and *DGR* (Toronto) 7, 3 (March 1897): 18.

<sup>38</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Cases, RG 39, Ser. C, Vol. 335, No. 11608a.

<sup>39</sup> John A. Bell Diary, Micro: Biography: Bell, John Allison, 8 April 1886, 29 March 1888, NSARM.

pressing concerns, or when unexpected personal tragedy intervened. When the North End grocer and liquor dealer James Broadhurst paid cash for his liquor licence and rent, he found himself unable to meet his other debts. Declining profits from his shop on Gottingen Street and child-care responsibilities made matters worse. Broadhurst's inability to pay creditors led to his imprisonment for debt in 1873 and his assignment soon after.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, Mrs. Annie Granville, a boardinghouse keeper in 1876, faced business failure when she was unable to pay marble cutter Michael Griffin \$300 for a stone monument recently placed in the Holy Cross Cemetery.<sup>41</sup>

Fortunately for some shopkeepers, harsh economic times prompted local suppliers to exhibit leniency in matters of payment. For instance, wholesalers who stocked local shops in the 1870s were willing to offer renewals for up to eighteen months. According to the *Morning Herald*, even city banks practised flexibility with Halifax shopkeepers, thereby avoiding "a terrible settling day" that would surely have occurred during the depths of the depression.<sup>42</sup> Retailers who dealt with outside suppliers, however, risked legal action for the anonymity dealing with strangers could generate.<sup>43</sup>

Notwithstanding the presence of generosity, creditors from home and away did use

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<sup>40</sup> 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 4 (F2), 6; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2; and Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 3, No. 16.

<sup>41</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 1, No. 37.

<sup>42</sup> *MH*, 19 June 1875, 2.

<sup>43</sup> *AR*, 1 Sept 1875, 2; and *MH*, 31 May 1875, 2.



legislative action to recover monies in circumstances where cordial relations had not been fostered and when assignment on the part of a retailer seemed inevitable. In Halifax's lower courts, small debts less than \$80 could be tried without jury in the City Civil Court throughout the late nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup> After 1874, creditors could also file cases before the newly-created County Court. Nova Scotian legislators created this venue to lessen the burden on the higher courts and to act as an appeal for municipal jurisdictions. Here creditors sued for debts worth more than \$20 but less than \$400.<sup>45</sup>

Before 1890, however, imprisonment for debt became the ultimate weapon in creditor-debtor relations. Such cases often were filed in the Nova Scotia Supreme Court, either as suits recovering larger amounts than permitted at the municipal or county level, or as appeals from the lower courts. In these cases, the plaintiff had the advantage since debtors could be sent for jail at the pleasure of the creditor whether the defendant had contracted the debt under fraudulent conditions or not. Debtors were arrested under *mesne* process, a pre-judgement procedure wherein the creditor gave an oath of a debtor's past due bill, plans for fleeing the province, or strategy for concealing property. Thus, the onus rested upon the defendant to prove his innocence from within the walls of a jail cell. By the mid-1880s, prisoners innocent of fraud could petition the court as an indigent debtor, securing their

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<sup>44</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2, 1900-1; and *Halifax City Charter and Ordinances* (Halifax: Queen's Printer, 1885). See also Philip Girard, "The Rise and Fall of Urban Justice in Halifax, 1815-1886," *Nova Scotia Historical Review* 8, 2 (1988): 57-71.

<sup>45</sup> Henry W. C. Boak, *A Concise Summary of the Collection Laws of the Province of Nova Scotia* (Halifax: John Bowes, 1886), 6; and Supreme Court Main Guide, Vol. I, NSARM.

release from jail once an assignment was made to the creditor in trust for the debt payment. If the imprisoned debtor had committed fraud, the law required the prisoner to remain in jail for no more than one year or until the receipt of the payment. In cases where the bill remained unpaid, the law forced the debtor to assign his property upon release from prison.<sup>46</sup> In other words, prior to 1890, an honest debtor's only legal escape from imprisonment in Nova Scotia involved the full payment of all debts. Meanwhile, according to contemporary opponents of the law, creditors reaped the benefits.<sup>47</sup>

Suits for past due bills, as those tried in the provincial Supreme Court, frequently predicted a shopkeeper's impending failure even when outward appearances judged otherwise. For example, Antoine N. Precourt, a medium-sized hotel keeper, restaurateur and liquor dealer on Upper Water Street, supported a wife and three children, owned property, kept servants, and employed staff throughout the 1870s and early 1880s.<sup>48</sup> In 1881, however, his creditor supplying groceries and alcohol sued Precourt for \$852 plus costs, resulting in his imprisonment for debt. Financial difficulties compounded when further suits foreclosed on two mortgages. Within ten years, no sign of either Precourt's business nor his

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<sup>46</sup> Philip Girard, "Married Women's Property, Chancery, and Insolvency Law," in *Essays in the History of Canadian Law III: Nova Scotia*, eds. Philip Girard and Jim Phillips (Toronto: Osgoode Society, 1990), 93-5; *AR*, 9 March 1888, 2; Boak, *A Concise Summary*, 3, 11; and *Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1900, c. 183.

<sup>47</sup> As explained by P. B. Waite in *The Man from Halifax: Sir John Thompson, Prime Minister* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 91; and by Nova Scotia's Attorney General in 1888 when introducing a bill for its abolition, *AR*, 9 March 1888, 2.

<sup>48</sup> Credit agents granted Precourt a capital estimation of \$2,000 to \$5,000. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Sept. 1879; 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 1 (C1), 50; 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 36; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2, 1881-2.

family remained.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to predicting failures in seemingly successful establishments, suits involving smaller shops could also indicate poor or fraudulent business practices. In 1874, Robert O'Mullins sent North End grocer Michael J. Fahie to prison over an unpaid tea chest worth \$40. The basis for Fahie's imprisonment rested upon suspicious circumstances surrounding the sale of the chest and several other items as well as his failure to practice detailed accounting methods. A court investigation soon revealed Fahie's total liabilities to be \$4,000, an amount which far outnumbered his small stock worth \$300 and his \$400 in customer debts. Moreover, Fahie possessed two mortgages on his home and had purchased further real estate with borrowed money. Unfortunately for his dependents, the grocer's imprisonment and eventual failure left an adopted child and shop clerk without adequate support.<sup>50</sup>

Shopkeepers not only faced law suits and imprisonment themselves, they could also use debtor legislation to their own advantage to pressure others, making these retailers both the debtor and the creditor. In 1881, W. C. Brennan, boot and shoe dealer for ten years, suffered numerous debt-related suits in the Supreme Court. Two cases, ordering him to pay

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<sup>49</sup> Precourt's financial problems appeared as early as 1880 when he refused to pay for a liquor licence but continued selling alcohol. After his imprisonment and foreclosure, Precourt's business and family did not appear in the *Mercantile Agency Reference Book* for September 1885 and March 1887, nor *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory* for 1890-1 and 1891-2. Halifax County Supreme Court Cases, RG 39, Ser. C, Vol. 336, No. 11656a; RG 39, Ser. C, Vol. 337, No. 11703.5a; RG 39, Ser. C, Vol. 338, No. 11801a; and *MH*, 6 July 1880, 3.

<sup>50</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 2, No. 27.

debts of over \$300 each, resulted in his incarceration. Brennan had experienced both financial and legal difficulties for at least a year. Throughout 1880 he repeatedly advertised bankrupt sales and even convinced his brother Abner to buy goods under false pretenses. Before finally assigning his property in 1881, Brennan sued his tenants for rent past due on a Brunswick Street shop as a last resort to avoid complete business ruin.<sup>51</sup>

Before 1890, contemporaries viewed imprisonment for debt as an effective deterrent for irresponsible borrowing and contraction of debt under fraudulent circumstances. Without this deterrent, many feared that credit would be unavailable for much of the populace since creditors would be unwilling to risk the accumulation of bad debts.<sup>52</sup> Precourt, Fahie, and Brennan had not just failed to pay a debt, their inability to fulfill a financial obligation indicated to contemporaries a weak moral fibre and illegitimate status as commercial retailers. These transgressions entitled all three to strict punishment by law.

Since the 1820s, the Nova Scotian legislature had frequently debated the questionable merits of imprisonment for debt. Throughout the pre-Confederation era, rural representatives opposed urban reformers who pushed for its abolition. The inability to uphold one's financial duties represented to many an admission of failure before family, friends, and neighbours

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<sup>51</sup> Brennan had previously held a partnership with his brother on Granville Street in the early 1870s. By 1872, he established his own shop, leaving his brother Abner to assign soon after. Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 1, No. 6; Halifax County Supreme Court Cases, RG 39, Ser. C, Vol. 334, Nos. 11416a, 11442, 11439a; and *MH*, 18 Oct. 1880, 3; 28 Oct. 1880, 3; 13 Dec. 1881, 3; 3 Nov. 1880, 4; 6 Nov. 1880, 3.

<sup>52</sup> Girard, "Married Women's Property, Chancery Abolition, and Insolvency Law," 101; and *MH*, 9 March 1883, 2.

particularly within small, close-knit rural communities.<sup>53</sup> Such attitudes continued after Confederation and were embodied within provincial legislation.

Although in some circles the non-payment of debt continued to be viewed as an individual moral failing, by the 1880s renewed interest in the issue surfaced in the provincial House of Assembly. Calls for reform were presented by three members of the legislature between 1879 and its final abolition in 1890. All three were Halifax residents of the city's fashionable South End, pursued careers as lawyers, and two of the three were members of the provincial Liberal party. In 1879 and 1882, the Attorney General, Conservative member for Antigonish, and Halifax lawyer, John S. D. Thompson, presented various amendments.<sup>54</sup> Between 1883 and 1887, the Liberal member for Shelburne, William F. MacCoy, introduced yearly bills for the abolishment of imprisonment. Although he represented a rural riding, MacCoy also worked as a Halifax barrister and previously served as a city alderman for the South End.<sup>55</sup> In 1888 and 1890, the Liberal Attorney General, J. W. Longley, presented similar bills. Like Thompson and MacCoy, Longley served as the member for the rural riding

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<sup>53</sup> Girard, "Married Women's Property, Chancery Abolition, and Insolvency Law," 101.

<sup>54</sup> *NSJHA*, 27 March 1879, 52; 4 April 1879, 70; 14 Feb. 1882, 40; 17 Feb. 1882, 48; and Waite, *The Man from Halifax*, 88, 91. Waite explains that Nova Scotia permitted its Attorney Generals to continue their private law practice while in provincial office, both from long tradition and financial necessity. See Waite, *The Man from Halifax*, 88.

<sup>55</sup> Beck, *Politics of Nova Scotia*, vol. 1, 220; *NSJHA*, 19 Feb. 1883, 20; 22 March 1884, 55; 1 April 1885, 69; 5 March 1886, 16; 15 April 1887, 82; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1882-3, 1883-4.

of Annapolis, but worked in a Halifax law firm.<sup>56</sup>

Although these bills frequently caused splits in the House of Assembly, were rejected by the Legislative Council, or were deferred indefinitely, the reform became increasingly popular by the mid-1880s. Under the Liberal government of W. S. Fielding, MacCoy's bills gained steady support while his opposition decreased from 18 in 1884 to seven in 1886.<sup>57</sup> While much of the support came from fellow Liberal members, Halifax representatives, and lawyers, little is known of the attitudes in these years from the city's business community.<sup>58</sup> According to political scientist J. Murray Beck, MacCoy's 1884 bill had been defeated in the House due to fears that abolition of imprisonment for debt would harm the province's commercial class.<sup>59</sup> At least one supporter of the reform, however, worked as a wholesale grocer while representing Halifax in the House of Assembly.<sup>60</sup> Further commercial support is unknown since no commercial media or associational outlets for retailers existed locally before 1889, and the records for the Halifax Board of Trade have not survived in their

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<sup>56</sup> Beck, *Politics of Nova Scotia*, vol. 1, 216, 240-1; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1.

<sup>57</sup> Fielding was also a member for Halifax and the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*. *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1883-4 to 1886-7; *NSJHA*, 25 March 1884, 61; 10 April 1885, 84; and 9 March 1886, 22.

<sup>58</sup> In the non-party vote of 1884, for example, at least nine of the 14 who voted favourably for MacCoy's proposal were Liberal members. Of these nine, at least four were lawyers and two were members for Halifax, including W. S. Fielding and William D. Harrington. *NSJHA*, 25 March 1884, 61; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1883-4, 1884-5; and Beck, *Politics of Nova Scotia*, vol. 1, 191, 197, 213, 215-16, 220, 223, 248.

<sup>59</sup> Beck, *Politics of Nova Scotia*, vol. 1, 220.

<sup>60</sup> William D. Harrington appeared as a wholesaler in *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1881-2; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885.

entirety.<sup>61</sup>

Whether the business community supported the reforms or not, a variety of occurrences helped gain adherents for the measures among members of the general public and the Nova Scotia legislature. In part, these calls for reform were merely a continuation of earlier debates that began in the 1820s.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, the frequency of these debates increased by the 1880s with a greater realization of the cyclical nature of the economy. Downturns in the economic cycle had occurred everywhere during the depression of the 1870s and the recessions plaguing the 1880s. These financial crises created significant increases in Nova Scotian business failures between 1872 and 1875, 1877 and 1879, 1882 and 1884, as well as 1886 and 1888.<sup>63</sup> Legal historians Philip Girard and Rebecca Veinott also point to the impact of industrial transformation after the National Policy of 1879 which necessitated legal reform in several commercial and property related areas.<sup>64</sup> Equally

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<sup>61</sup> While the *Canadian Grocer* made no mention of the issue prior to 1890, the *Maritime Grocer* did not begin publication until 1893. Retail grocers organized in Halifax during 1889 and again in the mid-1890s. Retail dry goods dealers also organized in the mid-1890s. Finally, NSARM collections do not contain a complete run of the *Annual Reports for the Halifax Board of Trade*.

<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of pre-Confederation debates surrounding the reform of Nova Scotia's debtor legislation, see Girard, "Married Women's Property, Chancery Abolition, and Insolvency Law," 92-105.

<sup>63</sup> See Appendix C, Tables C.3 and C.4.

<sup>64</sup> Philip Girard and Rebecca Veinott, "Married Women's Property Law in Nova Scotia, 1850-1910," in *Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Maritimes*, eds. Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994), 81. Jonathan H. Davidson uses a similar argument to explain the development of corporation law in Nova Scotia. See Davidson, "Industry and the Development of Company Law in Nineteenth-Century Nova Scotia," *Nova Scotia Historical Review* 15, 2 (1995): 110.

important were fears of appearing unprogressive during an era of rapid change. Knowing that England, eastern United States, and several Canadian provinces had abolished imprisonment for debt by 1888, the Attorney General and other critics complained of the “disgraceful relic of barbarism” not “in accord with the spirit of the age.”<sup>65</sup> Many contemporaries simply viewed the imprisonment of more than 300 debtors annually in the late 1880s, one-third of whom were residents in Halifax County, as an unenlightened act.<sup>66</sup> Finally, the professionalization of the bar in Nova Scotia after 1875 contributed substantially to provincial legal reform during the last two decades of the century.<sup>67</sup>

After almost seventy years of debate, Nova Scotia’s legislature abolished imprisonment for debt in April 1890, making the new law effective by May 1891. Designed to professionalize the relations between creditors and debtors by making the reforms

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<sup>65</sup> *AR*, 9 March 1888, 2; and 12 April 1889, 2. English legislators abolished imprisonment under *mesne* process as early as 1838, while completely reforming debtor legislation by 1869. Most of the eastern United States had abolished imprisonment for debt by 1870. By 1888, significant reforms had occurred in Canada when Ontario, New Brunswick, British Columbia, and Manitoba all required *prima facie* proof before jailing a debtor. See Girard, “Married Women’s Property, Chancery Abolition, and Insolvency Law,” 95; and *AR*, 9 March 1888, 2. For further information on insolvency legislation in England and the United States, see V. Markham Lester, *Victorian Insolvency: Bankruptcy, Imprisonment for Debt, and Company Winding-Up in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); and Peter J. Coleman, *Debtors and Creditors in America: Insolvency, Imprisonment for Debt, and Bankruptcy, 1607-1900* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1974).

<sup>66</sup> People imprisoned for debt in Halifax County for the years 1886, 1887, and 1888, numbered 109, 121, and 119, respectively. *NSJHA*, 1889, Appendix No. 20; and *AR*, 12 April 1889, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Philip Girard, “The Roots of a Professional Renaissance: Lawyers in Nova Scotia, 1850-1910,” in *Glimpses of Canadian Legal History*, eds. Dale Gibson and W. Wesley Pue (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Legal Research Institute, 1991), 155-88.



acceptable to both sides, the amendments showed greater humanity to impoverished debtors while enabling creditors a venue for retrieving just debts or ensuring punishment for those guilty of wrong doing. Arrests under *mesne* process were replaced by establishing a *prima facie* case. Debtors were no longer jailed until needed. Instead, they could give bonds to assure their appearance before the court. Further, without a special order to do so, debtors could no longer be arrested and jailed under execution upon any judgement or order for the recovery of debt. Special orders for arrests, however, could still be made in cases involving debtor fraud, disappearance, or refusal to pay despite means available.<sup>68</sup>

In 1892, legislators enacted further amendments to laws governing creditor-debtor relations, creating the first recognizable opposition from members within the business community. The reform in question, requiring that a debtor must be served in person unless a purposeful evasion could be proven, created an increase in legal paper work and enraged at least one retailer who claimed that such suits were no longer practical. Isaac G. Leslie, a Dartmouth grocer who claimed to speak for the Halifax-Dartmouth urban business community, blamed the designers of the amendment, a committee of lawyers, who merely wished to pocket money at the expense of creditors. According to Leslie, business interests had wanted an amendment that “would prove efficient in dealing with dishonest debtors, and place the business community on a firmer and more substantial basis.” Instead, he asserted that it became almost impossible to collect a debt where the debtor refused or neglected to pay. Leslie’s complaints originated from his difficulties as a retailer to obtain payment from defaulting customers. His letter to the editor contained no realization that such reforms could

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<sup>68</sup> *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1890, c. 17.

also benefit shopkeepers in possible wholesaler-retailer disputes.<sup>69</sup>

After the passage of the Collection Act in 1894, Leslie again voiced concerns against reforms to creditor-debtor relations while still claiming to speak for a larger commercial community of both retailers and wholesalers. The new act, "Of the Collection of Debts and Imprisonment," governed the legal steps to be taken by a plaintiff when a debtor defaulted on a court-ordered payment and upheld the 1890 decision to abolish imprisonment for debt.<sup>70</sup> Reacting to the Act's passage and practice, Leslie composed almost a dozen letters to the editor in various Halifax papers during the summer of 1897, asserting that the legislation was "a foul blot" upon "the fair name of justice." In his opinion, the Act allowed people to forget their debts and permitted fraud to go unpunished. Debtors were thus made "martyrs" while honest dealers were viewed as "fools or devils."<sup>71</sup> Retailers were not the only proprietors to suffer in Leslie's narrative, wholesalers also experienced loss resulting from the decrease in revenue retailers collected from consumers.<sup>72</sup>

Unfortunately for researchers, it is unknown how many Halifax proprietors shared

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<sup>69</sup> *AR*, 21 March 1893, 2, reference from Ian McKay's *Social History*, *QUA*; *CG*, 29 April 1892, 10; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2. Another comment against lawyers pocketing money in law suits regarding debt appeared in *EM* (Halifax), 4 Aug. 1897, 1, 8.

<sup>70</sup> The Collection Act permitted imprisonment in cases where a debtor refused to appear for examination, planned to flee the province, committed fraud, refused to assign, or neglected to pay court-ordered installments. In many cases, the debtor could apply for relief under the province's Indigent Debtors' Act. *Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1900, c. 182.

<sup>71</sup> *EM*, 27 July 1897, 1. This letter represented his ninth article on the issue. Leslie wrote at least one additional letter which appeared in *MH*, 2 Aug. 1897, 3.

<sup>72</sup> *MH*, 2 Aug. 1897, 3.

Leslie's attitudes. Although he claimed to speak for the commercial population, Leslie held no known position within the Halifax-Dartmouth Retail Grocers' Association nor the Halifax Board of Trade.<sup>73</sup> As early as 1892, however, Thomas Fyche, the Cashier for the Bank of Nova Scotia responsible for systemizing loan policies and prominent member of the Halifax Board of Trade, expressed similar views regarding insolvent debtors. According to Fyche, insolvents should not be "treated as a favored class, petted and helped as if they had been benefactors to the community instead of drags on it, while better and abler men are treated as of no account in comparison, and the interest of the general public practically ignored."<sup>74</sup>

Despite the worries of Leslie and Fyche, suits continued against defaulting debtors. Although Leslie believed retailers were particularly ill-used by customers unwilling to pay shop bills, the most alarming case involving debt in the early 1890s involved the fraudulent actions of a young North End grocer and provision dealer, Phillip E. Gough. In 1891, Gough purchased \$3,000 worth of goods with the intention to defraud creditors. At least three others, a Halifax victualler, an assistant city assessor, and a rural grocer were arrested for conspiracy in connection with the case. After acquiring the goods for himself and his co-conspirators, Gough fled to the United States to work in a meat market while his wife Margaret stayed in Halifax. After his escape, the sheriff sold his stock in trade for \$218, a

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<sup>73</sup> Leslie's letters to the editor in 1897 raised opposition from at least two writers, James A. Fraser, a Liberal ex-member of the legislature from the 1880s, and Charles E. Knapp, a former lawyer disillusioned with the law profession. Both men answered Leslie's complaints by proclaiming the immorality of imprisonment for debt. Leslie referred to Fraser's letter in *MH*, 2 Aug. 1897, 3; and Knapp's letter appeared in *EM*, 4 Aug. 1897, 8, 1.

<sup>74</sup> *CG*, 15 April 1892, 1; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2; and Frost, "The 'Nationalization' of the Bank of Nova Scotia," 5-16.

surprise to Halifax merchants who believed Gough had been operating “a large business.” After failing to receive his promised portion from his associates, Gough returned to Halifax in 1892 to assign his property, face legal authorities, and testify against others in the case. The preliminary case before Halifax’s stipendiary magistrate received daily media attention in the local papers and updates in the national trade press even before going to the Supreme Court.<sup>75</sup>

Whether shopkeepers experienced the ill-effects of unmanageable debt through fraud or legitimate means, assignment of property could provide relief from imprisonment and reduce further financial obligations. Nonetheless, assignment also signified commercial failure. During the late-Victorian period, an array of regulations governed assignments and co-existed with provincial enactments involving debt. Creditors, commercial journals, political officials and lawyers supported the passage of federal and provincial legislation to enforce the standardization of assignment procedures for individuals engaged in trade. These regulations represented another example of mercantile reform which helped redefine creditor-debtor relations. Unlike the abolishment of imprisonment for debt, assignment legislation generally granted creditors with greater advantages than debtors. Traders and their assignees therefore found ways to contravene both the content and spirit of the laws in question, raising criticisms of the new procedures and resulting in their temporary repeal.

During the first decade of Confederation, federal legislation governing commercial

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<sup>75</sup> 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 6 (E6), 4; *AR*, 31 Dec. 1891, 3; 23 March 1892, 3; 24 March 1892, 3; 30 March 1892, 2; 31 March 1892, 2; 1 April 1892, 2; 2 April 1892, 2; 4 April 1892, 3; 6 April 1892, 3; 7 April 1892, 3; *CG*, 1 April 1892, 10; and Return of Person’s Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 35, 4 April 1892, NSARM

assignments had been influenced by the British North American Act of 1867 which granted the Canadian parliament the power to regulate bankruptcy (forcible assignment), insolvency (voluntary assignment), and court-ordered discharges for remaining debt.<sup>76</sup> Parliament thus passed the Dominion Insolvency Act of 1869 which permitted traders to voluntarily assign their property to an official assignee, but also allowed creditors to liquidate the property of traders owing more than \$500 in cases where proprietors had absconded, concealed their estate, or refused to make payments. Creditors could also apply by court affidavit for a writ of attachment on a trader who owed a debt exceeding \$200. Once a trader had complied with the Act's regulations and paid a portion of the outstanding debt, he or she could be granted a discharge forgiving the remaining debt.<sup>77</sup>

Soon after the Act's passage, observers realized the measure inadequate to govern business failure. Although the federal government had promised to amend the Act as early as 1872, complaints especially surfaced after the onset of depression.<sup>78</sup> Critics in the Halifax media and by members of the wholesale-dominated Chamber of Commerce protested that insolvents abused the existing regulations while creditors failed to utilize the full extent of the law.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, discharge became too easy to acquire since the Act failed to specify

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<sup>76</sup> Lester, *Victorian Insolvency*, 296; and House of Commons, *Debates*, 4 Feb. 1896, 1096-7.

<sup>77</sup> *Citizen*, 4 Jan. 1870, 4.

<sup>78</sup> *Annual Report of the Nova Scotia Chamber of Commerce, Halifax, N. S.*, 1872, 8.

<sup>79</sup> *EE* (Halifax), 1 Oct. 1873, 2; and *Annual Report of the Chamber of Commerce, Halifax, N. S.*, 1873, 4-5.

a certain percentage of the debt to be paid. Shopkeepers such as George T. Nauffts could assign in August 1873 and be granted a discharge by the end of the year after paying only five cents on the dollar. To make matters worse, most of the money went to his relative W. H. Nauffts. Fortunately for his remaining creditors, the debtor turned to coal hawking after receiving a discharge rather than attempting a second grocery business.<sup>80</sup>

Given the problems with the first insolvency legislation and the increasing numbers of business failures after 1873, the Canadian parliament enacted the Dominion Insolvency Act of 1875. This regulation provided creditors with greater power by implementing new precautions against fraud which included the banning of both preferential assignments and voluntary failures. Equally important for fraud prevention, federal legislators set a minimum repayment limit of one-third before allowing a discharge from debt. By 1877, parliament increased the latter minimum to 50 percent.<sup>81</sup>

While local observers were initially pleased with the new Act, particularly after two Halifax bankrupts were arrested for fraud within six months, the federal government repealed the legislation in 1880 amidst a fury of national complaints.<sup>82</sup> Many protests against the Act of 1875 involved opposition against the appointment of official assignees through

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<sup>80</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser B, Vol. 2, No. 21; *RG*, 27 Aug 1873, 384; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1869-70, 1871-2, 1880-1.

<sup>81</sup> *MH*, 20 April 1875, 4; 4 Sept. 1875, 1, 3; *AR*, 31 Aug. 1875, 3; and 6 April 1892, 2.

<sup>82</sup> The *Morning Herald's* business columnist applauded these arrests since creditors had previously been too sympathetic with debtors. See *MH*, triweekly, 5 Feb. 1876, 3.

political patronage and the actions of unethical assignees who took unfair advantage of failing proprietors. Additionally, some insolvent estates were becoming absorbed through court costs and assignee fees. By 1878, the Dominion Board of Trade and its Halifax counterpart demanded reforms in the Act or its outright repeal. Finally, when the economy recovered by 1880, few observers recognized the need for long-term regulations governing business failures.<sup>83</sup>

After the federal government repealed the Dominion Insolvency Act of 1875, no standard procedure existed for assignments, compromises, and discharges. Instead, common law governed in its place. Insolvent retailers could transact compromises with suppliers, assign to a person of their choosing, preference certain creditors above others, and be forgiven of their debts by the voluntary action of creditors. Thus, after the Nova Scotian ban on imprisonment in 1890, the law favoured the side of the debtor and provided even greater opportunity for the commitment of fraud. Nevertheless, by 1898, Nova Scotia passed its own ruling concerning these cases which legislators intended as a stop-gap remedy for commercial demoralization until the federal government re-enacted its own legislation.

Poor economic conditions in Nova Scotia during the 1890s contributed in part to the interest and passage of the province's new insolvency regulations. The recent failures of 48 Halifax businesses, a number equalled only during the depression years of the 1870s, may have sparked an earlier version of the act presented in 1893.<sup>84</sup> In fact, after a reversal in

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<sup>83</sup> *Annual Report of the Nova Scotia Chamber of Commerce, Halifax, N. S.*, 1878, 11; *AR*, 6 April 1892, 2; and House of Commons, *Debates*, 4 Feb. 1896, 1088-1123.

<sup>84</sup> *NSJHA*, 20 March 1893; 18 April 1893; Beck, *Politics of Nova Scotia*, vol. 1, 246-7, 250; and Appendix C, Tables C.1 and C.2.

1893, increases occurred again in the commercial failure rate of both Halifax and Nova Scotia between 1894 and 1897.<sup>85</sup> Accordingly, local and national media abounded with reports of the commercial depression in the Maritimes, bankrupt sales throughout Nova Scotia, and the hard times Halifax shopkeepers faced.<sup>86</sup> As economic historians Kris Inwood and John Chamard argue, the Maritime economy even suffered in the manufacturing sector during the late 1890s.<sup>87</sup>

Similar regulations in other provinces also helped persuade the Nova Scotian government to enact its own guidelines for insolvency proceedings in the face of federal inaction. Between 1894 and 1896, the Canadian House of Commons debated the merits of a federal insolvency act. Notwithstanding Speeches from the Throne repeatedly promising to remedy the situation, nothing materialized from bills originating from the Senate, Canadian Boards of Trade, nor private members. Attempts to establish a national standard failed throughout the 1890s because politicians remembered the problems associated with previous acts, feared the lack of support among retailers, disagreed over who to include within new legislation, and observed a growing number of provincial governments passing

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<sup>85</sup> See Appendix C, Tables C.2 and C.4.

<sup>86</sup> For example, see *DGR* 5, 3 (March 1895): 60; *AR*, 7 Feb. 1895, 2; *CG*, 11 Dec. 1896, 32; *MM*, 7 Jan. 1897, 43; 7 Jan. 1897, 11; 21 Jan. 1897, 42; 18 March 1897, 45; 1 April 1897, 46-9; and *AR*, 4 Dec. 1897, 2, reference from McKay.

<sup>87</sup> Kris Inwood and John Chamard, "Regional Industrial Growth During the 1890s: The Case of the Missing Artisans," *Acadiensis* XVI, 1 (Autumn 1986): 101-17. Inwood and Chamard argue that the economy grew at a slower rate than elsewhere in Canada. See also Kris Inwood, "Maritime Industrialization from 1870 to 1910: A Review of the Evidence and Its Interpretation," *Acadiensis* XXI, 1 (Autumn 1991): 132-55.



similar acts.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, in 1894 the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council ruled that provinces could enact laws governing the voluntary assignment of insolvents, but could not pass bankruptcy legislation forcibly compelling debtors to assign.<sup>89</sup> By 1897, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Manitoba had all passed the appropriate provisions. Within four years of the 1894 ruling, Nova Scotia also followed suit.<sup>90</sup>

Nova Scotians were thus not alone in awaiting an enactment by the Dominion government and expressing the need for a temporary local solution.<sup>91</sup> Rumours did circulate in the national trade press, however, that Maritime merchants opposed Dominion regulation since they feared losing a local advantage over their distant competition. The creation of a national standard without provision for preferencing one creditor over another would place competitors from differing regions on an equal footing for debt repayment.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, as a whole, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce and the local Board of Trade campaigned for state regulation at both a national and provincial level.<sup>93</sup>

Aside from the influence of other provincial governments, the desire to punish

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<sup>88</sup> For the debate in 1896 and an account of earlier discussions, see House of Commons, *Debates*, 4 Feb. 1896, 1088-1123; and 26 March 1896, 4653.

<sup>89</sup> *CG*, 2 March 1894, 5.

<sup>90</sup> *AR*, 20 March 1895, 2; *Amherst Daily News*, 22 Oct. 1897, 2. Nova Scotia's neighbour, New Brunswick, had passed the legislation in 1895. See *DGR* 5, 4 (April 1895): 7.

<sup>91</sup> See, for instance, *AR*, 30 March 1885, 2; 6 April 1892, 2; 7 April 1892, 3; 20 Dec. 1892, 2; 20 March 1895, 2; and *MC*, 13 Oct. 1897, 5.

<sup>92</sup> *DGR* 3, 4 (April 1893): 1; *CG*, 18 Jan. 1901, 14; and 8 March 1901, 14.

<sup>93</sup> *MH*, 15 March 1883, 3; *AR*, 19 Nov. 1884, 2; and 7 April 1892, 3.

commercial demoralization, enforce professional conduct, and assist legitimate failures remained the most important factors leading to the passage of the Nova Scotia Insolvency Act. Legislators and their supporters intended the Act of 1898 to provide an up-to-date solution to business failure and commercial wrong doing after the banning of imprisonment for debt only eight years previously. As early as 1892, one local supporter for a provincial solution labelled such an act as a reflection of a more humane and modern age.<sup>94</sup> Creditors often pointed to preferential assignments as the worst manifestation of demoralization, especially in cases where the insolvent named a close relation or family friend as the preferred creditor.<sup>95</sup> While creditors believed that most customers were honest, they admitted that commercial trade needed specific legislation to investigate a dishonest minority. Appropriate legislation and punishment could thus enforce proper conduct through example.<sup>96</sup>

After the Conservative leader of the opposition and the Liberal Attorney-General failed to enact legislation in 1893 and 1895, respectively, the provincial legislature passed the Nova Scotia Insolvency Act in 1898.<sup>97</sup> Introduced by Attorney-General J. W. Longley,

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<sup>94</sup> Editorial printed in Halifax's *Morning Chronicle*, as cited by *CG*, 20 May 1892, 3-4.

<sup>95</sup> *AR*, 30 March 1885, 2; 20 March 1895, 2; *DGR* 5, 4 (April 1895): 7; *AR*, 11 Sept 1897, 2, reference from McKay; *MC*, 13 Oct. 1897, 5; and *MM*, 27 Oct. 1898, 48.

<sup>96</sup> A representative from W. and C. Silver, a Halifax dry goods firm, made these comments. See *MC*, 13 Oct. 1897, 5.

<sup>97</sup> In 1893, the member for Shelbourne, editorial writer for the *Herald*, and leader of the Conservative party, C. H. Cahan, introduced the first bill to regulate insolvency proceedings. The bill failed to advance in the legislature after its first reading. Two years later, the Liberal Attorney-General, J. W. Longley, introduced a similar bill. Longley had

the Act permitted voluntary assignments, banned preferences, appointed official assignees, and declared all arrangements be made by a majority decision of creditors.<sup>98</sup> Additionally, the legislation required that all assignments be registered and open for public inquiry. Although the provincial Act could not legally govern the granting of discharges, it allowed for the repayment of debt in the form of dividends after twelve months and every six months thereafter until the insolvent estate could be disposed.<sup>99</sup> The new regulations avoided many pitfalls prevalent in the earlier federal regulations, but left the insolvent proprietor with few advantages to negotiate the process and the final outcome.

Given the advantages the Act granted to creditors, wholesalers and those interested in their welfare were initially pleased with its passage. The Halifax Board of Trade had helped form the measure and reported its satisfaction with the final law.<sup>100</sup> Writers for the *Maritime Merchant* believed the Act would make shopkeepers work hard to avoid

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earlier presented the successful bill in 1890 to ban imprisonment for debt. This second attempt passed through the Assembly successfully, but was defeated in Legislative Council eleven to five. The 1895 bill closely resembled its successful counterpart from 1898. See *AR*, 20 March 1895, 2; *NSJHA*, 7 March 1895, 113; 11 March 1895, 128; and 15 March 1895, 145.

<sup>98</sup> While the Act enabled the appointment of official assignees by the Governor-in-Council, another assignee could be chosen if a majority of the creditors agreed to the change. Only creditors with a debt owing of at least \$100 were entitled to vote.

<sup>99</sup> *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1898, c. 11; *Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1900, c. 145; Beck, *Politics of Nova Scotia: Volume Two 1896-1988* (Tantallon, N. S.: Four East Publications, 1988), 15; and *NSJHA*, 7 Feb. 1898, 29; 9 Feb. 1898, 43; 22 Feb. 1898, 94; 3 March 1898, 142; 8 March 1898, 166; and 10 March 1898, 175.

<sup>100</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Trade of Halifax, N.S.*, 1898, 8.

insolvency, and protect the estates of honest dealers from expensive litigation.<sup>101</sup> The representative of the credit-reporting agency R. G. Dun and Company likewise offered his support for the new Act. In fact, the company's local representative, George E. Faulkner, became the official assignee for Halifax County.<sup>102</sup> Finally, both political parties in the Legislative Assembly supported the provincial regulation. Members such as George Mitchell, a prominent supplier and president of the Halifax Board of Trade, certainly had a vested interest in the legislation's passage.<sup>103</sup>

While creditors and their direct interests responded positively, the opinion of Nova Scotian retailers is more difficult to gauge. No shopkeepers in Halifax voiced public opinions on the issue since they lacked a forum for doing so. The retail associations of the early and mid-1890s were defunct by 1898, and members of the societies had failed to comment on earlier bills in the press. Perhaps their lack of involvement on a provincial level is not surprising since retailers in general had neglected to campaign the federal government's insolvency bills of the same decade.

Notwithstanding silence from the local retail sector, complaints by the Board of Trade and the *Maritime Merchant* after 1899 illustrated that shopkeepers had quickly adapted by taking advantage of the strict regulations. Although legislation officially banned preferences, failing retailers could allow one creditor to seek litigation for repayment of debt

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<sup>101</sup> *MM*, 31 March 1898, 12; 21 July 1898, 11; and 27 Oct. 1898, 48.

<sup>102</sup> *MM*, 21 July 1898, 11.

<sup>103</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2, 1897-8; and *Annual Report of the Board of Trade of Halifax, N.S.*, 1898, 17.

while additional creditors awaited the outcome of the case. In some suits, however, no funds remained to meet obligations with subsequent suppliers. Furthermore, shopkeepers continued to use this strategy to favour close friends and family.<sup>104</sup> The immediate passage of the Act also failed to noticeably improve the province's rate of commercial failure. In 1899, credit agents reported a large increase in the failure of Nova Scotian businesses and only a minimal decrease in Haligonian assignments.<sup>105</sup> By 1900, substantial decreases had occurred, but mainly as a result of Maritime economic recovery.<sup>106</sup> While local critics renewed agitation for federal regulation, the national government would not pass the Canadian Bankruptcy Act until 1919.<sup>107</sup>

Disregarding the relative effectiveness of state regulation, legislation governing assignments and disallowing imprisonment for debt illustrated a growing demand for the professionalization of the mercantile trade. These enactments also recognized that commercial failure sometimes occurred for reasons beyond the control of the failing debtor. Depressions, unfavourable government policy, competition, and personal misfortune could strike any retailer with disastrous results. Inexperience, extravagance, and poor accounting also affected a variety of traders, but were under the influence of individual shopkeepers. Although contemporaries realized that financial ruin could strike even those businesses

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<sup>104</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Trade of Halifax, N. S.*, 1899, 12; and *MM*, 27 March 1902, 22.

<sup>105</sup> See Appendix C, Tables C.2 and C.4.

<sup>106</sup> *MM*, 6 July 1899, 40; 5 July 1900, 14; and *Annual Report of the Board of Trade of Halifax, N. S.*, 1901, 8.

<sup>107</sup> Lester, *Victorian Insolvency*, 296.

previously considered legitimate, failing shopkeepers with the lowest capital investment continued to be maligned as illegitimate and blamed for the commercial ruin affecting both themselves and their trade.

Downturns in the nineteenth-century economy certainly contributed to a large number of assignments in Halifax and elsewhere. The depression of the 1870s represented the worst economic disaster in these years. According to announcements published in Nova Scotia's *Royal Gazette*, Halifax business failures doubled throughout the mid-1870s. During the peak years of 1873, 1875 and 1879, assignments in the city ranged between 45 and 68 annually.<sup>108</sup> According to figures compiled by credit-reporting agents, 1875 corresponded with Halifax's greatest year for reported business failures, the peak year for Nova Scotian assignments, and a doubling for reported failures in Canada.<sup>109</sup>

Although these local, provincial and national figures coincided with increased reporting due to the Dominion Insolvency Acts of 1869 and 1875, Halifax's population definitely suffered during these years. In the last half of the decade, the declared wealth in Halifax declined by over four million dollars, most of which represented a significant decrease in personal property.<sup>110</sup> By 1879, one observer privately reflected that while Halifax had never been "a lively or pushing place, commercially speaking," it had recently been "more inert than ever" with a surplus of unemployed mechanics and trade failure

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<sup>108</sup> See Appendix C, Table C.1.

<sup>109</sup> See Appendix C, Tables C.1 and C.3.

<sup>110</sup> *Annual Report of the Nova Scotia Chamber of Commerce, Halifax, N. S.*, 1878, 12. Since residents often undervalued personal and real property to avoid municipal taxation, the decrease in wealth may have been far greater.

everywhere.<sup>111</sup>

High rates for unemployment during the late 1870s especially contributed to a retailer's accumulation of book debts, thereby increasing the number of business failures and bankrupt sales throughout the city. The ready availability of cheap stocks reportedly encouraged inexperienced labourers and rural migrants to set up shop, existing retailers to purchase these goods at auction to sell below cost, and failing shopkeepers to undermine the consumer prices of their more successful counterparts.<sup>112</sup> Such stocks, as those offered for cash terms in the "Great Bankrupt Sale" of the insolvent retail dry goods dealer Robert Conroy in August 1875, hurt "legitimate trade" and caused bitter resentment from Halifax shopkeepers who refused to cut prices themselves.<sup>113</sup>

Although the economic depression of the 1870s witnessed failures from a wide variety of proprietors, writers in the Halifax press smugly announced the assignments of "small concerns whose demise had been expected," usually referring to enterprises worth less than \$1,000 and those truly marginal retailers maligned as "one-horse concerns." In the opinions of these writers, petty proprietors and rural interlopers bought goods with lengthy credit terms and assigned within six months, thereby destroying the trade of larger shops, increasing the losses to city wholesalers, and generally acting as leeches upon Halifax

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<sup>111</sup> Bell Diary, 2 Jan. 1879. For Halifax's high unemployment rates between 1876 and 1879 especially, see Ben Forster, *A Conjunction of Interests: Business, Politics and Tariffs, 1825-1879* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 94.

<sup>112</sup> For complaints in the 1870s against rural migrants setting up shop, see *MH*, triweekly, 29 July 1876, 3; 28 Aug. 1875, 3; and *AR*, 6 Sept. 1875, 2.

<sup>113</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 10 Aug. 1875, 2; 18 Sept. 1875, 3; and 28 Aug. 1875, 3.

trade.<sup>114</sup> Interested observers believed these small shops ruined the legitimate retail trade through inexperience, lack of education, improper accounting, and cheap goods. Widespread financial depression thus escalated tensions between town and country, as well as between manual and non-manual labour, making place of origin and previous work experience determining factors in attaining commercial legitimacy.<sup>115</sup>

While the business population expected the failures of small shops, the assignments of seemingly wealthy firms created more alarm. Edward W. Chipman, a dry goods shopkeeper on fashionable Granville Street, caused a sensation in business circles when his reckless extravagance brought him to failure in 1875, only two years after breaking compromises from a previous assignment.<sup>116</sup> If failures involved previously substantial proprietors innocent of fraud who properly followed insolvency legislation and possessed few liabilities at home, writers viewed these disappointments as “honourable” misfortunes

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<sup>114</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 29 July 1876, 3; and 8 Jan. 1876, 3. See also *MH*, triweekly, 14 Aug. 1875, 3.

<sup>115</sup> Although Monod's *Store Wars* discusses the factors of gender, class, and ethnicity, it misses the important divisions arising from town and country. For further arguments on the importance of rural identity within the context of urban nineteenth-century environments, see Allan Stanley Horlick, *Country Boys and Merchant Princes: The Social Control of Young Men in New York* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1975); and Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 189-215.

<sup>116</sup> *RG*, 17 March 1875, 122; 28 June 1876, 353; *MH*, triweekly, 22 July 1876, 3; and *AR*, 9 Feb. 1895, 2. Information on Chipman's earlier assignment appeared in *RG*, 30 July 1873, 334; 17 Sept. 1873, 420; and 11 March 1874, 116. For failures causing similar sensations, see *MH*, triweekly, 25 July 1873, 3; 14 Aug. 1875, 3; and 16 Oct. 1875, 3.



caused by the economic crisis of the depression years.<sup>117</sup>

Besides cyclic changes in local and national economies, policies originating from the Dominion government could also precipitate dull times. Throughout the 1880s and early 1890s, the *Acadian Recorder*, a local Liberal paper, blamed many Halifax failures on the National Policy of 1879, even renaming its commercial column listing assignments as the “National Policy Notes.”<sup>118</sup> Although it is difficult to distinguish truth from political axe grinding during these years, the dry goods trade did seem to suffer from the completion of the Intercolonial Railway in 1876, the imposition of import tariffs after 1879, and the construction of the Short Line rail route after 1889 which reduced travel time from Halifax to Montreal by ten hours.<sup>119</sup> Thus, when a medium-sized dry goods retailer on Granville Street assigned in 1892 after only three years in business, a writer lamented how “[d]ry goods men, more than any other class” were feeling the “wasting effects of ‘the diabolical tariff’ which compels them to pay enormous duties in the face of legitimate and illegitimate

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<sup>117</sup> See the “honourable” failure of wholesale grocers Payzant and King, *MH*, triweekly, 7 Aug 1875, 3.

<sup>118</sup> For example, see *AR*, 2 Oct. 1883, 2; 15 Feb. 1884, 3; 11 Sept. 1889, 2; 7 Jan. 1892, 2; and 5 Jan. 1892, 3.

<sup>119</sup> For information on the Intercolonial Railway in Eastern Canada and the Short Line route, see Woods, *Cinders & Saltwater*, 68-89, 167-9; and Forbes and Muise, eds. *Atlantic Provinces*, 62-7, 93-4. For difficulties arising in the Maritime dry goods trade and their resulting business failures in Halifax, see *AR*, 10 April 1883, 2; 8 March 1892, 3; and *DGR* 6, 2 (Feb. 1896): 48. The protectionist *Morning Herald*, a Conservative paper, believed that Halifax’s dry goods businesses were prospering under the National Policy. *MH*, 9 April 1881, 3; and 11 April 1881, 3.

competition.”<sup>120</sup>

Difficult economic times, whether caused by economic depression or government policy, revealed business overcrowding as a further cause of commercial failure in the late nineteenth century. Most complaints of commercial congestion appeared in years of financial crisis, but were often attributed to the generous credit terms of wholesalers and lofty ambitions of unsuitable persons. Objections made in Halifax newspapers during the mid-1870s corresponded to the worst years of financial depression and peak periods of commercial failure. When a small dry goods shop owned by the firm Dewolf and Doane assigned in 1875, a business columnist angrily questioned why suppliers grant so much credit to stores destined to failure.<sup>121</sup> Similar views were expressed in the early 1880s when Nova Scotian assignments doubled and the overall Canadian economy suffered comparatively.<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, in 1888, when the province’s failures had been increasing for several years, a local columnist blamed the poor conditions on Halifax’s overdone trade and easy access to credit.<sup>123</sup> During the recession of the early 1890s, reporters for the *Acadian Recorder* also

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<sup>120</sup> *AR*, 8 March 1892, 3. According to the *Mercantile Agency Reference Book* of July 1890, the dry goods retailer, Alex Adams, possessed assets between \$2,000 and \$5,000.

<sup>121</sup> *AR*, 6 Sept. 1875, 2; and *MH*, triweekly, 14 Aug. 1875, 3.

<sup>122</sup> *MH*, 4 Sept. 1882, 1; *AR*, 30 March 1883, 2; and Frost, “The ‘Nationalization’ of the Bank of Nova Scotia,” 4, 9-11. See also Appendix C, Table C.4. It is important to note that after the repeal of the Dominion Insolvency Act in 1880, no reliable channel existed for the accurate recording of business failures in Canada. In 1881, however, R. G. Dun and Company estimated that unknown failures formed only a small percentage of reported assignments. See *MT* (Toronto), 7 Jan. 1881, 782.

<sup>123</sup> *Critic*, 16 Nov. 1888, 8.

blamed philandering retailers, described as “an army of adventurers” who demoralized “legitimate trade” by competing with proprietors whose “hard-earned experience and backing” ensured commercial success.<sup>124</sup> As late as 1901, when the Maritime region experienced slower growth than elsewhere, local business columnists and trade journalists again raised alarm at the proliferation of small shops by inexperienced proprietors in a city without the population to support so many.<sup>125</sup>

Leaders in the Halifax business community regarded inexperienced and uneducated shopkeepers with contempt, blaming their lack of knowledge and skills for commercial failure. These criticisms continued into the 1890s when trade journals established to promote professional standards in retail merchandising also worked to exclude those considered inappropriate for self-employed shopkeeping.<sup>126</sup> Both the national and local trade press also opposed the shopkeeping tendencies of rural migrants, labouring men, and working-class wives whose ventures would supposedly end in failure. As Halifax’s *Maritime Grocer* asserted, “Let everyman stick to his text--the shoemaker to his awl and the grocer to his counter.”<sup>127</sup>

While certain shopkeepers who lacked significant experience and education

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<sup>124</sup> *AR*, 27 Jan. 1891, 2; 21 Sept. 1891, 2; and 3 Oct. 1891, 2.

<sup>125</sup> *AR*, 19 May 1900, 2; *MM*, 21 June 1900, 13; and 20 June 1901, 50.

<sup>126</sup> *MG*, 2 Nov. 1893, 19; 26 Jan. 1893, 23; *CG*, 19 April 1889, 1; and 19 July 1889, 4-5. For complaints from trade journals on inexperienced shopkeepers in general, see *CG*, 9 Jan. 1891, 2; 6 March 1891, 1; 27 March 1891, 1; *MG*, 21 March 1895, 2; and *MM*, 16 March 1899, 56.

<sup>127</sup> *MG*, 14 Nov. 1895, 1. See also *CG*, 19 July 1889, 4-5; and 9 Jan. 1891, 2.

successfully used self-employment to make ends meet, others did end their businesses in failure. As David Monod reminds readers of Ontario history, one cannot assume that a career in retailing constructed “a social bridge” for the working class to ascend the socio-economic ladder.<sup>128</sup> Although illiterate shopkeepers sometimes relied on a system of numbers and tallies for rudimentary accounting, others were unable to maintain detailed records to understand profits and losses. Peter Martin, for example, the owner of a small liquor shop, assigned in 1875 for owing approximately \$500. When petitioning for a discharge from insolvency one year later, Martin could only sign with an “x.”<sup>129</sup> Retailers such as Martin were described by one Halifax reporter as the “disturbing element” in business.<sup>130</sup> Other inexperienced shopkeepers may have suffered a fate similar to Stephen Breen or Jane Newington. Breen, a wage-earning carpenter who opened “a small front shop” in a “low-roofed, ill-ventillated house” on Upper Water Street died in terrible poverty in 1889 despite his turn to self-employment.<sup>131</sup> Newington, a widowed mother of three children failed to make ends meet despite her inherited suburban shop on Robie Street and side line of street huckstering in the mid-1880s. Tragically, Newington and her youngest daughter entered the

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<sup>128</sup> See David Monod, “Ontario Retailers in the Early Twentieth Century: Dismantling the Social Bridge,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1993): 207-27.

<sup>129</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 2, No. 2; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Jan. 1876.

<sup>130</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 11 Sept. 1875, 3.

<sup>131</sup> *AR*, 9 Sept. 1889, 3; and 10 Sept. 1889, 3.

Poor's Asylum after less than a decade of operation.<sup>132</sup>

According to nineteenth-century Halifax sources, former clerks formed an additional class of inexperienced shopkeepers who could end their commercial careers in failure. Reportedly, many clerks were tempted to set up shop as an independent retailer before completing a suitable apprenticeship under the tutelage of a successful shopkeeper. Clerks were partly motivated to establish their own shops as soon as possible because they were unable to earn enough money to marry or raise a family. As one "Aged Parent" disparaged in a letter to the *Acadian Recorder* in 1883, "Halifax clerks, as a general rule, live on salaries which the lowest and most illiterate of the laboring class would despise." According to the writer, accounting and mercantile clerks who worked in financial institutions, wholesale operations, and large retail shops, generally received \$60 for their first year of employment and approximately twice as much thereafter.<sup>133</sup> Other clerks had self-employment thrust upon them when their own employers faced debtor proceedings. When authorities arrested the North End grocer Michael J. Fahie in 1874, his clerk Angus M. McDonald established his own grocery shop three weeks later. McDonald's loss of employment, board and outstanding

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<sup>132</sup> Beginning in 1894, Newington spent the next four years in the Poor's Asylum with her twelve-year-old daughter. 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 9 (E9), 5; and Tanya Gogan, "Surviving as a Widow in Late Nineteenth-Century Halifax" (M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1994), 61, 107.

<sup>133</sup> *AR*, 14 June 1883, 4. Christopher Hosgood's work on British shop clerks illustrates that even shop hands earning top clerical wages still earned less than skilled labourers. See Hosgood, "'Mercantile Monasteries': Shops, Shop Assistants, and Shop Life in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 38 (July 1999): 329.

wages, motivated his own willingness to set up shop in the face of hard times.<sup>134</sup> No matter how long some clerks served apprenticeships, however, certain employees were simply not destined to become successful retailers. When dry goods retailer and former clerk N. W. Mason assigned in 1887, one business columnist complained that “a certain style of individual” could never become a prosperous shopkeeper. In the columnist’s opinion, Mason should have remained an employee since his lack of serious attention to business proved fatal to his new enterprise. Mason, a popular reciter at church events and other special occasions, turned to self-employment when his failing brother-in-law offered him an opportunity to purchase his bankrupt stock for a bargain.<sup>135</sup> By the 1890s, Halifax’s local trade journal began publishing an educational column for retail clerks. Its editor and sponsors hoped to better prepare aspiring employees while dissuading clerks ill-suited from independent shopkeeping.<sup>136</sup>

Besides failures connected to inexperience and lack of training, personal misfortune certainly contributed to the annals of Halifax failures. Fire, for example, comprised one of the most commercially damaging occurrences in the late nineteenth century. The municipality of Halifax thus created a brick district to ban wooden construction in the core middle-class business and administrative regions of the city. This regulated district covered the city centre as well as a small portion of the South End. Regrettably, the Council regularly

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<sup>134</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 2, No. 27.

<sup>135</sup> *AR*, 12 May 1887, 3.

<sup>136</sup> The *Maritime Grocer* began printing, “Behind the Counter” in *MG*, 19 April 1894, 28. The *Canadian Grocer* followed suit several years later beginning in 1900.

granted residents permission to alter buildings with the use of wood and neglected to include the northern suburbs within its district despite its heavy residential, commercial, and industrial population.<sup>137</sup>

While suppliers promoted insurance as an indispensable weapon arming retailers against fire loss and insurers decreased their rates gradually over the century, not all shopkeepers could afford the expense of insurance premiums.<sup>138</sup> In fact, complaints surfaced in 1895 from the general business community over the rates of fire insurance and the perception that local companies were acting as a “combine” to maintain high prices.<sup>139</sup> By 1901, the Halifax Board of Trade established a committee to study the matter, meet with municipal officials, and protest against a large hike in premiums by the Nova Scotia Board of Fire Underwriters.<sup>140</sup> Wholesalers within the Board and supporters of the *Maritime Merchant* were especially concerned over the small number of city retailers neglecting to insure their stock. A columnist for the commercial paper thus suggested that future grants

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<sup>137</sup> For a complaint concerning the boundary and regulation of this district, see *EE*, triweekly, 13 Oct. 1871, 2. Before 1891, the brick district included Wards Three and Four, as well as a small section of Wards One and Two. The streets bordering the brick district comprised Water, Jacob, Brunswick, Queen, and Morris. For further details see *Halifax City Charter and Ordinances* (1885), 131; and Halifax City Council Minutes, NSARM.

<sup>138</sup> B. E. S. Rudachyk, “‘The Trade of Trades’: Fire Insurance in Nova Scotia, 1805-1885” (Ph.D. diss., Queen’s University, 1992), 690-1.

<sup>139</sup> *MG*, 16 May 1895, 1; 28 Nov. 1895, 10; and *Annual Report of the Board of Trade of Halifax, N.S.*, 1895, 8.

<sup>140</sup> *MM*, 15 Aug. 1901, 36; and 7 Nov. 1901, 46.

of credit should hinge upon the possession of adequate fire insurance.<sup>141</sup>

Street blazes and small fires struck Halifax shopkeepers frequently throughout the late-Victorian era whether proprietors had secured enough insurance or not. The Upper Water Street fire of 1891, striking merchants, manufacturers, and retailers for several blocks, represented the worst commercial conflagration since the Granville Street disaster thirty years earlier.<sup>142</sup> Smaller fires also damaged the property of individual proprietors. When fire totally destroyed William H. Havill's small North End grocery in 1881, his insurance for \$500 failed to cover the damage to both the shop and stock. Havill's young female clerk had caused the blaze by dropping a lighted lamp and can of kerosene oil--a common accident leading to fires throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>143</sup>

Individual shortcomings, including extravagant spending and excessive drinking, could also lead to insolvency. As historian Michael Bliss explains for Canada's late-Victorian business population, an important component of commercial morality involved the achievement of a "living profit" through the rejection of extravagance.<sup>144</sup> Throughout the late nineteenth century, local papers, both general interest and trade specific, warned of the

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<sup>141</sup> *MM*, 7 Nov. 1901, 22.

<sup>142</sup> *AR*, 2 Oct. 1891, 3; and *CG*, 9 Oct. 1891, 10. Additional street fires destroying commercial property included the Grafton Street fire of 1883 and the Barrington Street fire of 1899. *AR*, 5 Nov 1883, 2; and *MM*, 27 April 1899, 74.

<sup>143</sup> *MH*, 22 Jan. 1881, 3.

<sup>144</sup> For his examination of Canadian business morality, see Michael Bliss, *A Living Profit: Studies in the Social History of Canadian Business, 1883-1911* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 15-32.



dangers associated with excessive spending.<sup>145</sup> The extravagances of shopkeepers and their families did lead to commercial failure in several cases. Water Street butcher John Miller, for example, assigned in 1876 with \$22,000 in liabilities, but only a paltry \$2,000 in assets.<sup>146</sup> Similarly, after 50 years in business, tailor and clothier Henry S. Laurillard assigned in 1886 due in part to excessive spending. Unlike Miller, however, Laurillard benefitted from an excellent business reputation for decades; the extravagance instead originated from the excesses of family members less disciplined than himself.<sup>147</sup> Immoderate drinking could also lead to reckless business practices and possible failure. Absconding grocer Patrick A. Connolly may have experienced financial problems in the early 1880s because he was reportedly “drinking very hard.”<sup>148</sup> John H. Philp, hat and cap dealer on Upper Water Street who contemporaries recognized as a respected retailer by 1889, experienced a series of early commercial misfortunes attributable to alcohol.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 14 Aug. 1875, 3; *AR*, 1 Sept. 1875, 2; 6 Oct 1883, 2; 4 Dec. 1897, 2, reference from McKay; and *MM*, 18 July 1901, 32.

<sup>146</sup> To make matters worse, Miller had not yet fulfilled a compromise from an earlier failure in 1875. *RG*, 16 Feb. 1876, 75; and *MH*, triweekly, 11 March 1876, 3.

<sup>147</sup> Bell Diary, 8 April 1886; and R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 11, 222, (Nova Scotia), MG 28 III 106, NAC.

<sup>148</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Cases, RG 39, Ser. C, Vol. 335, No. 11608a.

<sup>149</sup> Philp’s business suffered from fire in 1867, as well as assignments in 1869, 1870, and 1880. According to Dun reporters, the fire in 1867 and the first assignment may have been caused by excessive drinking which affected his credit rating or lack thereof throughout his career. Nevertheless, by 1889, compilers of the booster pamphlet and business directory, *Our Dominion*, included Philp as a representative Halifax business proprietor. For information on Philp, see R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 11, 667; *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, March 1887, July 1890; *RG*, 17 Feb. 1870, 65; 12 July 1871, 307; 13

Nevertheless, poor record keeping constituted the most common mistake retailers made in late nineteenth-century Halifax. Tales of failure recorded in the courts, published in newspapers, and reported in commercial journals often mentioned the lack of care taken to account for stock inventory, credit transactions, cash sales, employee wages, and personal expenses. As early as 1874, Halifax's wholesale sector, represented by the Chamber of Commerce, even protested against the lack of proper accounting apparent in many cases of failure.<sup>150</sup> Two decades later, trade journals backed by the commercial elite encouraged the use of modern accounting methods to separate the marginal shopkeeper and peddler from the trader seeking an elevation in social and economic standing.<sup>151</sup>

Although business columnists preferred to believe that only small, untrained retailers were guilty of inadequate accounting, proprietors of all sizes and reputations engaged in this oversight. For instance, when dry goods proprietor W. H. Bauld assigned in the early 1870s, an investigation into his affairs revealed an incomplete cash book, a ledger for only private accounts, personal expenses taken from business profits, and little evidence of inventory

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Sept. 1871, 402; 21 April 1880, 170; 12 May 1880, 211; Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 3A, No. 11; *Our Dominion: Mercantile and Manufacturing Interests Historical and Commercial Sketches of Halifax and Environs*. . . (Toronto: Historical Publishing Company of Canada, 1887), 65; 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 3 (F1), 105; 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 2 (F2), 6; 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 6 (E6), 51; and 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 3 (E3), 11.

<sup>150</sup> *Annual Report of the Chamber of Commerce, Halifax, N. S.*, 1873, 4-5.

<sup>151</sup> The *Canadian Grocer*, for instance, ran a series of articles entitled "Hints on Bookkeeping" throughout 1891. The first article appeared in *CG*, 7 Aug. 1891. See also *CG*, 13 Nov. 1891, 1; 6 Jan. 1899, 7; 7 April 1899, 6; and *MM*, 8 Nov. 1900, 22; and 3 Jan. 1901, 16.

control. Yet, Bauld's failure had been a surprise to the community since his suppliers and fellow shopkeepers believed his middle-class enterprise to be prosperous and deserving of good credit.<sup>152</sup> Medium-sized businesses with fair credit ratings, such as the North End grocery owned by Michael J. Fahie, also faltered from lacklustre accounting. Fahie assigned in 1874 with only one book for credit transactions. Alarming, in fifteen years of business, the shopkeeper had neglected to take stock, record cash payments, and keep track of employee wages. Like Bauld, Fahie also removed money from his shop to cover personal expenses.<sup>153</sup> Finally, small retailers with poor reputations and even worse accounting practices ended their business careers in failure. J. and A. Kent, shopkeepers selling crockery, tea, and light groceries on the city centre's Barrington Street, assigned in 1892 with no records of bills and notes payable, "or much pretence of book keeping of any kind." R. G. Dun and Company had granted the Kents a fair credit rating two years previously and estimated their worth to be between \$1,000 and \$2,000. The Halifax correspondent for the *Canadian Grocer*, commenting on the assignment, attacked the now bankrupt shop as "a source of great annoyance" who "preyed on legitimate business" thus hurting the "better class of trade." The reporter felt no sympathy for the Halifax wholesalers who supplied the Kents and thus "fastened such rotten concerns right in the midst of some first class stores in

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<sup>152</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 1, No. 3; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873.

<sup>153</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 2, No. 27; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873.

the same lines.”<sup>154</sup> While these disparate shopkeepers succumbed to failure in times of economic stress, their lack of accounting ensured their eventual ruin. J. and A. Kent, as the smallest enterprise failing in a period of intensified hostility against so-called illegitimate shopkeepers, experienced the most wrath from fellow business proprietors. It mattered little to contemporaries that the Kents had assigned in 1892, a year which experienced a remarkable highpoint for Halifax failures hearkening back to the dark days of the 1870s depression.<sup>155</sup>

Improper accounting procedures not only led many shopkeepers into uncontrollable debt, such inadequate measures also left insolvent debtors bewildered when financial crisis struck and legal repercussions resulted. Unfortunately, the feelings of failing Halifax shopkeepers are difficult to assess since clear insolvency records only exist between 1870 and 1876 with a minority of cases containing detailed testimony.<sup>156</sup> Of course, one must also remember that shopkeepers sometimes feigned confusion to avoid charges of fraud by proclaiming no knowledge of their insolvent state. Retailers used this defence especially

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<sup>154</sup> CG, 10 June 1892, 4; *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, July 1890; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1.

<sup>155</sup> See Appendix C, Tables C.1 and C.2.

<sup>156</sup> For late nineteenth-century Nova Scotia, insolvency cases were filed separately only from 1870 to 1876. Most of the cases fall under the jurisdiction of the Dominion Insolvency Act of 1869 with a smaller number falling under the Act of 1875. After 1876 they were interfiled with all Supreme Court of Nova Scotia cases and were not necessarily marked as insolvencies nor indexed clearly. Nova Scotia's insolvencies between 1870 and 1876 can be found in RG 39, Ser. B, Vols. 1-3B, NSARM. Some Canadian and British researchers have been able to utilize more thorough court records from other eras. For example, see Monod, *Store Wars*, 68-76, 187-8; and David A. Kent, "Small Businessmen and their Credit Transactions in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Business History* 36, 2 (April 1994): 47-64.

when explaining their last credit transaction before assigning.<sup>157</sup> A defence involving expressions of bewilderment and explanations for deficient bookkeeping could avoid possible fraud charges leading to certain imprisonment and ensure a quick discharge of debts once proprietors had met a minimum of financial responsibilities.

As evidenced by surviving testimony in the 1870s, confusion did seem to occur over the mixing of personal and business expenditures, a common mistake which many retailers felt they had no choice but to practice. Aforementioned insolvent proprietors, Annie Granville, James Broadhurst, W. H. Bauld, and Michael J. Fahie, had all raided the coffers of their establishments to help fund non-commercial-related expenses. The lack of a sharp distinction between home and shop helped create these perceptions. Certainly, the businesses operated by Granville, Broadhurst, and Fahie were located in or next-door to their homes. Moreover, although both Bauld and Fahie employed non-relatives, the former received extensive financial support from family members while the latter offered lodging to his shop clerk.<sup>158</sup> Despite the continued popularity of combining home and shop as late as the 1890s, as shown in Chapter One, the close relationship between these private and public spheres became increasingly associated in the minds of the commercial elite with marginal profits,

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<sup>157</sup> See, for example, Abner Brennan, boot and shoe retailer, Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 1, No. 6; Michael J. Fahie, grocer, Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 2, No. 27; and James Parker, grocer and liquor dealer, Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 3A, No. 7.

<sup>158</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 1, No. 37; RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 3, No. 16; RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 1, No. 3; RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 2, No. 27; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2.

lack of middle-class refinement, and illegitimate competition.<sup>159</sup> Advice provided in commercial journals thus warned shopkeepers to avoid these accounting mistakes by providing themselves and family workers with modest wages and avoiding the home consumption of shop stock without adequate compensation to the business.<sup>160</sup>

Besides expressing confusion in the courts, whether real or feigned, at least one Halifax proprietor rebelled against a charge of bankruptcy and any wrong doing. Edward Doran, an innkeeper on Sackville Street near the Halifax waterfront, used a variety of arguments in the early 1870s to avoid compulsory liquidation and possible imprisonment for debt. Doran unsuccessfully argued that no proof existed of his insolvency, that his plaintiff's complaint to the court had not been creditably witnessed, and that his liabilities were not of a sufficient amount to warrant legal action. Surprisingly, Doran even claimed he could not be considered a "trader" under the Dominion Insolvency Act of 1869. Given that he had inherited his business from his father Michael and the existence of an advertisement in the city directory for "Doran's Royal Hotel and Stables," the latter argument also failed to sway the judge's decision in his favour. In fact, evidence of possible fraud surfaced since Doran had attempted to conceal his property. Not surprisingly, as early as 1866, when his father and himself operated the business jointly, Dun agents had recommended that no credit be given the establishment since the proprietors had a history of delaying payment. Fortunately for Doran, court proceedings did not greatly affect his business since he continued operating his hotel, with the addition of a market, until his death in 1876. Perhaps Doran's position as a

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<sup>159</sup> See Chapter One, 72-4.

<sup>160</sup> *CG*, 6 Jan. 1899, 7; and 13 Nov. 1891, 1.

first lieutenant of the Volunteer Engine Company and a member of the Charitable Irish Society helped the continued existence of his proprietary establishment.<sup>161</sup>

Some Halifax retailers may also have expressed indifference over court proceedings involving debt and insolvency. Like Edward Doran, certain shopkeepers continued their business once obtaining a discharge from debt. Unlike Doran, however, some shopkeepers failed repeatedly. Successive assignments and appearances in court seldom deterred these persistent individuals. Of the 413 Halifax assignments listed in the *Royal Gazette* throughout 1870 and 1880, 18 proprietors failed twice with an average of four years between insolvencies.<sup>162</sup>

Although business columnists generally maligned such individuals and the creditors who supplied them with goods, a small number of repeated insolvents later regained legitimacy in Halifax's business population. Milledge H. Ruggles, for instance, operated a series of businesses from the early 1870s until the early twentieth century. At least two of these businesses ended in financial crisis. When his medium-sized grocery and china shop failed for the second time in 1892, a reporter for the *Canadian Grocer* criticized both Ruggles and his supplying wholesaler who preyed on the "legitimate business" of the well-

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<sup>161</sup> R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 12, 698; Halifax County Supreme Court Bankruptcy Cases, RG 39, Ser. B, Vol. 3, No. 30; *RG*, 3 Jan. 1872, 2; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2, 109, 495; *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Jan. 1876; and *MH*, triweekly, 22 Feb. 1876, 3-4. At the time of his death, Doran had served in the Voluntary Engine Company for twelve years as an active member and for two years as an honorary member. Although he continued in business after 1872, his rating may have suffered since Dun reporters did not comment on his credit status prior to his death.

<sup>162</sup> *RG*, 1870-1880. Ten years represented the longest period between failures, while two years comprised the shortest period.

respected president of the Halifax Retail Grocers' Association, James A. Gass. Ironically, by 1896, M. H. Ruggles and Company had moved to a prestigious location known as Northup's Corner, his family had relocated from a working-class and racially-mixed street in the North End to the middle-class region of Dresden Row, and Ruggles himself had become an executive member for the Halifax-Dartmouth Retail Grocers' Association.<sup>163</sup>

Shame represented the final emotion shopkeepers could express upon admitting commercial failure. The worst tale of shame documented in these years occurred when Charles S. DeFreytas, stationer and cigar store proprietor, committed suicide in 1898 only two days after declaring himself insolvent under the Nova Scotia Insolvency Act. Regrettably, DeFreytas killed himself after creditors readily agreed to his offer of compromise. Realizing he had prematurely assigned his business and property, he feared the shame that accompanied commercial failure and the guilt in making an unwise decision which would affect his reputation, employees, and family. Defreytas had been a "prominent member" of the 63rd militia band, a "universal favorite" among his many friends, a relative to Alderman O'Donnell, an employer of one shop clerk, a joint partner in a second business with his brother on Spring Garden Road, a father to seven young children, and the husband of a wife ten years his junior. For two years after his death, Defreytas' wife Harriet operated

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<sup>163</sup> Between the 1870s and the early 1900s, Ruggles was a partner in Ruggles and Salterio, a china, glass and crockery shop; the owner of M. H. Ruggles and Company, a similar store retailing glassware which later added a grocery line; and the proprietor of the Farmers' Hotel on the corner of Argyle and Buckingham. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873, Jan. 1876, July 1890; *RG*, 6 March 1878, 113; *CG*, 19 June 1891, 22; 29 April 1892, 26; 10 June 1892, 4; *AR*, 15 Feb. 1895, 3; *MM*, 19 March 1896, 27; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1896-7, 1900-1; 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 3 (E3), 60; and 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 6.



his tobacco and news shop on Brunswick Street to help support her family, most of whom were daughters. By 1901, Harriet was no longer self-employed nor was his brother E. J. who Defreytas had helped run a bookselling, stationery, and printing business. Although unpaid debt in Nova Scotia no longer held the penalty of imprisonment and the stigma of moral failing had lessened, for Defreytas the fear of disgrace remained alarmingly tangible.<sup>164</sup>

Whatever failing shopkeepers felt concerning their straightened circumstances, Halifax proprietors demonstrated a remarkable degree of active agency throughout their retailing careers. Shopkeepers used a variety of illicit and lawful strategies to lessen the burdens of nineteenth-century retailing. For example, many shopkeepers absconded from the province as a final defense against financial obligations and legal repercussions. In 1876, a Halifax confectioner fled aboard an English steamer in spite of police efforts to detain him. After a creditor warned the authorities of the shopkeeper's probable flight, officers attempted to capture the man. While the police held the door of his state room ajar, the officers only succeeded in tearing off his clothing piece by piece before being ordered to leave the ship.<sup>165</sup> Fleeing the province, however, did not prevent a court-approved seizure of property nor bankruptcy proceedings. Under the Dominion Insolvency Acts, an absconding debtor committed an act of bankruptcy, thus forcing the debtor's estate into compulsory liquidation. Likewise, provincial debt legislation enacted in the early 1870s permitted a seizure of property from fleeing debtors if liabilities totalled at least \$20. To help further recover the

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<sup>164</sup> *AR*, 3 Nov. 1898, 3; 4 Nov. 1898, 3; 5 Nov. 1898, 3; 7 Nov. 1898, 3; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1897-8, 1899-1900, 1900-1; and 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 4 (E4), 62.

<sup>165</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 17 June 1876, 4.

debt, Nova Scotian law permitted a sale at auction of all the perishable goods and shop stock of the absent debtor.<sup>166</sup>

Wealthy shopkeepers with established reputations also absconded to avoid the outcome of serious financial embarrassments. In 1888, James Miller, a middle-class proprietor of a large bakery on Dresden Row as well as produce stores on Spring Garden Road and Buckingham Street, fled to the United States with instructions for his wife to follow with \$1,000 and their best furniture. Known for his business acumen, industry, and piety, Miller encountered failure after accepting a military contract for an unusually low price just prior to an unexpected rise in the cost of flour. No one had expected a man with good credit who "could be seen any day driving one of his own bread teams" to fraudulently avoid his just debts. Unlike Maritimers who migrated to the eastern United States to find improved employment opportunities, Miller returned to Halifax within a month of his escape to assign his estate to a close relative.<sup>167</sup> The lack of official assignees in Nova Scotia between 1880 and 1898 allowed the shopkeeper to utilize such a loop hole in an effort to

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<sup>166</sup> *Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1873, c. 97; and Boak, *A Concise Summary of the Collection Laws*, 4.

<sup>167</sup> For the out-migration of Maritimers in these years, see Betsy Beattie, "'Going up to Lynn': Single Maritime-born Women in Lynn, Massachusetts, 1879-1930," *Acadiensis* XXII,1 (Autumn 1992): 65-86; Alan Brookes, "Out-Migration From the Maritime Provinces, 1860-1900," *Acadiensis* V,2 (Spring 1976): 26-55; Patricia Thornton, "Some Preliminary Comments on the Extent and Consequences of Out-Migration from the Atlantic Region," in *Merchant Shipping and Economic Development in Atlantic Canada: Proceedings of the Atlantic Canada Shipping Project, June 25-June 27, 1981*, eds. Lewis R. Fischer and Eric W. Sager (St. John's: Maritime History Group, M.U.N., 1982), 185-218; and "The Problem of Out-Migration from Atlantic Canada, 1871-1921," *Acadiensis* XV, 1 (Autumn 1985): 3-34.

protect a greater extent of his insolvent estate.<sup>168</sup>

Creditors were sometimes disappointed to find not only the debtor gone, but also the goods. Throughout the late nineteenth century, Nova Scotia enacted and amended legislation for the prevention of secret bills of sale. Whether the debtor planned to flee the province or not, shopkeepers facing financial difficulties could attempt to sell their property to family or friends in an effort to defraud creditors from obtaining payment, issuing writs of attachment, forcing assignments, and selling estates at public auction. This law required the official registration of all bills of sale. Further, if a debtor issued a bill of sale to a creditor in lieu of payment, the registration had to be accompanied by an affidavit stating that the sale had been made in good faith, not for the purpose of protecting goods from additional creditors.<sup>169</sup>

Despite these legal precautions, shopkeepers still used questionable bills of sale to defraud creditors. Patrick A. Connolly, the grocer on Lower Water Street whose father helped establish his business in the late 1870s, gave the elder Mr. Connolly a bill of sale for \$600 and absconded soon after. When Connolly's suppliers sought legal action to have the bill of sale declared void, his father claimed that the sale legitimately covered his son's start up loan and secured a note for a further loan he had endorsed.<sup>170</sup> In 1883, the *Acadian*

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<sup>168</sup> *MH*, 8 Aug. 1888, 1, reference from McKay; *AR*, 7 Aug. 1888, 3, reference from McKay; *Critic*, 24 Aug. 1888, 8; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, March 1887.

<sup>169</sup> *Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1873, c. 84; *MH*, 20 Feb. 1883, 2; *NSJHA*, 11 May 1886, 162; 4 April 1888, 110; 13 April 1893, 104; *Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1900, c. 142.

<sup>170</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Cases, RG 39, Ser. C, Vol. 335, No. 11608a.

*Recorder* complained about these dealings which reportedly occurred every few days while city proprietors continued to obtain credit without any means to pay the resulting debts. In the writers' opinion, the only solution was to allow every business person access to the weekly list of registered sales.<sup>171</sup>

In addition to fraudulent activities designed to conceal either the debtor or the estate, retailers could also commit arson to close a business and avoid bill payment without besmirching their reputations as efficient and trustworthy shopkeepers. Of course, this strategy only worked if the deception remained undetected. If suspected, arson was a chargeable offense under the Supreme Court, and in the case of shopkeepers, resulted in questions concerning profits, losses, and the removal of shop goods.<sup>172</sup> Contemporary observers especially noted the existence of suspicious fires in times of widespread financial crisis. At the height of the commercial depression of the 1870s, the *Morning Herald* remarked on the unusual number of fires in Halifax and Nova Scotia needing investigation.<sup>173</sup> Partly prompting this editorial was the fire destroying the insured stock of Thomas Longley and John Butcher, proprietors of a Halifax grocery and provision store. Authorities arrested Longley after his partner reported that he had threatened to commit arson and removed much of the shop goods beforehand. Although Longley protested his innocence in the local press, he was committed for the Supreme Court soon after. Unfortunately, the result of the case is

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<sup>171</sup> *AR*, 11 Oct. 1883, 2.

<sup>172</sup> Cases involving the arson of Halifax shopkeepers can be found in the Halifax County Supreme Court Fire Investigations, RG 39, Ser. M, Vols. 25-26, NSARM.

<sup>173</sup> *MH*, 11 Sept 1875, 3.

unknown but Longley seems to have escaped imprisonment. Within two years of the fire, he became self-employed in the grocery retail business elsewhere in the city, while his partner resumed working as a shop clerk.<sup>174</sup> In the following decade, legal authorities also investigated Joseph Fader, a retail butcher in the city centre's Bedford Row. Within three months of the investigation, Fader fled the province with more than \$4,000 in hand and money owing to many victuallers. When Fader finally assigned, he made preferences to his bookkeeper and mother-in-law, not the creditors who supplied him with goods.<sup>175</sup>

Not all business proprietors sought illegal means to avoid financial responsibilities. Retailers took advantage of the patchwork of laws dealing with property, debt, and insolvency to avoid payments, protect goods from creditors, and avoid punishment. In one special circumstance, spousal desertion, a female shopkeeper could take advantage of legislation to secure property and profits from her husband's creditors. Ellen Greening, the proprietor of "Metropolitan House" on Barrington Street, for instance, successfully sought an Order of Protection to safeguard her personal property and lodging house. Greening had initially established her business in 1864 and supported herself and her husband a decade later when he retired as a master mariner. Within five years, Greening's husband threw her out of the house, threatened her life, and sold his share of their property. Once the courts

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<sup>174</sup> Longley's case could not be found in the province's regular Supreme Court records, fire investigations series, nor in the court's bankruptcy proceedings. For information on the suspected arson, see *MH*, triweekly, 2 Sept. 1875, 3; 4 Sept. 1875, 2; 4 Sept. 1875, 2, 4; 11 Sept. 1875, 4; *AR*, 30 Aug. 1875, 3; 1 Sept. 1875, 3; 2 Sept. 1875, 3; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1875-6 to 1877-8.

<sup>175</sup> *AR*, 3 Jan. 1889, 3; and Halifax County Supreme Court Fire Investigations, RG 39, Ser. M, Vol. 25, No. 13.

sentenced her husband to twelve years in the Kingston penitentiary, Greening secured legal protection from her husband's creditors under Nova Scotia's Act for the Protection of Married Women. Throughout the case, Greening proved herself to be "a dutiful and faithful wife" whose supplier, grocer John H. Nesbit, "found her to be perfectly correct in her conduct and upright and honest in her dealings."<sup>176</sup> Although not utilized by many women, several female proprietors in the county of Halifax obtained similar orders since the Act's passage in 1866.<sup>177</sup>

Further legislation governing married women's property also offered failing husbands a chance to protect their possessions and continue their business. The Nova Scotia Married Women's Property Acts of 1884 and 1898 both permitted husbands to provide consent for wives to operate independent businesses while holding property separate from the control of their husbands. In this way, the wife of a failing husband could establish her own business or continue her husband's operation in her name alone.<sup>178</sup> When R. C. Peart assigned his shop selling toys and fancy goods in 1897, for example, Peart sold his stock and book debts

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<sup>176</sup> Halifax County Supreme Court Cases, RG 39, Ser. C, Vol. 336, No. 11645a.

<sup>177</sup> Initially, the Greenings established a boarding house on Argyle Street with a capital estimation of \$2,000 to \$5,000 and a fair credit rating. Although Ellen ran the business, her husband George was the official owner according to city directories and credit reports. After the couple separated, Ellen re-established her business under her own name on Barrington Street. See *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2, 1881-2. Girard and Veinott uncovered four additional women in Halifax County who sought similar orders to protect their boarding houses and shops from the creditors of deserted husbands. See Girard and Veinott, "Married Women's Property Law," 74-6.

<sup>178</sup> For the history of such legislation in Nova Scotia, see Girard and Veinott, "Married Women's Property Law in Nova Scotia," 67-91; and Girard, "Married Women's Property, Chancery Abolition, and Insolvency Law," 80-127.

to his wife Hannah who was registered to do business under the style of Peart's Bazaar.<sup>179</sup> As Lori Chambers argues for married women's property law in Ontario, the legislation enabled one spouse to easily transfer property to another spouse, misrepresent the owner of a business, and thereby evade debts. Contemporaries critical of this practice in Nova Scotia echoed Chambers' thesis a century earlier.<sup>180</sup>

Although some contemporary observers believed that women knew nothing of business matters or the part they played in "a solemn farce" to evade creditors, in these cases of husband-wife transfer, men and women could conspire together to take advantage of existing laws to protect their family's personal property, shop goods, and commercial reputations.<sup>181</sup> Of the 132 husbands who filed certificates with the Halifax municipality to register wives in the first ten years of the Married Women's Property Act of 1884, at least seven were known to be in financial difficulties at the time and another three husbands had assigned within five years of registering their spouses for business proprietorship.<sup>182</sup> Even the aforementioned shopkeepers who committed obvious fraud by absconding from the province, victuallers Philip Gough and Joseph Fader, enlisted their wives' aid by registering

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<sup>179</sup> *MM*, 11 Nov 1897, 59; 9 June 1898, 66; 23 June 1898, 66; and 7 July 1898, 68.

<sup>180</sup> Lori Chambers, *Married Women and Property Law in Victorian Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 11; and *AR*, 11 Sept. 1897, 2, reference from McKay.

<sup>181</sup> *AR*, 11 Sept. 1897, 2, reference from McKay. Chambers ably illustrates the fraudulent behaviour of both spouses when families took advantage of the Ontario Married Women's Property Acts. See Chambers, *Married Women and Property Law*, 105-21, 148-65.

<sup>182</sup> Index to Entries Under the Married Women's Property Act of 1884 (1884-1895), RG 35-102, Ser. 14C, Vol. 1, NSARM.

them to transact business.<sup>183</sup> After 1898, when the Nova Scotia Insolvency Act banned preferential assignments and implemented official assignees, the debt-avoidance strategy of these transfers provided a greater opportunity to protect family and commercial assets during financial crises.

Of course, husband-wife transfers and the establishment of new enterprises were not always effective strategies to protect assets nor did women operate entirely as independent agents. Just as the Act required a husband to grant permission, he could also revoke that consent. Halifax victualler Herbert Hartlen registered his wife to transact business in the early 1890s, for example, but revoked his consent by 1898. One wonders if Isabel Hartlen had been a party to his decision.<sup>184</sup> Additionally, shopkeeping married women could also suffer commercial failure, thereby hurting the credit reputations of both spouses and leaving little alternatives to protect personal and business property.

One legal strategy which could curb the damaging effects of insolvency involved the use of limited liability legislation. In 1883, the Nova Scotia Joint Stock Companies Act allowed a charter to be granted to any group of five or more people owning a business. Incorporation in this manner ensured that creditors could only secure from each owner an amount equal to their share in the business. Prior to 1883, the incorporation of mercantile businesses could only be accomplished through private members' bills in the local

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<sup>183</sup> Gough had registered his wife to do business in 1892 and 1893, while Fader did so in 1889. Index to Entries Under the Married Women's Property Act of 1884 (1884-1895).

<sup>184</sup> Index to Entries Under the Married Women's Property Act of 1884 (1884-1895); and *MM*, 31 March 1898, 67.



legislature. The procedure proved lengthy and the fees prohibitive for small commercial establishments.<sup>185</sup> Despite lower fees and simplified process, few retailers took advantage of the new regulation. One of the first Halifax retailers to become incorporated did so in the mid-1890s, more than ten years after the passage of the Act. In 1895, Melville Orley Wier established a city centre grocery shop on Argyle Street which he soon moved to nearby Buckingham. Within a year he set a precedent in the local grocery trade by applying for incorporation as M. O. Wier Grocery Company, Ltd. Three months after becoming incorporated, however, Wier's company failed due largely to selling below cost.<sup>186</sup> Although the venture ended in ruin, Wier and his partners successfully protected their personal property from liquidation.

Small proprietors with little property and profits avoided costly litigation through alternate avenues of protection. Specifically, disadvantaged women who felt vulnerable to legal action from creditors recruited aid through charitable agencies. Emily Melvin of Agricola Street called upon the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty in 1888 when she received a letter from Davidson Brothers threatening to sue her for £32 past due. Melvin owed the company for groceries and provisions supplied when she operated a small shop

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<sup>185</sup> Before the mid-1870s, the government charged a fee of \$20. By 1875, the fee increased to \$50. Barbara A. M. Patton, "From State Action to Private Profit: The Emergence of the Business Corporation in Nova Scotia, 1796-1883," *Nova Scotia Historical Review* 16, 1 (1996): 21-60; and Davidson, "Industry and the Development of Company Law in Nineteenth-Century Nova Scotia," 106.

<sup>186</sup> Other company members included Lewis Wier, his father; Lewis Brant, carpenter; Walter Crowell, contractor; and Ascenith Mosher of Newport. Applicants raised \$5,000 in 1,000 shares. *CG*, 14 June 1895, 28; 13 Sept. 1895, 28; 3 April 1896, 26; 3 July 1896, 28; and *MM*, 2 April 1896, 18, 51.

after the death of her husband. She turned to the Society for assistance since her meagre salary earned as a janitress of the Charles Street Church barely supported herself and her four children. Unable to afford a lawyer, Melvin utilized a resource familiar to the working class of Halifax, particularly to the city's needy women.<sup>187</sup>

While city shopkeepers took advantage of many strategies to alleviate financial burdens, the vagaries of the nineteenth-century economy produced a remarkably high turnover in most retail trades. According to the sample of shopkeepers analyzed from the 1891 census, Halifax retailers experienced a lower rate of persistence than business proprietors elsewhere. Of all shopkeepers residing in Wards Three and Five combined during 1891, only 14 percent continued to live in these communities while pursuing the same trade a decade later.<sup>188</sup> By comparison, David G. Burley calculated a persistence rate of 32 percent for Winnipeg's business proprietors during the same decade, while Christopher Hosgood estimated a 28 percent rate of persistence for small shopkeepers in Leicester, England during the previous decade.<sup>189</sup> Since city expansion occurred earlier in the period under study, the

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<sup>187</sup> Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, Daily Journal, 1888, MG 20, Vol. 516, No. 8, NSARM; and Gogan, "Surviving as a Widow," 107-8. For the valuable assistance provided to women by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, see Judith Fingard, *The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax* (Porters Lake, N. S.: Pottersfield Press, 1991), 171-186; and "The Prevention of Cruelty, Marriage Breakdown and the Rights of Wives in Nova Scotia, 1880-1900," in *Separate Spheres*, 211-31.

<sup>188</sup> See Appendix C, Table C.5. The linkage of shopkeepers from 1891 to 1901 was accomplished manually. Links were made if the retailer's name and additional supporting information reasonably matched. In cases where the link remained doubtful, the match was rejected.

<sup>189</sup> David G. Burley, "Frontier of Opportunity: The Social Organization of Self-Employment in Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1881-1901," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XXXI, 61 (May 1998): 54; and Christopher Hosgood, "The 'Pigmies of Commerce' and the

movement of Halifax retailers from the city centre to suburban wards fails to account for the low rates of persistence.

Although many historians argue that the largest group of non-persisters include a community's smallest business proprietors, evidence from Halifax reveals little connection between capital estimation, credit rating, and persistence.<sup>190</sup> Inclusion in the *Mercantile Agency Reference Books* and approximations of capital in 1890 failed to predict a shopkeeper's existence ten years later. Credit agents neglected to provide an estimate of pecuniary strength for the vast majority of sampled shopkeepers who persisted from 1891 to 1901. Furthermore, 22 percent of persisters were provided with the lowest estimations possible, 6 percent were provided with medium estimations, and only 3 percent were granted a large estimation.<sup>191</sup> Likewise, no correlation existed between the granting of a credit rating in 1890, rating specification, and decennial persistence. Again, almost three-quarters of persisters failed to have a credit rating in the *Mercantile Agency Reference Book* for 1890.

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Working-Class Community: Small Shopkeepers in England, 1870-1914," *Journal of Social History* 22, 3 (Spring 1989): 450. Others who have noted high turnover rates in business include the following: Clyde Griffen and Sally Griffen, "Small Business and Occupational Mobility in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Poughkeepsie," in *Small Business in American Life*, ed. Stuart W. Bruchey (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 126; Melanie Archer, "Merchants and Proprietors in Late Nineteenth-Century Detroit: Family and Social Mobility in an Era of Industrial Change" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1988), 242; Monod, "Ontario Retailers in the Early Twentieth Century," 212-15; *Store Wars*, 200; and Sylvie Taschereau, "Les Petits Commerçants de l'Alimentation et les milieux populaires Montréalais, 1920-1940" (Ph.D. diss., Université de Québec à Montréal, 1992), 126.

<sup>190</sup> See Burley, "Frontier of Opportunity," 62-3; Hosgood, "The 'Pigmies of Commerce,'" 450; and Archer, "Merchants and Proprietors," 242.

<sup>191</sup> See Appendix C, Table C.6.

Additionally, Dun agents granted 10 percent of persisters with a limited rating, 9 percent with a fair rating, 7 percent with a rating of good, and only 1 percent with a rating of high.<sup>192</sup> These findings reinforce that business success through longevity cannot be determined by an assessment from credit agencies.

It is also important to note the existence of varying rates of persistence among individual trades. Although all retailers of hardware, building supplies, used goods, and variety completely disappeared within ten years, more surprising closures occurred in the apparel trades. Remarkably, individuals selling clothing, textiles, and footwear comprised the second largest category of sampled retailers in 1891, but achieved the lowest rate of persistence by 1901. Retailers of clothing and dry goods represented the most volatile trade within this category since 96 percent of these proprietors had disappeared by the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>193</sup> As early as 1875, contemporaries noted that between one-quarter and one-half of all small dry goods retailers disappeared within the first five years of operation.<sup>194</sup> As mentioned previously, import tariffs, shorter rail lines to Montreal, and failure to reduce credit terms may have combined to lessen the chances for success of many Halifax dry goods dealers.

Of course, non-persisting dealers between 1891 and 1901 may have ensured the continuance of their businesses through family succession. In the case of ten businesses, five establishments passed from a retiring proprietor to a husband, wife or child, while another

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<sup>192</sup> See Appendix C, Table C.7.

<sup>193</sup> See Appendix C, Table C.5.

<sup>194</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 14 Aug. 1875, 3.

five shops were inherited by wives or sons after the death of the original proprietor. For instance, Barbara Renner, a widowed proprietor of the Tremont Hotel on Upper Water Street since 1886, left the business to her son and daughter before 1901. Her children, Thomas and Sophia, had been running a grocery and liquor business from the hotel throughout the 1890s.<sup>195</sup> Similarly, John M. Inglis, a North End shopkeeper since the 1870s, ensured the continuance of his grocery and liquor establishment by making his son a co-partner in the mid-1890s and sole owner after his death shortly after.<sup>196</sup> Thus, although Renner and Inglis were not counted as persisters in the 1890s, their businesses did continue under family ownership throughout the decade.

Just as researchers should note the importance of family succession, definite shop closures did not always signify financial failure. Indeed, some shopkeepers closed their establishments to relocate in areas where less competition promised greater rewards. For example, Sydney had become the industrial centre of Cape Breton by the twentieth century, prompting several Halifax shopkeepers to re-establish their trades in a boom town setting. Throughout 1900, the commercial press announced the departures of these proprietors without any hint of financial collapse. These grocers and clothiers merely chose to seek their

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<sup>195</sup> 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 39; 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 1 (C1), 15, 17; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1881-2, 1886-7, 1891-2, 1896-7, 1900-1.

<sup>196</sup> 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 2 (E2), 28; 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec. 2, Subd. 1 (F1), 47; 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 4 (E4), 59-60; 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 1 (E1), 6; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2, 1896-7, 1900-1.

fortunes beyond the crowded retail districts of Halifax.<sup>197</sup>

Besides family succession, migration, and business failure, the low rate of persistence for Halifax shopkeepers may also point towards self-employment as a life-cycle stage. As illustrated in Chapter One, the age structure of sampled shopkeepers did not indicate a retailing population aging over time. Rather, the largest percentage of retailing recruits remained somewhat young and middle-aged. Many male and female shopkeepers for both census years reported ages in the 30s and 40s, while female proprietors in 1901 frequently reported ages in the 20s to 50s. Sampled male shopkeepers also tended to be married, whereas female shopkeepers were most often without husbands, especially those women who had been widowed or separated.<sup>198</sup> Persistence, age, and marital status thus indicates a possibility of retailing as a life-cycle stage for those choosing self-employment as a temporary means of survival. As Canadian historians of the late-Victorian working-class argue, middle stages of the family cycle, advancing age, and widowhood all represented vulnerable times for Canadian households.<sup>199</sup> Scholars of self-employment also discuss shopkeeping as a particular stage in life or family cycles, arguing in some cases, that the temporary nature of certain proprietors should not automatically indicate the presence of

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<sup>197</sup> For instance, see announcements for J. H. Bertram, Frederick H. Reynolds, and T. H. Reynolds, in *CG*, 20 April 1900, 9; *MM*, 4 Jan. 1900, 84; 7 June 1900, 82; and 2 Aug., 1900, 18.

<sup>198</sup> See Appendix A, Tables A.33, A.34, and A.37.

<sup>199</sup> See, for example, Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993); and Peter Baskerville and Eric W. Sager, *Unwilling Idlers: The Urban Unemployed and Their Families in Late Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

commercial failure.<sup>200</sup>

If success and failure cannot be solely determined by the persistence of an individual proprietor and the presence of business closure, how can one identify the meaning of success to contemporaries of the nineteenth century? National and local trade papers published in the last two decades of the century helped define the successful shopkeeper.<sup>201</sup> The *Canadian Grocer and General Storekeeper*, first published by J. B. Maclean in Toronto in 1886, quickly became the country's leading dispenser of commercial advice in a variety of trades.<sup>202</sup> Within five years of its first issue, the *Canadian Grocer* established a loyal readership in the Maritimes and claimed to have the largest circulation of any Canadian trade journal in print.<sup>203</sup> In 1891, Maclean launched the *Dry Goods Review* as a trade-specific

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<sup>200</sup> See Susan Ingalls Lewis, "Beyond Horatio Alger: Breaking Through Gendered Assumptions about Business 'Success' in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," *Business and Economic History* 24, 1 (Fall 1995): 97-105. In addition, Burley's study of Brantford reveals a connection between life-cycle stage and self-employment in the early years of the mid-Victorian era. See David G. Burley, *A Particular Condition in Life: Self-Employment and Social Mobility in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 63, 85-9.

<sup>201</sup> It should be noted, however, that the *Canadian Pharmaceutical Journal* became the earliest trade-specific paper published in Canada with subscribers in Halifax. First published in 1868 by pharmacists in Toronto seeking to professionalize their own trade, it worked towards the general improvement of trade matters through the promotion of both business and scientific training. According to the paper's editor, "leading druggists in the Eastern provinces" subscribed to the journal. *CPJ* (Toronto) XVIII, 2 (Sept. 1884): 13; and E. R. Elliot, *Elliot's Hand-Book of Medical, Hygienic, Pharmaceutical and Dental Journals of the United States and Canada* (New York: A. R. Elliot Advertising, 1895).

<sup>202</sup> By 1889, the publishers printed the journal in both Toronto and Montreal. *CG*, 27 Dec. 1889, 1.

<sup>203</sup> *CG*, 4 Dec. 1891, 3. See also *CG*, 5 Jan. 1894, 3. News of Maritime shopkeepers began to appear in the journal as early as 1889.

publication aspiring to a national audience.<sup>204</sup> By 1892, Halifax publisher W. M. MacNab established a popular regional paper similar in scope and content to Maclean's publications. The *Maritime Grocer and Commercial Review*, with its "guaranteed circulation in every city, town and village in the Maritime Provinces," promised subscribers information and advice in the grocery and provision lines, as well as general mercantile interests.<sup>205</sup> By 1896, the publisher changed its name to the *Maritime Merchant*, a move which reflected the paper's earlier expansion beyond the trade of food distribution.<sup>206</sup>

National and regional trade papers often became the medium through which wholesalers and manufacturers encouraged professional merchandising to sell their products, concentrate credit in reliable hands, and improve local economies. Occasionally the bias of editors and directors shone through their rhetoric as when the *Maritime Grocer* admitted to advertisers that its goal was to sell groceries, "not . . . to advance hygienic principles and promote the health of either the publishers or its readers."<sup>207</sup> At other times, however, such papers advanced professionalization by playing upon retailers' aspirations for enhanced status. In 1894, the editor of the *Maritime Grocer* explained that, "The service of a trade paper to the retail dealer may be likened to the purchase of a legal journal to a lawyer, or a

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<sup>204</sup> *DGR* 1,1 (Jan. 1891): 1; and 6, 3 (March 1896): 7.

<sup>205</sup> *MG*, 12 Jan. 1893, 1.

<sup>206</sup> *MM*, 6 Feb. 1896, 5.

<sup>207</sup> *MG*, 31 May 1894, 2.



medical journal to a doctor.”<sup>208</sup> Editors concerned with selling issues even convinced readers that a trade paper subscription was the only way to become successful shopkeepers worthy of respect from peers and credit from superiors.<sup>209</sup>

According to writers and advertisers in these commercial publications, success did not mean the simple accumulation of wealth. As a contributor to the *Maritime Merchant* explained in 1900:

The matter of business success is possible to everyman, not in an equal sense of dollars, but equal in relation to the ability of each. In other words, it is possible for every man to rise higher than he is. If you are chimney sweep, it is your fault if you do not become a grocer or reach some kindred level in trade. If you are a grocer, it is your fault if you do not become a first-class one, enjoying a lucrative business. If you have an income of \$5,000 a year, it is your fault if you do not find a legitimate way to make it \$10,000 to \$25,000, and if you “do not own the road.” This is what success means. Be something more to-morrow than you are to-day.<sup>210</sup>

Moreover, a columnist for the same paper defined a successful merchant as one who began with little, overcame numerous obstacles, and acquired adequate savings for retirement.<sup>211</sup> Nevertheless, being an “up-to-date” shopkeeper became the most important criteria for achieving success in the eyes of such writers. Detailed accounting, responsible debt management, dust-free floors, brightly lit interiors, orderly shelves, and clean aprons were

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<sup>208</sup> *MG*, 24 Sept. 1894, 8. Similarly, in 1901, the paper reminded readers that one did not have to be a clergyman, a doctor, nor a lawyer to be a professional. See *MM*, 18 July 1901, 21.

<sup>209</sup> See *CG*, 13 Dec. 1889, 2, for a list of ten reasons why retailers should become regular readers of the trade press.

<sup>210</sup> *MM*, 20 Dec. 1900, 22.

<sup>211</sup> *MM*, 16 March 1899, 16.

essential ingredients in the progressive late-Victorian shop.<sup>212</sup> In addition, the advent of plate glass windows and elaborate window displays allowed middle-class dealers on major business thoroughfares to relay the message of modernity to creditors, customers, and neighbouring retailers.<sup>213</sup> As the editor of the Halifax trade press believed, “Onwards is the motto, and he is wise who holds himself in constant harmony with the spirit it invokes.”<sup>214</sup>

Halifax shopkeepers who subscribed to commercial journals, the leading proprietors of the retail trade, practised most lessons these publications preached. Within two years of the *Maritime Grocer*’s first appearance, its writers noted “a marked improvement” in the city’s shop advertisements, exterior decor, window displays, and interior arrangement.<sup>215</sup> By the turn of the twentieth century, the region had undergone a “revolution” in shop construction and adornment. Proprietors concerned with progressive appearances replaced small windows with “handsome fronts of plate glass,” rough wooden counters with glass-topped showcases, and gas illumination with electric light.<sup>216</sup>

Successful shopkeepers in neighbouring working-class districts and racial enclaves even copied the opulence of Halifax’s wealthier merchants and prosperous proprietors in

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<sup>212</sup> *MG*, 1 June 1893, 18; *MM*, 18 March 1897, 20; 24 May 1900, 44; 13 Sept. 1900, 46; 20 June 1901, 58; 11 April 1901, 42; and *CG*, 10 Aug. 1900, 9.

<sup>213</sup> For the message of modernity contained in window displays, see Keith Walden, “Speaking Modern: Language, Culture and Hegemony in Grocery Window Displays, 1887-1920,” *Canadian Historical Review* LXX, 3 (Sept. 1989): 285-310.

<sup>214</sup> *MG*, 24 Sept. 1894, 9. See also *MM*, 6 Dec. 1900, 24.

<sup>215</sup> *MG*, 19 April 1894, 1; and 28 June 1894, 2.

<sup>216</sup> *MM*, 30 Aug. 1900, 28.

larger urban centres. In 1892, James McPherson, who established the “People’s Store” on Gottingen Street, renovated his North End shop with electric light, plate glass windows, enlarged entrances, gold lettering, and lavish interior design. By the 1890s, Gottingen Street had become a retail centre servicing the city’s expanding northern suburbs with increasingly upscale shops for respectable working and lower middle-class residents.<sup>217</sup> Initially opened in 1867 with an estimated worth of less than \$1,000, McPherson succeeded in owning what the *Acadian Recorder* described as the best illuminated store in the city and what the *Dry Goods Review* claimed as the fanciest shop in the Maritimes.<sup>218</sup> By the mid-1890s, McPherson had joined the Halifax Retail Dry Goods Association and became a keen supporter of that association’s campaign for early shop closing.<sup>219</sup> In this capacity, McPherson could socialize with the association’s president, E. T. Mahon, the Barrington Street proprietor of Halifax’s largest dry goods firm which mainly catered to middle-class customers from the South End.<sup>220</sup>

Unlike James McPherson who achieved both financial and social success in his possession of a progressive store, the owners of backstreet shops in Halifax’s poorest

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<sup>217</sup> *AR*, 20 June 1891, 3; and *MM*, 7 May 1903, 28.

<sup>218</sup> *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Sept. 1879, Jan. 1876; *Our Dominion*, 92; *AR*, 13 April 1892, 3; and *DGR* 6,7 (July 1896): 32. At the time of the renovation, McPherson made a former commercial traveller, W. B. Freeman, a partner in the business. The exterior and interior of the shop after its renovation can be seen in Judith Fingard, Janet Guildford, and David Sutherland, *Halifax: The First 250 Years* (Halifax: Formac Publishing Co., 1999), 88, 94.

<sup>219</sup> *DGR* 5, 5 (May 1895): 40; and 6, 2 (Feb. 1896): 48.

<sup>220</sup> *DGR* 5, 5 (May 1895): 40; *Our Dominion*, 99-100; *MH*, triweekly, 23 Dec. 1875, 2; and *MM*, 7 May 1903, 28.

neighbourhoods could ill-afford the costly investment of renovation. Nor did they possess the education, time and extra finances which a trade paper subscription required. Yet, even backstreet shopkeepers could find modest success. Two members of the African-Nova Scotian community introduced in the previous chapter, for example, the well-respected Louisa Bailey and possible underclass member Charles H. Clark, both appear among the 14 percent of shopkeepers from 1891 whose businesses survived into the twentieth century.<sup>221</sup> Likewise, Irish-Nova Scotian Johanna Fahie's grocery and variety on Upper Water Street's Market Wharf, persisted under her proprietorship for at least fifteen years after her initial widowhood in the 1880s. By 1901, R. G. Dun and Company even began rating her small shop while she had recently learned to read. As a result, Fahie succeeded in bettering her circumstances over the final decade of the century.<sup>222</sup>

While the careers of McPherson, Bailey, Clark, and Fahie illustrate the multiple meanings of success, business failure typified the experience of most late-Victorian shopkeepers. The dry goods dealer introduced at the beginning of this chapter, W. H. Bauld, serves as an accurate representative of retailing in "a city of shopkeepers." Embarking on self-employment with the generous aid of family members, Bauld established his business in one of the most popular trades of the city. Although he sold goods for cash, credit and debt linked Bauld to relatives, suppliers and employees. Close connections between home

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<sup>221</sup> See Chapter Two, 113-18, 132.

<sup>222</sup> 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 41; 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 24; 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 1 (C1), 14; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2, 1900-1; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, July 1890, Jan. 1901.

and shop precipitated inadequate accounting which in turn led to financial failure in the face of widespread economic depression. In the end, Bauld's previous good reputation and sympathy engendered in court saved him from imprisonment for fraud, harsh criticism from fellow proprietors, and lengthy financial payments. The many failures which followed Bauld's brief venture into retailing prompted a host of reformers to professionalize mercantile transactions, revolutionize commercial legislation, and establish a media voice for defining success.

Although the reforms discussed in this chapter were most often pushed by suppliers of credit, legislators of the state, and a new cadre of legal professionals, retailers also took matters into their own hands. Prosperous and petty proprietors used a variety of strategies to avoid commercial failure, debt payment, and legal punishment. Retailers took even wider steps, however, to protect their businesses in late nineteenth-century Halifax. Specifically, shopkeepers most concerned with professionalization promoted cooperative action and a homogenous retail identity. Unfortunately, few trades could overcome the divisive forces unleashed during such an ambitious undertaking.

## Chapter Four

### Cooperative Action and Legitimate Dissension

On a Monday evening in February 1892, the Halifax Retail Grocers' Association held its first sleigh ride to Bedford, stopping at a popular inn for an evening of jovial entertainment. According to the *Acadian Recorder*, the "jolly party" consisted of approximately 60 men, including middle-class grocers and several distinguished guests. At the inn, the head table included President James A. Gass, a cash grocer of the city centre, and Vice President Andrew A. Hubley, a suburban grocer near the West End and alderman for Ward Four. Between these two associated proprietors sat W. S. Fielding, Liberal Premier and Provincial Secretary; as well as M. J. Power, Liberal representative for Halifax, Speaker of the House, and former retail grocer. Additional guests included Robert Motton, Stipendiary Magistrate; Thomas Trenaman, City Medical Officer; W. F. Pickering, merchant tailor and city councillor for Ward Three; C. W. Outhit, produce dealer, Oddfellow member, and alderman for Ward Six; and H. V. Wier, downtown grocer, fellow lodge member, and alderman for Ward Two. After toasting all levels of government, "Brother Merchants," and the local press, participants delivered recitations, played games, and danced to orchestra music. Amid such festivities serious discussion occurred concerning civic tax reform, early closing campaigns, peddling nuisances, and public market inadequacies. Premier Fielding and Speaker Power commended the association for the good feeling demonstrated among Halifax "grocerymen," and the gathering's disregard for political and commercial jealousies. After an evening of merriment, the grocers and their guests raced home in three four-horse sleighs, arriving in Halifax in the wee hours of the morning where all congratulated the

organizing committee “for having afforded such a pleasant time.”<sup>1</sup>

As illustrated by the grocers’ outing of 1892, cooperative action represented a crucial strategy by leading retailers in the drive towards professionalization. Commercial, political, and associational ties assembled a wide assortment of middle-class and even elite Haligonians, connecting well-known retailers of the city centre and growing suburbs with wholesalers, legal and medical authorities, municipal officials, and provincial representatives. Such formal events certainly revealed the fraternal bonds between prosperous and respected men in many lines of white-collar employment. The event also led credence to these retailer’s claims of legitimacy and desires for respectable status. Most importantly, this and other examples of cooperative action demonstrated that Halifax retailers were not politically impotent proprietors. Rather, as one reporter to the *Canadian Grocer* commented in 1896, Haligonians were more than capable of driving a bargain or making a speech.<sup>2</sup>

Halifax retailers seeking respectability, cooperated through self-regulation and recourse to state power to protect their businesses from an array of elements threatening their commercial and social status. Cooperative action could involve a series of ad-hoc agreements, participation in formal political associations, or establishment of trade societies in several commercial lines. Throughout the late nineteenth century, retailers occasionally cooperated with suppliers to gain legitimacy by close association with the commercial elite

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<sup>1</sup> *AR* (Halifax), 23 Feb. 1892, 3; *CG* (Toronto), 4 March 1892, 4; and *McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2.

<sup>2</sup> *CG*, 19 June 1896, 28.

while addressing city-wide business concerns or threats facing specific trades. The appearance of national and local trade papers in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, however, particularly furthered the formal affiliation of retail shopkeepers. Such collaboration could foster the illusion of a common identity among shopkeepers while excluding those deemed unfit for professional standing. Specifically, cooperative action helped fight illegitimate competition, restrictive government legislation, moral reform initiatives, economic downturns, and destructive national markets. Nevertheless, in many cases cooperation turned to conflict when competing definitions of legitimacy from both inside and outside each trade surfaced to shatter an emerging shopkeeper ideology and a fledgling move towards professionalization.

Although historians often explain the ideology of shopkeeping through its most visible and easily accessible form—the retail association, evidence from Halifax reveals that retailers of goods and services collaborated long before their respective trades had organized. Ad-hoc agreements were often necessary because no retail forum for the discussion and mediation of shared problems existed. Journalists frequently decried the lack of formal cooperation between the commercial proprietors of Halifax, particularly during times of economic stress.<sup>3</sup> Although Halifax's commercial elite, dominated by wholesalers and proprietors in the West Indies trade, had formed a Chamber of Commerce in 1865, its membership and practices did not represent Haligonian retailers. The Chamber and its successor, the Halifax Board of Trade, did not officially bar retailers, but high dues were at

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, *MH* (Halifax), triweekly, 29 May 1875, 2; 11 Sept. 1875, 3; and 7 Oct. 1876, 3.



times a barrier to membership.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the control of the executive by wholesaling and shipping interests often resulted in the promotion of policies harmful to the retail sector. The non-representation of shopkeeper concerns continued until 1904, when a recently established Retail Merchants Association amalgamated with the local Board of Trade.<sup>5</sup> The frequent neglect of such concerns by the commercial elite helped foster various cooperative strategies among the city's numerous shopkeepers.

During the depression of the 1870s, when Halifax proprietors faced high rates of commercial failure, shopkeepers in certain lines combined informally to prevent the

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<sup>4</sup> According to the *Rules and By-Laws of the Board of Trade of Halifax, Nova Scotia* (Halifax: T. C. Allen and Co., 1894), 3, 6, as well as regulations based on a federal act of 1886, the local Board was open to those who had been or currently were merchants, traders, brokers, mechanics, manufacturers, bank managers, and insurance agents. Regulations made no mention that these merchants and traders had to be either wholesalers or retailers.

<sup>5</sup> Halifax's Chamber of Commerce, a body described by David Sutherland as a "self-perpetuating group of aging entrepreneurs," had tried implementing reforms during the mid-1880s to recruit younger merchants and retailers. While some new blood had been successfully incorporated into the organization through the establishment of lower membership dues, the Chamber's executive remained dominated by the old elite. The Halifax Board of Trade formed as a rival group in 1889 and included a core membership from the retail sector. In the following year, however, the two organizations united, with the elite of the Chamber gaining firm control of the union's executive. Thus, throughout the 1890s, as had been the case in earlier years, the Board promoted the interests of wholesalers at the expense of the retail sector. See D. A. Sutherland, "The Personnel and Policies of the Halifax Board of Trade, 1890-1914," in *The Enterprising Canadians: Entrepreneurs and Economic Development in Eastern Canada, 1820-1914*, eds. Lewis R. Fischer and Eric W. Sager (St. John's: Maritime History Group, M.U.N., 1979), 205-29. For a general survey of these groups in Canada, see Elizabeth Bloomfield, "Boards of Trade and Canadian Urban Development," *Urban History Review*, XII, 2 (Oct. 1983): 77-99. For the formation of the Retail Merchants' Association in 1902 and its union with the Board of Trade in 1904, see *HH* (Halifax), 11 Sept. 1902, reference from Ian McKay's Social History Collection, QUA; *MM* (Halifax), 13 Feb. 1902, 28; 3 Nov. 1904, 24; *Annual Report of the Board of Trade of Halifax, N. S.*, 1903, 6; and *Annual Report of the Board of Trade of Halifax, N. S.*, 1904, 11.

“demoralizing” effects of damaging competition and encourage the professionalization of their trade.<sup>6</sup> Often retailers welcomed increased trade interference from the municipal government through inspections and licensing as a tentative step towards these goals. In 1878, for instance, Maurice Keating, a Sackville Street butcher working in his father’s small business in the city centre, led a petition for victuallers to request a city bylaw to license their trade.<sup>7</sup> Butchers such as Keating may have suffered from the ill-effects of a crowded business. By the early 1880s, butchers publicly complained they could no longer earn an adequate profit on the sale of their products.<sup>8</sup> In the face of hard times, these shopkeepers desired to protect their businesses from growing competition, secure their own characters as trustworthy, and promote their trades as respectable callings.

Whereas certain proprietors willingly lobbied for state regulation, other shopkeepers actively opposed municipal licensing when such interference came not at the retailers’

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<sup>6</sup> As Michael Bliss has argued for a later period, nineteenth-century business proprietors frequently referred to the “demoralization” of trade during times of stiff competition. The term referred to otherwise legitimate retailers being forced into unethical practices they would prefer to avoid. Bliss, *A Living Profit: Studies in the Social History of Canadian Business, 1883-1911* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 44.

<sup>7</sup> Halifax City Council Minutes, 11 March 1878, 23 May 1878, NSARM; *The Mercantile Agency Reference Book (and Key) for the Dominion of Canada*, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879; 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 1 (C1), 1-2; 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Sec.1, Subd. 2 (E2), 55-6; and *McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory*, 1880-1. R. G. Dun and Company estimated the capital of his father’s business to be worth under \$1,000 in both 1876 and 1879, the lowest category possible. Generally, the majority of Halifax’s butchers in 1879 were estimated to be worth under \$1,000, while victuallers were given a far larger estimate. The large differential in estimated capital between butchers and victuallers may be a distinction between retailers and wholesalers, but contemporaries frequently used the two terms interchangeably.

<sup>8</sup> *AR*, 17 Aug. 1883, 2.

bequests. For instance, the regulation of stores selling scavenged and second-hand goods did not result from the petitions of concerned shopkeepers. Rather, City Council regarded the honesty of rag and junk dealers, marine store proprietors, and pawn brokers with skepticism. Regulations imposed by the municipality during the 1860s and 1870s required retailers to keep detailed accounts of all transactions and granted legal authorities permission to investigate these accounts for the retrieval of lost or stolen property.<sup>9</sup> Rag and junk dealers, in particular, repeatedly petitioned City Council against what they perceived as unfair legislation.<sup>10</sup> When fees more than doubled in the early 1890s from \$40 to \$100, these shopkeepers refused en masse to pay.<sup>11</sup> While the municipality viewed their claims of respectability with suspicion, these retailers saw themselves as legitimate business proprietors who did not require the heavy hand of the state to legislate commercial honesty.

Similarly, competitors also combined to safeguard their reputations as reliable

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<sup>9</sup> As early as 1861 the municipality of Halifax licensed rag and junk dealers for \$80 a year. See *The Charter and Ordinances of the City of Halifax* (Halifax: Alpin Grant, 1864), 203-4; and *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1867, c. 85. For regulations concerning pawn brokers, see *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1875, c. 38; *Halifax City Charter and Ordinances* (Halifax: Queen's Printer, 1885), 141-2; and *MH*, 6 June 1881, 4. For licensing as a method to retrieve lost or stolen property, see *The Charter and Ordinances of the City of Halifax* (Halifax: Alpin Grant, 1864), 203-4; *Ordinances of the City of Halifax* (Halifax: n.p., [1876?]), 241, Halifax County Supreme Court Cases, RG 39, Ser. C, No. 11483.5a, NSARM; and *MH*, 6 June 1881, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Halifax City Council Minutes, 6 April 1876, 23 Feb. 1877, 28 June 1882, 7 Sept. 1883. In 1876 these dealers were successful in convincing the municipality to reduce their annual licence fees from \$75 to \$50.

<sup>11</sup> *AR*, 4 May 1892, 3; 1 June 1892, 3; and 9 June 1892, 2. This strategy worked only for those proprietors who had taken out previous licences since they persuaded City Council to postpone their fee hike for one year. Less fortunate shopkeepers were required to pay the increase immediately.

dealers when health concerns surfaced over the products they sold. In 1886, Thomas A. Mosher, a well-known pork dealer of the northern suburbs, poisoned three working-class families through the sale of spoiled sausage. Alarming, Mosher continued to sell the spoiled goods even though a local physician had warned him to the contrary.<sup>12</sup> When the local press reported on the incidence, it failed to publicize Mosher's name, revealing only that the poisoning had occurred from a "pudding" sold by a Gottingen Street pork dealer. Neighbouring shopkeepers, doing a smaller trade than Mosher, were incensed by this important omission which threatened their own livelihoods. Carl Palm and Sarah Whitton penned a letter to the editor explaining their anger and reassuring customers that the spoiled sausage had not been purchased from their stores. Eager to persuade the community of their own reliability for providing quality goods, Palm and Whitton offered to open their shops for public inspection.<sup>13</sup> Palm's store, only half the size of Mosher's establishment, traded locally and supplied ships with provisions. Whitton owned an even smaller shop that supported her during widowhood, but escaped the notice of local directory compilers and credit-reporting agents.<sup>14</sup>

Soon after the publication of the letter, the press printed a reply from Mosher in

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<sup>12</sup> *MH*, 17 May 1886, 3.

<sup>13</sup> *AR*, 17 May 1886, 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Our Dominion: Mercantile and Manufacturing Interests Historical and Commercial Sketches of Halifax and Environs*. . . (Toronto: Historical Publishing Company of Canada, 1887), 65; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1880-1, 1881-2, 1886-7; *Halifax and Dartmouth Classified Business Directory and Business Manual for 1876-77* (Halifax: O'Flaherty and Walsh, 1876), 96; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, March 1887, July 1890.

which he identified himself as the pork dealer in question. In the letter, Mosher built upon his established character as a trustworthy proprietor and admitted to confusion over the bad pudding. He too invited the public to inspect his premises for cleanliness, but placed the blame for the poisoning on the shoulders of his working-class customers who were unable to digest his rich-tasting sausages.<sup>15</sup> Mosher's own claim to legitimacy rested upon his successful business operations and a favourable reputation within the commercial community. A contemporary pamphlet, listing only "representative businessmen," applauded Mosher's large Halifax and Maritime trade in pork, ham, bacon, and sausage. The publication's author ironically asserted that it was "a well known fact" that Mosher did not carry "inferior goods."<sup>16</sup>

While some cooperative ventures included only retailers within a single line, others, such as the early closing movement with its campaigns for reduced shop hours and a Saturday half-holiday, combined the forces of both the wholesale and retail sectors in a variety of trades. Over-worked shop clerks initiated the first movement for shorter hours, yet the practice of early closing became an important test of legitimacy for wholesale houses, retail shops, and businesses combining both operations. Large retailers had most to gain in participating in the movement since close association with Halifax's commercial elite enhanced their business and personal reputations. In addition, the movement gave retailers an opportunity to show the general public their concern, whether real or feigned, for their hard-labouring shop assistants. Perhaps the most important motive for participation involved

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<sup>15</sup> *AR*, 21 May 1886, 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Our Dominion*, 55-6.

the opportunity to distinguish their businesses from small family-owned stores. Before the twentieth century, few expected or desired backstreet shops to take part in a reform movement dedicated to illustrating the generous paternalism of leading middle-class proprietors. Aside from the movement's importance as a tool for establishing respectability in the eyes of shopkeepers' clerks, fellow traders, and customers, self-regulated agreements often failed to last beyond a season, forcing an annual ritual of renegotiation.

The early closing and half-holiday movement was not unique to Halifax; the local campaign followed an international phenomenon involving the changing relationship between shopkeepers and their assistants throughout the nineteenth century. Reformers widely campaigned to provide male clerks with leisure time for self-improvement through educational reading and physical recreation.<sup>17</sup> While Halifax reformers had campaigned for reduced hours as early as the 1850s, the reform gained momentum during the 1860s with the formation of the Young Men's Early Closing Association.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps influenced by

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<sup>17</sup> For the history of this movement in the United States and Britain, see Marten Estey, "Early Closing: Employer-Organized Origin of the Retail Labor Movement," *Labor History* 13, 4 (1972): 560-70; Wilfrid B. Whitaker, *Victorian and Edwardian Shopworkers; the Struggle to Obtain Better Conditions and a Half-Holiday* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973); and Christopher Hosgood, "Mercantile Monasteries: Shops, Shop Assistants, and Shop Life in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 38, 3 (July 1999): 322-52.

<sup>18</sup> *MC* (Halifax), 25 Jan. 1851, 3; 10 July 1851, 2; 20 Dec. 1853, 2; 19 Oct. 1854, 2; *Christian Messenger* (Halifax), 26 Feb. 1868, 56; and *Unionist and Halifax Journal*, 8 May 1868, 2, all references from McKay. Although its members succeeded in obtaining the cooperation of wealthy merchants in several lines, the movement's initial impetus did not last long. The association, however, lived on as a leisure and lecture club which fostered the mutual improvement of young men hoping to become future business owners. See also *Citizen* (Halifax), 4 Jan. 1870, 2; *MC*, 14 April 1875, 3; and Janet Guildford, "Public School Reform and the Halifax Middle Class, 1850-1870" (Ph.D. diss., Dalhousie University, 1990), 252-8.

contemporary working-class protests for a shorter work day, Halifax shopkeepers selling groceries, dry goods, hardware, stationery, and jewellery signed a series of round-robin petitions in the early 1870s to close their shops at 8:00 p.m. during the week, Saturday excluded, or to make Saturday a temporary half holiday.<sup>19</sup> Wholesale and retail shops agreeing to the campaign, however, only regarded it as a temporary summer measure when business was traditionally slow between the busier spring and fall seasons. Moreover, some proprietors were unable to sustain the contracts for the duration of the time agreed upon. Once one shopkeeper refused to join the campaign or resorted to former practices, the movement quickly fell apart.<sup>20</sup> Doubtless, these voluntary restrictions were doomed to failure when reduced shop hours placed participating Haligonian businesses at a disadvantage during the onset of a serious commercial depression.

Although campaigns for shorter hours were often initiated by clerks, supported by the local media, and perhaps influenced by the Canadian nine-hour movement, shopkeepers primarily agreed to these reforms to aid their own claims towards legitimacy. Shopkeepers

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<sup>19</sup> *ER* (Halifax), 29 May 1873, 2; 18 June 1873, 2; 20 June 1873, 2; 21 June 1873, 2; 30 June 1873, 2; 2 July 1873, 2; 3 July 1873, 2; and *EE* (Halifax), 2 July 1873, 3. Grocery clerks had spear-headed this campaign for shorter hours in May 1873, influencing a general movement throughout the city. In Canada, labour demands for reduced work hours originated in the establishment of nine-hour leagues across Ontario and Quebec during the first six months of 1872. In Halifax, however, working-class protests for a nine-hour day were not successful until the 1880s. See Bryan D. Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980* (Toronto: Butterworth and Co., 1983), 89-91; and Judith Fingard, Janet Guildford, and David Sutherland, *Halifax: The First 250 Years* (Halifax: Formac Publishing Co., 1999), 107.

<sup>20</sup> *ER*, 30 June 1873, 2; and 2 July 1873, 2. The campaign first failed among dry goods dealers and jewellers when individual proprietors refused to sign the petitions.

were encouraged by a public who queried, “Why should men who call themselves merchants – whose daily sales amounts to thousands of dollars – wish to compete with little shops in the remoter parts of our city, whose sales are to be counted only by cents?”<sup>21</sup> Efforts for the widespread enforcement of state-regulated early closing would not occur until the mid-1890s, often with the support of retail trade associations.<sup>22</sup>

Whereas some shopkeepers worked together occasionally on issues of common concern, others cooperated formally through various political venues. In this way, retailers coordinated efforts with fellow representatives to further retail, business, and larger civic interests. Certainly, commercial trade papers often pushed the need for additional business owners in all levels of government.<sup>23</sup> Although no Haligonians offered opinions in 1900 when the *Maritime Merchant* asked its readers if businessmen should enter politics, many local shopkeepers had actively participated in the municipal administration, and to a lesser extent the provincial House of Assembly, long before the twentieth century.<sup>24</sup>

Since the establishment of an elected council in the mid-nineteenth century, Halifax’s municipal government had been dominated by residents of the middling stratum, often

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<sup>21</sup> *MH*, 30 Nov. 1876, 2. The writer of a letter to the editor, “Citizen,” posed this rhetorical question.

<sup>22</sup> See below for the early closing movement of the 1890s.

<sup>23</sup> See, for instance, *CG*, 22 May 1896, 15; *MM*, 5 July 1900, 34; and 25 Oct. 1900, 15. In one case the *Maritime Merchant* did provide contradictory advice. See *MM*, 7 Jan. 1897, 12.

<sup>24</sup> *MM*, 22 Nov. 1900, 76. Contemporaries sometimes noted the preponderance of Haligonian businessmen to enter politics. See *CG*, 24 May 1895, 10; and 19 June 1896, 28.



business proprietors, who sought recognition as respectable citizens worthy of sharing administrative power with local political and economic elites.<sup>25</sup> Although one journalist asserted in 1871 that City Council required more young men “with well-known abilities” regardless of class affiliation, working-class politics rarely made an appearance within municipal chambers during the latter half of the century.<sup>26</sup> In fact, fraternal ties shared among individuals belonging to the same voluntary association often aided the election of middle-class proprietors. In 1891, for example, four out of six aldermen elected to the Council belonged to the Mystic Lodge of the International Order of Oddfellows. Another alderman, already seated within Council, likewise belonged to this popular order. Moreover, all five lodge members owned business enterprises within the city, three of whom were retailers of foodstuffs. These three shopkeepers included associated grocer H. V. Wier, fruit

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<sup>25</sup> Janet Guildford, “Alderman Thomas Spence: The Dick Whittington of Halifax,” *Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society Journal* 2 (1999): 27-39; and Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 57-66. See also E. P. Hennock, *Fit and Proper Persons: Ideal and Reality in Nineteenth-Century Urban Government* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1973); and David C. Hammock, “Small Business and Urban Power: Some Notes on the History of Economic Policy in Nineteenth-Century American Cities,” in *Small Business in American Life*, ed. Stuart W. Bruchey (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 319-37.

<sup>26</sup> One exception occurred in the previous decade when Ward Five voters elected Thomas Spence as their municipal representative in 1862. Fellow councillors and middle-class residents, however, attempted several times to remove Spence from office. His premature death in 1864 rid the municipality of his services without recourse to further scandal. During the 1880s, another working-class candidate from Ward Five ran for elected office, but his candidacy ended in failure. By the late 1890s, the same candidate, Peter F. Martin, ran successfully as a self-employed proprietor. See Guildford, “Alderman Thomas Spence,” 27-39; and Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 107.

dealer C. W. Outhit, and victualler John F. Ryan.<sup>27</sup> Formal cooperation in voluntary societies, retail trade associations, and political office thus combined to aid in the collaboration of Haligonian shopkeepers.

Relatively minor qualifications for the municipal franchise allowed city retailers of the middling stratum ample opportunity for participating in local political affairs. Prior to 1887, qualified voters included male residents guilty of no treason or felony who lived in the city for at least one year and were appraised for municipal taxes. Additionally, the municipality enfranchised any male doing business from a shop or office within city limits for at least three years, regardless of residence. By 1887, the province granted single and widowed women the right to vote, as well as married women holding property if their husbands did not qualify. By the 1890s, however, certain residents could find qualifying difficult since the right to vote hinged upon the payment of civic taxes thirty days in advance of an election and the payment of the poll tax three months prior to the same date.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, this amendment mainly affected Halifax's most marginal enterprises and those operations strapped for cash on a regular basis.

Similarly, qualifications for civic office permitted middle-class shopkeepers the possibility of taking part directly in municipal government. Candidates were required to qualify as male civic voters of 21 years or older, possess British citizenship, remain innocent

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<sup>27</sup>AR, 30 April 1891, 3; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1891-2.

<sup>28</sup> *The Charter and Ordinances of the City of Halifax* (1864), 3-4; *Halifax City Charter and Ordinances* (1885), 6-7; *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1887, c. 28; *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1888, c. 49; and *Laws Relating to the City of Halifax* (Halifax: N. S. Printing Co., 1891), 15-16.

of treason or felony, and prove residency within the city for at least one year. Most importantly, candidates were required to have paid municipal taxes, not to have assigned or declared bankruptcy, and possess a certain monetary value of property beyond their just debts. In the early years, the property qualification remained relatively small. By 1880, for instance, the requirement included the possession of \$2,000 of unencumbered assets, in real or personal property, or any combination thereof.<sup>29</sup> As a result, in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, business entrepreneurs represented almost two-thirds of municipal councillors, while retail shopkeepers comprised almost one-third of those proprietors.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, only two retailers succeeded in the position of mayor, both of whom were city centre shopkeepers of apparel goods.<sup>31</sup>

Qualifications for municipal positions became significantly stringent in 1891 when the municipality doubled the assets required, including the implementation of a real estate qualification. During the 1890s, City Council required candidates to be property holders of \$2,000 of unmortgaged real estate, as well as the owners of a further \$2,000 in real and/or

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<sup>29</sup> *The Charter and Ordinances of the City of Halifax* (1864), 5, 12; *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1871, c. 23; and *Halifax City Charter and Ordinances* (1885), 6.

<sup>30</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2 to 1900-1. From 1871 to 1901, 81 business proprietors sat on City Council from a possible 134 aldermen (60.4 percent). During the same period, these 81 proprietors included 41 retail shopkeepers from a possible total of 134 aldermen (30.6 percent).

<sup>31</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2 to 1900-1. These two mayors included boot and shoe retailer William Dunbar, and merchant tailor James T. Hamilton. In the period under investigation, a total of 13 mayors had been elected to the municipality. Dunbar, a shopkeeper on Barrington Street, served as mayor during 1872-3. Hamilton, a Hollis Street retailer, served as councillor from 1888-9 to 1896-7, and served as mayor beginning in 1899.

personal property.<sup>32</sup> Although qualifications tightened, no reduction occurred in the proportion of retailers holding aldermanic positions. In fact, the percentage of retailers increased slightly from shopkeepers comprising 29 percent of councillors before 1891, to 36 percent after 1891.<sup>33</sup> Although the real property qualification produced little effect on municipal recruits, at least one alderman faced difficulties during the transition period. When Ward Four voters elected associated grocer Andrew A. Hubley to the Council in 1892, rumours surfaced in the local press that Hubley did not qualify as a candidate under the new legislation. Besides anonymous letters to the editor, William O'Toole, a small boot and shoe dealer of the North End who would not have qualified himself, launched a petition against Hubley's election. Whether from personal, business, or political differences, the campaign failed to unseat Hubley, who continued as an alderman until 1911.<sup>34</sup>

While retailers took an active part in municipal affairs, a smaller number participated in provincial politics. Dominated by members of the commercial and legal elite, only two retailers served as Halifax representatives within Nova Scotia's House of Assembly from the

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<sup>32</sup> *Laws Relating to the City of Halifax* (1891), 10; *AR*, 22 March 1892, 2; and 12 April 1892, 2.

<sup>33</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2 to 1900-1. Between 1871-2 and 1890-1, 32 councillors from a total of 109 worked as retail shopkeepers (29.4 percent). Between 1891-2 and 1900-1, 15 aldermen from a total of 42 councillors owned retail enterprises (35.7 percent).

<sup>34</sup> *AR*, 25 April 1892, 3; 29 April 1892, 3; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2. One year before his protest, credit agents estimated O'Toole's pecuniary strength to be less than \$500 and suggested he be provided with only limited credit. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, July 1890. For further information on Hubley's associational and civic career, see *CG*, 4 March 1892, 4; 27 Jan. 1893, 12; *MM*, 3 Sept. 1896, 27; 17 Sept. 1896, 20; and Judith Fingard, "Liquor and Hypocrisy: The Retail Drink Trade in Halifax, 1886-1916" (Unpublished manuscript, 1997), 17.

1870s to the turn of the twentieth century<sup>35</sup> William D. Harrington, a prosperous grocer and liquor dealer on Hollis Street, had served as a Ward Two councillor from 1876 to 1878 before joining the provincial legislature in 1879 where he sat for eight years.<sup>36</sup> Michael J. Power, a guest at the grocer sleigh ride and banquet of 1892, had been a medium-sized grocer and liquor dealer of the city centre throughout the 1870s and 1880s. Power served as an alderman for Ward Four from 1873 to 1879, fire warden for the municipality during the same decade, Halifax Liberal representative in the provincial government between 1883 and 1894, and Speaker of the House of Assembly since 1887.<sup>37</sup>

Besides provincial office, opportunities also existed for retailers within local political associations. The Liberal-Conservative Association of Ward Five, for instance, allowed various shopkeepers to cooperate with upwardly-mobile artisans, wholesalers, and manufacturers, as well as professionals in law and medicine. Here, shopkeepers could help mobilize Tory voters within their district, while discussing matters concerning provincial

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<sup>35</sup> Between 1871 and 1901, 17 men served as Halifax members within the House of Assembly. The largest number of representatives were either wholesalers or barristers. *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1869-70 to 1900-1; and *Belcher's Farmer's Almanac for the Province of Nova Scotia*, 1897 to 1901.

<sup>36</sup> While serving in the House of Assembly, credit-reporting agents estimated Harrington's business to be worth between \$10,000 and \$20,000, and granted him a credit rating of high. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Sept. 1879, March 1881, Sept. 1885, March 1887; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1876-7 to 1887-8.

<sup>37</sup> During the 1870s, R. G. Dun and Company estimated Power's monetary strength to be between \$2,000 and \$5,000, and granted him a credit rating of fair. For a time in 1876, however, agents doubled Power's pecuniary strength. When he entered provincial politics in the mid-1880s, Power's wealth was no longer assessed, but credit agents reported a similar rating. See *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879, March 1881, Sept. 1885; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2 to 1893-4.

economic development. During the first four years of the association's existence, at least four retailers directly participated in its activities. Participating shopkeepers ranged from small proprietors such as William Jackson, a second-hand dealer on Grafton Street, to wealthy retailers such as Bartholomew Walsh, an "up-right" grocer and provision dealer on Upper Water Street.<sup>38</sup> While the Nova Scotia franchise of the late-Victorian era permitted fewer Haligonians to vote provincially than could qualify for municipal elections, legislative changes in the 1880s did widen suffrage qualifications. Importantly, by 1889, the middling stratum of shopkeepers could vote whether they owned real estate or not, as long they earned an annual income of \$250 or more.<sup>39</sup>

Besides combining with shopkeepers and other business proprietors through ad-hoc collaboration and formal political participation, certain retailers of goods and services began to organize occupational associations as early as the 1870s and 1880s. Liquor dealers and

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<sup>38</sup> *MH*, 15 Jan. 1881, 1; 30 May 1882, 3; 1 June 1882, 1; 11 Feb. 1884, 1; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1880-1, 1881-2. Walsh's obituary in 1885 described him as "a good citizen" who "owed no man anything." He also reportedly declined public office in favour of running his business. The contributor estimated Walsh's wealth between \$12,000 and \$15,000, while credit-reporting agents in 1881 estimated his pecuniary strength to be in excess of \$20,000. See *AR*, 7 Feb. 1885, 3; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, March 1881.

<sup>39</sup> Changes occurred in the Nova Scotia franchise in 1863, 1885, and 1889. In 1863 suffrage qualifications tightened with the addition of property qualifications, but widened thereafter. By 1885, sons of wealthy property holders whose possessions justified two or more votes were enfranchised. After 1889, residents could vote solely on the basis of an annual income worth \$250 or more. Other qualified voters included those who were assessed with real estate worth at least \$150, and those who owned real and personal property of \$300 or more. This change in 1889 provided suffrage to a wider group of residents than the contemporary Dominion franchise. See J. Murray Beck, *Politics of Nova Scotia: Volume One 1710-1896* (Tantallon, N. S.: Four East Publications, 1985), 154, 224, 243-4; *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1889, c. 1; and *AR*, 18 April 1889, 2.

hairdressers established early associations, without the benefit of a trade press, to protect their businesses from external and internal forces threatening their financial well being and claims to respectable status. On the one hand, liquor sellers fought against an evolving series of license legislation and temperance reformers bent on reducing or eliminating their trade. On the other hand, barbers struggled to survive despite changing military regulations which resulted in a decrease in clientele. In both cases, these business proprietors also sought security from growing competition, especially competition deemed as illegitimate by organized dealers. Although a consensus failed to emerge on the meaning of legitimacy, organized members discussed the subject both directly and indirectly.

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, Halifax liquor sellers established four successive organizations to defend their trade from municipal, provincial, and federal changes in license legislation, as well as to raise the reputation of their occupation to counter the arguments of temperance reformers. In the case of liquor retailers, the impetus towards professionalization mainly originated from outside the trade. State officials, organized traders, marginal liquor sellers, temperance advocates, and the public all held competing ideas of respectability which rendered the trade hopelessly divided. In the end, liquor dealers were unable to deter the wave of temperance enthusiasm and its resulting restrictive legislation.

In 1872, those who claimed to be the most respectable portion of the trade formed the Grocers' and Liquor Dealers' Association to fight proposed civic legislation which promised to make licensing a more difficult procedure. Its members, grocers with a lucrative sideline of selling alcoholic beverages, keenly felt the negative publicity attracted by the numerous dives of the upper and lower streets which provided valuable goods and services

to military personnel, merchant mariners, and dependents, while also introducing a “carnival of vice.”<sup>40</sup> Only two years previously, military officials had ordered a four-year ban on Barrack Street which prevented servicemen from frequenting this infamous district adjacent to Citadel Hill.<sup>41</sup> Proposed changes to the city’s license law had been the result of petitions from temperance advocates seeking a reduction in the number of licences granted and more stringent regulations for all licensees. Reacting favourably to temperance demands, City Council proposed to decrease the number of licences over the next two years, enforce shorter hours of operation, and require all licence applicants to be accompanied with recommendations from ratepayers within their district.<sup>42</sup> When the municipality allowed liquor sellers to voice their concerns, a political lobby quickly organized with members presenting a petition led by the wealthy grocer and liquor dealer William Kandrick.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *AR*, 4 July 1866, 2. As explained in Chapter One, 52, the upper streets included Barrack and Albermarle (now Brunswick and Market), as well as the upper portions of Sackville, Prince, George, Duke, and Buckingham. The lower streets included mainly Upper and Lower Water Street. Judith Fingard has contributed much knowledge to the drink trade in Halifax. See Fingard, “‘A Great Big Rum Shop’: The Drink Trade in Victorian Halifax,” in *Tempered By Rum: Rum in the History of the Maritime Provinces*, eds. James H. Morrison and James Moreira (Porters Lake, N. S.: Pottersfield Press, 1988), 89-101; *The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax* (Porters Lake, N. S.: Pottersfield Press, 1991), particularly pages 15-28 and 61-76; and an unpublished manuscript kindly loaned to the author entitled “Liquor and Hypocrisy: The Retail Drink Trade in Halifax, 1886-1916.”

<sup>41</sup> Fingard, “‘A Great Big Rum Shop,’” 92.

<sup>42</sup> Halifax City Council Minutes, 30 March 1872.

<sup>43</sup> *EE*, triweekly, 8 March 1872, 2; 15 March 1872, 2; 22 April 1872, 2; and Halifax City Council Minutes, 26 April 1872. In 1873, R. G. Dun and Company estimated Kandrick’s capital to be between \$25,000 and \$50,000, and granted him a high credit rating. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873.



Despite the speedy action taken by shopkeepers threatened by these proposals, the legislation passed and an exodus from the trade soon became evident.<sup>44</sup> While several grocers abandoned the liquor trade, less respectable dealers continued selling whether they held a licence or not. Shopkeepers selling without the benefit of civic approval, such as Robert McFarlane, whose small grocery store on Upper Water Street became the front for an illicit still, faced multiple police raids throughout the spring and summer of 1872.<sup>45</sup>

Restrictions on the liquor trade mounted over the next ten years. Further police crackdowns, military regulations against Albermarle Street, and a requirement in 1874 for applicants to obtain a licence recommendation from a two-thirds majority of ratepayers within each civic district, threatened the livelihood of certain dealers.<sup>46</sup> By the mid-1870s, even the profits of wholesalers were placed in jeopardy when City Council discussed the licensing of these proprietors for the first time.<sup>47</sup> In 1880, municipal and legal authorities stopped the sale of so-called “temperance beer” in unlicensed houses. Proprietors such as

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<sup>44</sup> *EE*, triweekly, 5 April 1872, 2; 15 April 1872, 2; and 17 April 1872, 2.

<sup>45</sup> *EE*, triweekly, 5 July 1872, 2. When the Internal Revenue Department confiscated McFarlane’s property only \$100 worth of goods were found. For additional raids on unlicensed premises, see *EE*, triweekly, 29 May 1872, 2; 31 May 1872, 2; 3 June 1872, 2; 10 June 1872, 2; and 17 June 1872, 2.

<sup>46</sup> For police crackdowns, see *EE*, 1 Dec. 1873, 3; *MH*, triweekly, 29 June 1875, 3-4; 15 July 1875, 4; 24 July 1875, 4; 25 July 1875, 3; and 27 July 1875, 4. The military enforced a four-year ban on Albermarle Street in 1874. Fingard, “A Great Big Rum Shop,” 92. For the change in 1874 which brought the Halifax procedure in line with licensing regulations elsewhere in Nova Scotia, see *Annual Report of the Several Departments of the City Government of Halifax, Nova Scotia*, 1874-5, 151; and Fingard, “A Great Big Rum Shop,” 97.

<sup>47</sup> Halifax City Council Minutes, 1 Nov. 1875; and *MH*, triweekly, 9 March 1876, 1.

John H. Connors of Sackville Street sold lager beer as a temperance drink for years without state interference because contemporaries considered it a less intoxicating alternative to hops beer.<sup>48</sup> The redefinition of lager beer as intoxicating liquor, reflected in part the increased consumption of malt beverages in Halifax, a city long associated with rum. To make matters worse for liquor dealers in the upper streets, the military ordered a ban on Grafton Street for its men in 1883.<sup>49</sup> The resulting restrictions caused Halifax's City Council to decrease the number of licences granted from upwards of 300 in the 1860s to only 200 by the mid-1880s.<sup>50</sup>

Unable to prevent growing restrictions, liquor sellers organized the Licensed Victuallers' Association in 1884 to defend "the best interests of the trader," and to place the business in the hands of "men well known for their responsibility." Licensees united to raise their occupation's social status in the face of charges made by the Dominion Temperance Alliance.<sup>51</sup> Opened to both wholesalers and retailers, the Halifax Licensed Victuallers'

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<sup>48</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 1 July 1880, 3; 10 July 1880, 4; and 17 July 1880, 2.

<sup>49</sup> *AR*, 22 Dec. 1883, 3.

<sup>50</sup> During the decade of the 1860s, Halifax's City Council granted upwards of 300 establishments with licences. By 1874, the municipality granted only 248. Ten years later, in 1884-5, the city reduced the number of licensees to 200. See Fingard, "'A Great Big Rum Shop,'" 90; *Annual Report of the Several Departments of the City Government*, 1874-5, 151; and *Annual Report of the Several Departments of the City Government*, 1884-5, lxxv.

<sup>51</sup> *AR*, 28 May 1884, 2. In 1876, various temperance societies across Canada had established a federation popularly known as the Dominion Alliance, or officially titled the Dominion Alliance for the Total Suppression of the Liquor Traffic. See Sharon Anne Cook, *"Through Sunshine and Shadow": The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 64-6.

Association had counterparts elsewhere in Nova Scotia, as well as in New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. The Halifax association opposed the provincial clause requiring license applicants to seek the support of neighbouring ratepayers, and the more generally despised Dominion License Act of 1883.

The legislation of 1883, better known as the McCarthy Act, introduced a short-lived system of federal licences and inspectors for regions not governed by the Scott Act.<sup>52</sup> It also required grocery and liquor dealers to build separate entrances and partitions for each line of business. Finally, the act demanded that wholesalers cease selling alcohol at retail. Not wanting to forfeit its own power to regulate the liquor trade, City Council suspended the act within its municipal borders and continued granting its own permits between 1884 and 1885.<sup>53</sup> The confusion over the two systems left some dealers scrambling at the last minute for a city licence, while others stubbornly applied for federal permits.<sup>54</sup>

Prominent wholesalers and retailers initially kept their distance from Halifax's Licensed Victuallers' Association even though its first president, John C. O'Mullin, owned a prosperous business with ties to the civic government.<sup>55</sup> According to an executive officer

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<sup>52</sup> The federal government passed the Scott Act, or Canada Temperance Act, in 1878 to provide the option of prohibition for communities choosing so in a local referendum. By the 1880s, several rural counties in Nova Scotia had chosen to be 'dry.' *AR*, 28 May 1884, 2; and Fingard, "Liquor and Hypocrisy," 5.

<sup>53</sup> *Annual Report of the Several Departments of the City Government*, 1884-5, lxxxv; and *AR*, 19 Dec. 1885, 2.

<sup>54</sup> *AR*, 17 April 1884, 2.

<sup>55</sup> R. G. Dun and Company estimated the capital of John C. O'Mullin's business, P. and J. O'Mullin, to be between \$40,000 and \$75,000 in 1885. His partner and relative, Patrick O'Mullin, served as city alderman from 1882 to 1886 and Halifax's mayor

interviewed by the daily press, leading proprietors contributed money to the cause, but wished to remain anonymous.<sup>56</sup> These business owners may have kept a low profile to avoid raising the ire of temperance forces and to await the court's decision regarding the McCarthy Act. Moreover, conflict between the interests of wholesalers and retailers divided the trade, since wholesalers wished to retain their right to sell at retail. This division may have created additional membership problems.<sup>57</sup>

By 1885, conditions within the association improved as participation increased from both prominent proprietors and the rank and file of the liquor trade. Again, the president stressed the need to restrict the trade to proprietors "who were desirous of carrying on their businesses in a respectable and legal manner, and to place the trade in the hands of men of well-known respectability and responsibility." President O'Mullin also sought to end the sale of liquor in Halifax's many illicit dens.<sup>58</sup> Although the courts declared the Dominion License Act unconstitutional by the end of the year, liquor sellers soon encountered a more formidable challenge.<sup>59</sup>

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between 1887 and 1889. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Sept. 1885; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1882-3 to 1888-9.

<sup>56</sup> *AR*, 24 July 1884, 3.

<sup>57</sup> An example of such a conflict occurred prior to the formation of the new association when "A Liquor Dealer" publicly protested a petition made by wholesalers to the city. Although wholesalers had assured retailers they were on their side in the fight to protect the traffic in liquor, wholesale proprietors wanted to continue selling at retail in small quantities regardless of the Dominion License Law. *AR*, 29 Feb 1884, 3.

<sup>58</sup> *AR*, 21 Jan 1885, 3; and 28 Jan. 1885, 3.

<sup>59</sup> *AR*, 5 Jan. 1886, 3.

In 1886, the Nova Scotia Liquor License Act banned the open bar in Halifax, leaving only retail shop, hotel, and wholesale permits available. The new act represented the most stringent law in North American cities not governed by prohibition, and remained in force until 1905.<sup>60</sup> Besides the limitation of sale by the glass to hotels and their out-of-town guests, the act also hiked licence fees, extended the majority of support needed for granting a permit, and enlarged each district.<sup>61</sup> New demands forced small dealers to withdraw from the trade after they failed to garner enough support or pay the increased fees. In addition, saloon keepers unable to submit new petitions in time to convert their businesses to retail shops, also exited the trade or simply continued selling by the glass illegally. Charles Della Torre, for example, who operated a small liquor shop in 1885, switched to selling low alcoholic beer and lemonade after 1886.<sup>62</sup> Within two years, authorities arrested Della Torre for keeping intoxicating liquor one floor above his temperance drink shop. Although he claimed that the alcohol was for his own use, the unlicensed shop may have been a front for illicit selling. Not surprisingly, new restrictions forcing certain dealers from the trade

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<sup>60</sup> Fingard, "Liquor and Hypocrisy," 6, 12; *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1886, c. 3; and *AR*, 14 March 1887, 3. Although the province reestablished the bar in Halifax by 1905, it did not stay long. Within ten years the provincial government extended prohibition to Halifax when the Nova Scotia Temperance Act of 1910 came into force after 1916.

<sup>61</sup> In 1878, Halifax had imposed fees of \$50 for hotels and taverns, and \$60 for retail shops. Wholesale establishments were unregulated. Legislative changes in 1886 demanded fees of \$100 from retailers, \$150 from hotel keepers, and \$300 from wholesalers. *Halifax City Council Minutes*, 11 March 1878, 28 Dec. 1892; and *AR*, 14 March 1887, 3. In 1886, the majority required for support increased to three-fifths. *AR*, 12 May 1886, 3; and *Critic* (Halifax), 5 Nov. 1886, 8.

<sup>62</sup> Della Torre's business had only been assessed as being worth under \$500 in 1885. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Sept. 1885. For more on the Della Torre family of Halifax, see Chapter Two, 100-2, 120.

resulted in authorities granting less than 100 licences annually during 1887 and 1888.<sup>63</sup>

Within days of the official elimination of the tavern, observers noted the continuation of liquor sold by the glass in former bars and increased drunkenness in the street as customers gulped alcohol from bottles purchased nearby. Reports even surfaced that shopkeepers had lent glassware to thirsty and impatient customers.<sup>64</sup> To complicate matters, the provincial legislature had passed the Nova Scotia Liquor License Act without support from the Halifax City Council. Unlike the legislature which was dominated by temperance reformers from Nova Scotia's rural counties, the municipal government was closely linked to the city's liquor interests. Patrick O'Mullin, the brewery partner to the former president of the Licensed Victuallers' Association, served as Halifax's mayor between 1887 and 1889, while the inspector appointed by the city, John Mackasey, had once been a liquor seller himself.<sup>65</sup>

Soon after the announced ban on the bar, the Liquor Trade Defence Association formed to test the legality of the new law. After an expensive failure in the courts, leaders of this new organization were unwilling to support further cases, causing the association's quick death. Prosecuted dealers and their colleagues felt deceived over this perceived act

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<sup>63</sup> Fingard, "Liquor and Hypocrisy," 18-19; *AR*, 3 March 1887, 2; 14 March 1887, 3; *Annual Report of the Several Departments of the City Government*, 1885-6, x; and *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in Canada*, 1889, *Volume 6: Nova Scotia Evidence* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1889), 110-11. The city granted only 83 licences in 1887, while it issued 93 in the following year.

<sup>64</sup> *AR*, 17 March 1887, 3; *Critic*, 25 March 1887, 1; and *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in Canada* 1889, vol. 6, 110-11.

<sup>65</sup> Fingard, "A Great Big Rum Shop," 99.

of betrayal. In several cases the executive refused to back retailers who had failed to obtain a permit because it feared association with dealers seen as less than respectable.<sup>66</sup>

The power struggles over licensing between the municipal, provincial, and federal governments left wholesaling and manufacturing liquor interests with an advantage over retailers who lacked the same clout to fight growing constraints. After a two-year hiatus, licensed proprietors of retail shops and hotels reorganized the Licensed Victuallers' Association in 1889. Wholesalers, brewers, and distillers without retail branches, were no longer welcomed in the association since they had again escaped state regulation by launching a series of court cases to render certain sections of the Nova Scotia Liquor License Act *ultra vires*.<sup>67</sup> Objects of the new association included the protection of "legitimate and licensed interests of the retail trade" by battling the "temperance cranks" and distancing themselves from illicit sellers. Members used moral suasion to raise the respectability of the trade, rather than launching a campaign against unlicensed dealers. In practice, the association tolerated illicit competition because its members required the support of

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<sup>66</sup> AR, 13 May 1887, 3; and 14 May 1887, 2.

<sup>67</sup> AR, 7 July 1888, 2; and 15 April 1889, 3. Under the 1886 provincial act which banned the bar in Halifax, wholesalers had been required to take out a licence for \$300. In 1887 the federal Minister of Justice informed the local legislature that under the case of *Queen v. Severn* the province could not interfere with the business of wholesalers. The Nova Scotia legislature stubbornly refused to repeal the offending section of its license act, deciding in 1888 to test the case in the Supreme Court. In the meantime, officials ordered wholesalers to file a bond with the Provincial Secretary in lieu of the fee. The Supreme Court decision eventually declared that the local legislature did indeed have the right to license wholesalers. As of 1892, however, wholesalers were still not being licensed. Moreover, provincial authorities would not prevent wholesalers from selling liquor at retail until 1910. See Halifax City Council Minutes, 28 Dec. 1892; and Fingard, "Liquor and Hypocrisy," 60.

neighbouring businesses, whether licensed or not, in petitions to renew the permits.<sup>68</sup>

Retailers dominated the new organization's executive, despite the presence of a few wholesalers operating retail branches. Members elected Edward J. Quirk as their first president, a saloon keeper who successfully became a respected shopkeeper after the 1886 ban on the bar.<sup>69</sup> Leon T. Brand, secretary at the time of the Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic, had turned to retailing alcoholic beverages in 1886 on Upper Water Street after failing at a dry goods business. Brand's peers, including business proprietors in other lines, regarded him as a popular man.<sup>70</sup> Notwithstanding an increase in membership from 40 in 1889 to 68 in 1892, the Licensed Victuallers' Association ceased activities by the mid-nineties. A growing temperance movement and previous inabilities to alter legislation

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<sup>68</sup> AR, 7 Sept. 1889, 3; and Testimony by Leon Brand, secretary of the association, on 27 July 1892, from "Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic: Minutes of Evidence, Nova Scotia," in *Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic Minutes of Evidence, Volume I* (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1893), 132-42. Although associated liquor dealers in Halifax generally refused to report illicit sellers to the police, associations of licensed dealers elsewhere in North America took a more active role in regulating legitimacy. See, for instance, the example of Chicago's association in Perry R. Duis, *The Saloon: Public Drinking in Chicago and Boston 1880-1920* (Urbana: University of Chicago and Illinois Press, 1983), 62.

<sup>69</sup> Quirk's claim to respectability included a residence on fashionable Spring Garden Road, separate from his shop on Lower Water Street, and the presence of a servant at his home address. R. G. Dun and Company estimated his worth to be between \$2,000 and \$5,000 in 1890. For comparison, almost three-quarters of retailers selling only liquor were determined to be worth under \$2,000. AR, 11 Oct. 1892, 3; *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, July 1890 and Fingard, "Liquor and Hypocrisy," 63.

<sup>70</sup> AR, 3 Jan. 1883, 1; *Our Dominion*, 66; and "Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic: Minutes of Evidence, Nova Scotia," 132-42. Additional officers, such as William Nott, Robert Anderson, and S. D. Mitchell, were also liquor retailers. John Mullane, a liquor seller and grocer in the North End, became the association's second president in 1893. AR, 11 Oct. 1892, 3; and Fingard, "Liquor and Hypocrisy," 63.



ensured that Haligonian liquor sellers would not resurrect the organization again, nor any other association, until 1905.<sup>71</sup>

Thus, a series of formal alliances in the liquor trade between the early 1870s and mid-1890s, battled with external and internal forces in a failed attempt to forge a common understanding concerning the definition of a legitimate liquor seller. Yet, for dealers in wines, malts, and spirits, legitimacy most often involved a state-imposed definition. This definition was influenced by an on-going power struggle among three levels of government and an increasingly enthusiastic temperance crusade waged by the Protestant clergy and several temperance organizations.<sup>72</sup> The resulting maze of legislation created an ever changing legal opinion of what form of business society tolerated and who should be its operator. Certainly, by 1886, the state not only banned open bars, but also intemperate dealers.<sup>73</sup>

Aside from the definitions used by state representatives and temperance advocates, prosperous men such as Thomas Gough, with a past of liquor license violations, maintained their reputations as respectable retailers. Remembered after his death in 1892 as well-known, straightforward and reliable, authorities had arrested Gough for license violations several

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<sup>71</sup> AR, 7 Sept. 1889, 3; "Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic: Minutes of Evidence, Nova Scotia," 132-42; and Fingard, "Liquor and Hypocrisy," 65.

<sup>72</sup> For Nova Scotia's temperance crusade and eventual prohibition, see E. R. Forbes, "Prohibition and the Social Gospel in Nova Scotia," in *Challenging the Regional Stereotype: Essays on the 20th Century Maritimes* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1989), 13-40; and Tanya Gogan, "A 'Noble Experiment?': The Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Repeal of Prohibition in Nova Scotia" (B.A. honours essay, Dalhousie University, 1992).

<sup>73</sup> Fingard, "Liquor and Hypocrisy," 58.

times during the 1880s. One arrest occurred when Gough continued selling alcohol by the glass after 1886, a bold move considering his bar's proximity to Halifax's police station. Such run-ins with the law did nothing to tarnish his good reputation as a supposed self-made businessman with temperate habits. While the local press frequently commented on Gough's series of successful bars, hotels, and restaurants, his accomplishments were not entirely 'self-made.' Gough's wife, Catherine, contributed to his success by inheritance of her late husband's Dining and Oyster Saloon and no doubt by a knowledge of the business. Nonetheless, Gough made a name for himself in catering by the early 1880s and before his death opened a new restaurant on Bedford Row with a lunch counter reputed to be one of the best in the city.<sup>74</sup> Even John Naylor, former liquor inspector under the McCarthy Act, conceded that proprietors similar to Gough, were "a very good lot of men" despite occasional acts of legal disobedience. As Naylor explained to investigators of the Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic in 1892, these generally good citizens broke the law only in an attempt to preserve the financial well being of their establishments.<sup>75</sup>

Society did not view all dealers in the liquor traffic so favourably. Disreputable

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<sup>74</sup> For information on Gough's life see his obituary in *AR*, 17 Dec. 1892, 3. Additional material on Gough's reputation, businesses, and run-ins with the law can be found in the following: *MH*, 3 July 1880, 4; 11 Sept. 1880, 3; Return of Person's Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 28, 17 Sept. 1880, NSARM; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 31, 18 Nov. 1884; *AR*, 12 May 1887, 3; 24 May 1887, 3; Halifax City Council Minutes, 10 Jan. 1888; and *AR*, 21 March 1892, 3. See also 1881 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 11-12; and 1891 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 2 (C2), 7. Augustus Prioux, Catherine Gough's late husband, appeared in the 1871 Halifax City Census, Ward 3, Div. 1 (C1), 48; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2.

<sup>75</sup> "Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic: Minutes of Evidence, Nova Scotia," 241-3.

proprietors who ran businesses on a hand-to-mouth existence whose activities were associated with unseemingly behaviour were branded by the trade and the community as illegitimate. During the 1880s, members of the Licensed Victuallers' Association had attempted to distance themselves from this class of retailers. The shopkeepers deemed unworthy to take part in such an organization, however, held their own definition of respectability. In the early 1870s, the daily press reported Elizabeth Granger as the owner of a shameful house, guilty of disturbing the peace of her quiet neighbourhood. The incident involved the return of her estranged drunken husband, as well as the presence of prostitutes in her establishment on Falkland Street, a thoroughfare running parallel to the northern boundary of the Halifax Citadel. Granger's quick response, an indignant letter to the editor, illustrated her view of herself as a legitimate business person and respectable citizen:

During Mr. Granger's long absence from home no trouble has ever arisen at my house, nor was I at all to blame in the case now spoken of; and it does seem rather hard, Mr. Editor, that because one's husband takes a drop too much, his doing so should be made the occasion, by the young gentleman connected with the press, of spreading abroad calumnious reports, calculated to seriously injure, not only my character but my business.<sup>76</sup>

Compilers of the city directory added to the insult of Granger's negative publicity when they neglected to list her North End business under her own name. Granger's letter had made it clear that the saloon was indeed her own commercial venture, conducted without the benefit

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<sup>76</sup> *EE*, 8 Sept. 1873, 2. The offending press report had appeared in *EE*, 1 Sept. 1873, 3. When reporters described further disturbances at her saloon they sarcastically remarked that she was indeed disadvantaged--disadvantaged by having the police present at the wrong times. See, for example, *EE*, 16 Sept. 1873, 3; and 17 Oct. 1873, 3.

of her husbands' assistance.<sup>77</sup>

Granger's abuse in the local press, pointed to another factor making her an illegitimate dealer in the eyes of many late-Victorians. Elizabeth Granger had committed the sin of indulging in unfeminine behaviour; she was a female saloon keeper. Temperance reformers, such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union, considered the liquor traffic to be an improper occupation for respectable women. When women and liquor combined, most reformers expected that only immorality would result.<sup>78</sup> Even organized dealers in the Licensed Victuallers' Association would have ignored Granger's claims to legitimate status, since they repeatedly emphasized their desire to concentrate the trade in the hands of respectable *men*.<sup>79</sup>

Finally, competing ideas of legitimacy arose not only within the liquor trade, but also within the wider business community. Temperate shopkeepers, for example, opposed the business ventures of their fellow colleagues. After the ban on the bar in 1886, Henry A. Taylor, the popular druggist and high-ranking Sons of Temperance official, advertised his tee-totalling character and his sale of non-alcoholic beverages. Taylor even offered his customers a "square drink" for free.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, prominent grocer and long-time alderman, Andrew A. Hubley, became known as the temperate conscious within Halifax's otherwise

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<sup>77</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1872-3, 1873-4.

<sup>78</sup> Fingard, "Liquor and Hypocrisy," 39-40.

<sup>79</sup> Leaders of the organization made this point clear in *AR*, 28 May 1884, 2; and 21 Jan. 1885, 3.

<sup>80</sup> *AR*, 25 March 1887, 1. For more on Taylor, see the Introduction, 1-2; and the discussion of pharmacists below.

“wet” City Council.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, prominent business people, such as Taylor and Hubley, who were members of professional and trade associations, may have been concerned over the distribution of credit to proprietors of doubtful reputations. In the early 1870s, temperate behaviour had been a crucial factor in determining one’s creditworthiness.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, throughout the 1870s and 1880s, debates raged in the local press involving whether the liquor trade as a whole could be considered a legitimate pursuit.<sup>83</sup>

Halifax’s hairdressing industry had much in common with the city’s trade in liquor. Both lines of business included proprietors divided from one another in numerous ways. Similar to dealers in wines, malts, and spirits, barbers catered to a varied clientele, including working-class citizens, military personnel, and increasingly prominent middle-class inhabitants. The customer base for each enterprise largely depended on quality of the establishment, price of the goods and services, location of the shop, and character of the owner. Like liquor sellers, hairdressers formed a union in the 1880s to counteract a decrease in business from external forces beyond their control, and to raise the reputation of the occupation to that of a respectable profession deserving of a profitable living. Despite such lofty goals, Halifax’s ill-fated barber union magnified existing divisions in the industry,

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<sup>81</sup> Fingard, “Liquor and Hypocrisy,” 17. Hubley served as a Halifax alderman from 1892 to 1911, and became a prominent member in the Retail Grocers’ Association of the 1890s. For more on Hubley, see the discussion of associated grocers below and Chapter Five, 296, 299-300, 318.

<sup>82</sup> A glance through R. G. Dun and Company ledgers illustrates the importance of avoiding excessive drink. See Chapter Two for the determination of creditworthiness.

<sup>83</sup> Examples include *MH*, triweekly, 14 Aug. 1875, 2, 4; *AR*, 23 Jan. 1883, 3; and *MH*, 16 Feb. 1883, 1.

while creating further animosity among its adherents.

By the 1870s, an important division had emerged in the hairdressing trade between working-class entrepreneurs offering an inexpensive shave and haircut to a male clientele, and those more aptly described as “tonorial artists” providing services to middle-class men and women. Disreputable liquor sellers of the city’s upper streets increasingly had to share their space with barbers whose existence also depended on military patronage and working-class favour.<sup>84</sup> Stories in the local press concerning the activities of these rough men, such as the African-Nova Scotian barber charged by his wife for being a common drunkard, contrasted sharply with advertisements from “first-class hairdressers.”<sup>85</sup> John Roue, for instance, fitted his establishment on Hollis Street, “in a style of elegance and convenience, equal to some of the best Saloons in the United States.”<sup>86</sup> Similarly, John Keenan, on Duke Street between Granville and Barrington, refurbished his place of business “in first class American style” with the important addition of hot and cold water baths.<sup>87</sup> Not to be outdone by Roue and Keenan, George Fluck, a hairdresser with several branch businesses and an executive officer in a local Masonic lodge, opened a new salon on Hollis Street touted

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<sup>84</sup> When announcing the opening of a barbershop on the corner of Jacob and Brunswick, a local daily remarked that barbers were moving “uptown.” See *ER*, 11 Jan. 1873, 2.

<sup>85</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 16 Nov. 1876, 4.

<sup>86</sup> *EE*, triweekly, 15 May 1871, 2. Hairdressing establishments in this period were known by the Anglicized term ‘saloon,’ not by the French term ‘salon.’ In either case, whether referring to a hairdressing or liquor establishment, both terms referred to a room open to the public for a specified purpose.

<sup>87</sup> *EE*, triweekly, 30 Sept. 1872, 2.

proudly as “one of the most elegant establishments in the Dominion.” Fluck’s salon offered separate entrances and rooms for lady and gentleman customers, a secluded chamber for the removal of teeth and corns, and his own brand of hair and cosmetic products.<sup>88</sup>

During the 1880s, the varying class of hairdressing establishments and the wide variance in their owners’ experiences became more apparent. In January 1884, a newspaper announcement invited Halifax and Dartmouth hairdressers to a meeting “for the consideration of matters important to the mutual welfare of the craft.” Within a month interested hairdressers had formed an organization which combined the functions of a labour union with that of a trade association.<sup>89</sup> Notwithstanding the union’s ties to the Amalgamated Trades Union, organizers comprised middle-class proprietors partly seeking enhanced professional status. The driving force behind union organization, however, as reflected by the decision to raise the price of a shave to ten cents, had been a recent judgment from military authorities allowing soldiers to wear beards. Previous to this ruling, shaves had ranged from the working-class barber fee of five cents to the first-class hairdresser’s fee of seven cents. Permission for servicemen to wear facial hair reduced the business of both

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<sup>88</sup> *ER*, 13 May 1873, 2; 4 June 1873, 1; and *McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2, 490.

<sup>89</sup> *AR*, 26 Jan. 1884, 4; and *MC*, triweekly, 2 Feb. 1884, 3, references from McKay. Labour unions had been legally entitled to form in Nova Scotia since 1864, but hairdressers first met to discuss the founding of a union in 1882. Although it is unknown whether a formal organization resulted from this meeting, the barbers did agree to a petition asking City Council to pass an ordinance requiring all barbers to close on Sunday. *MH*, 20 May 1882, 3; and *AR*, 24 May 1882, 2-3. A decade earlier, in 1872, participating barbers and hairdressers had agreed to fix prices at seven cents for a shave and fifteen cents for a haircut. The resulting combine received little comment in the local press. *EE*, triweekly, 31 July 1872, 2.

classes of proprietors since officers and privates would no longer need to be clean-shaven on a daily basis.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, the union's representatives publicly denied that this change had initiated their formal cooperation, pointing instead to the higher cost of living and the need of better wage rates for employees.<sup>91</sup> Halifax's barber association, comprised mainly of middle-class hairdressers and their employees in the city's better neighbourhoods, was reluctant to admit that its members were as equally dependent on military custom as the barbers in Halifax's hated upper streets.

Although union leaders claimed that their association represented the entire trade, a flurry of insults published in the daily press between organized hairdressers and non-union or ex-union entrepreneurs, clearly revealed the true colour of union membership. Daniel Gerrior, the quick-witted barber of Sackville Street, referred to by union members as a "5-cent rat," became the most outspoken enemy of the association and its ten-cent shave. Gerrior had refused to join the organization because he believed the regulated price for a simple shave unfair and unwarranted considering the growing competition in the business. He attributed the raise in the price of a shave to greed, and argued that honest working men, serving honest labourers, could still make an adequate living with inexpensive prices. Gerrior reminded union members of their shared reliance on military customers and equally precarious financial circumstances when he penned the following lines to the editor of the *Acadian Recorder*: "I beg to say that if my chairs do not lie he needs his ten cents customers

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<sup>90</sup> *AR*, 5 Feb. 1884, 2.

<sup>91</sup> *AR*, 6 Feb. 1884, 2. It is significant that organized hairdressers only raised the price of shaves, not of shampoos and haircuts.



quite as much as I do five.”<sup>92</sup>

George H. Craig, a Dartmouth hairdresser and future secretary of the union who ignored his own working-class origins, repeatedly defended the organization’s reputation by unprofessionally belittling its critics. Craig’s motivation for promoting the exclusion of working-class barbers and uniting with Halifax’s middle-class hairdressers came from his efforts to increase his social standing. Craig asserted that men such as Gerrior, whose shop he described sarcastically as being in a “classic vicinity,” referring to the nearby upper streets, were inferior to Halifax’s first-class hairdressers. According to Craig, “when a barber solicits 5 cent custom, he generally gets it with a vengeance.” Low prices placed these entrepreneurs “below the youngest apprentices in the craft” whose associates included only “nickle friends.” “Cut prices,” in Craig’s opinion, only resulted in “cut faces.” In conclusion, Craig hoped that Gerrior’s shaving was of better quality than his poetry.<sup>93</sup>

Despite the belligerent attack on his reputation as a barber, Gerrior was assured of his own respectability as an honest working man. Indeed, Gerrior was not the stereotypical working-class barber. His lyrical advertisements suggested a degree of literary proficiency whom other proprietors in his class would not have achieved. In 1883, he advised all gentlemen to “Remember well and bear in mind / That good barbers are hard to find; / But if you find them good and true, / Never change the old for new.”<sup>94</sup> A second notice,

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<sup>92</sup> *AR*, 4 Feb. 1884, 3; and 9 Feb. 1884, 2.

<sup>93</sup> *AR*, 6 Feb. 1884, 2. Craig’s father had been a labourer. Six years before the union formed, Craig was the proprietor of a hair salon and fancy goods shop on Dartmouth’s Ochterloney Street. *McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory*, 1875-6.

<sup>94</sup> *AR*, 8 Feb. 1883, 3.

appearing three months later, recommended the following:

Whene'er you want an easy shave,  
As good as Barber ever gave,  
Just call on me at my Saloon,  
At morning, eve or busy noon.  
I'll cut and comb your hair with grace,  
To suit the contour of your face;  
My shears are sharp and razors keen,  
My shop is neat and always clean.  
And everything, I think you'll find,  
To suit the taste and please the mind.<sup>95</sup>

Although Gerrior never became known as a first-class hairdresser, he did make a success of his business. Gerrior's shop stayed open from the mid-1870s to the Great War, provided three children with apprenticeship and employment, and prepared at least one son for eventual business ownership.<sup>96</sup>

While working-class barbers may have been an easy target for union members, Craig had a more difficult time defending the goals of the association when a handful of middle-class hairdressers reverted to seven-cent shaves. These hairdressers may have harboured fears over lost revenue, but they also believed the union price unfair to loyal clients. Frederick Deroche, a first-class 'tonorial artist' on Upper Water Street with equally talented employees, became the first member to abandon the ten-cent circuit and proudly advertised

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<sup>95</sup> *AR*, 17 May 1883, 2.

<sup>96</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1876-7 to 1921. Throughout his career, Gerrior's shop moved many times, including locations on the streets of Lower Water, Barrington, Sackville, and Pleasant. After the turn of the twentieth century, his business employed sons Daniel and James, as well as daughter Beatrice. A grocery had been added to his hairdressing business in 1913. Gerrior's son, Daniel Jr., became a grocer by 1916, with no further listing given for his father.

this fact in the local press.<sup>97</sup> Jeffrey Terrio, also on Upper Water Street, became the second proprietor to flee the organization, an organization which had appointed him as its first secretary. Satisfied with his decision, Terrio explained in a letter to the editor, "I have always thrived well under the old tariff and paid better wages than the average Unionist."<sup>98</sup> With the desertion of such important members, Craig could only argue that opposition to the association resulted from the influence of two or three "foreigners," specifically the French man Deroche.<sup>99</sup>

In less than a month after its formation, the Halifax and Dartmouth hairdressing union had succeeded in widening the gap between various barbers and creating a more complicated hierarchy of prices. Both results had been unexpected by union members who at first sought to accomplish the opposite of goals. Throughout the bitter debates among feuding "knights of the razor," differing perceptions of respectability emerged. The factors of price, quality, location, clientele, and ethnicity all contributed to the meaning of legitimacy, but each participant had his own definition of what it meant to be a legitimate business person and what constituted an adequate profit. Each hairdresser, whether charging five, seven, or ten cents a shave, had his own belief concerning what was good for the trade and what entailed proper service to the public.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> *AR*, 5 Feb. 1884, 3.

<sup>98</sup> *AR*, 7 Feb. 1884, 3; 8 Feb. 1884, 3; and 13 Feb. 1884, 2.

<sup>99</sup> *AR*, 11 Feb. 1884, 2; and 13 Feb. 1884, 2.

<sup>100</sup> For additional information, see *AR*, 5 Feb. 1884, 3; 8 Feb. 1884, 2-3; 18 Feb. 1884, 2; and *MC*, triweekly, 9 Feb. 1884, 3. Barbers would not attempt union again until 1907 when they established the Journeyman Barbers' International Union of America,

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, Halifax shopkeepers in additional fields organized a series of formal trade associations. Unlike their counterparts in the liquor and hairdressing trades who attempted formal cooperation in the 1870s and 1880s, the appearance of a national and local trade press catering to the lines of grocery, dry goods, and general storekeeping, partly motivated retailers to establish associations. Even with the encouragement of these commercial journals, associations formed only when local retailers were ready to initiate formal collaboration. Despite the influence of the trade press, the new retail associations of the 1890s proved just as transitory as cooperative efforts from earlier decades.

Trade papers, such as the *Canadian Grocer*, *Dry Goods Review*, and *Maritime Merchant*, not only promoted professionalization through advice on proper business practices, as explained in Chapter Three, but also encouraged cooperation among retailers through the establishment of formal associations.<sup>101</sup> While each journal sought to stimulate cooperation by reporting on successful trade organizations in Canada, Britain and the United States, reports on associational activities involving the Toronto Retail Grocers' Association, particularly served as a model to promote cooperation among fellow traders.<sup>102</sup> National papers even pushed for national associations, while Maritime journals supported the creation

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Local 258 (Halifax). *MH*, 24 Aug. 1907, 10; and Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, *Souvenir Booklet: Twenty-fourth Convention of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada* (Halifax: McAlpine, 1908).

<sup>101</sup> See Chapter Three, 178, 186, 203-6.

<sup>102</sup> By 1889, the journal had become the association's official organ. See *CG*, 4 Jan. 1889, 1.

of regional branches.<sup>103</sup> Observing that labour, farmer and industrial interests were all combining, one journalist declared that, "Society is becoming an aggregate of associations rather than individuals. This is a time when common interests need to organize to hold their own."<sup>104</sup>

While the influence of these local and national publications certainly played a part in the formation of associations uniting Halifax grocers and dry goods dealers, not all proprietors in these lines were welcome as members. For the most part, organizers included male retailers recognized in the commercial press and the community as leading business proprietors within their trade. They ran profitable businesses from up-to-date shops and generally furnished Halifax's middle-class population with the goods necessary for maintaining respectable status.<sup>105</sup> Members whose businesses were located in predominantly working-class neighbourhoods, possessed reputations as hard working and reliable proprietors who owned progressive shops catering to the most respectable members of the lower classes. Moreover, several members of these associations had connections to the municipal government through their past, present or future service as city aldermen. Retail organizations even forged ties with provincial officials through their involvement in the same trade, or through a common concern with the promotion of Halifax business. Despite the

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<sup>103</sup> See, for example, *CG*, 31 July 1891, 1; 2 Oct. 1891, 1; and *MG*, 9 Aug. 1894, 2.

<sup>104</sup> *CG*, 25 April 1890, 1.

<sup>105</sup> For a gendered discussion of Halifax's middle-class consumption patterns prior to this period, see Janet Guildford, "'Whate'er the duty of the hour demands': The Work of Middle-Class Women in Halifax, 1840-1880," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, XXX, 59 (May 1997): 1-20.

presence of female grocers and dry goods dealers throughout Halifax, women did not play a part in the formation or continued existence of these associations, whatever their own reputations, clientele or class status.

Retail grocers established two associations in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the first of which may have been at the insistence of a South End grocer who had heard rumours of a similar organization in Toronto. Although the national trade press for grocery and general storekeeping was not widely circulated in Nova Scotia until the early 1890s, W. James Forrestall from the middle-class district of Spring Gardens had already noted its appearance. In 1889, Forrestall wrote a letter to organized grocers in Toronto asking for copies of the trade paper and advice on establishing an association. Forrestall believed that Spring Garden Road grocers were the “proper ones” to take initiative in the matter since they had successfully sustained an early closing agreement for an unprecedented two years.<sup>106</sup> Within one year of Forrestall’s contact with Toronto, Halifax grocers had established a union.

In August 1890, approximately seventeen grocers, well known to the trade and to their communities, met to discuss their need for union.<sup>107</sup> James A. Gass, the association’s first president, owned a large business in fine groceries and glassware, selling only on a cash basis.<sup>108</sup> H. P. Hopgood, a successful Spring Garden Road grocer and feed dealer who later

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<sup>106</sup> *CG*, 11 April 1889, 2-3.

<sup>107</sup> *MC*, 3 Aug. 1890, reference from McKay.

<sup>108</sup> *CG*, 10 June 1892, 4; and 27 Sept. 1895, 33. R. G. Dun and Company estimated Gass’s worth to be between \$5,000 and \$10,000, making him a relatively wealthy grocer. Less than one-quarter of the grocers given an estimation in 1890 were

invested in Labrador minerals and timber, was also present.<sup>109</sup> Another participant, W. E. Crowe, was a popular Gottingen Street cash grocer, a member of the Oddfellows and later a part owner in a confectionery and shoe factory.<sup>110</sup> At least two others, H. V. Wier and Andrew A. Hubley, served as city aldermen in the 1890s.<sup>111</sup> By 1892, the association's membership had grown from 55 to 70 grocers, representing approximately one-quarter of the city's trade.<sup>112</sup> Despite women comprising approximately one-third of Halifax retail grocers, women were noticeably absent from meetings and social events, either as grocers themselves or as the wives of grocers.<sup>113</sup> Notwithstanding the influence of important commercial, associational, and political allies, as illustrated by participants of the sleigh rides, the organization was defunct by 1894 from poor attendance at monthly meetings and inner

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worth above \$10,000. Approximately two-thirds were listed as being worth less than \$5,000, most of whom were less than \$2,000. *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, July 1890.

<sup>109</sup> *Our Dominion*, 64-5; *MM*, 13 May 1897, 27; and 28 April 1898, 50.

<sup>110</sup> *MM*, 20 Aug. 1896, 32; 21 Jan. 1897, 18; 10 June 1897, 28; and 15 Sept. 1898, 76.

<sup>111</sup> According to *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, Wier served as the Ward Two alderman from 1891-2 until 1893-4, and Hubley served as the Ward Four alderman from 1892-3 to 1900-1.

<sup>112</sup> *AR*, 4 Aug. 1891, 3; and 23 Feb. 1892, 3. In the mid-1890s, Halifax's retail grocers included at least 262 proprietors. *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1895-6, 578-80. According to the manuscript census of 1891, Ward Three and Ward Five contained 115 grocers. See Appendix A, Table A.1.

<sup>113</sup> In 1891, women shopkeepers comprised 31.3 percent of grocers living and operating within the city centre and a portion of the North End (36 women from a total of 115 grocers). *CG*, 4 March 1892, 4; and Appendix A, Table A.1.

quarrels.<sup>114</sup>

In January 1896, the *Maritime Grocer* believed “the best class of grocerymen” would agree to reorganize since “united action wins where individual effort fails.”<sup>115</sup> By February, grocers established an association with W. E. Crowe as president. In an attempt to recruit more suitable members, Halifax grocers invited their counterparts from across the harbour to join, creating the Halifax-Dartmouth Retail Grocers' Association with a beginning membership of 50.<sup>116</sup> Editor I. C. Stewart of the commercial press became the organization's secretary, and the paper, now renamed the *Maritime Merchant*, became the society's official organ.<sup>117</sup> Additional members of the executive included grocers well-known to the previous association, such as directors W. J. Hopgood and H. V. Wier. M. H. Ruggles, a third director who sold groceries and crockeryware directly opposite the former president's shop in the city centre, had been a Halifax alderman from the late 1880s and early 1890s.<sup>118</sup> Additional grocers even included W. A. Adams, the association's second vice president, who sold “choice family groceries, fruit, and confectionery” in the northern suburbs adjacent to the

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<sup>114</sup> *MG*, 13 July 1893, 4; and *CG*, 7 Feb. 1896, 28. See above for an account of the first sleigh ride, and *MG*, 26 Jan. 1893, 3 for a similar account of the second annual outing.

<sup>115</sup> *MG*, 23 Jan. 1896, 8. As early as 1894 the editor had suggested that William E. Crowe call a meeting of Halifax grocers. *MG*, 13 Dec. 1894, 1.

<sup>116</sup> *CG*, 28 Feb. 1896, 28.

<sup>117</sup> *MM*, 20 Feb. 1896, 27; *CG*, 28 Feb. 1896, 28; and *MM*, 19 March 1896, 27. Stewart was not a retail grocer, but he had worked as a traveller in the local grocery trade. See *MG*, 13 July 1893, 1; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2.

<sup>118</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1888-9 to 1890-1, 1896-7; and *CG*, 10 June 1892, 4. For more on Ruggles, see Chapter Three, 187-8.



working-class district of Ward Six. Although in a less favourable district, contemporaries noted how Adams' progressive shop had become a credit to the neighbourhood.<sup>119</sup> Aside from press support and encouragement from the wholesale trade, old problems emerged, causing the association to lapse by the end of the year.<sup>120</sup>

Within four years of the appearance of the *Dry Goods Review*, prominent men in the lines of dry goods, millinery, footwear, hats and caps, tailoring, and gentlemen's furnishings, also established a formal organization known as the Halifax Retail Dry Goods Association.<sup>121</sup> E. T. Mahon, of Mahon Brothers, became the association's first president. Contemporaries acknowledged his firm as the largest and most profitable retail dry goods house in Halifax. Its location on Barrington Street, an elegant shopping district of the city centre since the mid-1870s, further testified to the firm's prominence.<sup>122</sup> The association's vice president, C. S. Lane, was a leading Halifax hatter and furrier doing business in the older middle-class district of Granville Street. Lane, a very popular man among fellow traders and the

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<sup>119</sup> According to the *AR*, 7 June 1888, 3, Adams had recently added plate glass windows, a Queen Anne style window, and an extra story. See also *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1901-2.

<sup>120</sup> The last mention of the association's activities occurred in September 1896. See *MM*, 17 Sept. 1896, 20.

<sup>121</sup> *DGR* (Toronto) 5, 5 (May 1895): 40; and *MG*, 13 June 1895, 4.

<sup>122</sup> *Our Dominion*, 99-100; *A Guide to the City of Halifax, N. S. 1884 and 1885* (Halifax: Wm. McNab, 1884), 5; *MH*, triweekly, 23 Dec. 1875, 2; and *MM*, 7 May 1903, 28. In 1890, R.G. Dun and Company estimated the worth of Mahon Bros. to be between \$40,000 and \$75,000. See *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, July 1890.

community in general, served as a city alderman throughout the decade.<sup>123</sup> Treasurer W. L. Kane, the partner of a young and prosperous firm, was also well known and respected within his community. Kane had been a veteran of the Northwest Rebellion and served in Halifax's 63rd Rifles.<sup>124</sup> An additional member of the retail association's first executive included director W. B. Freeman, a former commercial traveller turned dry goods retailer who operated the aforementioned "People's Store" with partner James McPherson. This popular shop on the busy retail street of Gottingen, offered moderate prices to its respectable patrons. A year after the association's establishment, the partners opened a new store which the *Dry Goods Review* heralded, with some exaggeration, as the fanciest shop in the Maritimes.<sup>125</sup>

Membership was selective in the Halifax Retail Dry Goods Association, as it had been in the two trade societies uniting grocers. By 1896, organized dealers numbered only 35, representing a small proportion of Halifax's trade. At that date, according to the *Dry Goods Review*, 53 retail dry goods proprietors were doing business in the city, along with 37 milliners, 16 hat and cap dealers, 29 shopkeepers selling gentlemen's furnishings, and several ready-made clothing dealers.<sup>126</sup> Women were particularly conspicuous in their

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<sup>123</sup> Lane served as the alderman for Ward Four between 1892 and 1894, as well as the alderman for Ward Three from 1895 until 1901. His election victory in 1895 produced the largest majority ever polled for an alderman in Halifax up to that date. See *CG*, 24 May 1895, 10; *DGR* 5, 5 (May 1895): 40; *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1892-3 to 1901; *MH*, 2 July 1880, 1; *AR*, 8 June 1889, 2; and *MM*, 7 May 1903, 28.

<sup>124</sup> *DGR* 6, 2 (Feb. 1896): 48.

<sup>125</sup> *Our Dominion*, 92; *AR*, 13 April 1892, 3; and *DGR* 6, 7 (July 1896): 32. See also Chapter Three, 206-7.

<sup>126</sup> *DGR* 6, 2 (Feb. 1896): 48.

absence from the association's activities and membership even though this form of self-employed retailing represented the most common occupation among Halifax's female shopkeepers.<sup>127</sup> Although prestigious publications and credit agencies gave a nod of respect to Halifax's female dealers, their fellow traders did not think them worthy of participation in formal organizations.<sup>128</sup>

In spite of the influence of persuasive trade journals, Halifax's retail grocers and dry goods shopkeepers embarked on projects requiring formal collaboration for a wide variety of reasons. Even with encouragement from journal editors, retailers combined only when local conditions made the strategy desirable. Local and national papers, for example, spent two years urging Halifax grocers to reorganize before former members finally took action.<sup>129</sup> Since shopkeepers formed associations to seek recognition as professionals and the elimination of illegitimate competition at a time of financial difficulties and altered commercial structures, associations promoted the sharing of trade secrets and the fostering of mutual goodwill, while excluding mere dabblers in the trade.

Haligonian grocers, despite their problems at maintaining a single association, were most successful at sharing information which would contribute to the health of the trade and the prosperity of fellow members. When grocers combined in 1890 and 1896, organizers

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<sup>127</sup> See Chapter One, 65.

<sup>128</sup> See Chapter Two, 103-6. For additional information on Halifax's nineteenth-century female dry goods dealers, see Guildford, "'Whate'er the duty of the hour demands.'"

<sup>129</sup> *MG*, 28 June 1894, 4; 23 Aug. 1894, 6; 13 Dec. 1894, 1; 23 Jan. 1896, 8; and *CG*, 25 Oct. 1895, 28.

identified the regulation of credit as one motivation for formal cooperative action.<sup>130</sup> Members controlled the granting of credit to consumers by compiling a list of delinquent customers unwilling or unable to pay their grocery bills. The delinquent list, published and distributed only for the benefit of members, effectively barred unreliable consumers from purchasing supplies at the shops of fellow associates. By 1892, the “black list” contained approximately 80 names.<sup>131</sup>

Leading retailers also formed associations to advance goodwill among members. Although the *Canadian Grocer* warned against evenings spent wording compliments to one another at the expense of discussing pressing trade matters, scheduled social activities helped reduce petty jealousies, while forging business and political contacts.<sup>132</sup> Grocers fraternized on a grand scale with fellow traders and government officials when they revived the annual tradition of Halifax’s mid-Victorian associations--the ever-popular sleigh ride to Bedford. In 1892 and 1893, retail grocers organized the aforementioned sleigh rides from Halifax, stopping for an evening of celebration in a fashionable Bedford hotel.<sup>133</sup>

Similarly, organized retailers regulated internal competition to promote cooperation. The establishment of voluntary price controls became one strategy for association executives

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<sup>130</sup> *MC*, 3 Aug. 1890, 3, reference from McKay; *MG*, 6 Feb. 1896, 8; and *MM*, 19 March 1896, 27.

<sup>131</sup> *CG*, 26 Aug. 1892, 12.

<sup>132</sup> *CG*, 29 April 1892, 1.

<sup>133</sup> For descriptions of similar events attended by Halifax’s fledgling middle class at mid-century, see David Sutherland, “Voluntary Societies and the Process of Middle-class Formation in Early-Victorian Halifax, Nova Scotia,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* (1994): 237-57.

to limit the damage of internal rivalry. A cause of concern for the city's retail grocery trade, for example, became the price of cheap staples. Many grocers sold sugar as a "loss leader," meaning that retailers sold it at unprofitable prices to attract the business of consumers. Trade journals denounced the cheap price of such staples as a waste of a potentially profitable business.<sup>134</sup> After the federal government reduced the tariff on sugar in 1891, organized grocers agreed to regulate the price of the staple to ensure an adequate profit.<sup>135</sup> The resulting fiasco destroyed the previous harmony of the young association and its goals towards professionalization.

Other than voluntary price controls, trade associations attempted to reduce rivalry among members through the revival of Halifax's former early closing movement. The 1890s campaign to reduce shop hours not only solicited the support from members within each association, but also involved collaboration between various organizations. "Before-Eight Closers" first used moral suasion to achieve their goals, then requested state regulation when voluntary action failed.

Associated grocers first revived the early closing movement when 49 retail grocers and an additional 134 shopkeepers signed a round robin petition to close their businesses from Monday to Thursday at 8:00 p.m., effective January 1892. This plan would reduce the working hours of clerks and shop owners from the usual gruelling 12 to 14 hour days. Retailers accomplished an important coup when they gained the working-class support of the Trades and Labour Council of Halifax. Peter F. Martin, the Council's president,

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<sup>134</sup> See, for example, *CG*, 10 July 1891, 1.

<sup>135</sup> *AR*, 1 July 1891, 3.

encouraged the wives, sisters, and mothers of labouring members to purchase goods only from participating shopkeepers. Surprised by this impressive show of solidarity, the *Canadian Grocer* congratulated Halifax retailers for their zeal and diplomacy, while lamenting the need for such action in other Canadian cities.<sup>136</sup>

Cooperation among various retailers and supposed unity with respectable working-class tradesmen could not prevent the collapse of the early closing movement by early spring when many shopkeepers expressed their inability to continue profitably.<sup>137</sup> In fact, as early as January, dissension surfaced when one grocer felt threatened by Martin's usurpation of the campaign and his plan to boycott unparticipating shopkeepers, a strategy he had used previously to further the interests of working-class consumers.<sup>138</sup> To make matters worse, organized grocers expressed their desire for early closing to be in part a strategy to attract the business of a better class of shoppers. This previously hidden agenda, reported in the national trade press, snubbed the important support provided by Martin's constituents.<sup>139</sup>

Three years later, Halifax's early closing movement passed from the hands of the defunct grocers' association to the yet unorganized dry goods dealers. In January 1895, at the insistence of a determined female dry goods clerk, approximately 50 shopkeepers and

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<sup>136</sup> *CG*, 15 Jan. 1892, 3; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2. Martin previously ran unsuccessfully for the position as a North End aldermen in the 1880s with the support of the Amalgamated Trades Union. Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*, 107.

<sup>137</sup> *AR*, 23 March 1892, 2.

<sup>138</sup> *AR*, 8 Jan. 1892, 2.

<sup>139</sup> *CG*, 22 April 1892, 8.

employees met to discuss drafting legislation similar to that found in Ontario which permitted early closing if three-quarters of the shopkeepers in a particular line agreed to do so.<sup>140</sup> Within a month, a bill came before the Nova Scotia legislature which would regulate the closing hour of most shops as well as reduce the number of hours worked by young clerks. Early closing, regulated by the government in this manner, would inconvenience working-class consumers who frequently shopped at night thereby destroying the livelihood of “small shopkeepers who have their residences over their places of business and very often a porch or living room opening in the shop.”<sup>141</sup> The bill failed to pass intact when a few prominent dry goods dealers joined the growing opposition from small retailers. The ensuing legislation, therefore, only limited the hours of employment for children working as clerks in non-family-owned establishments.<sup>142</sup>

One year later, the reorganized grocers’ association combined forces with the now united dry goods dealers to lobby the municipal government for the Halifax Shops’ Regulation Act.<sup>143</sup> Although successfully passed in February 1896, the ordinance’s many loopholes rendered it largely ineffective. The new legislation applied to both wholesale and retail businesses, but excluded drug stores, tobacco shops, hotels, restaurants, and even the prolific fruit and candy stores. If agreed to by three-quarters of the trade through local

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<sup>140</sup> *AR*, 23 Jan. 1895, 3; and *DGR* 5, 2 (Feb. 1895): 15.

<sup>141</sup> *AR*, 19 Feb. 1895, 2; 20 Feb. 1895, 3; and *MG*, 21 March 1895, 4.

<sup>142</sup> *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1895, c. 17; and *DGR* 5, 7 (July 1895): 32.

<sup>143</sup> *AR*, 31 Jan. 1896, 2, reference from McKay; and *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1896, c. 29.

petitions, hours could be limited only for three days a week, and not during the busy shopping and shipping seasons of Christmas and spring. Despite the legislation's weak points, petitions circulated immediately from opposing shopkeepers, especially from Gottingen Street grocers who catered to a working-class trade within the North End.<sup>144</sup> After leading members of the dry goods association unsuccessfully pushed a revised ordinance through City Council in March of the same year, the movement foundered. The ever-growing resistance from shopkeepers personally offended or financially worried by mandatory early closing made the campaign impossible to continue.<sup>145</sup>

Whereas associations formed to control competition among members, retailers also organized to eliminate competition from outside sources, particularly suppliers who sold directly to consumers. Halifax's grocers were the most adamant against wholesalers and manufacturers sidestepping usual distribution patterns. When grocers united forces in 1890 and 1896, leading members of the trade expressed specific concern over suppliers who combined both wholesale and retail departments.<sup>146</sup> In 1891, wholesalers tried to smooth relations between themselves and retailers by sending their formal approval for the establishment of the new Halifax Retail Grocers' Association. Members, however, promptly arranged a boycott of all suppliers interfering with the legitimate trade of the retail grocer.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> *AR*, 24 Feb. 1896, 3, reference from McKay.

<sup>145</sup> *DGR* 6, 3 (March 1896): 14.

<sup>146</sup> *CG*, 11 April 1889, 2-3; *MC*, 3 Aug. 1890, 3, reference from McKay; and *MG*, 6 Feb. 1896, 8.

<sup>147</sup> *CG*, 12 June 1891, 8.



Wholesalers who supplied the city's numerous hotels and boarding houses, as well as manufacturers selling baking powder directly to consumers, particularly raised the ire of many shopkeepers.<sup>148</sup>

Halifax wholesalers increasingly trespassed upon the business of retailers because their own shops experienced diminishing financial returns resulting in part from improved transportation facilities which disturbed traditional distribution patterns. Manufacturers began neglecting wholesalers as the usual go-between, preferring instead to supply retailers and the public directly. Large retail houses, dry goods establishments in particular, also neglected the wholesaler by importing goods directly. Moreover, by the 1890s with better transportation networks, the city's wholesale merchants faced further trade rivalry from their counterparts in prosperous provincial towns such as Windsor, additional Maritime centres such as Saint John, and rapidly expanding Central Canadian cities such as Montreal and Toronto. Reacting to the frustrations of both wholesalers and retailers, trade journals backed the boycotts organized by retailers, but reminded associations they must obtain shop goods from local suppliers.<sup>149</sup>

Although suppliers offered encouragement to retailers through their promotion of trade journals and formal collaboration, albeit for selfish reasons, retailers in the 1890s often preferred to distance themselves from the wholesale trade and manufacturing industry. Leading retailers from the grocery and dry goods business promoted this strategy to distinguish their work as a separate and legitimate profession. In fact, retailers resisted

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<sup>148</sup> *CG*, 13 Feb 1891, 3; *MM*, 16 April 1896, 28; and 14 May 1896, 27.

<sup>149</sup> See, for example, *MG*, 4 April 1895, 6.

advice from the *Maritime Grocer* to affiliate their associations with the Halifax Board of Trade, an organization largely dominated by wholesalers, shippers, and manufacturers.<sup>150</sup>

Even with the initial enthusiasm to advance mutual concerns on a fraternal basis, formal cooperative ventures launched during the 1890s proved transitory. While grocers failed to sustain a single organization during the decade, Halifax's dry goods association quickly disappeared from view after only one year. Poor attendance at monthly meetings often plagued trade organizations, although most members attended scheduled social outings. As early as 1893, the first grocers' association experienced chronic poor attendance when even the well-to-do grocers of Halifax's South End neglected meetings.<sup>151</sup> When grocers reorganized in 1896, they frequently failed to establish a quorum, making the discussion of important matters impossible.<sup>152</sup> Furthermore, both associations fell apart soon after a failed joint meeting between grocers and dry goods dealers in 1896. Only three retailers attended the event from a possible 15 who had expressed interest in pursuing inter-trade cooperation.<sup>153</sup>

Besides a general apathy for the dry discussion of trade matters, the unwritten exclusionary policies of both associations contributed to their eventual demise. Although grocers tried to increase membership, executive leaders did so always with an eye to attract

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<sup>150</sup> See, for instance, *MG*, 13 June 1895, 4. Although the first grocers' association had collapsed by this date, Halifax's leading dry goods dealers were united in cooperative action, as were the city's dealers in hardware.

<sup>151</sup> *MG*, 13 July 1893, 4.

<sup>152</sup> *MM*, 23 July 1896, 27; and 6 Aug. 1896, 27.

<sup>153</sup> *MM*, 17 Sept. 1896, 20.

the most prominent retailers. Halifax grocers followed this strategy when they opened their association to leading victuallers in 1891 and Dartmouth grocers in 1896.<sup>154</sup> Similarly, the city's dry goods association opened its membership to a variety of retailers selling textiles and clothing. Efforts to increase membership aside, both organizations captured only a small percentage of their respective trades. When grocers revived formal cooperative action in 1896 by inviting their counterparts in Dartmouth to affiliate, only 50 retailers joined ranks, a number far less than the previous association's membership of 70 in 1892.<sup>155</sup> Likewise, the Halifax Retail Dry Goods Association attracted only one-quarter of the city's eligible retailers in that line.<sup>156</sup>

Rival definitions of what constituted a legitimate retail business, however, became the crucial factor in the downfall of formal collaboration during the 1890s. The aforementioned early closing movement pitted prosperous shopkeepers of the Halifax middle class against small storekeepers providing goods to the city's less affluent population. The campaign also highlighted differing opinions concerning hours of operation and the resulting status of respectability for each retailer. Meanwhile, boycotts against wholesalers who sold at retail revealed tensions over the meaning of fair business practices within the same commercial line as well as anxiety over increasingly altered patterns of distribution. Fuelled

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<sup>154</sup> *CG*, 12 June 1891, 4, 8; *MG*, 23 Jan. 1896, 8; and *MM*, 20 Feb. 1896, 27.

<sup>155</sup> In the mid-1890s, at least 262 retail grocers were operating in Halifax, not including those proprietors located in Dartmouth. These figures indicate that less than 19 percent of the trade from both cities had organized. *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1895-6, 578-80.

<sup>156</sup> *DGR* 6, 2 (Feb. 1896): 48.

in part by a hostile public, conflicts also arose among prominent members of trade associations when disagreement surfaced over what entailed a legitimate profit of staple products. Such dissension occurred during the Halifax sugar scandal of 1891 which destroyed the illusory harmony of the first grocers' association, illustrating the many conflicts created by competing definitions of legitimacy.

During the spring of 1891, federal officials significantly lowered the import tariff on refined sugar, motivating suppliers to reduce the wholesale price, and prompting several retailers to pass the bargain on to consumers. Shopkeepers such as H. V. Wier, began selling refined sugar for a profit of only 10 percent by retailing 20 pounds (approximately 9 kilograms) for one dollar. Working-class consumers, who usually purchased less refined sweeteners, now benefited from cheaper prices, while housekeepers in general looked forward to preserving extra jars of summer fruits. Many associated grocers quickly became concerned with the use of sugar as an even cheaper loss leader than previously and worried over possible price cutting. In June of the same year, grocers met to consider voluntary price controls to ensure a living profit from the sale of this important household staple.

After attacking prominent members such as Wier for demoralizing the trade, the association decided to regulate the consumer price of granulated sugar to six cents a pound (0.5 kilograms) or one dollar for every 17 pounds (approximately 8 kilograms). The less refined brown sugar would be sold for one cent less per pound up to a maximum of 50 pounds (approximately 23 kilograms). Unlike refined sweeteners, individual retailers could sell larger amounts of brown sugar at their own discretion. The agreement therefore ensured

grocers within the association to earn a 25 percent profit.<sup>157</sup>

The ensuing grocers' combine not only created friction between individual association members, but also resulted in an immediate public outcry through the local media. Papers published editorials, conducted interviews, and wrote reports showing public opinion to be at a "fever heat."<sup>158</sup> Not surprisingly, given that the federal Conservatives had passed anti-combine legislation in 1889, the leading opponent of the affiliated grocers became Halifax's Tory organ, the *Morning Herald*.<sup>159</sup> Writers from the *Herald* raged over what they perceived as the grocers' act of betrayal, reminding members and the public of the association's promise in the previous year not to initiate price controls. Professing to speak for the unanimous opinion of all consumers, the paper's editor stated that the organization made a grievous error in strategy and would no doubt drive a large amount of trade from the city. Aiding in the alienation of these grocers' clientele, the *Herald* suggested consumers boycott associated grocers, purchase sugar from enterprising peddlers, cooperate to buy supplies in bulk from wholesalers, or establish a cooperative store.<sup>160</sup>

One day following the paper's virulent attack on the Retail Grocers' Association, an

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<sup>157</sup> *MH*, 30 June 1891, 2; *AR*, 30 June 1891, 3; 1 July 1891, 3; and *MH*, 3 July 1891, 3.

<sup>158</sup> *CG*, 24 July 1891, 1.

<sup>159</sup> The city's affiliated grocers had technically committed an illegal act by combining against the interest of customers. Unlike American legislation from the same period, Canada's anti-combine regulations were weak and rarely enforced. For Canadian anti-combine laws, see Michael Bliss, "Another Anti-Trust Tradition: Canadian Anti-Combines Policy, 1889-1910," *Business History Review* XLVII, 2 (Summer 1973): 177-88.

<sup>160</sup> *MH*, 1 July 1891, 3; and 3 July 1891, 3.

advertisement announced the opening of "The Halifax Co-operative Sugar Company." P. Farquahar, the shop's manager and an employee with a prominent baking and confectionery firm, proudly claimed that "This store is / Owned by the People, / Operated by the People, / Patronized by the People." Farquahar's inexpensive prices caused a rush on opening day since he offered the public 20 pounds (approximately 9 kilograms) of granulated sugar for one dollar cash and 24 pounds (approximately 11 kilograms) of brown sugar for the same price.<sup>161</sup> Faced with stiff competition, a large majority of members from the grocers' association voted to continue their agreement despite dire warnings from the *Herald* and concern from the *Canadian Grocer*. After only five days, however, Halifax's cooperative sugar store closed once the price of sugar increased when both wholesalers and Canadian refineries established combines to safeguard their own profits.<sup>162</sup> Thus, the combine launched by Halifax's associated grocers outlasted its most formidable opposition, yet, the union's success remained only a pyrrhic victory. Wier, a city alderman and original secretary to the association, tendered his resignation during the combine fiasco and returned to selling sugar at a price he considered fair to his valued customers and legitimate for making a commercial profit.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> *AR*, 4 July 1891, 2; *MH*, 6 July 1891, 3; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1891-2. Farquahar worked as the head packer for Moir and Son. It is unknown if a further connection between the sugar cooperative and this well-known firm existed.

<sup>162</sup> *AR*, 7 July 1891, 3; 16 July 1891, 3; and *CG*, 24 July 1891, 1. For information on grocery wholesale and sugar refinery combinations in Central Canada during the 1880s and early 1890s, see Bliss, "The Flight from Competition," in *The Living Profit*, 33-54.

<sup>163</sup> *AR*, 4 Aug. 1891, 3.

Even if retail associations in Halifax's most competitive trades collapsed by the mid-1890s, individual proprietors continued to combine on an ad-hoc basis when circumstances necessitated cooperation. Campaigns against trading stamps at the turn of the twentieth century, for instance, united a disparate group of retailers, wholesalers, and manufacturers against what they considered an illegitimate practice. Although many middle-class shopkeepers demonstrated greater concern for fighting retail-specific battles during the early 1890s, many proprietors disregarded their own differences by participating in a wider movement to ban an innovative scheme fostered by an outsider.

In the late 1890s, newcomer N. M. Shimberg established the Halifax Trading Stamp Company on Granville Street. Shimberg's venture, a gift-giving scheme for Haligonian consumers, involved participating retailers who supplied customers with trading stamps for purchases paid by cash. Shoppers collected these tickets, each stamp representing ten cents, to attain free goods distributed through Shimberg's store. Using one completed book or more of stamps, consumers could choose among an "attractive" stock of dining, bedroom, and office furniture, as well as jewellery, silver-plate, framed pictures, and musical instruments. To take part in this incentive program, the company required retailers to contribute 5 percent of all sales to the operation. In the opinion of Shimberg, the Nova Scotia legislature, and at least one journalist who visited his establishment, all participants gained an advantage by taking part in this competitive strategy. Shimberg profited by the 5 percent payment, retailers benefitted from increased cash sales, and customers appreciated a free gift for shopping with

affiliated proprietors.<sup>164</sup>

Although some residents viewed the scheme with indifference, a large contingent of Haligonians campaigned against its continued practice. Strong supporters of the movement included municipal councillors, moral reform advocates, commercial press editors, and many self-employed residents. During 1898, councillors John F. Ryan, victualler and proprietor of the Colonial Market, and Daniel H. Campbell, wholesale and retail grocer, became the most outspoken aldermen within the City Council. Both men believed that Shimberg's enterprise failed to uphold the principles of "legitimate business," troubled over the "shoddy goods" consumers received, and angered over the resistance of the provincial Lower House to allow the municipality to ban such operations within city boundaries.<sup>165</sup> Halifax's additional aldermen generally shared their concerns, especially since the remaining councillors included eight commercial proprietors, six of whom engaged in retail shopkeeping.<sup>166</sup> Moral reform advocates, led by Rev. Mr. Foster Almon, an Anglican minister who laboured among the lower classes of the North End, additionally worried over consumers who learned something could be gained from nothing.<sup>167</sup> Likewise, the *Canadian Grocer* and *Maritime*

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<sup>164</sup> *AR*, 8 March 1898, 3, reference from McKay; 22 March 1898, 2, reference from McKay; and *MC*, 23 March 1898, 6.

<sup>165</sup> *AR*, 8 March 1898, 3, reference from McKay; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1897-8, 1898-9.

<sup>166</sup> *AR*, 8 March 1898, 3, reference from McKay; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1897-8, 1898-9.

<sup>167</sup> *AR*, 8 March 1898, 3; and Fingard, *The Dark Side of Life*, 129.



*Merchant* criticized greedy customers, exploitive companies, and short-sighted retailers.<sup>168</sup> Contributing to this general opposition, 98 commercial and industrial proprietors, approximately half of whom included retail shopkeepers of goods and services, submitted a petition to the municipality declaring that Shimberg's operation was "injurious to the best interests of legitimate trade." These petitioners further argued that local business people already paid heavy rents and taxes "without contributing to the support of foreigners and irresponsible people."<sup>169</sup>

Concerns over unfair competition can especially be understood through an analysis of petitioning opponents. Significantly, the majority of opposing firms represented main-street operations located in popular shopping districts, namely Barrington and Argyle streets in the city centre, Spring Garden Road in the southern suburbs, and Gottingen Street in the North End. Moreover, approximately 17 petitioners had been featured in an 1887 directory of "representative" business owners, three served as civic aldermen, and several had belonged to the now defunct retail trade associations.<sup>170</sup> As the owners of Halifax's most

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<sup>168</sup> *CG*, 1 July 1898, 13; *MM*, 7 June 1900, 48; and 2 Aug. 1900, 18, 56.

<sup>169</sup> *HH*, 24 March 1898, 2; and Halifax City Council Minutes, 22 March 1898.

<sup>170</sup> *HH*, 24 March 1898, 2; *MM*, 22 Dec. 1898, 18; *McApline's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1; and *Our Dominion*. According to city directories, councillors included Daniel H. Campbell, wholesale and retail grocer who served from 1896 until 1900; G. W. McLellan, wholesale and retail victualler who served in the early 1880s; and George Rent, retail stove dealer who served in the mid-1880s. Previous trade association members included the dry goods dealers Mahon Brothers and McPherson and Freeman, as well as the grocers W. J. Hopgood, William E. Crowe, Edwin R. Wright, E. J. Fenton, Joseph S. Hubley, and W. A. Adams. For membership information on each, see *MM*, 17 Sept. 1896, 20; *DGR* 5, 5 (May 1895): 40; *MM*, 19 March 1896, 27; 5 March 1896, 27; *CG*, 27 Jan. 1893, 12; and *MM*, 14 May 1896, 27.

respected firms, these proprietors were concerned with protecting the principles of what they termed as legitimate enterprise. By contrast, another group of applicants experienced financial constraints at the time of the petition or soon after. By 1900-1, five applicants had failed, two removed their businesses from Halifax, and 12 disappeared for reasons unknown. Another three petitioners had opened their businesses within three years of the 1898 campaign.<sup>171</sup> These failing and recently established proprietors worried most over the dangers of excessive and damaging competition. Additionally, certain retailers probably opposed Shimberg's operation because their shops sold goods he distributed for free. Certainly, William H. Nye, a retailer of musical instruments since 1869, would not have been pleased with the prospect of free mandolins in exchange for only a one-half book of collected stamps.<sup>172</sup> Finally, the petition's attack on Shimberg's status as a "foreigner" reflected the large number of applicants who were British or Canadian-born, many of whom were Nova Scotian. Surprisingly, according to *Our Dominion*, at least one business owner originated from Germany. Carl Palm, the aforementioned respected pork and provision dealer on Gottingen Street, arrived in Halifax by 1872. His willingness to sign a petition attacking entrepreneurs of foreign-birth indicates a distinction made in the business

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<sup>171</sup> *HH*, 24 March 1898, 2; *MM*, 22 Dec. 1898, 18; *McApline's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1; and *Our Dominion*. According to commercial trade papers, petitioners who definitely failed or sold off their shops included A. W. Fuller, H. L. Wallace, Alma J. Hiseler, Thomas Lynch, and Thomas Ellis. *MM*, 7 July 1898, 68; 21 July 1898, 66; 2 Feb. 1899, 68; 25 May 1899, 76; 22 June 1899, 76; and *CG*, 30 June 1899, 34. Those who had recently opened new shops included Harold E. Hosterman, retail dry goods; H. L. Wallace, retail grocer; and A. M. Boutilier and Company, wholesale grocers and commission merchants. See *MM*, 29 April 1897, 56; 1 Oct. 1896, 54; and *CG*, 15 Feb. 1895, 34.

<sup>172</sup> *MC*, 23 March 1898, 6; *HH*, 24 March 1898, 2; and *Our Dominion*, 49.

community between long-standing residents and threatening outsiders, as well as an assault on Shimberg's possible Jewish heritage.<sup>173</sup>

Notwithstanding arguments between the City Council and Nova Scotia Legislature concerning legal jurisdiction, campaigns against Shimberg and the Halifax Trading Company resulted in the firm's closure by the twentieth century. During 1899, the municipality succeeded in passing an ordinance banning the operation of trading stamp companies within city limits which threatened to sentence violators to nine months imprisonment with hard labour. Although local business proprietors lobbied for the bylaw's enforcement, City Council feared its implementation would create further conflict with the provincial government. Instead, the city protected local rate-paying proprietors by requiring Shimberg to pay an operating licence of \$600. Soon after, lack of support within Halifax's business community caused Shimberg to leave the city and announce the firm's closure in 1900.<sup>174</sup> In this manner, retailers successfully combined with additional business leaders to exclude a so-called illegitimate newcomer who challenged the notions of fair competition. Shopkeepers who previously failed to establish permanent trade associations and who attacked suppliers for selling directly to consumers, willingly cooperated with a wide assortment of main-street proprietors to rid the city of an external threat.

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<sup>173</sup> Of the 98 petitioners, place of birth could be identified for 28 names. Of these 28, 21 were Canadian-born, including 20 Nova Scotian-born proprietors. Another five petitioners were British-born, one reported birth in the United States, and one reported German birth. Places of birth were identified from *Our Dominion* and Halifax City Census, Wards Three and Five, for 1881, 1891, and 1901.

<sup>174</sup> Halifax City Council Minutes, 28 Dec. 1898, 17 Jan. 1899, 22 Feb. 1899, 14 Sept. 1899, 16 Aug. 1900; *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1899, c. 57, s. 2; *HH*, 15 Sept. 1899, 1; *MM*, 2 Aug. 1900, 18, 56; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1.

Aside from the continued viability of ad-hoc strategies, many shopkeepers in the late nineteenth century ultimately failed to sustain long-lasting retail associations which could promote professionalization and construct a single definition of legitimacy. Pharmacists, however, were one important exception to the rule. Throughout the period under study, Halifax druggists successfully achieved the dual identity of retailer and professional by the establishment of the Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society in the mid-1870s. Nova Scotian pharmacists, led by prominent druggists operating in Halifax, combined forces to protect their trade from medical interference during the economic depression after 1873, as well as to raise their calling to the status of an expert. At a time when many late-Victorians regarded science as the ultimate basis for bourgeois progress, druggists succeeded in these goals where other retailers had failed, since the trade of pharmacy was closely linked to the scientific fields of both medicine and chemistry.<sup>175</sup>

Several Haligonian druggists had cooperated on an ad-hoc basis in the 1860s to promote voluntary early closing, but pharmacists did not generally collaborate on trade

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<sup>175</sup> For the development of pharmacy in Canada as a separate profession within the field of medicine, see R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, *Professional Gentlemen: The Professions in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 221-2; R. J. Clark, "Professional Aspirations and the Limits of Occupational Autonomy: The Case of Pharmacy in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 8, 1 (1991): 43-63; and Ernst W. Stieb, "A Professional Keeping Shop: The Nineteenth-Century Apothecary," *Material History Bulletin* 22 (1985): 1-10. For the importance of science to further material progress in Canada's Victorian age, see Suzanne Zeller, *Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); *Land of Promise, Promised Land: The Culture of Victorian Science in Canada*, Canadian Historical Association Historical Booklet No. 56 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1996), 19; and Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

matters until the mid-1870s when the province's medical profession attempted to usurp control.<sup>176</sup> In the early nineteenth century, medical practitioners represented Halifax's only dispensers of drugs. Not until the mid-century did the city's first non-medical pharmacists appear.<sup>177</sup> Meanwhile, city physicians established a medical society in 1853 and helped develop a self-regulated profession by 1872. Soon after, several non-medical druggists became conscious of their emerging identity and demonstrated anxiety over protecting the incipient drug trade from a medical field recently professionalized.<sup>178</sup>

Halifax pharmacists were not the only Canadian retailers of drugs facing jeopardy by the 1870s. In Ontario, druggists primarily from Toronto organized the Canadian Pharmaceutical Society which began publishing a national trade journal in 1868. The *Canadian Pharmaceutical Journal* worked towards the general improvement of trade matters through the promotion of both business and scientific training, while campaigning for nation-wide legislation regulating the sale of poisons and creating a self-managing national pharmaceutical board. The society abandoned these national aims in 1870 when it became the Ontario College of Pharmacy in anticipation of the province's first pharmacy

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<sup>176</sup> For the druggist early closing movement, see *EE*, 18 July 1862, 3; and G. A. White, *Halifax and its Business*. . . (Halifax: Nova Scotia Printing Co., 1876), 71.

<sup>177</sup> Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, *Fiftieth Anniversary of the Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society 1875-1925* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society 1925), 12.

<sup>178</sup> Colin D. Howell, "Medical Professionalization and the Social Transformation of the Maritimes, 1850-1950," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27, 1 (Spring 1992): 8-9.

act passed in 1871.<sup>179</sup>

In spite of its new orientation, Ontario's pharmaceutical society continued to publish the journal for "the advancement of the art and science of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutic chemistry" and "to separate pharmacy from the practice of medicine, by placing it on its own basis, and upholding it on its own merits."<sup>180</sup> Although the journal frequently ignored developments in the Maritime provinces, Halifax druggists did subscribe to the periodical which influenced their own efforts towards professionalization. Halifax pharmacist M. F. Eager had joined the Canadian Pharmaceutical Society within four months of the journals' first appearance. By the mid-1880s, according to the paper's editor, "leading druggists in the Eastern provinces" had subscribed.<sup>181</sup> Ten years later, although a second paper catering to the interests of the national druggist trade had appeared, the more successful *Canadian Pharmaceutical Journal* possessed a nation-wide circulation of 1,175.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Stieb, "A Professional Keeping Shop," 2; *CPJ* (Toronto) I, 1 (May 1868): 1, 8; and 3, 27 (July 1870): 102. In Quebec, the provincial government had incorporated a pharmaceutical society in 1870, but physicians regulated the trade by achieving licensing control. In 1874, however, the province passed the Quebec Pharmacy Act which granted druggists greater supervision over their own trade. Likewise, the pharmaceutical society of Manitoba gained official recognition from the provincial government in 1878, thus beginning the road to self-regulated professionalization. For information on these developments, see *CPJ* IV, 36 (1871): 40; VIII, 9 (April 1875): 326; and XV, 9 (April 1882): 292.

<sup>180</sup> *CPJ* 1, 1 (May 1868): 1, 4.

<sup>181</sup> *CPJ* XVIII, 2 (Sept. 1884): 13.

<sup>182</sup> In 1889, a rival journal of pharmacy appeared which sought national recognition. The new *Canadian Druggist* (Toronto) had a circulation of 1,000 by the mid-1890s and lasted until 1931. The *CPJ*, however, remained in print until 1984. The latter's claim to represent national interests is somewhat circumspect since in its first two decades of publication, only one mention was ever made of the Nova Scotia

Nova Scotian druggists, led mainly by prominent retailers in the capital, followed the lead of Ontario pharmacists with the establishment of the Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society in 1875. Initial organizers of the society felt threatened by the possible encroachment of their trade by medical doctors and the provincial governments' neglect to consult leading druggists while discussing a bill to restrict the sale of poisons in Halifax and Dartmouth to registered pharmacists.<sup>183</sup> With an initial membership of 45 druggists, the society successfully brought another bill before the legislature which resulted in the Nova Scotia Pharmacy Act of 1876.

Nova Scotia's legislation regulating the pharmacy trade allowed for the registration of all druggists who were in business at the time of its passage and who had completed seven years experience. In addition, all those registered must have reached the age of 21 years or more and pay an annual fee of four dollars. A board consisting of three members from the society's executive and two others appointed by the Nova Scotia government examined additional people wishing to enter the trade. Candidates for examination required three years of experience as an assistant, one year of which involved dispensing medicine. The high cost for entering the trade after 1876 may have deterred some from pursuing a pharmaceutical career since candidates had to pay ten dollars for an examination and diploma fee, as well

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Pharmaceutical Society. E. R. Elliot, *Elliot's Hand-Book of Medical, Hygienic, Pharmaceutical and Dental Journals of the United States and Canada* (New York: A. R. Elliot Advertising, 1895); *CPJ* 3, 27 (July 1870): 105-7; and X, 11 (June 1877): 405-7.

<sup>183</sup> For discussions on this proposed legislation which never succeeded at becoming law, see *MH*, triweekly, 24 April 1875, 1; and 14 March 1876, 1.

as the society's annual dues.<sup>184</sup> In fact, the first three candidates to undergo examination in 1877 failed to gain a diploma.<sup>185</sup> During 1878, certain members attempted to take professionalization still further with the informal creation of a code of ethics.<sup>186</sup> By 1880, pharmacists, with the help of the provincial government, successfully gained control over recruitment and training.

Henry A. Taylor, the previously mentioned Barrington Street druggist, became the first president of the Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society. Taylor's middle-class customers could purchase not only the druggists' own compounds for dysentery and coughs, but also various toiletries and temperate beverages. The Scottish-born Taylor, who reportedly brought to his business "the sagacity of the Scot tenacity of purpose, and indomitable energy," served as president from 1875 to 1882, except for 1877 when he acted as treasurer. At the time of the society's formation, he had already been engaged in the Halifax pharmaceutical trade for 20 years, including ten years on his own account. When elected as president, Taylor also served as the alderman for Ward Two, a position he held from 1874 to 1877. The publication *Halifax and its Business* (1876) and his obituary thirty years later, lauded Taylor for his "worthy professional pride" and proclaimed him as an "active and fearless" champion "of whatever tended to advance the city." The prominent druggists' claim to middle-class

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<sup>184</sup> Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 33; and CPJ X, 11 (June 1877): 405-7.

<sup>185</sup> Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 34.

<sup>186</sup> It is not known who composed the initial code nor when the society accepted it as an official guide for proper conduct. Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 35.



respectability went still deeper. Taylor became a Grand Master in the Order of Oddfellows and a member of a local Masonic lodge early in his career. By 1865, he became a Grand Worthy Patriarch of the Sons of Temperance, and a Grand Treasurer from 1870 to 1892. As evidenced by his commercial, civic, and fraternal careers, Taylor worked throughout his life to promote the professionalization of pharmacy, define the meaning of legitimate business in general, and advance the moral and material progress of the city.<sup>187</sup>

When the Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society assisted in the passage of the province's first act regulating the sale of drugs, Halifax's retail pharmaceutical trade comprised 17 pharmacists who had "attained a modest competence" by selling drugs, patent medicines, perfumery, homeopathic compounds, toiletries, and greeting cards. Several shops even established soda fountains in the summer to attract the business of thirsty consumers. Halifax's druggists thus surpassed the simple apothecary dispensing medicine; pharmacists not only sold drugs in the 1870s, they also catered to a new middle-class clientele who purchased varied goods and products to help maintain or enhance their class status.<sup>188</sup> By 1898, Halifax's pharmaceutical business had grown to include 25 retail shops, four of which were branch stores. Although these shops each earned an annual business average of \$7,000

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<sup>187</sup> For information on the life of Taylor, see *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1874-5 to 1876-7; *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Feb. 1873, Sept. 1879, July 1890, Jan. 1901; *Halifax and Its Business*, 75; *MH*, 27 Oct. 1881, 1; *Our Dominion*, 42; *MC*, 27 Dec. 1890, 2; *HH*, 20 June 1907, 3; Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 56; and the Introduction, 1-2.

<sup>188</sup> For the importance of druggists in the female beauty industry, see Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), 17-18. *Halifax and Its Business*, however, noted that pharmacists sold few face powders and rouges during the 1870s. *Halifax and Its Business*, 70-1; and Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 27-8.

and contributed to the growth in middle-class consumerism, credit reporters detected a wide variance in capital investment which ranged from \$500 to \$10,000 in 1890.<sup>189</sup>

Membership in the Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society grew throughout the period as the Halifax trade expanded. Beginning with a membership of 45, by 1877 the society comprised 52 registered druggists which included self-employed shopkeepers as well as their assistants. By 1882, the society gained an additional ten members, the vast majority of which were in business for themselves. Halifax druggists took the lead in society matters for most of the late nineteenth century. From its creation in 1875 until 1889, the society held its annual meetings only in the province's capital.<sup>190</sup> Although it played a crucial role in the professionalization of pharmacy, and provided important opportunities for the establishment of business contacts at its annual meetings, the association did not organize its first social excursion until 1892, 17 years after its establishment.<sup>191</sup>

Despite achieving the dual identity of shopkeeper and professional in the 1870s, each pharmacist faced tensions between these identities by the turn of the twentieth century. Druggists in Halifax, as in other areas, encountered the erosion of their scientific expertise during the 1890s.<sup>192</sup> Increasingly druggists were becoming retailers who sold a variety of

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<sup>189</sup> *HH*, 19 Nov. 1898, 4; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, July 1890. In 1890, of the ten listed by R. G. Dun and Company as retail druggists with capital assessments included, 60 percent carried estimates between \$2,000 and \$10,000, whereas 40 percent were estimated below \$1,000, most of whom were even below \$500.

<sup>190</sup> Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 33-5, 41.

<sup>191</sup> Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 36.

<sup>192</sup> See David Monod, *Store Wars: Shopkeepers and the Culture of Mass Marketing, 1890-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 240-50, for a

brand name goods manufactured outside the region. At an annual meeting of the Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society in 1896, president Frank C. Simson “deplored the increase of proprietary articles which [were] daily dispensed” and advised members to show physicians that they could prepare medicine from the necessary crude drugs.<sup>193</sup> Retrospectives of the pharmacy trade published in the daily and trade press even lamented that most retailers obtained products from large manufacturers in Canada and the United States, rather than mixing their own compounds. The use of prescriptions consequently declined since customers mainly purchased ready-made patent medicines and brand name concoctions.<sup>194</sup>

The sale of patent medicines by non-registered retailers also challenged druggists’ claims to professional status and threatened their own businesses with what they perceived as illegitimate competition. Nova Scotia’s Pharmaceutical Act, as with similar legislation in other provinces, did not regulate the sale of such medicines. Much to the chagrin of respectable pharmacists everywhere and writers in the *Canadian Pharmaceutical Journal*, consumers could bypass the local druggist in favour of a convenient corner grocer or interesting itinerant who combined consumerism with spectacle.<sup>195</sup> Legislation governing the sale of poisons did nothing to prevent individuals such as Mr. Bezanson, a 70-year-old

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discussion of Canadian pharmacists who adapted to the transition from manufacturer to retailer.

<sup>193</sup> Nova Scotia Pharmaceutical Society, *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 37.

<sup>194</sup> See, for instance, *HH*, 19 Nov. 1898, 4; and *MM*, 20 Dec. 1900, 42.

<sup>195</sup> See, for example, *CPJ* IX, 4 (Nov. 1875): 137-8; XIV, 4 (Nov. 1880): 117; and XV, 5 (Dec. 1881): 150-1.

Halifax man who manufactured medicine for patients whom doctors could not cure as a sideline to his business of performing exorcisms.<sup>196</sup> Middle-class contemporaries viewed travelling medicine shows with particular alarm. As Chapter Five will explain, these events combined exhibitions with the sale of medicinal mixtures containing mainly alcohol, providing the urban working class with an evening of inexpensive entertainment. Unless legal authorities perceived these itinerants as dangerous persons or a public nuisance, nothing could prevent this competition despite pharmacists' otherwise success at professionalizing their trade.<sup>197</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, spectres of professionalization and legitimacy haunted the daily efforts of retailers desiring an elevated social standing for themselves and their trade. Many middle-class proprietors craved public recognition as experts through the strategies of cooperation, education, exclusion, and state regulation. At times, retailers collaborated with the commercial elite to help boost their own respectability while coordinating efforts against common problems. Such cooperation illustrated initial indecision concerning a separate retail identity as well as the dependency of shopkeepers on their wholesaling and manufacturing suppliers. Retail participation in various political venues also tied shopkeepers to additional middle-class residents and local elites where both groups furthered retail, economic, and general civic interests. Formal retail fellowship and the exclusion of those deemed unworthy for membership, however, became the crucial element in the quest for professionalization. Decisions concerning who should be excluded

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<sup>196</sup> *AR*, 22 Jan. 1884, 3.

<sup>197</sup> See Chapter Five, 287-8.

as professional retailers, helped fuel the late nineteenth-century obsession with defining legitimacy.

Whether prominent proprietors, the state, or the public viewed shopkeepers as legitimate business retailers depended on a myriad of factors. These factors could include quality and price of the goods and services offered, location of the establishment, class and character of the clientele, hours of operation, contribution to the local economy, and changing state legislation regarding licensing. Moreover, the shopkeepers' temperate habits, training, urban or rural origins, gender, class and ethnicity also could contribute to their respectable standing. Most retail lines, however, failed to sustain long-term cooperation when rival definitions of legitimacy from both inside and outside each trade destroyed any attempts towards real professionalization and a homogenous shopkeeper identity. Even the advent of a national and local trade press by the 1890s, with the influence of self-interested creditors, could not aid in the development of a single definition. Although pharmacy's use of science enabled druggists to construct an identity as both retailers and trusted experts in their field, pharmacists fought an on-going battle to protect their trade from outside interference and with what constituted a legitimate druggist.

Debates surrounding the meaning of legitimacy were most intense when conflict arose between shopkeepers and the most marginal of retailers--Halifax's street peddlers and open-air market entrepreneurs. The fight against itinerant retailing and the popular spectacle it often accompanied, contributed further to the concept and multiple meanings of legitimacy. Throughout the late-Victorian period, shopkeepers struggled to eliminate, contain, or appropriate spectacular consumption in an attempt to boost the reputation of

themselves, their trade, and even their city.

## Chapter Five

### Consuming, Containing, and Appropriating the Spectacle

In 1889, a journalist for Halifax's popular newspaper, the *Acadian Recorder*, remarked that itinerant retailers frequently tramped over city streets selling "almost everything--from a clothespin to a Methodist meeting-house." Meanwhile, the writer explained, vendors in Halifax's outdoor farmers' market turned "portions of the city into oriental bazaars and free circuses." Although many residents and tourists admired the "unique and dazzling spectacle" these colourful hucksters presented, the journalist feared that such spectacles placed the city "into a degree of disrepute that [was] far from desirable."<sup>1</sup> In expressing criticism for what the journalist perceived as a disorderly and antiquated mode of exchange, these comments echoed the concerns of many leading shopkeepers and their allies.

Halifax's most marginal retailers, the peddlers of the city streets and the vendors of the Green Market, elicited from various residents both an attraction and revulsion. Victorian spectacles of the 'other,' whether they involved the presentation of racial and ethnic difference, idyllic agrarianism, or eccentric behaviour, appealed to a curious audience while offering needy customers a convenient shopping alternative. Although itinerant retailing also provided several disadvantaged groups with the necessary means for financial support, critics of these enterprising hucksters expressed jealousy with the possibility of illegitimate competition, concern for commercial professionalism, worry over disorderly city streets, and fear for the unprogressive image they gave the city. While late-Victorian Halifax was not

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<sup>1</sup> *AR* (Halifax), 17 April 1889, 2.

entirely unique for its carnivalesque nature of commercial exchange, the city's constant battle against a conservative business reputation made the critics of itinerant retailing especially eager to re-imagine their city as a community willing to embrace modernity. Despite the popularity of such spectacles, fixed-shop retailers and their allies called for their municipal regulation. Ironically, many shopkeepers borrowed and adapted aspects of the spectacle to attract more customers, albeit in an orderly and efficient manner.

Although contemporary accounts of street peddlers and farmers' markets attest to their carnivalesque character, few researchers have recognized this alluring aspect of itinerant commercial exchange. Rather, most relevant historical works focus on state regulation and campaigns for orderly streets.<sup>2</sup> Market historiography particularly examines motivations behind formal regulation--whether municipalities established public markets to benefit the community, gain control over hinterlands, protect the interests of shopkeepers,

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Henry Trachtenberg, "Peddling, Politics, and Winnipeg's Jews, 1891-1895: The Political Acculturation of an Urban Immigrant Community," *Historie sociale/Social History* XXIX, 57 (May 1996): 159-86; Daniel M. Bluestone, "'The Pushcart Evil': Peddlers, Merchants, and New York City's Streets, 1890-1940," *Journal of Urban History* 18, 1 (November 1991): 68-92; and Andrew Brown-May, "A Charitable Indulgence: Street Stalls and the Transformation of Public Space in Melbourne, c. 1850-1920," *Urban History* 23, 1 (May 1996): 48-71. For additional urban peddling works, see Alan M. Kraut, "The Butcher, the Baker, the Pushcart Peddler: Jewish Foodways and Entrepreneurial Opportunity in the East European Immigrant Community, 1880-1940," *Journal of American Culture* 6 (Winter 1983): 71-83; John Benson, "Hawking and Peddling in Canada, 1867-1914," *Histoire sociale/Social History* XVIII, 35 (May 1985): 75-84; and Andrew Heinze, "Jewish Street Merchants and Mass Consumption in New York, 1880-1914," *American Jewish Archives* 41, 2 (1989): 199-214. A recent monograph on European peddlers, however, does briefly discuss the spectacle associated with itinerant retail. See Laurence Fontaine, *History of Pedlars in Europe*, trans. Vicki Whittaker (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 81.



or ensure the proper use of public space.<sup>3</sup> Unique for his linkage of commerce and spectacle, however, American scholar Jackson Lears describes how early twentieth-century advertising adapted the seductive allure of nineteenth-century commercial exchange.<sup>4</sup>

While few scholars consider the element of spectacle in these forms of retail distribution, the appeal for exoticism and pageantry has not been entirely overlooked. In the last decade, several historians have shown how contemporaries of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries incorporated spectacle admiration with industrial and celebratory

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<sup>3</sup> For the moral economy model of markets in Canada, see Brian S. Osborne, "Trading on the Frontier: The Function of Peddlers, Markets, and Fairs in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," *Canadian Papers in Rural History* II (1980): 69-77. The historiographical debate on the moral economy within the American context is discussed in Winnifred Barr Rothenberg, *From Market-Places to a Market Economy: The Transformation of Rural Massachusetts, 1750-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Others see a more sinister role in the state regulation of markets in Canada. See John Benson, "Small-Scale Retailing in Canada," in *The Evolution of Retail Systems, c. 1800-1914*, eds. John Benson and Gareth Shaw (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), 88-99; W. Thomas Matthews, "Local Government and the Regulation of the Public Market in Upper Canada, 1800-1860: The Moral Economy of the Poor?" *Ontario History* LXXIX, 4 (December 1987): 297-326; and Sean Gouglas, "Produce and Protection: Convent Garden Market, the Socioeconomic Elite, and the Downtown Core in London, Ontario, 1843-1915," *Urban History Review* XXV, 1 (October 1996): 3-18. Some international historians have viewed the banning of street selling in favour of regulated markets as a debate between outdoor vendors and the state over the use of public space. See Brown-May, "A Charitable Indulgence"; and Barbara Clark Smith, "Markets, Streets, and Stores: Contested Terrain in Pre-Industrial Boston," in *Autre Temps Autre Espace/Another Time Another Space: Etudes sur l'Amérique pré-industrielle*, eds. Elise Marienstras and Barbara Karsky (Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy, 1986), 181-97.

<sup>4</sup> Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 9, 162. Richards also discusses spectacle and early advertising, but does not discuss its earlier elements in markets and peddling. See Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

exhibits, as well as popular travel destinations.<sup>5</sup> As historians of the spectacle make clear, these theatrical entertainments helped define the dominant consuming group from the 'other' on display.<sup>6</sup> Because itinerant retailing appealed to both the working and middle class as a form of street theatre, 'consuming spectators' not only benefitted from the purchasing of goods, but also from taking part in the culture of the spectacle.

Street peddlers provided no exception to the Victorian combination of spectacle and commerce in late nineteenth-century Halifax. Hawkers contributed to an interesting cast of street characters whose eccentricities proved comical to many residents, but worrisome to competitors and vexing to law enforcement officials. Local newspapers relished in these characters, frequently relating their tales to an appreciative audience of readers. Tom Noonan, a newsworthy peddler from the early 1870s, cried his wares throughout the streets of Halifax while frequently falling through cellar hatchways. Despite making an independent but precarious living by selling fish and self-composed ballads, Halifax's Stipendiary

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<sup>5</sup> See Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*; Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Karen Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1999); and H. V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Since the early nineteenth century, writers and artists had portrayed street life as entertainment where the urban spectator experienced these scenes as passing shows to be glimpsed from afar. Deborah Epstein Nord, "The City as Theater: From Georgian to Early Victorian London," *Victorian Studies* 31, 2 (1988): 159-60. See also Michael R. Booth, "Illusion and Reality: The Victorian Stage," *Theatre History Studies* X (1990): 183-98; and Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 115-54.

Magistrate ordered Noonan to the Poor House where he could no longer harm himself, disturb the peace, or compete with the municipally-regulated fish market.<sup>7</sup> The antics of Samuel Keefe, an equally eccentric fish hawker of the same year, also graced the pages of a local newspaper. Like Noonan, legal authorities stopped Keefe's disorderly habit of coasting down Duke Street and possibly destroyed his business by confiscating the offending sled, a vehicle which also transported his goods for sale.<sup>8</sup> Twenty years later, colourful street peddlers continued to sell from door-to-door, gaining the attention of consumers, the press, and the authorities.<sup>9</sup>

Besides the displays of spectacle offered by eccentric peddlers, the planned performances of patent medicine retailers transformed public thoroughfares, parade grounds, and exhibition halls into theatre for the masses. Dr. King's Advertising Troupe, who visited Halifax during the early 1870s, promised cures for all aches and pains while providing open-air entertainment in the city's Grand Parade. Not all Haligonians, however, delighted in the

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<sup>7</sup> *EE* (Halifax), 23 July 1873, 3. Noonan composed and sold ballads concerning George Brown, who may have been the federal politician of these years or George Brown the local world champion rower. As Noonan commented, "Now they think that I think George Brown is a god. But I don't, and he aint. I sell the songs about him, and thus make money--but that's all. I don't think much of him." Besides the music offered by Noonan, a variety of musical performers roamed Halifax's streets. See the accounts of organ grinders, blind musicians, and Italian violinists in the *EE*, triweekly, 26 April 1872, 2; *MH* (Halifax), triweekly, 24 July 1875, 4; 8 June 1876, 3; *AR*, 7 June 1888, 3; and 6 Aug. 1891, 2.

<sup>8</sup> The Stipendiary Magistrate fined Keefe \$2 or 20 days in the city prison. *ER* (Halifax), 7 Feb. 1873, 2.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the report of an African-Nova Scotian woman who allegedly peddled tripe since her possession by the devil made her unfit for alternative labour. *AR*, 9 Jan. 1892, 3.

spectacle of travelling medicine shows. When Dr. King arrived in the city during the summer of 1871, a writer from the *Evening Express* admonished foolhardy spectators for their gullible nature and the City Council for allowing these events to endanger public health. The columnist particularly feared the financial drain unattended ailments would have on municipal coffers when ill and impoverished residents sought aid from the City Dispensary after failing to find a cure from Dr. King's Immediate Relief and Cough Balsam.<sup>10</sup>

Despite early criticisms, later peddlers surpassed Dr. King's daily programme of free concerts, lectures, and jokes by offering greater spectacles at a small cost.<sup>11</sup> Healey and Bigelow's Kickapoo Medicine Company and Wild West Show, for instance, entertained Haligonians in the 1890s for the admission of ten cents. When civic authorities revoked the company's exhibition licence to stop boys from desperately begging and pickpocketing the price of admission, the show's popularity ensured its immediate reinstatement.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately for the critics of cure-all itinerants, provincial drug legislation did nothing to prevent the sale of patent medicines by unlicensed retailers.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to spectacles of eccentricity and contrived dramatics, peddlers contributed to the city's ethnic diversity while sometimes lending a dangerous exoticism to the streets.

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<sup>10</sup> *EE*, 21 Aug. 1871, 2.

<sup>11</sup> *EE*, 16 Aug. 1871, 2.

<sup>12</sup> *AR*, 9 Dec. 1891, 3; 24 Feb. 1892, 3; and 25 Feb. 1892, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Canada's national pharmaceutical journal, with a readership including prominent Halifax druggists, likewise complained of illegitimate competition in the drug business. See, for example, *CPJ* (Toronto) IX, 4 (Nov. 1875): 137; XIV, 4 (Nov. 1880): 117-18; and XV, 5 (Dec. 1881): 150-1. For the establishment of provincial drug legislation, see Chapter Four, 272-80.

Beginning in the 1890s and continuing into the early twentieth century, Halifax attracted a growing number of immigrants from non-traditional countries of origin.<sup>14</sup> Within certain immigrant groups, large numbers of their population adopted peddling to make ends meet, send money home to relatives, or save capital for a fixed-shop venture.<sup>15</sup> Peddlers of Italian, Jewish, and Syrian-Lebanese heritage hawked fresh produce, peanuts, confection, jewellery, and an assortment of dry goods throughout the streets of Halifax. Local newspapers and police charge books often revealed the precarious existence these marginalized characters

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<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, this migration pattern is difficult to illustrate with published census statistics. For instance, enumerators did not collect material for determining ethnic and racial origin for both 1891 and 1901. Moreover, whereas the federal government required enumerators to collect data concerning place of birth in both 1891 and 1901, published reports for 1901 display this data only for Halifax County, not urban Halifax. "Table V: Places of Birth," in *Census of Canada 1890-91*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1893), 337; and "Table XIV: Birthplace of the People by Districts," in *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1902), 422.

Only qualitative evidence, manual counts, and data involving religious adherence can illustrate a growing presence of non-traditional immigrants. During the late 1880s, newspaper references indicated that Syrian-Lebanese immigrants began settling in Halifax. Accordingly, a manual count for the manuscript census of 1901 revealed that 53 Arabic newcomers resided within city limits. By 1911, this population had increased to 75. *AR*, 27 Aug. 1889, 3; 21 Nov. 1889, 3; 1901 Halifax City Census; and "Table XVI," in *Fifth Census of Canada, 1911*, vol. II (Ottawa: C. H. Parmelee, 1913), 430. Faster growth appeared in the city's Jewish population, as illustrated by published statistics involving religion. In 1891, enumerators described 18 Haligonians as Jewish. Ten years later, this population had increased to 118. "Table IV: Religions," in *Census of Canada 1890-91*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1893), 242-3; and "Table X: Religions of the People," in *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1902), 172-3.

<sup>15</sup> Although numbers are unknown for earlier years, after the first decade of the twentieth century, the vast majority of peddlers residing in Nova Scotia were reported as being foreign born. Of the 148 peddlers listed by enumerators in 1911, 116 had previously emigrated to Canada. See "Table V," in *Fifth Census of Canada, 1911*, vol. VI (Ottawa: J. L. Taché, 1915), 156.

faced and the underclass world many immigrant peddlers inhabited.<sup>16</sup>

Members of the Syrian-Lebanese population comprised the most identifiable group of immigrant peddlers residing within the confines of city limits. Early Arabic newcomers to Nova Scotia, usually Maronites from Mount Lebanon, settled in the province because Halifax served as a winter port along the popular steamship route from Europe to New York.<sup>17</sup> By 1901, Nova Scotia possessed the third largest population of Arabs in Canada,

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<sup>16</sup> Halifax police records and local newspapers from the mid-1880s and thereafter frequently included the arrests of many immigrant peddlers for street nuisances, threatening language, violent encounters, and drunken behaviour. For accounts of Italian peddlers in Halifax and their misadventures, see information on Antonio Butto, peanut vendor; Nickola Peolar, peanut and candy vendor; and ice cream peddler Peter Gasparo. *AR*, 5 Aug. 1884, 3; 14 Nov. 1895, 3; Return of Person's Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 34, 14 Nov. 1895, NSARM; and RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 36, 8 Feb. 1897, 21 May 1897. For evidence of Jewish peddlers in Halifax from Russia, Poland, Austria, and Germany, see Return of Person's Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 31, 30 Jan. 1891; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 34, 14 July 1894, 22 Aug. 1894; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 35, 28 July 1892; and RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 36, 18 March 1897. Further information on Jewish peddlers residing and/or peddling in the city can be found in *AR*, 9 July 1889, 3; 20 July 1889, 3; and 16 Nov. 1889, 3. Syrian-Lebanese peddlers are discussed in more detail below.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph G. Jabbra and Nancy W. Jabbra, *People's of the Maritimes: Lebanese* (Tantallon, N. S.: Four East Publications, 1987), 20; Baha Abu-Laban, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980), 22, 136; and A. Ross MacKay and Joseph Gerard Alley, "The Lebanese Experience," *Nova Scotia Genealogist* XIV, 1 (Spring 1996): 16. The Syrian-Lebanese exodus from the Ottoman Empire, beginning in the 1860s, resulted from economic decline, political tyranny, religious turmoil, and western influences. Out-migration especially peaked after 1896-7 when the Turkish government removed the official ban on external travel. Kemal H. Karpat, "The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, 2 (1985): 177, 180-2; Philip M. Kayal and Joseph M. Kayal, *The Syrian-Lebanese in America: A Study in Religion and Assimilation* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 58, 67; Philip M. Kayal, "Religion in the Christian 'Syrian-American Community,'" in *Arabic Speaking Communities in American Cities*, ed. Barbara C. Aswad (New York: Center for Migration Studies of New York, 1974), 115; MacKay and Alley, "The Lebanese Experience," 15; Abu-Laban, *An Olive Branch*, 76; and Jabbra and Jabbra, *Peoples of the Maritimes*, 21.

described variously by census enumerators as "Syrian," "Assyrian," "Arabian," or "Turkish."<sup>18</sup>

Halifax's population of Syrian-Lebanese residents overwhelmingly took part in peddling operations while forming a minority enclave within a working-class neighbourhood and busy commercial district. In 1901, enumerators identified 53 people of Syrian-Lebanese descent living in clusters along the North End streets of Upper Water, Gottingen, Maitland, and Cornwallis Lane.<sup>19</sup> According to the census, almost half this population was self-employed in enterprises of itinerant commerce while enumerators identified no alternative occupation among the group. At least two of these men, Peter R. Allen and Abraham Arab, both residents of Upper Water Street, supplied peddlers since 1896.<sup>20</sup> Although enumerators missed him, Edward Libbey on Maitland Street also set up shop as a peddler and variety

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<sup>18</sup> Immigrants in the 1901 census from Syria and Turkey appear mainly in Central Canada and the Maritimes, with smaller numbers in Manitoba, British Columbia, and the North West Territories. "Table XVI: Immigrant Population by Provinces" in *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. 1, 450-1. For works on the Syrian-Lebanese population in Canada and brief mention of peddling operations of the first generation, see Abu-Laban, *An Olive Branch*; Nancy W. Jabbra, "Assimilation and Acculturation of Lebanese Extended Families in Nova Scotia," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* XV, 1 (1983): 54-72; Joseph G. Jabbra and Nancy W. Jabbra, *Voyageurs to a Rocky Shore: The Lebanese and Syrians of Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Institute of Public Affairs, Dalhousie University, 1984); *People's of the Maritimes*; Jim Kidd, "Arabs in Canada," *The Archivist* 18, 2 (July-Sept. 1991): 16-17; David Weale, *A Storm Out of Lebanon: An Introduction to the Coming of Syrian/Lebanese Emigrants to Prince Edward Island* (Charlottetown: Institute of Island Studies, 1988); and MacKay and Alley, "The Lebanese Experience," 15-20.

<sup>19</sup> 1901 Halifax City Census; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1901-2.

<sup>20</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1901-2; 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 5, Div. 1 (E1), 10; 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 4, Div. 4 (D4), 11; and Partial List of Early Lebanese/Syrians in Nova Scotia compiled by MacKay, MG 100, Vol. 92, No. 24, NSARM.

storekeeper.<sup>21</sup> Libbey's peddlers included at least eight separate family units, all living between 32 and 38 Maitland Street.

Early Arabic newcomers to Nova Scotia operated as a "middleman minority." These first generation immigrant communities, often based on kin and village affiliation, turned to peddling enterprises employing ethnic and/or kin labour as a socio-economic strategy for self-advancement in the face of hostility and competition from host-owned businesses.<sup>22</sup> Syrian-Lebanese wholesalers financed passages to Canada, supplied credit, and helped find

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<sup>21</sup> The enumerator listed Libbey's peddlers on Maitland Street, but did not include their creditor. 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward 4, Div. 4 (D4), 4; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1901-2.

<sup>22</sup> Originally formulated to explain why certain immigrant groups in peasant societies engaged in trade, sociologist Edna Bonacich first applied the middleman minority theory to Asian-Americans in 1973. In 1982, Walter P. Zenner expanded the theory to cover Arabic immigrants who became North American entrepreneurs. Bonacich, "A Theory of Middleman Minorities," *American Sociological Review* 38 (Oct. 1973): 583-94; "Middleman Minorities and Advanced Capitalism," *Ethnic Groups* 2, 3 (1980): 211-19; and Zenner, "Arabic-Speaking Immigrants in North America as Middleman Minorities," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 5, 4 (Oct. 1982): 457-77. Zenner identifies an immigrant population as a middleman minority "if a substantial and disproportionate number of its members are engaged in small commercial enterprises or are employed in such enterprises by other members of their groups." Characteristics which also must be present within these populations include the adoption of occupations spurned by the host society, and the determination of migration patterns, sojourning practices, employment opportunities, and credit advancement all by ethnic and/or kin ties. Zenner, "Arabic Speaking Immigrants in North America as Middleman Minorities," 457-8; and *Minorities in the Middle: A Cross-Cultural Analysis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991). For an explanation of how this differs from an ethnic enclave economy, see Ivan Light, *et al.*, "Beyond the Ethnic Enclave Economy," *Social Problems* 41, 1 (Feb. 1994): 66-7. While some researchers criticize the middleman minority theory because it cannot be applied to all immigrant business populations, it does fit the first generation of the Syrian-Lebanese in Nova Scotia. For these criticisms see Eugene F. Wong, "Asian American Middleman Minority Theory: The Framework of an American Myth," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 13, 1 (1985): 51-88; and Robert Cherry, "American Jewry and Bonacich's Middleman Minority Theory," *Review of Radical Political Economics* 22 (1990): 158-73.



shelter for the peddler and his family. These newcomers adopted peddling to pay creditors who financed their migration, send money home to remaining relatives, adapt to Canadian culture before settling permanently, and acquire sufficient capital to establish a shop for themselves.<sup>23</sup>

Although many Syrian-Lebanese peddlers sold their wares throughout rural Nova Scotia, their presence did not go unnoticed in Halifax.<sup>24</sup> In fact, contemporaries recognized the Arabic community forming in the North End, their preference for self-employed commerce, and the tendency of some of its members to take part in street violence and drunken exploits.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, certain members residing within these peddling clusters did ply their trade in the city streets. Arabic youths and women of all ages often confined their enterprise close to the security of home. Such was the case of twelve-year-old Rosie Joseph, one of the youngest Syrian-Lebanese peddlers in Halifax who local authorities quickly arrested after the City Council established regulations controlling itinerant commerce in 1892.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Jabbra and Jabbra, *People of the Maritimes*, 21; and Stewart G. McHenry, "The Syrian Movement into Upstate New York," *Ethnicity* 6, 4 (Dec. 1979): 335.

<sup>24</sup> For more information on rural peddling in Nova Scotia, see Tanya Gogan, "East Meets West: 'Alien' Peddling in Rural Nova Scotia, c.1890-1914," paper presented at the Atlantic Canada Studies Conference, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, May 1998.

<sup>25</sup> For examples of comments on the Syrian-Lebanese community in Halifax, its commercial exploits, and problems with legal authorities, see *AR*, 27 Aug. 1889, 2; 21 Nov. 1889, 3; 24 Dec. 1892, 3; 26 May 1893, 3; 27 May 1893, 3; 29 Oct. 1894, 3; 25 Jan. 1898, 3; *HC* (Halifax), 17 June 1901, 26; 21 June 1901, 6; 15 July 1901, 6; *MM* (Halifax), 21 April 1904, 25; and 1 June 1905, 23.

<sup>26</sup> *AR*, 24 Dec. 1892, 3; and Return of Person's Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 34, 24 Dec. 1892. Other peddling youths of the same decade

Halifax's many street peddlers, whether eccentric, theatrical, or simply foreign, not only contributed to spectacles of the 'other,' their enterprise benefitted both themselves and their customers. Itinerant commerce provided an essential source of income for Halifax's most marginal residents, including unskilled, elderly, impoverished, and immigrant individuals. The goods these entrepreneurs provided to the public were of especial importance to the city's working-class inhabitants of the northern suburbs. Hawkers who peddled from door-to-door offered these similarly disadvantaged residents inexpensive goods from a convenient location at flexible business hours.<sup>27</sup> Working-class customers could ill-afford the expense and time required to shop in Halifax's central stores, nor could they visit the Saturday morning market while still awaiting their Saturday night pay.<sup>28</sup>

Notwithstanding the conveniences street peddlers offered to their clients and the contributions hawking provided to the peddlers' own earnings, numerous criticisms arose against street peddling from fixed-shop retailers, business proprietors within the Halifax Board of Trade, members of the City Council, and columnists in the local and commercial press. By the early 1890s, the presence of immigrant peddlers from non-traditional countries of origin, pressure from shopkeepers within the Council, and campaigns launched by

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included Wooda Joseph, Joseph Levy, and Charles Unis. *AR*, 25 Jan. 1898 3; 26 May 1893, 3; Return of Person's Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 34, 26 May 1893, 21 March 1896; and RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 36, 24 Jan. 1898, 25 Jan. 1898, 5 Nov. 1898.

<sup>27</sup> *AR*, 18 Dec. 1884, 2; 23 March 1892, 2, reference from Ian McKay's Social History Collection, QUA; and *AR*, 22 June 1893, 3, reference from McKay.

<sup>28</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in Canada, 1889, Volume 6: Nova Scotia Evidence* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1889), 43.

associated proprietors, moved the municipality to enact legislation with a specified schedule of fees, fines, and prison sentences.<sup>29</sup>

Self-interest on the part of shopkeepers particularly created opposition against itinerant commerce on the basis of unfair competition. Peddlers could undercut the prices of many shops since hawkers did not pay taxes nor rent and suffered little loss from unpaid bills or deteriorated stock.<sup>30</sup> These sentiments led to several calls for the licensing of peddlers from both shopkeepers and retailing city councillors. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, a variety of retailers petitioned the local government for the municipal regulation of street peddling.<sup>31</sup> In the late 1880s and early 1890s, fixed shop grocers even organized their own retail association and launched campaigns to prevent the door-to-door sale of tea, coffee, sugar, and onions.<sup>32</sup> Aldermen most receptive to these campaigns, those who were themselves shopkeepers, suggested similar regulations from within the Council. Alderman Thomas P. Connolly, for instance, a bookseller and stationer in the city centre, proposed ordinances in 1878 and 1881 to impose taxes on peddlers operating within city limits.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, merchant tailor W. F. Pickering, bookseller and printer T. C. Allen, victualler John

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<sup>29</sup> *AR*, 1 June 1892, 3, reference from McKay; and *CG* (Toronto), 26 Aug. 1892, 24.

<sup>30</sup> For example, see complaints of this in the national trade press, *CG*, 8 Nov. 1889, 1; 2 Oct. 1891, 24; and 16 Oct. 1891, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Halifax City Council Minutes, 19 March 1877, 28 March 1879, 24 Sept. 1880, 12 June 1883, 25 Jan. 1884, 21 March 1884, 16 Sept. 1884, 14 July 1885, NSARM.

<sup>32</sup> *CG*, 11 April 1889, 2-3; and *AR*, 23 March 1892, 2, reference from McKay.

<sup>33</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1880-1; and Halifax City Council Minutes, 7 May 1878, 18 May 1878, 2 March 1881.

F. Ryan, grocer H. V. Wier, and grocer Andrew A. Hubley, all used their positions as councillors to support an ordinance with especially stiff penalties during the early 1890s.<sup>34</sup> Hubley, an alderman during the last decade of the nineteenth century and a prominent member of the Retail Grocers' Association, even lobbied for more effective control after the Council had passed regulatory legislation in 1892.<sup>35</sup>

Once municipal regulations required non-tax-paying peddlers to obtain licences and display registration numbers publicly, shopkeepers could use the regulation as a weapon to have non-complying competitors arrested and charged.<sup>36</sup> When a peddler from Ontario sold small lots of grapes throughout Halifax without a licence, grocery dealers complained en masse to police authorities. The offending street trader faced a charge for violating the new ordinance while the municipality required him to expend \$20 for the right to compete with local shopkeepers.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, authorities arrested Nickola Peolar, an Italian peddler who paid for a licence but established a fixed stand on Cornwallis Street, soon after receiving complaints from a nearby shopkeeper. Both North End retailers earned a living by selling

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<sup>34</sup> These aldermen supported a bylaw which would punish violators with a maximum fine of \$100 and a 90-day prison sentence. The ordinance finally passed with a punishment of only 40 days in prison and a fine of \$50. The latter was a compromise between the aforementioned councillors and those wanting only a \$25 fine. Halifax City Council Minutes, 31 May 1892, 8 June 1892; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1891-2, 1892-3. For more on Wier and Hubley, see throughout Chapter Four and the discussion below.

<sup>35</sup> *MM*, 3 Sept. 1896, 27; and 17 Sept. 1896, 20. According to *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, Hubley served as an alderman for Ward Four from 1892-3 to 1910-11.

<sup>36</sup> *AR*, 1 June 1892, 3, reference from McKay; and *CG*, 26 Aug. 1892, 24.

<sup>37</sup> *AR*, 27 Sept. 1892, 3.

confection and peanuts, but Peolar's temporary stand was in violation of the city's new bylaw. The price this native of Genoa paid for improperly competing with a fixed-shop retailer included a fine or a five-day sentence in the city prison, as well as a loss of his original licence at a value of approximately ten dollars.<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, peddlers represented more than simple competition for many shopkeepers. Middle-class retailers regarded disadvantaged individuals hawking goods through public thoroughfares and from door-to-door as illegitimate trade rivalry. Complaints against peddling and campaigns for efficient regulation were often made in terms of protecting and fostering a professionalism among shopkeepers. Moreover, debates surrounding municipal regulation contributed to an evolving definition of legitimacy since monetary contribution to municipalities, fixed locations, quality goods, and adequate knowledge became requirements for achieving the status of a successful and responsible business person.

When shopkeepers petitioned the city to limit the business activities of street traders in the 1870s and 1880s, they did so because they viewed themselves as valuable community members who comprised the only retailers fit for the distribution of certain goods. For instance, after the city ended the monopoly of the public fish market by licensing private dealers who were required to follow sanitary regulations, newly licensed fish mongers protested the sale of fish and boiled lobsters by unqualified peddlers.<sup>39</sup> Thomas Brackett, a

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<sup>38</sup> *AR*, 14 Nov. 1895, 3; and Return of Person's Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 34, 14 Nov. 1895.

<sup>39</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 6 May 1876, 4; and *Ordinances of the City of Halifax* (Halifax: n.p., [1876?]), 224, Halifax County Supreme Court Cases, RG 39, Ser. C, No. 11483.5a,

medium-sized fish dealer “upright in all his dealings,” led the first petition in 1877. Although Brackett was probably annoyed at the destruction of his monopoly over the fish trade since his firm had been the previous renters of the public market before 1876, his frustration was not leveled at fellow licensees. Instead, Brackett expressed frustration with the city’s most vulnerable fish traders--hawkers of the city streets.<sup>40</sup> Additional petitions to City Council from grocers and victuallers particularly objected to the unfair competition from individuals who did nothing to contribute to civic welfare.<sup>41</sup> These middle-class shopkeepers wished to use the state to legitimate their leadership within the local community while eliminating unwanted rivals deemed unworthy of the retailing trade.

Besides petitions to the City Council, shopkeepers also voiced dissatisfaction at illegitimate competition through the local press. After the Halifax Board of Trade issued a report in 1889 recommending the municipal regulation of hawkers to protect customers from dishonest sales, “A Shopkeeper” expressed frustration in the *Acadian Recorder* with Halifax’s peddling “nuisance.” According to the writer, this nuisance ruined the business of proper retailers who paid rent, taxes, “and every expense incidental to a legitimate

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NSARM. Fishermen and customers had been complaining about the city’s monopoly of the fish trade since at least 1868. *ER*, 2 April 1868, 2-3; and 21 April 1868, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Halifax City Council Minutes, 19 March 1877; and *The Mercantile Agency Reference Book (and Key) for the Dominion of Canada*, Sept. 1879. For additional petitions from fish dealers against itinerant selling, see Halifax City Council Minutes, 24 Sept. 1880, 12 June 1883, 16 Sept. 1884.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Halifax City Council Minutes, 28 March 1879, 21 March 1884.

business.”<sup>42</sup> In turn, a letter from “A Commercial Traveler,” revealed the true motives behind such disapproval. Indicating that successful shopkeepers had little to fear from Halifax’s most needy traders, the writer argued that these critics were most interested in distancing themselves and their trade from the humble past of street peddling. The greater the distance created, the more opportunity fixed-shop retailers acquired to establish their businesses as professions and themselves as capable of socio-economic advancement.<sup>43</sup>

After the passage of the ordinance concerning hawkers in 1892, shopkeepers and the commercial press continued to use the debates surrounding licensing as opportunities for establishing professional standards. In 1896, Halifax’s *Maritime Merchant* suggested that the City Council should raise the price of licence fees since these hucksters who only own a horse, cart or a shed in a back alley were “privileged to ruin the trade of legitimate traders.” The writer of the commercial journal thus urged local shopkeepers to lobby the municipality in this regard.<sup>44</sup> Partly in response to this call for action, the new Halifax-Dartmouth Retail Grocers' Association formed in the following month and established a committee to discuss with the Mayor the unfair competition created by street peddling.<sup>45</sup> By September of the same year, alderman and grocer Andrew A. Hubley denounced hawkers as an invading horde

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<sup>42</sup> *AR*, 17 April 1889, 2; and 20 April 1889, 3.

<sup>43</sup> *AR*, 24 April 1889, 2.

<sup>44</sup> *MM*, 23 Jan 1896, 5.

<sup>45</sup> *CG*, 28 Feb. 1896, 28; *MM*, 20 Feb. 1896, 27; 14 May 1896, 27; and 23 July 1896, 27.

of petty peddlers who overran the city with “cheap and nasty” goods.<sup>46</sup>

Of course, the regulation of street peddlers also reflected the growth of the local state within Halifax. Licensing increased the economic and social power of municipal governments through the collection of additional revenue and the control of activities deemed appropriate by its middle-class members.<sup>47</sup> After 1892, the ordinance to license non-assessed peddlers entitled the city to collect a basic fee of \$8 from each peddler, with additional fees collected for handcarts, wheelbarrows, horses, and boats. Most peddlers paid \$8, indicating hawkers selling goods on foot from a pack, while several others paid up to \$30 in fees.<sup>48</sup> For the first year of the bylaw’s operation, the municipality reported the substantial revenue from these licences to be \$775. By 1899, Halifax gained over \$800 in fees associated with itinerant commerce.<sup>49</sup> The legislation also required peddlers to be readily identified by a metal badge, prevented them from obstructing public thoroughfares, and

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<sup>46</sup> *MM*, 3 Sept. 1896, 27.

<sup>47</sup> State formation has most often been associated with moral regulation, welfare legislation, and education. See Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985); Allan Greer and Ian Radforth, eds., *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); and Bruce Curtis, *True Government by Choice Men?: Inspection, Education, and State Formation in Canada West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

<sup>48</sup> The new legislation did not apply to farmers selling country produce in markets nor fishermen selling fish. *AR*, 1 June 1892, 3, reference from McKay; *CG*, 26 Aug. 1892, 24; and License Fee Book, RG 35-102, Ser. 11D, Vol. 8, NSARM.

<sup>49</sup> During the three years after 1893, the city reported reduced revenues of \$379, \$173, and \$434. Although after 1896-7 the municipality no longer separated this revenue from other licences issued, fees derived from peddling were recorded in the municipal license book. *Annual Report of the Several Departments of the City Government of Halifax, Nova Scotia*, 1893-4 to 1896-7; and License Fee Book.



barred them from vocally advertising their wares. Non-complying peddlers could face the loss of their licence, a maximum fine of \$50, and a stay in the city prison for up to 40 days.<sup>50</sup> Hence, the ordinance of 1892 allowed the city, along with the self-interested support of local business proprietors, to clearly mark hawkers as the 'other,' while reducing the element of spectacle by bringing a semblance of order to city streets.

Regulating street traders became necessary not only for preventing obstructions and unwanted noise, but also for controlling criminal behaviour. During the 1880s and 1890s, numerous peddlers were arrested for public drunkenness, disorderly conduct, violent acts, animal cruelty, theft, and, in one case, indecent assault. These problems pitted peddler against peddler, as well as peddler against customers, shopkeepers, or other city residents.<sup>51</sup> While both Nova Scotian and foreign-born traders clashed with the Halifax police, the

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<sup>50</sup> *AR*, 1 June 1892, 3, reference from McKay; *CG*, 26 Aug. 1892, 24; and Halifax City Council Minutes, 8 June 1892.

<sup>51</sup> For examples of drunken and disorderly behaviour involving peddlers, see Return of Person's Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 28, 29 Jan 1880, 12 May 1880, 2 Sept 1880, 9 Dec 1881; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 31, 9 July 1895; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 34, 26 May 1893, 21 July 1894, 22 Aug 1894; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 35, 1 July 1889; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 36, 21 April 1897, 30 July 1897, 28 Feb 1899. For acts and threats of violence, see *AR*, 26 May 1893, 3; 29 Oct. 1894, 3; Return of Person's Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 31, 30 Jan 1891; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 34, 26 May 1893, 22 Aug. 1894, 29 Oct 1894; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 35, 20 July 1892, 28 July 1892; and RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 36, 3 Aug. 1897, 25 Oct. 1897. For instances of theft, see *MH*, triweekly, 2 Nov. 1880, 4; Return of Person's Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 28, 17 June 1884; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 31, 22 Aug 1894, 31 July 1896; and RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 34, 14 July 1894, 22 Nov. 1895. For examples of animal abuse and peddling, often involving coal hawkers and their horses, see Return of Person's Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 28, 4 Sept. 1880; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 34, 15 Aug 1893; and RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 35, 18 Feb 1889. For the one instance of indecent assault, see Return of Person's Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 28, 5 July 1882.

commercial press later used these instances to protest against the presence of immigrant peddlers who most represented the 'other.'<sup>52</sup>

Although shopkeepers and their allied contemporaries failed to view street traders as legitimate retailers, certain individuals did object to the formal control of Halifax's peddlers. As early as 1884, one protester complained against the banning of fish hawkers who were unable to ply their wares since only fixed-shop retailers could obtain licences to sell fish and seafood. As "Justice to Fish Hawkers" explained in the local paper, citizens needed to be spared of "the pitiful spectacle of seeing a one-armed cripple prosecuted and fined for earning an honest living."<sup>53</sup> In 1889, at least one commercial traveller, who probably worried over his own future status as an itinerant salesman, expressed concern over the possible licensing of all peddlers. According to the writer, peddlers shared a common heritage with shopkeepers, laboured long hours, and paid bills when required.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, when debates surfaced concerning the licensing of peddlers in the City Council and among associated grocers during the early months of 1892, a third writer to the *Acadian Recorder* denounced the greed of local shopkeepers and encouraged aldermen to ignore petitions based solely upon self interest. The writer especially opposed discussions surrounding the licensing

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<sup>52</sup> See, for example, *MM*, 21 April 1904, 25. In this comment on Halifax's Syrian-Lebanese peddlers, the writer mistakenly identifies these individuals as Italian street traders. Additional complaints against foreign-born peddlers include *MM*, 1 June 1905, 3; and 24 Dec 1908, 30.

<sup>53</sup> *AR*, 18 Dec. 1884, 2.

<sup>54</sup> *AR*, 24 April 1889, 2.

of coal hawkers, a trade from which grocers had nothing to fear.<sup>55</sup>

Likewise, Halifax's municipal council rarely agreed unanimously for the control of itinerant commerce. During the decades of the 1870s and 1880s, councillors frequently disagreed over how and when to license peddlers. Significantly, municipal authorities ignored early legislation passed in 1877 and 1882. These early enactments were never enforced since the Council neglected to decide whether a flat rate should be charged or a schedule of fees devised.<sup>56</sup> Even when the passage of an enforceable bylaw was imminent in the early months of 1892, councillors diverged widely over the degree of punishment for violators of the proposed ordinance.<sup>57</sup> These clashes within the Council indicated that non-shopkeeping aldermen failed to consider infractions of regulatory legislation as serious offenses.

In addition to individuals who demonstrated sympathy with the street trader's plight, peddlers saw themselves as legitimate business entrepreneurs. Following the peddler

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<sup>55</sup> *AR*, 23 March 1892, 2, reference from McKay.

<sup>56</sup> The 1877 ordinance to regulate peddlers, "An Act Concerning Sales of Goods by Strangers in the City of Halifax," did not apply to people bringing fish, fruit, fuel, lumber, agricultural produce, provisions, or any other natural product of the province to sell in the city. Within a year councillors again proposed new regulations. *MH*, 2 April 1877, 4; and Halifax City Council Minutes, 29 June 1876, 8 Dec. 1876, 13 Feb. 1877, 7 March 1877, 7 May 1878, 18 May 1878. The 1882 regulation was put into the new city assessment act for that year, and required all persons hawking goods, not previously assessed for the water tax, to pay a yearly licence fee. This act proved ineffective since the Council was slow to resolve a schedule of fees and the police force was hesitant to enforce them. In fact, disagreement of fees occurred a year earlier and continued thereafter. Halifax City Council Minutes, 2 March 1881, 13 April 1881, 10 Feb. 1882; *MH*, 14 April 1881, 1; 17 Feb. 1882, 1; and Halifax Police Charge Books, RG 35-102, Ser.16A, Vols. 1, 4 (1882-3, 1888-9), NSARM.

<sup>57</sup> Halifax City Council Minutes, 31 May 1892, 8 June 1892.

ordinance of 1892, at least one trader protested publicly against interference with his trade. In 1893, an impoverished fish hawker penned a letter to the *Acadian Recorder* objecting to the twelve-dollar fee for his peddler's licence and the privilege to use a handcart. As the hawker explained, he did not use the cart every day since his enterprise operated on a seasonal basis. Moreover, the peddler's trade proved too precarious to afford the cost of a licence without borrowing money to do so. In comparison, a truckman paid the low fee of \$2.50, but could ply his trade daily throughout the year. The fish hawker in question did not understand that his business, unlike the truckman's, posed a threat to fixed-shop retailers, particularly those licensed to distribute fish under sanitary conditions regulated by the city.<sup>58</sup>

While street peddlers raised the ire of competitors and interested local authorities by contributing to the Victorian combination of spectacle and commerce in late nineteenth-century Halifax, the city's famed Green Market provided the ultimate example of commercial spectacle in these decades. Although little has been written on this once well-known institution, particularly by historians, contemporaries frequently praised its uniquely picturesque quality in national and international magazines, travel literature, tourist pamphlets, novels, and local newspapers.<sup>59</sup> The greatest source of attraction and revulsion

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<sup>58</sup> *AR*, 22 June 1893, 3, reference from McKay.

<sup>59</sup> For the best historical descriptions of the Halifax public market in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Phyllis R. Blakeley, *Glimpses of Halifax 1867-1900* (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1949), 65-7; D. E. Robinson, *A Special Report: The Halifax City Market, 1750-1977* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Marketing, 1978); and Julie A. Porter, "The Halifax City Market" (M. B.A. thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1980). Popular descriptions include Linda Biesenthal, "Halifax City Market," in *To Market, To Market: The Public Market Tradition in Canada* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1980), 43-51; and *Cole Harbour and the City Market* (Cole Harbour: Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society, 1980).

for both visitors and residents involved the market's racially and ethnically diverse group of rural producers who operated within a largely unregulated and unlicensed public square. While the Green Market attracted enthusiastic customers, City Council members and established business proprietors increasingly saw the public market as a nuisance and feared the economically backward reputation it may have given the city. Although the two camps held differing opinions concerning the market, they both perceived rustic farmers, masculine African-Nova Scotian women, romanticized Acadians, and the once noble Mi'kmaq as the elements of exotic theatrical entertainment, not legitimate business people. In an era obsessed with commercial progress, civic boosterism, and professional standards, the spectacle that worked towards the sellers advantage, eventually led to their downfall.

At a time when most urban centres had at least partially contained their public markets within a regulated structure, Halifax held its Green Market free of charge every Saturday on the nearby streets, steps, and window casings of the Post Office, Custom House and City Hall.<sup>60</sup> Market vendors had been selling in this open-air venue since 1854 when produce sellers refused to enter a new brick market house touted as a modern edifice worthy of improving the economic progress of the city.<sup>61</sup> Halifax's municipal government failed to

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<sup>60</sup> The city also allowed the Green Market to be held every Wednesday, but Saturday became the most popular day for both vendors and consumers. Biesenthal, *To Market, To Market*, 26. Other nineteenth and twentieth-century cities holding popular open-air or partial outdoor markets included Toronto, Quebec City, Ottawa and Hamilton. See Ewart P. Reid, "Some Observations on the Organization and Operation of 25 Ontario Markets," *The Economic Annalist* VIII, 5 (August 1938): 59; and Biesenthal, *To Market, To Market*, 72, 80, 96.

<sup>61</sup> For years civic leaders had expected rural producers to sell their goods in a small dilapidated market shanty, one which the editor of the *Nova Scotian* believed should be encased in glass and sent to the World's Fair, as "an apt illustration of the utter

attract country vendors to the covered market because it required payment for the rental of stalls, allotted an inadequate number of stalls to producers, and created bitterness over butchers receiving the most advantageous locations.<sup>62</sup> By 1865, the Mayor realized the facilities were inadequate when only half the stalls could be let for the ensuing year.<sup>63</sup> Thus, from 1854 until the police compelled vendors to enter a second market house in 1916, the city centre streets of Cheapside, George, Hollis, and Bedford Row became the de facto public market for Halifax.

Just as street peddlers provided an important function in the distribution of goods to city residents, markets remained an important option for consumers throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Improvements in transportation allowing farmers to deliver produce directly to wholesalers, as well as an expansion in the grocery and provision trade, neglected to render the Green Market entirely redundant.<sup>64</sup> Unlike peddling, however, the

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want of public spirit which characterizes a rising city.” Since 1799, however, a provincial statute had permitted rural vendors to sell produce on the streets of Halifax if indoor accommodation could not be found. See *Nova Scotian* (Halifax), 24 March 1851, 1; and Robinson, *A Special Report*, 2.

<sup>62</sup> At first the covered market provided space for 13 butchers, 14 hucksters, and 34 country vendors. Officials charged the latter two dollars a year, half of which was due in advance. These stalls were drawn for by lots. *Nova Scotian*, 1 May 1854, 2. By 1862-3, only 20 green grocer stalls and 14 butcher stalls were available. *Annual Report of the Several Departments of the City*, 1862-3, 60. In 1866, an editor of a local newspaper queried, “We cannot understand why the building which was designed for a Green Market, should be occupied almost wholly by resident Butchers. The Butchers possess a good deal of wealth, and are quite able to put up a building of their own.” *Unionist and Halifax Journal*, 15 Oct. 1866, 2.

<sup>63</sup> *Annual Report of the Several Departments of the City*, 1864-5, 11, 40-1.

<sup>64</sup> Besides the public markets for produce and fish, several merchants constructed private facilities featuring hotels, stables, hucksters’ stalls, and shops. *British Colonist*

Green Market benefitted middle-class consumers who possessed ample time to spend a leisurely Saturday morning purchasing goods for ready cash. While one observer noted that market-goers entailed a mixed crowd, local evidence given in 1889 to the Royal Commission on the Relations between Labour and Capital revealed that Haligonian labourers rarely possessed the opportunity to attend the city's popular market.<sup>65</sup>

For white middle-class residents and visiting tourists, the Green Market offered a source of street theatre with new tastes, smells, sights, and sounds that could not be experienced in private farmers' markets nor in retail shops. On a Market Saturday, youngsters heard a gramophone or tasted ice cream for the first time, while tourists sketched or photographed market scenes involving vendors and their oxen.<sup>66</sup> Guidebooks published in Halifax took advantage of the market's "odd and picturesque" elements to attract visitors to the city.<sup>67</sup> Magazine journalists praised the "quaint" institution, finding it singularly indigenous to Halifax.<sup>68</sup>

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(Halifax), 12 March 1868, 2; *AR*, 12 Aug. 1870, 2; and *MH*, 19 June 1875, 3.

<sup>65</sup> Frederic S. Cozzens, *Acadia; or, A Month with the Blue Noses* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1877), 26; and *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in Canada, 1889*, vol. 6, 43.

<sup>66</sup> Owdis Isenor, a grandson of rural vendors who frequently accompanied his grandparents to the market, commented many years later, "Those Saturdays at Cheapside were the days when I wished I could live forever." *Mail-Star* (Halifax), 17 Dec. 1971, 26. For accounts of American tourists, see *AR*, 25 Aug. 1888, 3; 8 Aug. 1892, 3; and Allan Eric, "A Yankee in Halifax," *The Canadian Magazine* (Toronto), March 1895, 401-6.

<sup>67</sup> W. H. Howard, *Glimpses In and About Halifax, Nova Scotia* (Halifax: W. H. Howard, 1896), 43.

<sup>68</sup> See, for instance, Ella J. Hunter, "The Halifax Market," *The Dominion Illustrated* (Montreal), 7 March 1891, 232; Eric, "A Yankee in Halifax"; and Ella Adelia

Consuming spectators particularly viewed the Green Market as a weekly street carnival because of the seemingly peculiar vendors themselves. The market's lack of fees made it a haven for a diverse and marginalized cast of characters selling food, handcrafts, and various oddities. As American travel writer Frederic S. Cozzens observed in 1877, the Green Market contained a "shifting crowd, in all costumes and in all colors, Indians, negroes, soldiers, civilians, and Chizzincookers [*sic*], make up a pageant of no little theatrical effect and bustle."<sup>69</sup> Indeed, the vendors' designation as "Market People" set them apart from the consuming public who saw them as the 'other' in a "dazzling spectacle" sometimes likened to an oriental bazaar.<sup>70</sup> Halifax's Green Market thus became a "contact zone" where middle-class citizens and tourists of Euro-American descent eagerly sought the distinctive foods and handcrafts each race and ethnicity of market sellers offered. This allowed both residents and visitors to take part in a world different from their own without concern for the poverty that demanded such selling.<sup>71</sup> While these wares catered to the tastes of market-goers, they provided the resourceful vendors with an inexpensive source of cash which was then used

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Fletcher, "England's Canadian Stronghold," *Anglo-American Magazine* (Boston), March 1899.

<sup>69</sup> Cozzens, *Acadia*, 26.

<sup>70</sup> See, for example, *AR*, 17 April 1889, 2. For European interest in orientalism in general and the spectacle of real bazaars, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978); and Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 1-33.

<sup>71</sup> Mary Louise Pratt developed the notion of a "contact zone" as a "social space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination . . . ." Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 4.



to buy supplies from city merchants.

Vendors who represented notions of idyllic agrarianism, rural eccentricities, as well as ethnic and racial difference, helped to make the Green Market a consuming spectacle. As Keith Walden has recently noted within the context of the Toronto Industrial Exhibition, the difference between rural and urban origin could be as important as the frequently discussed factors of gender and class for determining identity in late-Victorian society.<sup>72</sup> Although rural and urban differences were not the most important source for identity in Halifax, when combined with the 'others' of ethnicity and race, these factors did contribute to the attention received by local vendors from curious onlookers.

Many consumers enjoyed the goods displayed by German and Scottish farmers who provided the Green Market with the bulk of its cultivated produce. Arriving from the agricultural settlements of Cole Harbour and Lawrencetown on Friday night via the Dartmouth ferry, the farmers' wagons were laden with a variety of vegetables, meat, dairy products, eggs, preserves, homemade bread, flowers and berries.<sup>73</sup> Market selling became an important source of cash for rural women who worked in kitchen gardens, gathered eggs, milked cows, churned butter, and supervised their young who scavenged for wild berries in nearby fields. It was often these farm women and their children who sold at the market.<sup>74</sup> The hard work of these rugged farm families, who disposed of their goods long before the

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<sup>72</sup> Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto*, 189, 214.

<sup>73</sup> *Cole Harbour and the City Market*. For a further description of these vendors see Charles G. D. Roberts, *The Canadian guide-book: the tourist's and sportsman's guide to eastern Canada and Newfoundland*. . . (New York: D. Appleton, 1891), 225.

<sup>74</sup> Biesenthal, *To Market, To Market*, 48.

grocer and provision dealer opened their shops for business, impressed many consumers who particularly valued their produce.<sup>75</sup> Despite such admiration, however, they were at times looked down on as simple country folk, whose bashful and courteous speech contrasted markedly with their “keen and shrewd-eyed” counterparts from New England.<sup>76</sup> One American writer even regarded these vendors as “white trash.”<sup>77</sup>

Similarly, Acadian market vendors from the isolated community of Chezzetcook attracted attention by consumers, especially tourists who enjoyed their quiet stoicism, and romantic historic appeal. These vendors sold cordwood, hay, potatoes, turnips, fish, clams, lobster, and berries, but were especially famed for their woolen socks and mittens. Acadian women often walked all night to reach the market, a distance of thirty kilometres, knitting an extra pair of socks along the way.<sup>78</sup> Haligonians did not regularly see this segment of the rural population since Acadian women seldom ventured into the city and started on their homeward journey after only a brief stay in the market.<sup>79</sup> Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem *Evangeline* (1847) and the tourist boom it fostered by the 1860s, helped fuel spectator

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<sup>75</sup> Mrs. William Lawson, *History of the Townships of Dartmouth, Preston and Lawrencetown* (1893; reprint, Belleville: Mika Studio, 1972), 256; and *Nova Scotian*, 17 Oct. 1885, 7.

<sup>76</sup> Roberts, *The Canadian guide-book*, 225.

<sup>77</sup> *Nova Scotian*, 17 Oct. 1885, 7.

<sup>78</sup> Ronald Labelle, *Acadian Life in Chezzetcook* (Lawrencetown Beach, N.S.: Pottersfield Press, 1995), 12, 27-8, 31-2; and Roberts, *The Canadian guide-book*, 225-6.

<sup>79</sup> Cozzens, *Acadia*, 26.

interest in these oft-romanticized vendors.<sup>80</sup> Visitor guides and fictional literature promoted a picturesque image of the Acadian market seller, describing how many strangers had been detained by “the quaint costumes of the Chezzetcook women, whose kerchief-covered heads remind one of *la belle France*, a reminiscence strengthened by the *patois* pattered out all around.”<sup>81</sup> Such romantic images brought flocks of visitors to the Green Market, but often glossed over the poverty that drove these women to walk sixty kilometres a week to sell the products of their labour.<sup>82</sup>

Like other exhibitions involving racial difference, the Green Market’s spectacle of race attracted the greatest attention from contemporaries.<sup>83</sup> Throughout the late nineteenth-century, the racial diversity of Halifax’s open-air market became a popular subject for artistic expression. Artists, writers, and amateur playwrights could not help but portray the spectacle African-Nova Scotian and Mi’kmaq vendors provided to the outdoor institution.

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<sup>80</sup> Cozzens, *Acadia*, 26; and Sharon Ingalls, “Mad About Acadians: Nineteenth-Century Americans Flocked to the Land of Evangeline,” *Beaver* 69, 3 (1989): 21-7.

<sup>81</sup> *Evening Mail Carnival Number* (Halifax), Aug. 1889, 14. See also Saunders, *The House of Armour* (Philadelphia: A. J. Rowland, 1897), 284-5.

<sup>82</sup> One writer did show compassion for their destitution when she lamented the meagre stock in trade of one Acadian woman who brought three pairs of socks and a quarter lamb, and a second woman who only carried a half bushel of periwinkles. See Fletcher, “England’s Canadian Stronghold,” 13-14, cited in Blakeley, *Glimpses of Halifax 1867-1900*, 66.

<sup>83</sup> Dubinsky, writing on a similar time period, describes Niagara Falls as a contact zone where tourists took part in the spectacle of race involving residents of African and aboriginal heritage. Dubinsky, *Second Greatest Disappointment*, 55-83. Likewise, Jasen discusses aboriginal and Euro-American contact zones which existed throughout Ontario’s many popular tourist destinations. Jasen, *Wild Things*, 14, 16, 41-3, 49-51, 70-71, 95-101, 133-49.

As Agnes Helen Lockhart described to potential visitors in 1897, “Here, Darkies with their berries, and Indians with their bows, / Form features of the market-place, in true artistic pose.”<sup>84</sup> Visual artists often depicted African-Nova Scotian vendors in sketches and paintings, while local best-selling author Margaret Marshall Saunders commented in her novel *The House of Armour*, “let us stand back and watch them. I do love colored people.”<sup>85</sup> Aboriginal vendors also became the subject for charitable dramas when the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals staged a fair in 1880 featuring a display of white women acting in “true Indian style” as Mi’kmaq vendors, or in 1891 when a branch of the King’s Daughters performed a comic tableau for charity entitled “A Market Day in Halifax.”<sup>86</sup>

The lives these vendors led in reality were anything but romantic. African-Nova

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<sup>84</sup> Agnes Helen Lockhart, *Gems from Scotia’s Crown* (Boston: American Printing and Engraving Co., 1897), 33.

<sup>85</sup> Saunders devoted an entire chapter to the Green Market. See Saunders, “On Market Day,” in *The House of Armour*, 281-301. For her comment on the popularity of African-Nova Scotian retailers, see Saunders, *House of Armour*, 286. For examples of visual art, see W.O. Carlisle’s sketch “Negresses Selling Mayflowers on the Market Place” (1872), and Ozias Dodge’s painting “Post Office on Market Morning” (1894). These works are mentioned in the following: Suzanne Morton, “Separate Spheres in a Separate World: African-Nova Scotian Women in Late-19th-Century Halifax County,” in *Separate Spheres: Women’s Worlds in the 19th-Century Maritimes*, eds. Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994), 197; and Judith Fingard, *The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax* (Porters Lake, N.S.: Pottersfield Press, 1991), 76. Carlisle’s sketch appears in the *Canadian Illustrated News* V, 21 (25 May 1872): 325 [database online]; available from Images in the News: Canadian Illustrated News, 1869-1883, National Library of Canada, <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/cin>. Dodge’s painting is reproduced in Fingard’s monograph and is held by the Slater Memorial Museum of Norwich, Connecticut.

<sup>86</sup> *MH*, 1 July 1880, 3; *AR*, 15 June 1891, 3; and 20 June 1891, 3. The tableau also included three “Preston Darkies,” three “Chezzetcookers,” four “E[astern] Passengers,” and three consumers.

Scotian vendors resided in the poverty-stricken rural settlements of Preston and Hammonds Plains. Women from these communities were particularly renowned for their splintwood basketry, birch brooms, Christmas wreaths, herbal remedies, wild berries, and artistic arrangements of ferns, moss, and mayflowers.<sup>87</sup> Such goods gave these women a year-round source of ready cash when racism and sexism combined to limit their wage-earning alternatives.<sup>88</sup>

While market-goers admired African-Nova Scotian women for their resourcefulness and handiwork, it was the stark contrast they made with their white middle-class counterparts that inspired amusement and fostered a carnivalesque appeal. Observers of black market women were struck by their eccentric qualities and masculine habits involving an unshakeable self-confidence, outspoken manner, cunning wit, flamboyant sense of style, and fondness for pipe smoking.<sup>89</sup> Contemporaries often romanticized these images against

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<sup>87</sup> See Joleen Gordon, *Edith Clayton's Market Basket: A Heritage of Splintwood Basketry in Nova Scotia* (Halifax: The Nova Scotia Museum, 1977); *Cole Harbour and the City Market*; and Lawson, *History of the Townships of Dartmouth, Preston and Lawrencetown*, 188. Other items sold by the residents of Preston and Hammonds Plains included pea sticks, hop and bean poles, rustic seats, flower boxes, bundles of kindling, ferns, and trout.

<sup>88</sup> African-Nova Scotian women were not in demand for domestic labour since they competed with the more numerous women of Euro-American descent. See Morton, "Separate Spheres," 190, 192. Black women in Ontario also sold their wares in urban markets. Peggy Bristow, "'Whatever you raise in the ground you can sell it in Chatham': Black Women in Buxton and Chatham, 1850-65," in *'We're Rooted Here and You Can't Pull Us Up': Essays in African Canadian Women's History*, ed. Peggy Bristow (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 89.

<sup>89</sup> See *Critic*, 5 Nov. 1886, 7-8; *Evening Mail Carnival Number*, Aug. 1889, 14; Roberts, *The Canadian guide-book*, 226; and Saunders, *House of Armour*, 281-301.

the fragile goods they sold, seeing their femininity as a mere pretence.<sup>90</sup>

African-Nova Scotian vendors, both male and female, became market celebrities whose antics the local press eagerly reported on, adding colourful dialect to instill humour into their local publications.<sup>91</sup> Consumers mused over the African-Nova Scotian “merry disregard for their comfortless lives,”<sup>92</sup> and noted their pride in patronizing terms, linking it with their African ancestry.<sup>93</sup> While many found humour in comparing the “upright carriage” of these impoverished Market People with African kings and queens, others likened them to monkeys chattering under the summer sun.<sup>94</sup> At a time when white society regarded blacks as having many bemusing qualities, the African-Nova Scotian contingent remained a popular one with both Haligonians and travelers throughout the history of the Green Market.<sup>95</sup>

Mi'kmaq camping seasonally along the Bedford Basin or residing in the small nearby

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<sup>90</sup> For instance, Hunter described a scene involving mayflowers in her article “The Halifax Market,” 232. Carlisle’s sketch, “Negresses Selling Mayflowers on the Market Place,” also depicted African-Nova Scotian women selling wild flowers as a picturesque feature of the market.

<sup>91</sup> Lawson, *History of the Townships of Dartmouth, Preston and Lawrencetown*, 190; and *AR*, 18 Aug. 1883, 2.

<sup>92</sup> *Critic*, 7 Dec. 1888, 6. For a similar commentary on the African-Nova Scotian indomitable spirit, see Saunders, *House of Armour*, 301.

<sup>93</sup> See, for example, *Nova Scotian*, 17 Oct. 1885, 7; and Hunter, “The Halifax Market,” 232.

<sup>94</sup> Lawson, *History of the Townships of Dartmouth, Preston and Lawrencetown*, 188-9.

<sup>95</sup> Allen P. Stouffer, “A ‘restless child of change and accident’: The Black Image in Nineteenth Century Ontario,” *Ontario History* LXXVI, 2 (June 1984): 131.

community of Turtle Grove comprised the final group of vendors providing market-goers with an often romanticized spectacle of race.<sup>96</sup> As one traveler described, "Quite a little colony these Indians make on the sidewalk on market day. Each man brings his squaw--man-like and particularly Indian-like--to carry the pack, and of course each squaw brings her papoose."<sup>97</sup> While the Mi'kmaq sometimes sold foods from the wild, such as fish, fowl, and berries, it was the native handcrafts that attracted the most attention from discerning consumers.<sup>98</sup> These vendors cleverly adapted their traditional crafts involving basketry, quill, and bead work to cater to the tastes of their white middle-class customers. Goods for sale included a variety of baskets, sewing boxes, eyeglass cases, blotting books, photo frames, tea cosies, chair seats, slippers, oars, dug-out canoes, juvenile bows and arrows, toboggans, tomahawks, and snow shoes.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> For information on the Turtle Grove native community, destroyed by the Halifax Harbour Explosion, see Jennifer Burke, "Turtle Grove: Dartmouth's Lost Mi'kmaq Community," in *Ground Zero: A Reassessment of the 1917 Explosion in Halifax Harbour*, eds. Alan Ruffman and Colin D. Howell (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1994), 45-53.

<sup>97</sup> *Critic*, 5 Nov. 1886, 7-8.

<sup>98</sup> Beginning in the early 1800s, Indians turned to a reliance on the sale of handcrafts for subsistence since the coming of the Loyalists had caused a depletion in game. See L. F. S. Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists: Indian-White Relations in the Maritimes, 1713-1867* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979), 128-9; and Ellice B. Gonzalez, *Changing Economic Roles for Micmac Men and Women: An Ethnohistorical Analysis* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1981), 65-6. For further information on the sale of aboriginal handcrafts in Canada, see Jasen, *Wild Things*, 50, 97-8; Dubinsky, *Second Greatest Disappointment*, 62-8; and Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998).

<sup>99</sup> Gonzalez, *Changing Economic Roles*, 86; *AR*, 20 Sept. 1884, 3; *Nova Scotian*, 17 Oct. 1885, 7; *Critic*, 5 Nov. 1886, 8; and *Halifax Mercury* (Halifax), midsummer

Like African-Nova Scotian vendors, aboriginal retailers also led a difficult existence. For the Victorian market-goer whose fascination with native culture had been fuelled by museum collections, exhibition displays and travelling shows, Halifax's Green Market offered them the weekly opportunity to study an indigenous "dying breed."<sup>100</sup> Contemporaries repeatedly expressed pathos and guilt for the skilful Indians of the market who were "a degenerate specimen of the once noble race . . . thrust from their own country" by the ancestors of the spectators themselves.<sup>101</sup> American visitors also expressed sadness at the poor Mi'kmaq who "hast not kept up with the times; not even Halifax times."<sup>102</sup> Echoing the sentiments of many visitors to the market, one local reporter lyrically explained: "The memory of the red man / Will never pass away, / While in Halifax they cluster, / At the Market Saturday."<sup>103</sup> Another writer, however, juxtaposed the representation of the noble

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edition, 1891, 9-10. For information on Mi'kmaq basketmaking, see Bunny McBride, *Our Lives in our Hands: Micmac Indian Basketmakers* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1990).

<sup>100</sup> For the popularity of native spectacles, see Keith Regular, "On Public Display," *Alberta History* 34, 1 (1986): 1-10; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 14-17, 41-3, 85; Peter Geller, "'Hudson's Bay Company Indians': Images of Native People and the Red River Pageant, 1920," in *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, ed. S. Elizabeth Bird (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 65-77; Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building*, 172-81; and Dubinsky, *Second Greatest Disappointment*, 62-8.

<sup>101</sup> *Critic*, 7 Dec. 1888, 6. For similar statements, see *AR*, 4 Aug. 1883, 2; *Halifax Mercury*, midsummer edition, 1891, 9; and Roberts, *The Canadian guide-book*, 226. In this period, whether viewed with contempt or compassion, white society often saw natives as a dying breed. See Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists*, 127; and Jasen, *Wild Things*, 17.

<sup>102</sup> *Nova Scotian*, 17 Oct. 1885, 7.

<sup>103</sup> *AR*, 8 Aug. 1892, 3.



savage with the image of the dangerous and drunken Indian, revealing clearly the attraction and revulsion the spectacle of race could elicit from the middle-class onlooker.<sup>104</sup>

Organized business proprietors and city councillors increasingly launched protests against the Green Market throughout the late nineteenth century, despite its popularity with many residents and visitors from afar. Those who fought to house vendors within a suitable structure made objections to the market's continued open-air existence because it disrupted seemingly legitimate commerce on occupied streets, created fears of an economically backward appearance to visitors, raised alarm over inadequate trade regulations, and endangered the respectability of the market as an institution and of the street itself. By the turn of the twentieth century, civic boosters promoted a racially 'cleansed' image of the market while working to contain it within a covered structure.

Unlike shopkeepers elsewhere who favoured the close proximity of public markets for the additional business they encouraged, the most sustained protests against Halifax's outdoor market came from proprietors adversely affected by weekly obstructions near their shops and offices as well as those offended by the illegitimate competition their presence created.<sup>105</sup> As in the case with business requests for regulation of street peddlers, appeals made to the public, City Council, legal authorities, and fellow shopkeepers, emphasized the inability of these disadvantaged retailers to contribute to city coffers and to the well-being of commercial trade. In January 1868, for instance, a letter to the editor, signed by "A

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<sup>104</sup> Roberts, *The Canadian guide-book*, 226. Jasen also describes this phenomenon in *Wild Things*, 15-17.

<sup>105</sup> See, for instance, the success of shopkeepers near London, Ontario's public market as explained by Gouglas, "Produce and Protection."

Sufferer,” complained of unlicensed vendors selling hay along Bedford Row where they obstructed businesses and left the street strewn with debris. The distressed proprietors, continued the writer, “have by their enterprise and public spirit built up a row of houses which are an ornament to the city; within that short distance taxes are every year paid to the city, which cannot be less than several thousand dollars.”<sup>106</sup> During the 1870s and early 1880s, city centre proprietors from Bedford Row and Hollis Street petitioned the Council as rate payers and property owners to complain of Market People blocking shop entrances.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, by 1883, alderman and victualler George McLennan derided vendors for engaging in commerce by the light of a proprietor’s store without paying rent, taxes, or licence fees and taking home a supply of ready cash as a result.<sup>108</sup> Ten years later, the newly-formed Retail Grocers’ Association offered its support for the cause when it asked the city to remove the offending sellers. Not surprisingly, members of the association, Andrew A. Hubley and H. V. Weir, enthusiastically supported this petition within City Council as aldermen and adversely affected retailers. Hubley and Weir received additional support from councillor C. S. Lane, whose hat and cap business on Granville Street also faced ill-effects from open-

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<sup>106</sup> *British Colonist*, 4 Jan. 1868, 2.

<sup>107</sup> Halifax City Council Minutes, 8 Aug. 1871, 8 Oct. 1874, 9 Aug. 1882; *AR*, 10 Aug. 1882, 3; and *McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2, 1873-4, 1881-2.

<sup>108</sup> Non-commercial councillors also agreed with McLellan, such as Alderman Edward O’Bryan, harbour master and municipal representative for the North End. Not surprisingly, however, O’Bryan’s office was located on Bedford Row. *AR*, 15 Jan. 1883, 2; and *McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory*, 1882-3.

air vending.<sup>109</sup>

In their long fight to remove market vendors from the streets, the commercial press and the Halifax Board of Trade supported these offended proprietors. Members of the Halifax Board of Trade issued reports and petitions in 1889 and 1901 for the municipal regulation of market entrepreneurs and the elimination of open-air selling. According to the Board, these measures would help prevent dishonest sales while ridding the streets of bothersome vendors, crude wares, and market rubbish.<sup>110</sup> The *Maritime Merchant* entered the campaign by the turn of the twentieth century when it reported that the Green Market “has proven as great a nuisance to busy people as it has proven an attraction to tourists. It is quite picturesque, but it will have to give way to something more practical.” In the opinion of the journal’s editor, “something more practical” involved the containment of vendors within a covered structure.<sup>111</sup> Commercial interests, both retail and wholesale, were thus united in their opposition to the open-air market and considered their own enterprises to be far more valuable than the tourist trade it brought to the city and the extra cash it provided to needy sellers.

Besides opposition motivated by self-interest and resistance to illegitimate competition, critics of the Green Market worried over the possible association of this open-

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<sup>109</sup> *AR*, 19 March 1892, 3; Halifax City Council Minutes, 7 Sept. 1892; and *McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory*, 1892-3. Like Lane, H. V. Wier’s shop was also located on Granville Street. Although Hubley did not establish his grocery and feed shops along the streets frequented by market vendors, he suffered competition from Green Market farmers who sold fresh produce, hay, and feed.

<sup>110</sup> *AR*, 17 April 1889, 2; and Halifax City Council Minutes, 3 Dec. 1901.

<sup>111</sup> *MM*, 12 Sept. 1901, 26. See also, *MM*, 13 Sept. 1900, 34.

air spectacle with a negative commercial reputation for the city overall. As explained in Chapter One, Halifax had long rebelled against a reputation of it being a commercially dull town; an image made worse with added competition from businesses in Central Canada, growing provincial towns, and Saint John, New Brunswick.<sup>112</sup> In 1889, when the Halifax Board of Trade recommended that market vendors be municipally regulated, its report argued that, “The time is past when the most public thoroughfares of the city should be paraded as a village market or fair day; while a few tourists may enjoy the unique sight, it is not conducive to business order or the general progress of the city.”<sup>113</sup> Although not agreeing entirely for the need to license Market People, the *Acadian Recorder* conceded that while “oriental bazaars and free circuses [were] good enough from a spectacular standpoint,” they did nothing to promote the appearance of an up-to-date city.<sup>114</sup> The unsuccessful removal of vendors from Hollis Street in 1900, at the request of renewed complaints, prompted a reporter with the *Halifax Herald* to write, “It is doubtful if in another city in Canada the spectacle of itinerant merchants hawking their produce on the sidewalk of one of the principal thoroughfares of the city is to be seen. . . . Even St. John has a market building which is a credit to the city, and in this respect Halifax is a way behind the times.”<sup>115</sup> In the same year, the *Maritime Merchant* suggested in desperation that the city at least hide

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<sup>112</sup> See Chapter One, 41-3.

<sup>113</sup> *AR*, 17 April 1889, 2.

<sup>114</sup> *AR*, 17 April 1889, 2.

<sup>115</sup> *HH* (Halifax), 14 May 1900, 5.

the market under a canvas tent.<sup>116</sup> An era of heightened civic boosterism and worry for economic urban decline combined to create a growing resistance against the Green Market despite its continued popularity with tourists and regular market-goers.

As the regulation of street peddlers represented the growth of the local state within Halifax, civic officials also realized the opportunity for enforcing legislation to regulate the market efficiently and profitably. The few ordinances to control public sales within the Green Market, created in the 1870s, had failed to bring profits to the municipality or order to the streets. These short-lived attempts at regulation included prohibiting hay carts from obstructing traffic, banning live animals from the selling area, and charging vendors twenty-five cents a day for the privilege to sell outdoors.<sup>117</sup> Once vendors could be placed within a public market house, the local government could again charge fees for selling, enforce orderly conduct, and scrutinize goods offered for sale.

The final motivation behind protests eventually bringing an end to Halifax's Green Market involved concerns over infusing respectability to the market as a long standing public institution and restoring order to the street.<sup>118</sup> In the nineteenth century, foreign-born peddlers were not the only class of itinerant retailers to be singled out for criminal activity. In fact, the market square and certain vendors were often associated with the crimes of

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<sup>116</sup> *MM*, 13 Sept. 1900, 34.

<sup>117</sup> *Ordinances of the City of Halifax* ([1876?]), 226-8.

<sup>118</sup> Brown-May argues that outdoor selling had to be cleared from the street because of "a reconceptualization of public space as the locus of respectability, unobstructed circulation, nationalism and civic pride." See Brown-May, "A Charitable Indulgence," 50. Smith shows how authorities wanted to keep trade protected from the every day life of the street. See Smith, "Markets, Streets, and Stores," 189.

drunkenness, assault, theft, and prostitution. For example, although travel writers often praised the artwork of Mi'kmaq vendors, locally the image of the drunken and immoral Indian frequently confronted the public.<sup>119</sup> While the press recorded several incidences of Indians drinking and fighting in market square,<sup>120</sup> one notorious Mi'kmaq family in particular, the Gooleys, became well-known personalities to legal authorities and to readers of the *Acadian Recorder*.

Throughout the 1880s and early 1890s, Mary Gooley and her two daughters, spent more time in the city prison and poorhouse for their activities on the street than they did in their homes on the Shubenacadie Reserve in nearby Hants County. Like many Mi'kmaq women, the Gooleys earned money by selling baskets in the Green Market.<sup>121</sup> Her daughters, Mary Ann and Sarah, may have marketed themselves at night to Halifax soldiers for

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<sup>119</sup> *The Canadian guide-book* represented one exception. See Roberts, *The Canadian guide-book*, 226.

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, *MH*, 19 Aug. 1880, 4; and *AR*, 25 June 1883, 3. These two cases each involved two native women fighting and drinking in market square.

<sup>121</sup> All three women were described in census and police court records as basket makers residing in Dartmouth, Bedford, or Shubenacadie. According to the Halifax Police Charge Books, these members of the family were arrested at least ten times in 1882 and 1883. See Halifax Police Charge Books, Nov. 1882-Nov. 1883, RG 35-102, Ser. 16A, Vol. 1. In the 1891 census, the enumerator for St. Croix described the mother as a wage-earning basket maker. See 1891 Census, Hants County, St. Croix, 56. The family again appears at least eighteen times throughout the Halifax Magistrate's Court records in the 1880s and early 1890s where they were sometimes discharged, jailed, or sent to the poorhouse. Under the names of Gooley, Blino, Morris, and Cope, see Return of Person's Before the Stipendiary Magistrate, RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 28, Jan. 1880-Aug. 1884; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 31, Sept. 1884-May 1891; RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 35, Dec. 1888-Sept. 1892; and RG 42, Ser. D, Vol. 34, May 1891-Aug. 1896.

additional income.<sup>122</sup> All three women used their meagre earnings to purchase alcohol and were too often found in a drunken stupor after market hours.<sup>123</sup> When not earning enough money for food, clothing, or intoxicating liquor, the Gooley women resorted to theft from city shopkeepers.<sup>124</sup> The lives of these women on the margins were not pleasant. In times of desperation the mother attempted suicide to gain attention from apathetic jailors or to end a difficult existence.<sup>125</sup> The Gooleys faced a powerful combination of colonialism and patriarchy, leaving them without a stable home nor a means for an adequate subsistence, especially in periods of transiency, separation from loved ones, illness, and widowhood.<sup>126</sup> As the aforementioned tourist writer described in 1891, the once noble savage of the marketplace, sometimes became the drunken and immoral Indian after market hours.<sup>127</sup> Civic boosters wishing to clear the market and streets of these seemingly disreputable characters

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<sup>122</sup> *AR*, 3 July 1883, 3. Of course, the Gooley women may not have been prostitutes, but legal authorities frequently viewed them as such.

<sup>123</sup> For one year alone, the Gooleys appeared in at least five newspaper issues. *AR*, 2 Jan. 1883, 3; 23 Aug. 1883, 3; 3 Sept. 1883, 3; 13 Sept. 1883, 3; and 1 Oct. 1883, 3.

<sup>124</sup> See, for example, *AR*, 9 Jan. 1888, 3.

<sup>125</sup> On a Saturday evening in 1883, Mary tried to hang herself twice when the police imprisoned her for drunkenness. *AR*, 2 Jan. 1883, 3.

<sup>126</sup> See, for instance, *AR*, 3 July 1883, 3. In this incident, the police arrested the two daughters for being in the company of soldiers at night. The stipendiary magistrate discharged the case, however, when Mary Ann explained she had three children to care for, a dead husband, and a mother in the city prison. On another occasion, officials discharged Mary Ann from prison to care for an ailing infant. *AR*, 4 Oct. 1886, 3.

<sup>127</sup> After a description of native vendors, the writer remarked that the "noble red man" sometimes fell victim to rum and the station house after a Market Saturday. Roberts, *The Canadian guide-book*, 226.

could not have missed this connection.

With a growing opposition to the open-air market by the turn of the twentieth century, Halifax guide books promoted a likeness of the market that contrasted sharply with descriptions by travelling journalists and local writers of fiction. Several souvenir booklets portrayed the Green Market as a unique sight with “queer” and “picturesque” vendors, yet made no explanation as to its racially diverse character nor gave details of the Market People’s specific eccentricities.<sup>128</sup> Other tourist pamphlets printed photographs of the market, but did not mention it as an attraction within the text. These black and white representations were unable to capture the festive spirit of a market Saturday. Nor did they ever portray anything out of the ordinary, such as the African-Nova Scotian and Mi’kmaq women’s passion for pipe smoking.<sup>129</sup> Interested individuals thus promoted a racially cleansed portrait

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<sup>128</sup> See, for example, *The Halifax Guide Book (Illustrated)* (Halifax: C. C. Morton, 1878), 16-17; and Howard, *Glimpses In and About Halifax, Nova Scotia*, 39-43. One souvenir booklet made no mention of the Green Market, although it did comment on the old Market House. See *A Guide to the City of Halifax, Nova Scotia 1884 and 1885: Its Past and Present* (Halifax: Wm. MacNab, 1884).

<sup>129</sup> See, for instance, *Halifax: The Garrison City* (Toronto: W.G. MacFarlane, 1900). Howard’s *Glimpses In and About Halifax, Nova Scotia*, 3, 12, 34, and 43, contained many photographs to accompany its textual description of the market. As with the former souvenir book, however, the pictures illustrated only a lack-lustre version of the market. Although never printed in any guides, a picture of a native woman smoking did appear in a local literary and historical journal. See the photograph by Thomas J. Curren labelled “Squaws at the Halifax Market” in D. R. Jack, “The Indians of Acadia,” *Acadiensis* 1, 4 (Oct. 1901): 193. Guides published after 1900, particularly those endorsed by the Board of Trade, neglected to mention the market entirely. Although a Halifax Board of Trade publication from 1908 commented on the market and its unusual producers, similar guides published and/or endorsed by this business organization in 1909 and 1912 ignored its existence. See Board of Trade of Halifax, *About Halifax, Nova Scotia: A Guide Book Telling What There is to be Seen in “the Garrison City By the Sea,” and How to See it* (Halifax: Board of Trade, 1908), 5; I. J. Isaacs, *The City of Halifax: The Capital of Nova Scotia, Canada. Its Advantages and Facilities* (Halifax:



of the Green Market in an effort to boost Halifax's status as a city of commercial progress and respectable behaviour.

In the fight to remove rural retailers from the streets of Halifax, the steps of civic buildings, and the doorways of various shops and offices, few protestors ever considered Market People to be legitimate business professionals themselves. Like their itinerant counterparts who sold door-to-door, vendors in the Green Market could not command respect from civic officials nor local entrepreneurs under a limiting definition of legitimacy. Occasionally reporters in the local press voiced concerns that "unsophisticated people from the rural districts" sold produce at short measure.<sup>130</sup> Others complained that such producers misunderstood the law of supply and demand as well as the rule of quick sales and moderate profits.<sup>131</sup> Critics of Halifax's business community repeatedly compared unprogressive merchants with the "apple woman" in front of Custom House selling so many apples for so many cents.<sup>132</sup> Even the *Acadian Recorder*, whose reporters were often sympathetic to market vendors, still poked fun at their lack of education. Frequently their humour was made at the expense of African-Nova Scotians.<sup>133</sup> Refusing to see market vendors as enterprising

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William MacNab and Son, 1909), 30; and Board of Trade of Halifax, *About Halifax, Nova Scotia: A Guide Book Telling What There is to be Seen in "the Garrison City By the Sea," and How to See it* (Halifax: Board of Trade, 1912).

<sup>130</sup> *EE*, 23 Aug. 1873, 3.

<sup>131</sup> *AR*, 27 May 1893, 2.

<sup>132</sup> *MH*, triweekly, 7 Oct. 1876, 3; and *MM*, 8 Nov. 1900, 22.

<sup>133</sup> See, for instance, *AR*, 18 Aug. 1883, 2. The *Acadian Recorder*'s preoccupation with interviewing market people from Preston annoyed the local competition who accused it of catering to the masses. Coming to the defense of "Prestonites," the *Acadian*

individuals, these contemporaries mocked their knowledge of standard selling procedures, primitive means of accounting, and naivety of products sold.

Although most Haligonians would not have seen the colourful denizens of the Green Market as budding entrepreneurs, the vendors themselves did take their own commercial activities seriously. While officials barred Market People from the decision-making process involving their fate, vendors did try to make their opinions known. In 1896, farmers from Cole Harbour and Lawrencetown directly petitioned the City Council asking for a covered market to save them from inclement weather.<sup>134</sup> Market sellers particularly protested en masse when changes to their weekly routine threatened their livelihood. In 1900, for example, when police officers tried to remove vendors from Hollis Street to please local businesses, the afflicted Market People immediately sought the aid of a sympathetic alderman and voiced alarm that they would be unable to serve their regular clientele.<sup>135</sup> Vendors also displayed a shrewd business sense by understanding they could command higher prices for their wares than nearby retailers offering sterile goods in mundane shops. As one writer explained how African-Nova Scotians refused to haggle, "How those darkies do laugh and chatter; but they have their senses about them, and their small wares--wild

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*Recorder* warned the *Herald* that it "will probably be sorry for its sneers at the "respectability" of the residents of that polling section of the County of Halifax" in the next election. *AR*, 22 Aug. 1883, 2.

<sup>134</sup> Halifax City Council Minutes, 19 October 1896; *MC* (Halifax), 20 Oct. 1896, 1; 21 Oct. 1896, 6; *HH*, 21 Oct. 1896, 2; and *McAlpine's Nova Scotia Directory*, 1896. Since this petition included white farmers from the areas east of Dartmouth and only one woman, it was not representative of all market sellers.

<sup>135</sup> *HH*, 14 May 1900, 5.

flowers, ferns and “yarbs”--are set a price and at that price they are sold.”<sup>136</sup> Finally, Halifax’s market sellers exhibited a keenness for their employment by labouring tirelessly to gather saleable goods throughout the year while rarely missing a market Saturday no matter what the weather.<sup>137</sup>

The process of containing the Green Market into a regulated medium for indoor exchange took decades to achieve despite the support from fixed-shop retailers, business professionals within the Halifax Board of Trade, and interested members of the municipal government. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, the municipality’s protracted negotiations with the British government to procure a waterfront site, known as the Military Fuel Yard, created much of the delay surrounding the construction of a new facility. After several failed negotiations and a letter from the Retail Grocers’ Association in 1892, the City Council began appraising alternative sites.<sup>138</sup> While still deliberating over the matter, the City Engineer recommended O’Connor’s Wharf as a compromise location, being both accessible to market vendors arriving via the Dartmouth ferry and economical to City Fathers.<sup>139</sup> After failing to decide upon an obtainable site, however, the Council once

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<sup>136</sup> *Halifax Mercury*, midsummer edition 1891, 9-10.

<sup>137</sup> When vendors did miss a market Saturday, the local press commented on its rarity. See, for example, *AR*, 27 Dec. 1890, 3.

<sup>138</sup> Failed negotiations for securing the Military Fuel Yard and expressions of further interest in the site occurred during the 1850s, 1880s, and 1890s. *Nova Scotian*, 13 Jan. 1851, 10, 13; *Annual Report of the Several Departments of the City*, 1885-6, viii, xlv-xlv; *Nova Scotian*, 18 Sept. 1886, 4; *AR*, 2 Nov. 1889, 2; and Halifax City Council Minutes, 12 April 1893. Mention of the letter by associated grocers appeared in the *AR*, 19 March 1892, 3.

<sup>139</sup> Halifax City Council Minutes, 7 Sept. 1892; and *AR*, 20 Dec. 1892, 3.

again commissioned a study to find a convenient and economical location. This move was supported by the Board of Trade and spurred to action by the demolition of the old Market House.<sup>140</sup> By the end of 1901, the committee recommended a block near the Citadel bounded by the dingy upper streets of Brunswick, Duke, Buckingham, and Albermarle.<sup>141</sup>

Although several councillors and Green Market vendors found this suggested location objectionable for the steep climb producers would have to endure after embarking from the ferry, construction on the new site began after another failed attempt to purchase the fuel yard property.<sup>142</sup> Completion of the structure in 1916 satisfied both consumers who desired a more central location and municipal officials who campaigned for urban renewal. Unfortunately for vendors whose families had been selling at the open-air location for generations, the new site proved especially inconvenient.<sup>143</sup>

Most importantly, the establishment of a regulated facility forever altered the market-going experience by ending the open-air spectacle. Overseers of the covered market could

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<sup>140</sup> Halifax City Council Minutes, 12 April 1893, 31 July 1901, 3 Dec. 1901.

<sup>141</sup> *MC*, 4 Dec. 1901, 1.

<sup>142</sup> *MC*, 4 Dec. 1901, 1. In 1896, a contingent of vendors supported the waterfront site of the military fuel yard. *MC*, 21 Oct. 1896, 6. Interest continued to be shown for the Fuel Yard into the early twentieth century. *HH*, 12 Nov. 1907, 1; *MC*, 10 April 1908, 1; *AR*, 10 April 1908, 2; *HH*, 12 Jan. 1912, 5; and *AR*, 12 Jan. 1912, 2. For further detail on these post-1901 debates concerning the location of an enclosed market, see Tanya Gogan, "Taming the Exotic: Reinventing the Halifax Green Market, 1854-1916," paper presented at the Fifth Canadian Business History Conference, Hamilton, Ontario, October 1998.

<sup>143</sup> Expressions involving the combination of urban renewal and market construction, as well as the new site's convenience for consumers, appeared in the Report of the Special Committee on a Market Site, 7 July 1910, Submissions Before City Council, RG 35-102, Ser. 1B, Vol. 9, No. 224, NSARM; and in *HH*, 8 July 1910, 1-2.

now keep questionable vendors from selling within the confines of the building. Impoverished but enterprising sellers threatened the disciplined conduct of the new facility and could not afford the expense of a weekly table. As well, a new enthusiasm for the sanitary distribution of foodstuffs brought competition to traditional market entrepreneurs who sold produce from wooden crates, butter wrapped in leaves, and eggs packed in straw. Customers could now buy their goods guaranteed fresh from the country at the table operated by the Halifax Household League who sold from glass-covered cases kept cool by ice.<sup>144</sup> Another modification, racially segregated lunch rooms, operated by the Local Council of Women with profits going to the war effort, introduced an additional tension between consumer and producer, as well as between Market People of differing origins.<sup>145</sup> Finally, the market was no longer attractive to tourists seeking a unique experience about which to write home, take photographs, or sketch. For years after the demise of the open-air spectacle, visitors continued to look for the renowned Green Market. Upon discovering its containment within a regulated structure, such tourists turned away in disappointment to seek the next

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<sup>144</sup> MC, 31 July 1916, 9. Household Leagues had formed at the turn of the twentieth century, but became particularly active during the Great War. They fought for government regulated prices, standardized packaging, and more efficient distribution of foods locally produced. Alison Prentice, *et al.*, *Canadian Women: A History*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1996), 231.

<sup>145</sup> MC, 31 July 1916, 9. Although the races freely mixed for decades in the former Green Market, admittedly the African-Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq vendors had faced de facto racial segregation on the ride aboard the Dartmouth ferry. Until 1906, for a fare of two cents less, black and native women could travel in the men's cabin, securing the ladies' cabin for respectable white women. Joan M. Payzant and Lewis J. Payzant, *Like a Weaver's Shuttle: A History of the Halifax-Dartmouth Ferries* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1979), 131.

picturesque stop on their itinerary.<sup>146</sup>

For more than sixty years, the Green Market had brought the nineteenth-century love for the spectacle to enthusiastic citizens and visitors alike. While producers seemed to encourage this culture of the spectacle to sell their wares for much needed ready cash, they unfortunately paid a price for their collusion with the middle-class consumer. Market-goers and market critics viewed these vendors as a cast of characters in an exotic theatre of the streets. Whether onlookers gazed in awe at the Market Peoples' skills, mused at their antics, or objected to their presence, they did not perceive them as legitimate business entrepreneurs nor recognize the poverty they endured. In the end, the Green Market's reputation helped orchestrate its own downfall in an age increasingly concerned with all aspects of modernism, a city fearing for its commercial reputation, and shopkeepers promoting retail professionalism in the face of keen competition.

Although city peddlers and market vendors encouraged the culture of the spectacle in late-Victorian Halifax, tensions between shopkeepers and non-fixed retailers should not be viewed entirely in terms of the conventional versus the extraordinary. Besides working for municipal regulation, fixed-shop retailers competed by adapting certain elements of itinerant commerce and even appropriating the spectacle itself. In this manner, shopkeepers catering to both a lower and middle-class clientele could attract consumer excitement, nurture customer loyalty, and maintain an adequate living. Nevertheless, individual and associated retailers sometimes disagreed over which forms of adaptation constituted legitimate commerce and fair competition.

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<sup>146</sup> See, for example, *AR*, 1 Oct. 1921, 1.

Throughout the late nineteenth century, shopkeeping and door-to-door selling were not mutually exclusive forms of urban retailing. Shopkeepers retailing foodstuffs and dry goods in the working-class district of the North End were those most likely to supplement their income through peddling.<sup>147</sup> In 1901, Irish dry goods dealer John O'Hearn and Jewish grocer Jacob D. Geller, both retailed stock from their shops in North Street, but hawked similar goods from door-to-door. On the one hand, O'Hearn's commercial activities helped support himself in his old age and provided a home for an extended family. On the other hand, Geller's enterprise supported his own motherless children.<sup>148</sup> Needy proprietors could thus engage in both modes of commerce to make ends meet and compete with their keenest rival, the street trader of the northern suburbs.

Proprietors also attracted business through the convenience of home delivery services. As early as the 1870s, certain shopkeepers disguised their wagons as those used in itinerant exhibitions. This advertising spectacle sometimes backfired, however, as when local children angrily attacked a delivery cart they had mistaken for a vehicle belonging to a travelling circus.<sup>149</sup> If not lavishly decorated, the *Maritime Merchant* later advised that delivery wagons be at least tastefully painted to represent both the quality of the shopkeeper

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<sup>147</sup> According to census enumerators for 1891, Ward Three contained one shopkeeper who also peddled, but Ward Five contained at least four who engaged in the same activities. According to enumerators for 1901, no fixed-shop retailers in Ward Three peddled, while four shopkeepers in Ward Five supplemented their income with itinerant commerce. 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards Three and Five.

<sup>148</sup> 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward Five, Div. 8 (E8), 3; 1901 Halifax City Census, Ward Five, Div. 9 (E9), 16; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1900-1, 1901-2.

<sup>149</sup> *EE*, 30 July 1873, 3.

and the quality of the goods.<sup>150</sup> By the 1890s, even shopkeepers of the North End, such as victualler Samuel Caldwell and pork dealer Thomas A. Mosher, advertised free delivery of purchases for customers residing in all districts of the city. Caldwell and Mosher could therefore compete with peddlers, market sellers, and rival shopkeepers in the lines of seasonal produce, eggs, lard, and a variety of fresh, smoked or corned meats.<sup>151</sup> Courtesy services also benefitted the consumer who lived further from adequate shops, owned no means for self-transportation, or possessed little cash to hire a hackman.

During the 1890s, commercial journals advised grocers and victuallers to go one step further from simple delivery by anticipating the needs of local shoppers. This technique transformed the fixed-shop retail business into a de facto peddling operation, in which delivery employees solicited potential orders from door-to-door or conveyed the necessary provisions as instructed by a window card displayed by the resident.<sup>152</sup> While some proprietors viewed this retailing technique as disruptive to households and demeaning to shopkeepers, many regarded it as a necessary evil in combatting close competition.<sup>153</sup>

In addition to adapting the techniques of urban street peddlers, Haligonian shopkeepers recreated the allure of the Green Market, in some cases even appropriating its

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<sup>150</sup> *MM*, 28 May 1896, 13.

<sup>151</sup> *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 6, 257. Although some shopkeepers were offering delivery services prior to the 1890s, advertisements in earlier directories did not reflect this practice. See, for example, *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1871-2, 1880-1. For more on Mosher, see Chapter Four, 216-17.

<sup>152</sup> *MM*, 4 Feb. 1897, 12; and *CG*, 19 Feb. 1892, 6.

<sup>153</sup> *CG*, 19 Feb. 1892, 6.



spectacle of race. For tourists too busy or timid to visit the outdoor market, Matthew Mooney's popular variety shop on Upper Water Street sold local aboriginal handcrafts in addition to his usual stock of groceries, clothing, and dry goods from the mid-1860s to the early 1880s.<sup>154</sup> Following Mooney's lead in the mid-1880s, grocer and marine store proprietor John Ead began selling native-made bead, leather and wooden work. According to one journalist, Ead's Mi'kmaq merchandise contained "novel articles" demonstrating skilful craftsmanship.<sup>155</sup> While some shopkeepers placed market goods within their stores, dry goods retailers James McPherson and W. B. Freeman placed both the market vendors and the products they sold behind glass. During the Christmas season of 1897, their well-known and recently renovated shop on Gottingen Street, the "People's Store," displayed within a large plate glass window "two squaws, amid congenial surroundings, busily engaged in making bead and other ornaments." Upon noticing the display, a columnist for the *Dry Goods Review* believed the exhibit to be the most attractive holiday window in Halifax, providing the store with a "gala appearance."<sup>156</sup> Using the spectacle of Mi'kmaq women, culture, and craftsmanship, usually displayed at the Green Market, these up-to-date

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<sup>154</sup> *AR*, 10 Dec. 1884, 3. According to the writer, Mooney's shop had especially been popular with tourists. Although his shop remained small, by the mid-1860s Mooney received favourable credit reports with the stock addition of Mi'kmaq wares. During the late 1870s and early 1880s, Dun reporters estimated his worth to be \$5,000 to \$10,000 and his credit rating to be good to fair. See R. G. Dun and Company Collection, Canada, Vol. 11 (Nova Scotia), 309, MG 28 III 106, NAC; and *Mercantile Agency Reference Book*, Sept. 1879, March 1881.

<sup>155</sup> *AR*, 10 Dec. 1884, 3.

<sup>156</sup> *DGR* (Toronto) 7, 1 (Jan. 1897): 56. See also Chapter Three, 207; and Chapter Four, 254.

shopkeepers hoped to gain the attention and business of passers by, probably at the expense of needy vendors.

While certain shopkeepers borrowed both the goods and even the vendors from Halifax's open-air market, retailers in the northern suburbs recreated the market atmosphere for working-class customers. During the mid-1890s, two grocers from Gottingen Street cooperated to establish sidewalk shopping which coincided with the weekly pay period of their labouring clientele. Upon receiving their pay every Saturday night, working-class families could shop out-of-doors within this North End retail district where proprietors kept late hours, labeled products clearly, and priced goods inexpensively. Although the makeshift market allowed these grocers to prosper while providing improved accessibility to consumers, members of the Halifax-Dartmouth Retail Grocers' Association petitioned City Council to eliminate this example of unfair competition. Associated grocers viewed this clever practice by North End retailers as negatively as it had viewed itinerant commerce. Not only were these Gottingen Street grocers competing with peddlers and market vendors, but also with fixed-shop retailers. Ironically, despite the delivery services practiced by many retailers during the 1890s, associated grocers wished to raise their trade above the practice of mere hawking. Notwithstanding the presence of several grocers within City Council, the municipality took into account the interests of these innovative retailers and the needs of working-class consumers.<sup>157</sup>

As shopkeepers combined elements of itinerant retailing with fixed-shop commerce,

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<sup>157</sup> *CG*, 5 June 1896, 32; 4 Sept. 1896, 17; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1895-6, 1896-7.

some retailers took the appropriation of spectacle to new heights by the end of the century. Although older forms of spectacle embodied in the personalities and cultures of the retailing 'other' continued to exist after 1900, albeit in a regulated manner, fixed-shop retailers increasingly attracted customers with the excitement of shopping for its own sake. As historian Thomas Richards argues for late-Victorian Britain, rather than associating spectacle with the retailer, contemporaries began assigning spectacle to the commodity itself and the process of achieving that commodity through shopping.<sup>158</sup> As discussed in Chapter Three, Haligonian retailers most concerned with appearing up-to-date adopted plate glass windows, elaborate displays, lavish interiors, and eye-catching advertisements. By the turn of the twentieth century, the *Maritime Merchant* proudly declared that regional shopkeepers had embraced modernity in all its aspects.<sup>159</sup>

In espousing the modernity preached by creditors, boards of trade, commercial publications, and retail associations, up-to-date shopkeepers cooperated with others to remove or contain itinerant commerce from public thoroughfares. After decades of debate, critics of urban peddlers and market vendors eventually convinced Halifax's municipality that state regulation could be used to control such spectacles of commerce. According to these opponents, the theatre of the streets provided to the working and middle classes increasingly reflected an unprogressive image to residents and outsiders. Spectacles providing a contact zone for disparate cultures, such as the Green Market, elicited both an

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<sup>158</sup> See Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, especially pages 57-72.

<sup>159</sup> *MM*, 30 Aug. 1900, 28; and Chapter Three, 205-7.

attraction and revulsion from contemporary observers. Both reactions proved harmful to the market's future as an open-air institution and to the continued well-being of its enterprising denizens. Peddling traders also worried contemporaries who believed the public presence of unskilled, elderly, impoverished, and immigrant individuals were a nuisance to citizens, legal authorities, and competitors, as well as a danger to themselves and the wider community.

Whether they worked individually, within associations, or as members of the Council, business proprietors comprised the most enthusiastic proponents of regulation. Although shopkeepers desired the appearance of orderly streets and progressive commercial relations, self-interest also motivated many local proprietors. Self-interest, however, entailed more than simple greed. Shopkeepers opposed itinerant commerce in an effort to reduce competition, but also to enhance the reputation of themselves and their trade. As the aforementioned travelling salesman of 1889 remarked in the daily press, up-to-date shopkeepers, some of whom may have been the offspring of mere hucksters, wished to distance themselves from the humbler past of urban retailing and perhaps from the past of their own families. Just as the consumers of the Green Market used its vendors to define themselves as middle-class Euro-Americans, shopkeepers used itinerant commerce to demarcate themselves from Halifax's retailing 'other.'

Ironically, retailers who suffered the most from street traders such as dry goods peddler Rosie Joseph or peanut vendor Nickola Peolar, rarely belonged to commercial associations or expressed a voice within City Council. So-called progressive retailers viewed petty shopkeepers in the same light as they viewed street traders and Green Market vendors.

While little could be done to limit the ill-effects of fixed-shop petty enterprise, Halifax's most marginal retailer, the itinerant seller, could easily be contained.

In addition to the use of state power to ameliorate their position within the world of Halifax commerce, fixed-shop retailers appropriated the tactics of urban peddlers and open-air vendors while transforming the love of the spectacle for their own purposes. Notwithstanding the changes in decor, display, and service offered by shopkeepers throughout all districts of the city, disagreements did occur concerning the propriety of certain innovations. By the end of the nineteenth century, multiple meanings of legitimacy surfaced not only to destroy retail associations and ongoing cooperative action, but also any pretense of a homogeneous and professional shopkeeper identity.

## Conclusion

In 1889, Toronto's *Canadian Grocer* featured an article on the lamentable increase in the "class of small traders" who possessed little skill or capital. Singled out for particular disapproval were rural migrants to urban centres, working-class male residents, and wives of respectable artisans. According to the writer, rural migrants sought self-employment in an effort to compensate for the higher cost of city living. Meanwhile, members of the working class established grocery and provision shops with a paltry inheritance and credit provided by insignificant wholesalers who cared nothing for the individual's level of experience. Similarly, wives of respectable artisans established backstreet shops with little business knowledge and minimal capital achieved through the practice of "industry and self-denial." In the opinion of the journalist, married women operated these businesses to the detriment of their family's financial, physical, and emotional well-being. Excessive numbers of proprietors in all three categories reportedly led to the overcrowding and demoralization of commercial trade, as well as their own financial ruin. Although the writer claimed to be sympathetic to the plight of marginal shopkeepers, the article ended by blaming these retailers for the "enormous amount of desultory trading" that threatened those who were "justly entitled to a larger share of public patronage."<sup>1</sup>

Comparable sentiments raged against these and other so-called illegitimate competitors throughout national and regional trade papers, while being voiced by additional participants in the late-Victorian discourse on legitimacy. Critics angered over the existence of these seemingly unworthy traders as well as their inappropriate suppliers. Contributors to

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<sup>1</sup> *CG* (Toronto), 19 July 1889, 4-5.

the discourse promoted the hegemony of professional business, but exclusion remained an essential strategy in designating the 'illegitimate' retailer. Although Halifax followed wider trends in these matters, the city's ongoing reputation for commercial conservatism strengthened the drive for professionalization and the need for regulating what various participants perceived as unfair competition. Notwithstanding these mounting criticisms and campaigns, retailing 'others' were not entirely defenseless in the growing onslaught against their right to make ends meet in a way they saw fit.

For the most part, this study in urban retailing has been an exercise in "accounting for legitimacy." The identity of the 'legitimate' retailer in Halifax rested upon a myriad of factors revealed throughout the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Criteria for achieving this identity often included the possession of a moral character and respectable clientele, display of commercial experience and education, sale of quality goods at fair prices, permanent operation within reasonable business hours, avoidance of competition in unrelated lines, practice of proper accounting procedures, maintenance of a living profit, and payment of municipal taxes. Additionally, a proprietor's claim to respectable status also reflected contemporary notions involving gender, class, race, ethnicity, and religion. Unfortunately for those attempting to acquire, sustain, and enforce this identity, no consensus emerged involving the exact meaning of each criteria, the combination of elements to employ, nor the consistency in which they would be applied.

Discussions of legitimacy often rested upon the self-representations of interested proprietors, as well as the views offered by external participants. Leading retailers hoped to enhance the status of themselves and their trade, while safeguarding their businesses from

deskilling, keen competition, financial downturns, harmful government policies, and hostile reforms. Credit-reporting agents, suppliers, trade papers, and government legislators worked to reduce financial risk by defining appropriate behaviour in the late-Victorian world of commerce. Social reformers, notably temperance advocates, campaigned to promote the benefits of the socially responsible retailer. In an era obsessed with modernity but plagued with recurring recession, all participants struggled to redefine Halifax as a city of progressive enterprise.

The perceptions of Halifax's retailing 'others' further distinguished the 'legitimate' retailer. Beyond becoming an occasional nuisance, these female, minority, backstreet, and itinerant traders posed no significant threat to the prosperous shopkeepers of main-street Halifax. Yet, their existence angered contemporaries most concerned for advancing an image of the professional shopkeeper and an up-to-date city. Although little could be done to stop the commerce of shopkeeping 'others,' the spectacle of itinerant retail proved possible to eliminate, contain, and even appropriate. Critics may have perceived these 'others' as unqualified interlopers, but vendors of the streets and market viewed themselves as hardworking traders who offered customers a convenient and entertaining shopping alternative.

Whereas many examinations of urban shopkeeping begin their narratives with the onslaught of mass marketing, complaints against inappropriate competition surfaced in Halifax as early as the 1870s and 1880s. Years of economic hardship intensified the feelings of ill-will against seemingly illegitimate competitors. Critics especially blamed these retailers for the presence of widespread financial failure, not the realities of a cyclical



economy. Although some retailers of goods and services turned to formal associationalism in an effort to counter both internal and external pressures, cooperative action in Halifax's liquor and hairdressing trades failed to prevent rising tensions threatening each line while exacerbating divisions within both trades.

The advent of commercial journals in several lines and the activities of prominent retailers elsewhere partially motivated Halifax shopkeepers to intensify discussion concerning professionalization. Nonetheless, associations formed only when local retailers were ready to initiate collaboration. Druggist associations in Ontario and the establishment of the *Canadian Pharmaceutical Journal*, for example, preceded a move by Nova Scotian pharmacists to launch their own campaign towards accredited affiliation. Yet, local druggists organized successfully in the mid-1870s mainly to prevent a recently professionalized medical field from encroaching on their trade and discourage future drug regulations enacted without trade consultation. Nova Scotian pharmacists, led by Halifax's leading druggists, succeeded in these goals because pharmacy embraced the fields of medicine and chemistry at a time when middle-class Victorians regarded science as the foundation for bourgeois progress.

Haligonian shopkeepers in the most crowded lines also aspired to professionalization following encouragement from Canada's national trade papers and members of Toronto's shopkeeping elite, but local circumstances provided additional motivation. By the 1890s, a commercial press based in Halifax and supported by elite suppliers, promoted regional business interests while badgering legitimate retailers to associate. The presence of seemingly inappropriate competition also prompted Halifax grocers and dry goods dealers

to formally organize. In the last decade of the Victorian era, many Haligonian shopkeepers operated within the lowest socio-economic stratum. Records from 1901 even indicate a growth in retailers working on their own account, as well as an increase in the ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of the retailing population. Although associated shopkeepers and their allies succeeded in regulating itinerant commerce, multiple meanings of legitimacy ultimately destroyed their ability to create a homogenous and professional identity. Specifically, associational conflict revealed that certain middling proprietors sought a balance between protecting their trade, earning a living profit, and serving customers fairly. Divisions thus occurred within associations and similar socio-economic groupings, as well as between main-street proprietors and backstreet shopkeepers.

Regardless of the ultimate failure of most shopkeepers to effectively professionalize or even sustain a business for an extended period of time, Halifax retailers demonstrated a remarkable degree of active agency throughout their commercial careers. Middle-class shopkeepers cooperated as aldermen, association members, and participants in ad-hoc schemes. Leading retailers collaborated with suppliers when their goals coincided, but also rejected the paternalism of self-interested wholesalers. Retailers who challenged the dictates of professionalism likewise moved beyond the role of hapless victims. Minority proprietors used family and community support to maintain businesses, despite their exclusion by credit-reporting agents and associated shopkeepers. Women raised their voices through local newspapers, city court rooms, and charitable organizations when critics questioned their respectability and men usurped control over their businesses. When regulations threatened, Halifax's itinerant vendors similarly expressed concerns with sympathetic aldermen and

editors of the local press. Furthermore, all retailers sought a variety of legal and illicit means to negotiate success, or, at the very least, lessen the burden of commercial failure.

The processes of professionalization explored throughout this study were not entirely unique to Halifax nor restricted to shopkeepers. Much of the secondary literature concerning professions ignores the possibility that occupations other than the commonly recognized fields of law, medicine, and education could attempt similar goals. Certainly, an emergence of a working-class consciousness with its accompanying associational life, union organization, and own standard of respectability represents an analogous process to the creation of a professional identity in several middle-class occupations. With the exception of David Monod's work on Central Canadian shopkeepers, however, researchers have neglected the parallel movements shaping retail commerce. As recent suggestions by historians R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar indicate, a wide variety of middle- and working-class occupations collectively organized to defend specific skills, maintain present work conditions, and enhance personal status during years of rapid social, economic, and technological change.<sup>2</sup> The preceding examination of Haligonian retailers contributes to studies of this wider movement by providing an uncommon case study in the history of professionalization, while featuring a group rarely considered in studies of Atlantic Canadian history, and a region sometimes dismissed by scholars as lacking in national significance.

Whether one studies working- or middle-class collectives, identity formation

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<sup>2</sup> See David Monod, *Store Wars: Shopkeepers and the Culture of Mass Marketing, 1890-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); and R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, *Professional Gentlemen: The Professions in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

represents a complementary process in the drive for respectable status and vocational defense. This dissertation has largely highlighted the multiple identities of the legitimate retailer, but additional identities were shaped through the nexus of retailing and consumerism. Main-street shops of the southern suburbs and city centre reinforced the middle-class status of both proprietors and clientele through a lavish interior decor, polite demeanour, and quality goods. The intersection of open-air vendors and consuming spectators at Halifax's famed Green Market assisted in a similar but somewhat different process. Within the 'contact zone' of the outdoor market, middle-class residents and tourists perceived themselves against the 'others' of urban Atlantic Canada, namely rustic farmers, bemusing African-Nova Scotians, romanticized Acadians, and remnants of the once noble Mi'kmaq. Just as shopkeepers used middle-class colleagues and Halifax's retailing 'others' to distinguish themselves as 'legitimate,' consumers used a variety of retailers to define themselves as middle-class Euro-Americans.

Besides highlighting attempts towards professionalization and the processes of identity formation, the preceding study has contributed to the historical analysis of various social constructs and an understanding of how those categories intersect. As such, the dissertation answers David Monod's call for regional and local research in the lives of leading retailers, backstreet traders, female proprietors, and minority shopkeepers.<sup>3</sup> While offering insights into the meanings of class, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and region in late-nineteenth century urban Canada, the study further incorporates these categories for analysis into various aspects of business history.

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<sup>3</sup> Monod, *Store Wars*, 349-50.

Because the shopkeeping population of Halifax varied in its socio-economic composition and the identity of the 'legitimate' retailer failed to coincide entirely with class background, my examination of self-employed retailing has not been driven by a sole need to distinguish the Haligonian lower middle class nor the wider bourgeoisie. However, a number of points are worthy to note. First, the definition of class should not comprise a static set of occupational criteria observable from the manuscript census, city directories, and R. G. Dun records. Whether an individual owns their means of production or engages in non-manual labour cannot constitute affiliation within the middle class. As evidence from Halifax illustrates, urban retailers included a heterogeneous mix of inhabitants with conflict apparent between and within each grouping. To some extent, business ownership may have acted as an important component of the emerging bourgeoisie, but not all self-employed residents shared the same socio-economic standing before, during, or after their foray into commercial enterprise. Certainly, a person's engagement in self-employment did not always signify an advancement in class status, nor did people remain in the same socio-economic position throughout their lives. Further, class formation involved a process of both consensus and conflict, each of which required an element of consciousness.

The second aspect of class analysis deserving of mention involves a word of caution for more sophisticated explanations of class affiliation. Some historians have modified the hypothesis connecting socio-economic rank with occupational status by relying on persistence in business as a prerequisite for the creation of a local bourgeoisie. Evidence focusing on Haligonian shopkeepers, however, reveals little connection between capital estimation, credit rating, and persistence. Even the presence of commonplace indicators of

a commercial middle-class identity, such as the separation between home and shop, failed to adequately indicate a household's socio-economic status. Shopkeepers who reported higher than average incomes and an employment of a servant continued to operate a business from within or adjacent to their home as late as 1901. In some cases these individuals were perceived as leading retailers, but households in similar circumstances still failed to meet the requirements for becoming a creditworthy proprietor.

Of course, Halifax's middle-class retailers did make important contributions to the discourse on legitimacy and certainly echoed concerns of the wider bourgeoisie. Leading shopkeepers took part in associational activity, directed the state to promote their interests, and worried frequently over material progress. Nevertheless, this group of retailers generally possessed contradictory feelings concerning moral reform and the doctrine of separate spheres, reminding researchers that middle-class identity did not constitute a monolithic ideal. In the final analysis, to which class each shopkeeper belonged becomes a moot point. Whether retailers represented a stratum within one class, the socio-economic background of their clientele, or the class identity according to shifting contexts, contemporaries discussed legitimacy to a greater degree than socio-economic origin.

Since class failed to represent the sole identity of the legitimate retailer, nor the only category for analysis in late-Victorian society, the preceding study illustrates the need for examining the experiences of businesswomen and the gendered aspects of commercial enterprise. Despite separate spheres doctrine, evidence from Halifax reveals a larger number of female retailers than expected, including women from a variety of class, ethnic, racial, and marital origins. An inclusive definition of 'business' as well as a careful reading of

empirical sources, helped locate the extent of female enterprise and the attitudes its presence generated. Although credit-reporting sources provided valuable information, they routinely underenumerated women's contributions to business ventures. Manuscript ledgers and published reference books from R. G. Dun and Company must be studied both for what they contain and for what they omit. Reading between the lines allows a researcher to better understand not only how commercial worth embodied a contemporary notion based on gender-appropriate behaviour, but how 'business' itself reflected a nineteenth-century social construct.

Historians of business should also avoid making simplified assumptions concerning the operation of gender. Sexual prejudice failed to prevent large numbers of women from engaging in retailing at some level, nor did it prompt early credit reporters to declare evaluated women as being unfit for business. Nevertheless, contemporaries most concerned with professionalizing retail commerce criticized female enterprise as inappropriate competition, omitted the majority of businesswomen from credit-reporting sources, and excluded female shopkeepers from trade associations. Moreover, businesswomen who stepped the furthest from separate spheres doctrine were regarded with fascination, pity, or even anger. Additionally, researchers hoping to study the gendered aspect of business must carefully recount and critically challenge the late-Victorian rhetoric connecting commercial enterprise with masculine ambition. Female shopkeepers were not the only individuals to seek retailing as a means for making ends meet, nor did women lack aspirations for success. Significantly, of the 'self-made businessmen' examined throughout this dissertation, few achieved self-employment or even success without the essential capital, knowledge, and

labour provided by female relatives.

Besides analyzing the social constructs of class and gender, historians must also critically assess ethnic-, racial- and religious-based stereotypes shaping the contemporary notion that legitimate business represented an Euro-American Christian (and often Protestant) endeavour. Careful attention to R. G. Dun and Company sources revealed that disadvantaged populations faced discrimination in the judgement of commercial worth throughout the late nineteenth century. Proprietors of suspected Jewish heritage experienced hostility from the wider business community and became direct targets of cooperative campaigns aimed at 'foreign' exclusion. African-Nova Scotians faced less direct prejudice, but racism ensured that white contemporaries viewed their businesses as insignificant operations. Credit reports also portrayed Roman Catholic proprietors as petty shopkeepers, often noting with surprise prosperous Irish Catholic establishments. Furthermore, ethnic and racial difference combined with rural origin and the practice of itinerant commerce to produce a spectacle curious middle-class consumers enjoyed, but 'legitimate' shopkeepers maligned.

Despite the unequal treatment these populations received, newcomers to Nova Scotia, members of minority ethnic and racial groups, and even Roman Catholic adherents were not prevented from engaging in business within late-Victorian Halifax. Although contemporaries believed these proprietors were confined to the trades of backstreet and itinerant commerce, immigrants, minorities, and Roman Catholics also represented main-street shopkeeping. No matter what the scale of enterprise, such retailers sustained their businesses through family support and ethnic- or racial-based cooperation, while catering to the needs of their own



communities, acting as a middleman minority, or finding a wider clientele.

Urban and rural origin also contributed to the determination of identities involving legitimacy and individual character. In Halifax, the discourse defining the legitimate retailer often distinguished rural-born proprietors as unsophisticated and inexperienced interlopers, while notions of idyllic and eccentric agrarianism attracted both admiration and ridicule to the public market. Although rural and urban differences were not the most important source for identity in late-Victorian society, historians should further explore this often neglected 'other' that helped define an increasingly urban Canada.

Like rural origin, contemporary constructs based on regional difference influenced the discourse on legitimacy and drive towards professionalization. Significantly for Canadian historiography and shopkeeping scholarship in general, the actions of local retailers belied the pervasive stereotype of Halifax and the Maritimes as a bastion for unprogressive conservatism. Halifax's leading shopkeepers of the late nineteenth century were not a population of politically impotent inhabitants who supported the economic philosophy of *laissez faire*. Members of the shopkeeping elite used political influence to enact legislation designed to strengthen and defend their businesses as representatives of middle-class enterprise. Similarly, leading shopkeepers became obsessed with appearing up-to-date, applying this term most frequently to city streets, building exteriors, shop decor, and accounting practices. Although Keith Walden comments in a slightly different context that most late-Victorians did not consciously consider "[b]ecoming modern" as a deliberate goal, the experiences of local shopkeepers most concerned with promoting professionalization

provides an argument to the contrary.<sup>4</sup> Halifax's prominent retailers may not have consistently applied criteria identifying legitimacy, but they sought modernity in almost every thought, speech, and action examined during the last decade of the nineteenth century.

More generally, the preceding exploration of Haligonian retailing serves as a model for further studies in shopkeeping, self-employment, and business history. Examinations of retailing should focus not only on the retailers' perceptions of themselves, but also views offered by additional participants and the 'others' of the commercial world. In studying such imagery, however, the realities of material lives must also remain in focus to understand how our subjects negotiated these perceptions. In a similar vein, self-employment studies can be enriched by the combination of qualitative and empirical data, particularly when researchers critically assess each source. Moreover, the examination of large-scale firms and male-defined ambitions need not shape the continued development of all business history. Like any topic of scholarly discussion, business can be placed within a wider social, cultural, economic, and political framework. Most importantly for social historians who tread the path of business enquiry, individualist greed cannot be assumed to motivate every action undertaken by their historical subjects. Finally, the processes examined in this dissertation relating to shopkeeping, self-employment, and business history, or indeed any study of identity formation, can best be understood by analyzing the complexities of the local context. When examining history from the community level, ideal perceptions are easily grounded in material experiences, specific pressures and motivations revealed, and intersections or

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<sup>4</sup> Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 333.

multiplicities of historical constructs explored. In examining the local context, historians must not lose sight of the state. Omission of the state in its many levels and forms risks the artificial division of the social from the political, the neglect of wider regional and national processes, as well as the disregard for state opposition, consensus, and exploitation.

In any study using the local context as a starting point for historical analysis, questions should be asked concerning the representative nature of the community examined. Certainly, Haligonian shopkeepers encountered similar aspirations, adversities, and perceptions as their counterparts throughout urban North America and Europe. Nevertheless, Halifax appeared unique for its high recruitment of shopkeepers among seemingly disadvantaged populations, lower than normal persistent rates, greater degree of commercial fragmentation, and continuation of subjective factors assessing credit worth. Unfortunately, the reality of these discrepancies are difficult to gauge since methodologies used in each study utilize different combinations of sources and varying definitions regarding business or self-employment. The city's small but varied population, high incidence of families living on or below the poverty line, lack of a dominant industry, and absence of a competing department store, may have ensured that Nova Scotia's capital remained "a city of shopkeepers." Of any Canadian city, Halifax probably most resembled Saint John, New Brunswick for its relative size, residential composition, reputation of conservatism, and shared medium for defining success and legitimacy. Examinations of commercial self-employment in alternative urban centres, however, could reveal contradictory levels of recruitment, conflict, and consensus. Whether representative or entirely unique, the preceding study serves as a corrective to works which neglect the lower echelons of

commercial enterprise and the multiple identities of their retailing recruits.

Although the dissertation reveals useful insights applicable to Canadian and business historiography, it leaves certain questions unanswered which lie beyond the scope of the study's primary objective. First, the place of retail commerce in family economies and local neighbourhoods require subsequent analysis, from the perspective of both the backstreet trader and the main-street proprietor. Second, the experiences, impressions, and processes shaping rural retailing must also be addressed, including its relationship to urban commerce. Third, the flip side of the retailing equation--the consumer--deserves further examination than presented here. Recently scholars have identified consumption as a gendered phenomenon greatly influencing twentieth-century urban society, but Canadian historians have overlooked nineteenth-century developments in both urban and rural Canada, while sometimes forgetting that working-class, masculine, ethnic, and racial identities could also be constructed through the nexus of retailing and consumerism.

As careful research reveals greater complexities than commonly supposed, historical processes rarely stop where scholars choose to end their narratives. Halifax shopkeepers formed a Retail Merchants' Association in 1902, uniting leading proprietors in one organization and establishing a retail voice from within the local Board of Trade. By 1909, a provincial branch of the association formed. Meanwhile, middle-class and aspiring shopkeepers continued to seek trade-specific cooperation. Halifax's only commercial publication for several decades, the *Maritime Merchant*, remained in print until the 1960s, while a paper produced by the Halifax Board of Trade, the *Commercial News*, began

publication in the 1920s.<sup>5</sup> Hence, in the first half of the twentieth century the Maritime drive for retail professionalization may have intensified with years of heightened mass marketing, periods of economic hardship, intermissions of war, and eventual deindustrialization. Self-employed retailing certainly continued its widespread presence throughout Canada in these years. In 1931, over 90 percent of all Canadian enterprises were small independent retailers, and more than 80 percent of all retail sales could be attributed to their business transactions.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly for scholars of shopkeeping, as late as 1990, at least one Canadian writer called for the professionalization of independent shopkeepers to attain the desired goal of respectability.<sup>7</sup> Such statements hearken back to the discourse on legitimacy more than a century earlier, making one wonder if a “class of small traders” continues to haunt the commercial imagination.

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<sup>5</sup> For examples of retail associations in Halifax between 1901 and the Great War, see *MM* (Halifax), 13 Feb. 1902, 28; 2 July 1903, 70; 3 Nov. 1904, 24; 9 March 1905, 22; 7 Feb. 1907, 27; 14 Oct. 1909, 26, 82; and 2 March 1911, 23.

<sup>6</sup> Monod, *Store Wars*, 19; and Graham D. Taylor and Peter A. Baskerville, *A Concise History of Business in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 349.

<sup>7</sup> Ervin Enchin, *The Great Shopocracy: The Professionalization of the Independent Shopkeeper* (Guelph: Alexis Press, 1990), 32.

## Appendix A

### Tables for Chapter One

**Table A.1**  
**Halifax City Population, 1871 to 1901**

	Census Year			
	1871	1881	1891	1901
<b>Population</b>	29,582	36,054	38,437	40,832

*Source:* "Table I: Areas, Dwellings, Families, Population, Sexes, Conjugal Condition," in *Census of Canada 1870-71*, vol. 1 (Ottawa: I. B. Taylor, 1873), 77; "Table I: Areas, Dwellings Families, Population, Sexes, Conjugal Condition," in *Census of Canada 1880-81*, vol. I (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger and Co., 1882), 9; "Table II: Population, Families and Dwellings" in *Census of Canada 1890-91*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1893), 26; and "Table VII: Areas, Houses, Families, Population, Sex and Conjugal Condition" in *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1902), 42-3.

*Note:* Often census tabulations for Halifax include the small population of Sable Island. The figures here include the population for the city of Halifax only.

**Table A.2**  
**Shopkeeping Rates in Wards 3 and 5, 1891 and 1901**

	1891			1901		
	Ward 3	Ward 5	Total	Ward 3	Ward 5	Total
<b>Number of shopkeepers</b>	118	390	508	158	298	456
<b>Population</b>	2,332	14,347	16,679	3,561	9,706	13,267
<b>Shopkeepers per 1,000</b>	50.6	27.2	30.5	44.4	30.7	34.4

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5; "Table II: Population, Families and Dwellings" in *Census of Canada 1890-91*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1893), 26; and "Table VII: Areas, Houses, Families, Population, Sex and Conjugal Condition" in *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1902), 42-3.

**Table A.3**  
**Retail Categories in 1891 by Sex and Total, Wards 3 and 5 Combined**

Retail Categories	Men		Women		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Food, drink &amp; pharmacy</b>	154	45.7	56	32.7	210	41.3
<b>Apparel</b>	64	19.0	63	36.8	127	25.0
<b>Personal services</b>	31	9.2	37	21.6	68	13.4
<b>Fine goods</b>	31	9.2	3	1.8	34	6.7
<b>Artisanal</b>	25	7.4	0	0.0	25	4.9
<b>Hardware, building equipment &amp; farm supplies</b>	13	3.9	1	0.6	14	2.8
<b>Variety &amp; shopkeeper</b>	9	2.7	10	5.8	19	3.7
<b>Used goods</b>	8	2.4	0	0.0	8	1.6
<b>Other</b>	2	0.6	1	0.6	3	0.6
<b>Total</b>	337	100.0	171	100.0	508	100.0

*Source:* 1891 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* The individual retail trades belonging to each category are listed in Table A.5. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.4**  
**Retail Categories in 1901 by Sex and Total, Wards 3 and 5 Combined**

<b>Retail Categories</b>	<b>Men</b>		<b>Women</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Food, drink &amp; pharmacy</b>	122	40.4	46	29.9	168	36.8
<b>Apparel</b>	50	16.6	72	46.8	122	26.8
<b>Personal services</b>	37	12.3	20	13.0	57	12.5
<b>Fine goods</b>	28	9.3	1	0.6	29	6.4
<b>Artisanal</b>	22	7.3	0	0.0	22	4.8
<b>Hardware, building equipment &amp; farm supplies</b>	20	6.6	0	0.0	20	4.4
<b>Variety &amp; shopkeeper</b>	11	3.6	12	7.8	23	5.0
<b>Used goods</b>	11	3.6	3	1.9	14	3.1
<b>Other</b>	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.2
<b>Total</b>	302	100.0	154	100.0	456	100.0

*Source:* 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* The individual retail trades belonging to each category are listed in Table A.6.



**Table A.5**  
**Retail Trades in 1891 by Sex and Total, Wards 3 and 5 Combined**

Retail Trades	Men		Women		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>1. Grocery</b>	79	23.4	36	21.1	115	22.6
Meat, fish & dairy	33	9.8	1	0.6	34	6.7
Bakery & confection	12	3.6	7	4.1	19	3.7
Liquors	14	4.2	2	1.2	16	3.1
Restaurant	12	3.6	9	5.3	21	4.1
Pharmacy	4	1.2	1	0.6	5	1.0
<b>2. Clothing &amp; dry goods</b>	38	11.3	62	36.3	100	19.7
Boots & shoes	26	7.7	1	0.6	27	5.3
<b>3. Hairdressing</b>	8	2.4	0	0.0	8	1.6
Hotel accommodation & lodging	23	6.8	37	21.6	60	11.8

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Table A.5--*Continued*

Retail Trades	Men		Women		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>4. Jewellery &amp; watches</b>	11	3.3	1	0.6	12	2.4
<b>Books &amp; stationery</b>	7	2.1	0	0.0	7	1.4
<b>Music &amp; instruments</b>	2	0.6	0	0.0	2	0.4
<b>Crockery, china &amp; glass</b>	4	1.2	1	0.6	5	1.0
<b>Fancy goods, toys, pictures &amp; gifts</b>	2	0.6	1	0.6	3	0.6
<b>Tobacco</b>	4	1.2	0	0.0	4	0.8
<b>Sporting goods &amp; taxidermy</b>	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.2
<b>Photographs</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>5. Cabinet-making, upholstery &amp; undertaking</b>	5	1.5	0	0.0	5	1.0
<b>Ironwork &amp; carriagemaking</b>	9	2.7	0	0.0	9	1.8
<b>Tanning &amp; leather goods</b>	3	0.9	0	0.0	3	0.6
<b>Coopering</b>	4	1.2	0	0.0	4	0.8
<b>Marblecutting</b>	2	0.6	0	0.0	2	0.4
<b>Locks</b>	2	0.6	0	0.0	2	0.4

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**Table A.5--Continued**

Retail Trades	Men		Women		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>6. Hardware, stoves &amp; plumbing</b>	2	0.6	0	0.0	2	0.4
<b>Lumber &amp; building supplies</b>	3	0.9	0	0.0	3	0.6
<b>Paint &amp; paper</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>Farm &amp; garden supplies</b>	4	1.2	0	0.0	4	0.8
<b>Fuel</b>	4	1.2	1	0.6	5	1.0
<b>7. Variety, bargain &amp; general store</b>	9	2.7	8	4.7	17	3.3
<b>Unspecified shop</b>	0	0.0	2	1.2	2	0.4
<b>8. Used clothing</b>	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.2
<b>Used furniture</b>	3	0.9	0	0.0	3	0.6
<b>Used goods unspecified</b>	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.2
<b>Junk &amp; marine</b>	3	0.9	0	0.0	3	0.6
<b>9. Sewing machines</b>	0	0.0	1	0.6	1	0.2
<b>Umbrella repair</b>	2	0.6	0	0.0	2	0.4
<b>Total</b>	337	100.0	171	100.0	508	100.0

*Source:* 1891 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* Numbers one to nine correspond with the nine retail categories listed in Table A.3. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.6**  
**Retail Trades in 1901 by Sex and Total, Wards 3 and 5 Combined**

Retail Trades	Men		Women		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>1. Grocery</b>	63	20.9	35	22.7	98	21.5
<b>Meat, fish &amp; dairy</b>	30	9.9	0	0.0	30	6.6
<b>Bakery &amp; confection</b>	7	2.3	3	1.9	10	2.2
<b>Liquors</b>	10	3.3	3	1.9	13	2.9
<b>Restaurant</b>	8	2.6	5	3.2	13	2.9
<b>Pharmacy</b>	4	1.3	0	0.0	4	0.9
<b>2. Clothing &amp; dry goods</b>	19	6.3	71	46.1	90	19.7
<b>Boots &amp; shoes</b>	31	10.3	1	0.6	32	7.0
<b>3. Hairdressing</b>	18	6.0	0	0.0	18	3.9
<b>Hotel accommodation &amp; lodging</b>	19	6.3	20	13.0	39	8.6

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**Table A.6--Continued**

Retail Trades	Men		Women		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>4. Jewellery &amp; watches</b>	12	4.0	0	0.0	12	2.6
<b>Books &amp; stationery</b>	3	1.0	1	0.6	4	0.9
<b>Music &amp; instruments</b>	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.4
<b>Crockery, china &amp; glass</b>	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.2
<b>Fancy goods, toys, pictures &amp; gifts</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>Tobacco</b>	5	1.7	0	0.0	5	1.1
<b>Sporting goods &amp; taxidermy</b>	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.4
<b>Photographs</b>	3	1.0	0	0.0	3	0.7
<b>5. Cabinet-making, upholstery &amp; undertaking</b>	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.4
<b>Ironwork &amp; carriagemaking</b>	16	5.3	0	0.0	16	3.5
<b>Tanning &amp; leather goods</b>	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.4
<b>Coopering</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>Marblecutting</b>	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.2
<b>Locks</b>	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.2

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**Table A.6--Continued**

Retail Trades	Men		Women		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>6. Hardware, stoves &amp; plumbing</b>	3	1.0	0	0.0	3	0.7
<b>Lumber &amp; building supplies</b>	2	0.7	0	0.0	2	0.4
<b>Paint &amp; paper</b>	6	2.0	0	0.0	6	1.3
<b>Farm &amp; garden supplies</b>	3	1.0	0	0.0	3	0.7
<b>Fuel</b>	6	2.0	0	0.0	6	1.3
<b>7. Variety, bargain &amp; general store</b>	1	0.3	4	2.6	5	1.1
<b>Unspecified shop</b>	10	3.3	8	5.2	18	3.9
<b>8. Used clothing</b>	0	0.0	1	0.6	1	0.2
<b>Used furniture</b>	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.2
<b>Used goods unspecified</b>	4	1.3	2	1.3	6	1.3
<b>Junk &amp; marine</b>	6	2.0	0	0.0	6	1.3
<b>9. Sewing machines</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>Umbrella repair</b>	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.2
<b>Total</b>	302	100.0	154	100.0	456	100.0

*Source:* 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* Numbers one to nine correspond with the nine retail categories listed in Table A.4. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.7**  
**Income Distribution Reported from Shopkeepers by Ward and Total, 1901**

Income Range	Ward 3		Ward 5		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Under \$100</b>	1	1.1	6	3.3	7	2.6
<b>\$100-\$499</b>	35	40.2	95	52.8	130	48.7
<b>\$500-\$999</b>	39	44.8	59	32.8	98	36.7
<b>\$1,000-\$1,999</b>	7	8.0	16	8.9	23	8.6
<b>\$2,000-\$4,999</b>	5	5.7	4	2.2	9	3.4
<b>Total</b>	87	100.0	180	100.0	267	100.0

*Source:* 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* This table is based on the 55.1 percent of shopkeepers who reported an income in Ward Three (87 of 158), 60.4 percent in Ward Five (180 of 298), and 58.6 percent overall (267 of 456). Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.8**  
**Income Distribution Reported from Grocers and Clothing and Dry Goods Dealers, Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1901**

Income Range	Grocers		Clothing & Dry Goods Dealers	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Under \$100</b>	1	1.8	4	8.5
<b>\$100-\$499</b>	25	44.6	37	78.7
<b>\$500-\$999</b>	22	39.3	3	6.4
<b>\$1,000-\$1,999</b>	6	10.7	1	2.1
<b>\$2,000-\$4,999</b>	2	3.6	2	4.3
<b>Total</b>	56	100.0	47	100.0

*Source:* 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* This table is based on the 57.1 percent of grocers who disclosed an income in 1901 (56 of 98), and 52.2 percent of clothing and dry goods dealers who did the same (47 of 90).

**Table A.9**  
**Shopkeepers and Servants in Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 and 1901**

Presence of Servants	1891		1901	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>With servants</b>	80	15.7	33	7.2
<b>Without servants</b>	428	84.3	423	92.8
<b>Total</b>	508	100.0	456	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

**Table A.10**  
**Shopkeepers and Servants by Ward, 1891 and 1901**

Presence of Servants	1891				1901			
	Ward 3		Ward 5		Ward 3		Ward 5	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>With servants</b>	20	16.9	60	15.4	13	8.2	20	6.7
<b>Without servants</b>	98	83.1	330	84.6	145	91.8	278	93.3
<b>Total</b>	118	100.0	390	100.0	158	100.0	298	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.



**Table A.11**  
**Shopkeeper Employment Status in 1891 and 1901, Wards 3 and 5 Combined**

Employment Status	1891		1901	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Own account</b>	244	48.0	342	75.0
<b>Employer</b>	234	46.1	92	20.2
<b>Employee</b>	30	5.9	11	2.4
<b>Unknown</b>	0	0.0	11	2.4
<b>Total</b>	508	100.0	456	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* The census referred to hired labour in 1891 as "wage earners," but as "employees" in 1901. Although enumerators mistook these individuals as hired labour, their status as self-employed shopkeepers was verified through consultation with other sources. In 1891, the census provided no designation for those working on their own account. Instead, these individuals were determined by a blank.

**Table A.12**  
**Shopkeeper Employment Status in 1891 and 1901 by Sex, Wards 3 and 5 Combined**

Employment Status	1891				1901			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Own account</b>	133	39.5	111	64.9	205	67.9	137	89.0
<b>Employer</b>	188	55.8	46	26.9	80	26.5	12	7.8
<b>Employee</b>	16	4.7	14	8.2	9	3.0	2	1.3
<b>Unknown</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	2.6	3	1.9
<b>Total</b>	337	100.0	171	100.0	302	100.0	154	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* The census referred to hired labour in 1891 as "wage earners," but as "employees" in 1901. Although enumerators mistook these individuals as hired labour, their status as self-employed shopkeepers was verified through consultation with other sources. In 1891, the census provided no designation for those working on their own account. Instead, these individuals were determined by a blank.

**Table A.13**  
**Shopkeeper Employment Status in 1891 and 1901 by Ward**

Employment Status	1891				1901			
	Ward 3		Ward 5		Ward 3		Ward 5	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Own account</b>	84	71.2	160	41.0	136	86.1	206	69.1
<b>Employer</b>	28	23.7	206	52.8	12	7.6	80	26.8
<b>Employee</b>	6	5.1	24	6.2	6	3.8	5	1.7
<b>Unknown</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	2.5	7	2.3
<b>Total</b>	118	100.0	390	100.0	158	100.0	298	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* The census referred to hired labour in 1891 as "wage earners," but as "employees" in 1901. Although enumerators mistook these individuals as hired labour, their status as self-employed shopkeepers was verified through consultation with other sources. In 1891, the census provided no designation for those working on their own account. Instead, these individuals were determined by a blank. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.14**  
**Grocer Residential Patterns in Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 and 1901**

Residential Patterns	1891		1901	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Same building/ next-door</b>	80	69.6	74	75.5
<b>Separation between home and shop</b>	27	23.5	18	18.4
<b>Unknown</b>	8	7.0	6	6.1
<b>Total</b>	115	100.0	98	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1891-2, 1900-1, 1901-2.

*Note:* "Grocers" include those who sold groceries alone or in combination with other lines as well as fruit, tea and coffee. Of the 27 grocers listed in the category of "Separation between Home and Shop" for 1891, three grocers kept stores at both their homes and a separate location. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.15**  
**Grocer Residential Patterns by Sex in Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 and 1901**

Residential Patterns	1891				1901			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Same building/ next-door</b>	47	59.5	33	91.7	41	65.1	33	94.3
<b>Separation between home and shop</b>	26	32.9	1	2.8	17	27.0	1	2.9
<b>Unknown</b>	6	7.6	2	5.6	5	7.9	1	2.9
<b>Total</b>	79	100.0	36	100.0	63	100.0	35	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1891-2, 1900-1, 1901-2.

*Note:* In the category of "Separation between Home and Shop" for 1891 male grocers, three grocers kept stores at both their homes and a separate location. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.16**  
**Grocer Residential Patterns by Ward, 1891 and 1901**

Residential Patterns	1891				1901			
	Ward 3		Ward 5		Ward 3		Ward 5	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Same building/ next-door	15	78.9	65	67.7	25	80.6	49	73.1
Separation between home and shop	1	5.3	26	27.1	3	9.7	15	22.4
Unknown	3	15.8	5	5.2	3	9.7	3	4.5
<b>Total</b>	19	100.0	96	100.0	31	100.0	67	100.0

Source: 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5; and *McAlpine's Halifax City Directory*, 1890-1, 1891-2, 1900-1, 1901-2.

Note: In the category of "Separation between Home and Shop" for 1891, of the 26 grocers listed in Ward Five, three grocers kept stores at both their homes and a separate location.

**Table A.17**  
**Shopkeeper Literacy in Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 and 1901**

Literacy Level	1891		1901	
	N	%	N	%
Read and write	477	93.9	436	95.6
Unable to read and/or write	31	6.1	20	4.4
<b>Total</b>	508	100.0	456	100.0

Source: 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

Note: In 1891, 17 shopkeepers (3.3 percent) were unable to both read and write, while 14 shopkeepers (2.8 percent) reported partial literacy. In 1901, 16 shopkeepers (3.5 percent) were unable to read and write, while four shopkeepers (0.9 percent) were partially literate.

**Table A.18**  
**Shopkeeper Literacy by Sex in Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 and 1901**

Literacy Level	1891				1901			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Read and write</b>	325	96.4	152	88.9	290	96.0	146	94.8
<b>Unable to read and/or write</b>	12	3.6	19	11.1	12	4.0	8	5.2
<b>Total</b>	337	100.0	171	100.0	302	100.0	154	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

**Table A.19**  
**Shopkeeper Literacy by Ward, 1891 and 1901**

Literacy Level	1891				1901			
	Ward 3		Ward 5		Ward 3		Ward 5	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Read and write</b>	99	83.9	378	96.9	145	91.8	291	97.7
<b>Unable to read and/or write</b>	19	16.1	12	3.1	13	8.2	7	2.3
<b>Total</b>	118	100.0	390	100.0	158	100.0	298	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

**Table A.20**  
**Illiterate and Partial Literate Shopkeepers by Retail Category**  
**in Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 and 1901**

Retail Category	1891		1901	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Food, drink &amp; pharmacy</b>	11	35.5	7	35.0
<b>Apparel</b>	8	25.8	2	10.0
<b>Personal services</b>	7	22.6	3	15.0
<b>Fine goods</b>	1	3.2	0	0.0
<b>Artisanal</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>Hardware, building equipment &amp; farm supplies</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>Variety &amp; shopkeeper</b>	4	12.9	4	20.0
<b>Used goods</b>	0	0.0	3	15.0
<b>Other</b>	0	0.0	1	5.0
<b>Total</b>	31	100.0	20	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* The small sample sizes illustrated in this table make any conclusions tentative.

**Table A.21**  
**Birth Place of Halifax Residents and Shopkeepers in Wards 3 and 5 Combined,**  
**1891 and 1901**

Place of Birth	1891				1901			
	Shopkeeping Sample		Total Population		Shopkeeping Sample		Total Population	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
N. S.	319	62.8	29,586	76.9	328	71.9	.....	.....
Other Canada	46	9.1	2,809	7.3	37	8.1	.....	.....
Canada-subtotal	365	71.9	32,395	84.2	365	80.0	.....	.....
England	51	10.0	2,617	6.8	36	7.9	.....	.....
Ireland	54	10.6	1,557	4.0	25	5.5	.....	.....
Scotland	13	2.6	621	1.6	6	1.3	.....	.....
Other G. B.	1	0.2	7	0.0	2	0.4	.....	.....
Great Britain-subtotal	119	23.4	4,802	12.5	69	15.1	.....	.....
Other	23	4.5	1,216	3.2	22	4.8	.....	.....
Unknown	1	0.2	82	0.2	0	0.0	.....	.....
Total	508	100.0	38,495	100.0	456	100.0	.....	.....

Source: 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5; and "Table V: Places of Birth," in *Census of Canada 1890-91*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1893), 337.

Note: Since the 1891 published census information did not contain data on birth places by ward, the data for Halifax City (which included Sable Island) was instead used for comparison with the shopkeeping population. In 1901, ward and city data were unavailable for comparison. "Other Canada" also includes Newfoundland. For the shopkeeping population, "Other G. B." refers to Wales and the Channel Islands. For the total population in 1891, however "Other G. B." refers only to the Channel Islands, while "England" includes both England and Wales. "Other" includes birth places for non-British immigrants. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.



**Table A.22**  
**Birth Place of Shopkeepers by Sex in Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 and 1901**

Place of Birth	1891				1901			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>N. S.</b>	218	64.7	101	59.1	208	68.9	120	77.9
<b>Other Atlantic</b>	17	5.0	26	15.2	19	6.3	14	9.1
<b>Other Canada</b>	2	0.6	1	0.6	3	1.0	1	0.6
<b>Canada-subtotal</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>70.3</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>74.9</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>76.2</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>87.7</b>
<b>England</b>	42	12.5	9	5.3	31	10.3	5	3.2
<b>Ireland</b>	28	8.3	26	15.2	16	5.3	9	5.8
<b>Scotland</b>	9	2.7	4	2.3	4	1.3	2	1.3
<b>Other G. B.</b>	1	0.3	0	0.0	2	0.7	0	0.0
<b>Great Britain-subtotal</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10.4</b>

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Table A.22--Continued

Place of Birth	1891				1901			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
United States	4	1.2	3	1.8	3	1.0	2	1.3
Western Europe	6	1.8	0	0.0	3	1.0	0	0.0
Northern Europe	4	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Southern Europe	2	0.6	0	0.0	5	1.7	0	0.0
Eastern Europe	2	0.6	0	0.0	2	0.7	0	0.0
Cont. Europe-subtotal	14	4.2	0	0.0	10	3.3	0	0.0
West Indies	2	0.6	0	0.0	3	1.0	0	0.0
Other	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	1.0	1	0.6
Unknown	0	0.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	337	100.0	171	100.0	302	100.0	154	100.0

Source: 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

Note: "Other Atlantic" includes the remaining Maritime provinces and Newfoundland. "Other G. B." includes Wales and the Channel Islands. "Western Europe" includes Germany and Holland. "Northern Europe" includes Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland. "Southern Europe" includes Spain and Italy. "Eastern Europe" includes Russia and Poland. "Other" includes Syria, Cape of Good Hope, Australia, and "at sea." Finally, total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.23**  
**Birth Place of Shopkeepers by Ward, 1891 and 1901**

Place of Birth	1891				1901			
	Ward 3		Ward 5		Ward 3		Ward 5	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
N. S.	63	53.4	256	65.6	107	67.7	221	74.2
Other Canada	16	13.6	30	7.7	14	8.9	23	7.7
Great Britain	33	28.0	86	22.1	30	19.0	39	13.1
Other	5	4.2	18	4.6	7	4.4	15	5.0
Unknown	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* "Other Canada" also includes Newfoundland. "Other" includes any foreign country or region other than Great Britain, as well as those labelled as born "at sea."

**Table A.24**  
**Urban and Rural Origin of Nova Scotia-Born Shopkeepers by Ward and Total, 1901**

Origin of Birth	Ward 3		Ward 5		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Urban	47	43.9	167	75.6	214	65.2
Rural	28	26.2	51	23.1	79	24.1
Unknown	32	29.9	3	1.4	35	10.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.25**  
**Ethnic and Racial Origins of the Populations in Shopkeeping**  
**and Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1901**

Ethnic & Racial Origin	Shopkeeping Sample		Total Population	
	N	%	N	%
English	213	46.7	6,300	47.5
Irish	109	23.9	3,466	26.1
Scottish	53	11.6	1, 691	12.7
German	24	5.3	610	4.6
African	20	4.4	510	3.8
French	17	3.7	365	2.8
Italian	5	1.1	44	0.3
Dutch	4	0.9	51	0.4
Welsh	3	0.7	24	0.2
Hebrew	3	0.7	80	0.6
Scandinavian	1	0.2	32	0.2
Arabian-Turkish	1	0.2	.....	.....
Unknown	3	0.7	32	0.2
Groups not in sample	0	0.0	62	0.5
Total	456	100.0	13,267	100.0

*Source:* 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5; and "Table XI: Origins of the People," in *Fourth Census of Canada*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1902), 302-3.

*Note:* The percentage of Halifax's total population which claimed Arabian-Turkish descent (primarily those who were Syrian-Lebanese) is unknown since published census books for 1901 did not present statistics for this group separately. Instead, they were lumped into a catch-all category of "others." The category "Groups not in Sample" include certain ethnic and racial groups in Halifax who did not have any members self-employed as shopkeepers. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.26**  
**Ethnic and Racial Origins of the Populations in the Grocery Trade**  
**and Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1901**

Ethnic & Racial Origin	Grocery Sample		Total Population	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
English	39	39.8	6,300	47.5
Irish	29	29.6	3,466	26.1
Scottish	13	13.3	1,691	12.7
German	5	5.1	610	4.6
African	1	1.0	510	3.8
French	1	1.0	365	2.8
Italian	4	4.1	44	0.3
Dutch	2	2.0	51	0.4
Welsh	1	1.0	24	0.2
Hebrew	1	1.0	80	0.6
Unknown	2	2.0	32	0.2
Groups not in sample	0	0.0	94	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13,267</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5; and "Table XI: Origins of the People," in *Fourth Census of Canada*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1902), 302-3.

*Note:* The category "Groups not in Sample" include certain ethnic and racial groups in Halifax who did not have any members self-employed as shopkeepers. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.27**  
**Shopkeeper Ethnic and Racial Origins by Sex in Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1901**

Ethnic & Racial Origin	Men		Women	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
English	136	45.0	77	50.0
Irish	66	21.9	43	27.9
Scottish	38	12.6	15	9.7
German	19	6.3	5	3.2
African	12	4.0	8	5.2
French	14	4.6	3	1.9
Italian	5	1.7	0	0.0
Dutch	3	1.0	1	0.6
Welsh	3	1.0	0	0.0
Hebrew	3	1.0	0	0.0
Scandinavian	0	0.0	1	0.6
Arabian-Turkish	1	0.3	0	0.0
Unknown	2	0.7	1	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.28**  
**Shopkeeper Ethnic and Racial Origins by Ward, 1901**

Ethnic & Racial Origin	Ward 3		Ward 5	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>English</b>	69	43.7	144	48.3
<b>Irish</b>	39	24.7	70	23.5
<b>Scottish</b>	16	10.1	37	12.4
<b>German</b>	6	3.8	18	6.0
<b>African</b>	12	7.6	8	2.7
<b>French</b>	9	5.7	8	2.7
<b>Italian</b>	1	0.6	4	1.3
<b>Dutch</b>	2	1.3	2	0.7
<b>Welsh</b>	3	1.9	0	0.0
<b>Hebrew</b>	0	0.0	3	1.0
<b>Scandinavian</b>	0	0.0	1	0.3
<b>Arabian-Turkish</b>	0	0.0	1	0.3
<b>Unknown</b>	1	0.6	2	0.7
<b>Total</b>	158	100.0	298	100.0

*Source:* 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.29**  
**Religious Affiliation of the Populations in Shopkeeping**  
**and Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 to 1901**

Religion	1891				1901			
	Shopkeeping Sample		Total Population		Shopkeeping Sample		Total Population	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Roman Catholic</b>	219	43.1	6,872	41.2	175	38.4	5,566	42.0
<b>Church of England</b>	122	24.0	4,192	25.1	114	25.0	3,340	25.2
<b>Methodist</b>	54	10.6	1,764	10.6	65	14.3	1,710	12.9
<b>Baptist</b>	51	10.0	1,459	8.7	35	7.7	1,184	8.9
<b>Presbyterian</b>	46	9.1	1,716	10.3	41	9.0	1,148	8.7
<b>Lutheran</b>	4	0.8	45	0.3	2	0.4	26	0.2
<b>Salvation Army</b>	2	0.4	90	0.5	3	0.7	76	0.6
<b>Jewish</b>	2	0.4	18	0.1	3	0.7	74	0.6
<b>Other</b>	6	1.2	55	0.3	7	1.5	109	0.8
<b>Unknown</b>	2	0.4	433	2.6	11	2.4	24	0.2
<b>Groups not in sample</b>	0	0.0	35	0.2	0	0.0	86	0.6
<b>Total</b>	508	100.0	16,679	100.0	456	100.0	13,267	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5; "Table IV: Religions," in *Census of Canada 1890-91*, vol. I (S. E. Dawson, 1893), 242-3; and "Table X: Religions of the People," in *Fourth Census of Canada 1901*, vol. I (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1902), 172-3.

*Note:* In 1891, shopkeepers reporting religions in the "Other" category included those who claimed to be an Atheist, an Agnostic, a Universalist, an Adventist, a Freethinker, and a Bible Christian. In 1901, this category included shopkeepers who reported being an Atheist, a Protestant, a Universalist, a Unitarian, an Adventist, a Brethren, and a Moravian. The category "Groups not in Sample" include certain religious groups in Halifax who did not have any members self-employed as shopkeepers. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.



**Table A.30**  
**Shopkeeper Religious Affiliation by Sex in Wards 3 and 5 Combined,**  
**1891 and 1901**

Religion	1891				1901			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Roman Catholic</b>	130	38.6	89	52.0	107	35.4	68	44.2
<b>Church of England</b>	79	23.4	43	25.1	79	26.2	35	22.7
<b>Methodist</b>	41	12.2	13	7.6	44	14.6	21	13.6
<b>Baptist</b>	41	12.2	10	5.8	29	9.6	6	3.9
<b>Presbyterian</b>	33	9.8	13	7.6	24	7.9	17	11.0
<b>Lutheran</b>	4	1.2	0	0.0	1	0.3	1	0.6
<b>Salvation Army</b>	1	0.3	1	0.6	3	1.0	0	0.0
<b>Jewish</b>	2	0.6	0	0.0	3	1.0	0	0.0
<b>Other</b>	5	1.5	1	0.6	4	1.3	3	1.9
<b>Unknown</b>	1	0.3	1	0.6	8	2.6	3	1.9
<b>Total</b>	337	100.0	171	100.0	302	100.0	154	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* In 1891, male shopkeepers reporting a religion in the "Other" category included one Atheist, an Agnostic, an Adventist, a Freethinker, and a Bible Christian. Female shopkeepers in this category during 1891 included one Universalist. In 1901, male shopkeepers reporting a religion in the "Other" category included one Unitarian, an Adventist, a Brethren, and a Moravian. Female shopkeepers in this category during the same year included one Atheist, a Protestant, and a Universalist. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.31**  
**Shopkeeper Religious Affiliation by Ward, 1891 and 1901**

Religion	1891				1901			
	Ward 3		Ward 5		Ward 3		Ward 5	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Roman Catholic</b>	67	56.8	152	39.0	65	41.1	110	36.9
<b>Church of England</b>	26	22.0	96	24.6	44	27.8	70	23.5
<b>Methodist</b>	6	5.1	48	12.3	16	10.1	49	16.4
<b>Baptist</b>	4	3.4	47	12.1	8	5.1	27	9.1
<b>Presbyterian</b>	10	8.5	36	9.2	15	9.5	26	8.7
<b>Lutheran</b>	1	0.8	3	0.8	2	1.3	0	0.0
<b>Salvation Army</b>	1	0.8	1	0.3	2	1.3	1	0.3
<b>Jewish</b>	0	0.0	2	0.5	0	0.0	3	1.0
<b>Other</b>	2	1.7	4	1.0	5	3.2	2	0.7
<b>Unknown</b>	1	0.8	1	0.3	1	0.6	10	3.4
<b>Total</b>	118	100.0	390	100.0	158	100.0	298	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* In 1891, shopkeepers in Ward Three listed in the "Other" category included one Agnostic and one Atheist. Those listed in Ward Five included one Universalist, an Adventist, a Bible Christian, and a Freethinker. In 1901, shopkeepers in Ward Three's "Other" grouping included one Atheist, a Protestant, a Unitarian, a Brethren, and a Moravian. Shopkeepers included in the same category for Ward Five in 1901 reported being a Universalist and an Adventist. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.32**  
**Income Distribution Reported from Roman Catholic Shopkeepers**  
**by Ward and Total, 1901**

Income Range	Ward 3		Ward 5		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Under \$100</b>	1	2.2	3	4.8	4	3.7
<b>\$100-\$499</b>	21	45.7	33	52.4	54	49.5
<b>\$500-\$999</b>	18	39.1	22	34.9	40	36.7
<b>\$1,000-\$1,999</b>	2	4.3	2	3.2	4	3.7
<b>\$2,000-\$4,999</b>	4	8.7	3	4.8	7	6.4
<b>Total</b>	46	100.0	63	100.0	109	100.0

*Source:* 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* This table is based on the 70.8 percent of Catholic shopkeepers who reported an income in Ward Three (46 of 65), 57.3 percent in Ward Five (63 of 110), and 62.3 percent overall (109 of 175). Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.33**  
**Shopkeeper Age Groups in Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 and 1901**

Age Group (years)	1891		1901	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Under 20</b>	3	0.6	7	1.5
<b>20-29</b>	75	14.8	73	16.0
<b>30-39</b>	131	25.8	97	21.3
<b>40-49</b>	134	26.4	114	25.0
<b>50-59</b>	86	16.9	79	17.3
<b>60-69</b>	51	10.0	66	14.5
<b>70-79</b>	17	3.3	15	3.3
<b>80-89</b>	4	0.8	2	0.4
<b>Unknown</b>	7	1.4	3	0.7
<b>Total</b>	508	100.0	456	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.34**  
**Shopkeeper Age Groups in Wards 3 and 5 Combined by Sex, 1891 and 1901**

Age Group (years)	1891				1901			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Under 20</b>	2	0.6	1	0.6	3	1.0	4	2.6
<b>20-29</b>	51	15.1	24	14.0	40	13.2	33	21.4
<b>30-39</b>	92	27.3	39	22.8	69	22.8	28	18.2
<b>40-49</b>	92	27.3	42	24.6	79	26.2	35	22.7
<b>50-59</b>	57	16.9	29	17.0	49	16.2	30	19.5
<b>60-69</b>	32	9.5	19	11.1	47	15.6	19	12.3
<b>70-79</b>	9	2.7	8	4.7	11	3.6	4	2.6
<b>80-89</b>	2	0.6	2	1.2	2	0.7	0	0.0
<b>Unknown</b>	0	0.0	7	4.1	2	0.7	1	0.6
<b>Total</b>	337	100.0	171	100.0	302	100.0	154	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

**Table A.35**  
**Shopkeeper Average Age in Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 and 1901**

	1891			1901		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
<b>Average age (years)</b>	43.7	45.6	44.3	45.9	43.4	45.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* To calculate the "Average Age" the middle age of each cohort was used, rather than actual ages. For example, for shopkeepers within the age group 60 to 69, the age used was 65. For those under 20 years, 18 was used.

**Table A.36**  
**Shopkeeper Marital Status in Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 and 1901**

Marital Status	1891		1901	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Married</b>	316	62.2	260	57.0
<b>Widowed/ separated</b>	102	20.1	81	17.8
<b>Single</b>	84	16.5	108	23.7
<b>Unknown</b>	6	1.2	7	1.5
<b>Total</b>	508	100.0	456	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* The category "Widowed/Separated" includes all women who were without husbands at the time of enumeration, whether they reported to be widowed or married.

**Table A.37**  
**Shopkeeper Marital Status by Sex in Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 and 1901**

Marital Status	1891				1901			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Married</b>	280	83.1	36	21.1	228	75.5	32	20.8
<b>Widowed/ separated</b>	13	3.9	89	52.0	15	5.0	66	42.9
<b>Single</b>	42	12.5	42	24.6	54	17.9	54	35.1
<b>Unknown</b>	2	0.6	4	2.3	5	1.7	2	1.3
<b>Total</b>	337	100.0	171	100.0	302	100.0	154	100.0

*Source:* 1891 and 1901 Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5.

*Note:* The category "Widowed/Separated" includes all women who were without husbands at the time of enumeration, whether they reported to be widowed or married. Total percentages may not equal 100.0 percent exactly since percentages were calculated by rounding to one decimal place.

## Appendix B

### Tables for Chapter Two

**Table B.1**  
**Estimated Size of Halifax Businesses in the**  
***Mercantile Agency Reference Books* for Selected Years**

Yr	T	Small Under \$2,000		Medium \$2,001 - 10,000		Large Over \$10,000		Unknown	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1876	808	309	38.2	232	28.7	212	26.2	55	6.8
1879	793	297	37.5	206	26.0	174	21.9	116	14.6
1885	726	253	34.8	191	26.3	158	21.8	124	17.1
1890	787	292	37.1	193	24.5	172	21.9	130	16.5

*Source: Mercantile Agency Reference Book (and Key) for the Dominion of Canada, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, July 1890.*

*Note:* The tables provided in Appendix B refer to all enterprises rated by the agency, including retailers, wholesalers, and manufacturers. The category "Unknown" includes those businesses where the reference books failed to report an estimation of size based upon monetary strength, as well as illegible entries. For 1876, this category included three illegible entries.

**Table B.2**  
**Credit Ratings for Halifax Businesses in the**  
***Mercantile Agency Reference Books* for Selected Years**

Yr	T	Limited		Fair		Good		High		Very High / Un-limited		Unknown	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1876	808	...	....	340	42.1	219	27.1	67	8.3	9	1.1	173	21.4
1879	793	...	....	377	47.5	126	15.9	44	5.5	4	0.5	242	30.5
1885	726	87	12.0	233	32.1	174	24.0	73	10.1	...	....	159	21.9
1890	787	118	15.0	238	30.2	188	23.9	85	10.8	...	....	158	20.1

*Source: Mercantile Agency Reference Book (and Key) for the Dominion of Canada, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, July 1890.*

*Note: The category "Unknown" includes those businesses where the reference books failed to report a credit rating, as well as illegible entries. For 1876, this category included three illegible entries.*

**Table B.3**  
**Businesses Attributed to Women in the *Mercantile Agency Reference Books***  
**for Selected Years**

Yr	Total Businesses Listed	Businesses Attributed to Women	
		N	%
1876	808	30	3.7
1879	793	39	4.9
1885	726	28	3.9
1890	787	48	6.1

*Source: Mercantile Agency Reference Book (and Key) for the Dominion of Canada, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, July 1890.*



**Table B.4**  
**Estimated Size of Halifax Businesses Attributed to Women in the**  
***Mercantile Agency Reference Books* for Selected Years**

Yr	T	Small Under \$2,000		Medium \$2,001 - 10,000		Large Over \$10,000		Unknown	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1876	30	18	60.0	8	26.7	3	10.0	1	3.3
1879	39	29	74.4	8	20.5	1	2.6	1	2.6
1885	28	16	57.1	5	17.9	1	3.6	6	21.4
1890	48	34	70.1	8	16.7	0	0.0	6	12.5

Source: *Mercantile Agency Reference Book (and Key) for the Dominion of Canada*, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, July 1890.

**Table B.5**  
**Credit Ratings for Halifax Businesses Attributed to Women in the**  
***Mercantile Agency Reference Books* for Selected Years**

Yr	T	Limited		Fair		Good		High		Very High / Un- limited		Unknown	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1876	30	...	....	16	53.3	3	10.0	1	3.3	0	0.0	10	33.3
1879	39	...	.....	22	56.4	2	5.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	38.5
1885	28	8	28.6	16	57.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	...	....	4	14.3
1890	48	21	43.8	17	35.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	...	....	10	20.8

Source: *Mercantile Agency Reference Book (and Key) for the Dominion of Canada*, Jan. 1876, Sept. 1879, Sept. 1885, and July 1890.

## Appendix C

### Tables for Chapter Three

**Table C.1**  
**Halifax Failures under the**  
**Dominion Insolvency Acts of 1869 and 1875**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Halifax Failures (N)</b>
<b>1870</b>	24
<b>1871</b>	22
<b>1872</b>	25
<b>1873</b>	45
<b>1874</b>	38
<b>1875</b>	68
<b>1876</b>	36
<b>1877</b>	37
<b>1878</b>	49
<b>1879</b>	52
<b>1880</b>	17

*Source: RG, 1870-1880.*

**Table C.2**  
**Halifax Failures, 1883 to 1901**

Year	Failures in Halifax		
	Number (N)	Liabilities (\$)	Assets (\$)
1883	31	566,100	.....
1884	26	602,150	.....
1885	17	106,825	.....
1886	21	260,300	.....
1887	34	354,760	187,400
1888	28	609,500	292,500
1889	18	116,308	59,410
1890	20	169,500	82,000
1891	16	231,800	142,830
1892	48	576,000	273,700
1893	23	318,813	175,400
1894	17	119,150	67,500
1895	24	527,205	182,650
1896	33	211,159	184,450
1897	32	171,648	98,100
1898	25	90,369	51,141
1899	24	173,814	82,600
1900	18	90,575	24,025
1901	25	138,350	42,600

*Source:* MC, 1 Jan. 1886; 1 Jan. 1887; 1 Jan. 1889; 1 Jan. 1895; 1 Jan. 1896; 1 Jan. 1898; 2 Jan. 1899; and 1 Jan. 1902.

*Note:* All figures originated from those provided by R. G. Dun and Co.

**Table C.3**  
**Canadian and Nova Scotian Failures under the**  
**Dominion Insolvency Acts of 1869 and 1875**

Year	Failures in Canada		Failures in Nova Scotia	
	Number (N)	Liabilities (\$)	Number (N)	Liabilities (\$)
1870	.....	.....	.....	.....
1871	.....	.....	.....	.....
1872	.....	.....	63	2,373,900
1873	994*	12,334,191*	.....	.....
1874	966*	7,696,765*	.....	.....
1875	1,968*	28,843,967*	243	2,759,750
1876	1,728*	25,517,991*	150	1,470,000
1877	1,890*	25,510,157*	117	1,187,000
1878	1,615*	23,152,262*	168	2,071,000
1879	1,902*	29,347,937*	187	2,164,000
1880	907*	7,947,063*	68	823,000

Source: *AR*, 5 March 1873; *MT*, 7 Jan. 1881; and *MH*, 1 Jan. 1884.

Note: Figures for the early 1870s are incomplete because local newspapers rarely published failure statistics. Additionally, financial papers such as Toronto's *Monetary Times* were not yet in print. Figures marked with an asterisk represent numbers originally compiled by R. G. Dun and Co. Remaining figures are of unknown origin.

**Table C.4**  
**Canadian and Nova Scotian Failures, 1881 to 1901**

Year	Failures in Canada		Failures in Nova Scotia	
	Number (N)	Liabilities (\$)	Number (N)	Liabilities (\$)
1881	631	5,675,807	72	1,249,000
1882	787	8,587,657	49	622,000
1883	1,384	16,000,000	89	1,058,000
1884	1,308	18,939,770	140	2,068,860
1885	1,247	8,743,049	108	615,375
1886	1,233	10,171,384	96	675,400
1887	1,366	16,070,595	120	716,860
1888	1,667	13,974,787	126	1,305,503
1889	1,747	14,528,884	78	469,234
1890	1,828	17,850,017	122	685,824
1891	1,861	16,723,939	141	905,200
1892	1,680	13,703,000	153*	956,830*
1893	1,278	12,456,000	127	807,386
1894	1,856	17,616,215	125	619,802
1895	1,923*	15,793,000*	108	690,138
1896	2,205*	16,369,000*	155*	782,520*
1897	1,907	13,147,929	181	976,729
1898	1,427*	9,644,100*	125*	650,415*
1899	1,287	10,658,675	202	1,037,205
1900	1,355	11,613,208	90	557,835
1901	1,341	10,811,671	117	540,892

*Source:* MH, 1 Jan. 1884; MC, 1 Jan. 1895; MT, 6 Jan. 1882; 12 Jan. 1883; 9 Jan. 1885; 8 Jan. 1886; 7 Jan. 1887; 6 Jan. 1888; 10 Jan. 1890; 8 Jan. 1892; 5 Jan. 1894; 10 Jan. 1896; 5 Jan. 1899; 11 Jan. 1901; 8 Jan. 1902; CG, 11 Jan. 1889; 6 Jan. 1893; 11 Jan. 1895; and 8 Jan. 1897.

*Note:* Figures marked with an asterisk originated with Bradstreet. The remainder originated with R. G. Dun.

**Table C.5**  
**Persistence in Shopkeeping, Wards 3 and 5 Combined, 1891 to 1901**

<b>Retail Categories &amp; Lines</b>	<b>Persistence (N)</b>	<b>Quitting (N)</b>	<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>Persistence Rate (%)</b>
<b>Food, drink &amp; pharmacy</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>18.1</b>
Grocery	26	89	115	22.6
Meat, fish & dairy	6	28	34	17.6
Bakery & confection	2	17	19	10.5
Liquors	2	14	16	12.5
Restaurant	2	19	21	9.5
Pharmacy	0	5	5	0.0
<b>Apparel</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>6.3</b>
Clothing & dry goods	4	96	100	4.0
Boots & shoes	4	23	27	14.8

*Continued on next page*

Table C.5--*Continued*

<b>Retail Categories &amp; Lines</b>	<b>Persistence (N)</b>	<b>Quitting (N)</b>	<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>Persistence Rate (%)</b>
<b>Personal services</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>11.8</b>
Hairdressing	3	5	8	37.5
Hotel accommodation & lodging	5	55	60	8.3
<b>Fine goods</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>23.5</b>
Jewellery & watches	4	8	12	33.3
Books & stationery	3	4	7	42.9
Music & instruments	0	2	2	0.0
Crockery, china & glass	0	5	5	0.0
Fancy goods, toys, pictures & gifts	0	3	3	0.0
Tobacco	0	4	4	0.0
Sporting goods & taxidermy	1	0	1	100.0

*Continued on next page*

**Table C.5--Continued**

<b>Retail Categories &amp; Lines</b>	<b>Persistence (N)</b>	<b>Quitting (N)</b>	<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>Persistence Rate (%)</b>
<b>Artisanal</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16.0</b>
Cabinetmaking, upholstery & undertaking	2	3	5	40.0
Ironwork & carriagemaking	2	7	9	22.2
Tanning & leather goods	0	3	3	0.0
Coopering	0	4	4	0.0
Marblecutting	0	2	2	0.0
Locks	0	2	2	0.0
<b>Hardware, building equipment &amp; farm supplies</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21.4</b>
Hardware, stoves & plumbing	0	2	2	0.0
Lumber & building supplies	0	3	3	0.0
Farm & garden supplies	1	3	4	25.0
Fuel	2	3	5	40.0

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**Table C.5--Continued**

<b>Retail Categories &amp; Lines</b>	<b>Persistence (N)</b>	<b>Quitting (N)</b>	<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>Persistence Rate (%)</b>
<b>Variety &amp; shopkeeper</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Variety, bargain & general store	0	17	17	0.0
Unspecified shop	0	2	2	0.0
<b>Used goods</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Used clothing	0	1	1	0.0
Used furniture	0	3	3	0.0
Used goods unspecified	0	1	1	0.0
Junk & marine	0	3	3	0.0
<b>Other</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Sewing machines	0	1	1	0.0
Umbrella repair	0	2	2	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>13.6</b>

*Source:* Halifax City Census, Wards 3 and 5, 1891 and 1901.

*Note:* For the purposes of this study, persistence can be defined as shopkeepers continuing to pursue the same self-employed trade in the same combined districts from 1891 to 1901.

**Table C.6**  
**Capital Estimation of Persisters from Wards 3 and 5, 1891**

Total (N)	Small Under \$2,000		Medium \$2,001 - 10,000		Large Over \$10,000		Blank or Unlisted	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
69	15	21.7	4	5.8	2	2.9	48	69.6

*Source: Mercantile Agency Reference Book (and Key) for the Dominion of Canada, July 1890.*

*Note: The category "Blank or Unlisted" refers to persisters who credit agents listed but provided no capital estimation, as well as persisters who were omitted entirely from the published reference book.*

**Table C.7**  
**Credit Ratings of Persisters from Wards 3 and 5, 1891**

Total (N)	Limited		Fair		Good		High		Blank or Unlisted	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
69	7	10.1	6	8.7	5	7.2	1	1.4	50	72.5

*Source: Mercantile Agency Reference Book (and Key) for the Dominion of Canada, July 1890.*

*Note: The category "Blank or Unlisted" refers to persisters who credit agents listed but provided no rating, as well as persisters who were omitted entirely from the published reference book.*

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